

Nutritional consultancy, worldwide

The world population is increasing, and so is prosperity: "This means that meat consumption worldwide will continue to increase, and that we need to intensify production", says Jan Fledderus, product manager swine and consultant at Schothorst Feed Research.

"To feed the world, we need to produce safe, affordable and healthy food in an efficient way", he emphasizes. Fledderus joined SFR last year, after a long career in the feed industry, working for international feed manufacturers. In his new role as swine consultant worldwide, he benefits from his experience in feed formulation, combined with his scientific background in pig nutrition.

"At SFR, we have the knowledge and the expertise to support nutritionists all over the world to improve pig nutrition in their specific situation", Fledderus explains. "A big advantage of SFR is that we provide independent advice: we do not sell premixes or additives, we have a load of research data available to provide solid backgrounds on the effects of feed composition on animal production, health parameters and the environment."

Fledderus sees room for improvement worldwide mainly in further development of feed evaluation, and the application of extensive data on raw material composition and processing effects. Nowadays, more than fifty percent of turnover in SFR products and services is attained outside of The Netherlands, and Fledderus expects that this share will increase further in the future: "Especially our Asian market is developing fast."

Challenges in swine production

Nowadays, swine production faces many challenges: "We need to increase production efficiency, reduce the use of antibiotics, improve animal health and welfare, and reduce the environmental impact of animal husbandry", summarizes Fledderus. "Fortunately, here in The Netherlands we have a wealth of knowledge and experience on these subjects. This knowledge and expertise is very valuable for countries all over the world." Fledderus refers to the use of by-products in swine feed: "More than fifty percent of our growing pigs in The Netherlands are fed on liquid diets containing wet and dry by-products from the food industry. In our country, we have a lot of data on a broad variety of feed ingredients, processing and feed quality." In the Western world, and especially in The Netherlands, ninety percent of the population is not actively involved in food production, five percent works in the agricultural sector (farmers, feed and food production) and the remaining five percent feels connected to ngo's related to animal welfare and environmental issues. These ngo's have better communication and lobbying skills than the agricultural sector and, therefore, have a strong influence on society and politics, sees Fledderus.

"The fact that political discussions are often based on model calculations and societal perceptions, and not on scientific facts and measurements is a threat for effective and sound government's policy", says Fledderus. "As a consequence, it is hard for Dutch and European pig farmers to make management decisions for the future of their enterprise."

Nevertheless, Fledderus does not foresee a bleak future for Dutch pig farmers, but it remains hard to predict how much room for pig production will remain in The Netherlands: "Developments in society and politics are unclear at the moment, but in my opinion pig production in closed barns, with air washers, does not impose a threat to air quality in the environment. Our advanced swine sector is very capable to produce pigs in a sustainable, animal and environmental friendly, manner."

Another issue that Fledderus touches upon is the import of nutrients from other parts of the world into Europe: "This leads to an environmental burden that largely might be solved by allowing export of swine manure to Eastern Europe. In the eastern part of Germany, there is a need for manure to sustain soil fertility."

Big data

SFR has developed a large database containing nutritional composition of many raw materials. "We are continuously expanding this database, to include all ingredients that are used in animal nutrition all over the world. These data help us to provide custom-made advice for our clients in Europe and abroad", says Fledderus. "We actively collect data on feed materials from various parts of the world. Rice by-products, e.g., are widely available in Asian countries, so we need to collect nutritional data on such commodities to accommodate the questions we receive from our customers in that part of the world."

MySFR

The MySFR tool is developed to provide insight to nutritionists. MySFR enables nutritionists to implement the database into their own formulation software. "The software tool helps us as consultants to discuss options and consequences of choices in feed formulation", Fledderus explains. "Our data and calculation tools are based on solid and extensive research, and therefore yield predictable outcomes for pig farmers."

As a consultant, Fledderus uses the tool to evaluate different choices in feed formulation. "Performing these calculations together with the nutritionist, and discussing the effects and consequences eventually brings us to a tailor-made advice. Also, it gives me valuable insights in market developments. Discussing these insights with the researchers at SFR and with our technical committee members helps us to focus our research and develop new products and services for our customers."

Extensive knowledge of raw materials is the starting point; coupling this to nutritional requirement of the animals results in the best advice for SFR clients.

Niet voor publicatie

Noot voor de redactie

Voor meer informatie, kunt u contact opnemen met:

Alieke Boudeling
Communicatiespecialist SFR
06-40926283
aboudeling@schothorst.nl

