

Towards the global reference for environmental footprinting in the feed industry: the Global Feed LCA Institute (GFLI)

1. Foreword

Environmental footprinting of livestock products is a challenging but essential task to improve the accuracy of reporting on the real impacts of livestock products. This includes both understanding where the livestock chain stands in terms of impact and encouraging the benchmarking and measurement of both individual and collective reduction efforts. Feed is an important part of the chain and it is essential that feed operators are able to understand their impact, not only from a business efficiency perspective but also to meet the expectations of their customers and public bodies, at both at national and international level.

2. GFLI vision and mission

The Global Feed LCA Institute is an independent feed industry initiative with the vision to develop a freely and publically available Feed Life Cycle Analysis (LCA) database and tool. The objective of the GFLI is to support meaningful environmental assessment of livestock products and to stimulate continuous improvement of the environmental performance in the feed industry.

3. Deliverables

During the 2016-2017 period, the GFLI will deliver

- A public LCA database with high quality secondary data covering cultivation, processing and logistics for feed ingredients; as a module to support environmental assessment of livestock products
- A feed LCA tool, primarily destined to feed companies, for identification of environmental hotspots, training and education. The tool will be built on the Feedprint tool previously developed in the Netherlands

4. Building on globally accepted methodological references

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)-led Livestock Environmental Assessment and Performance Partnership (LEAP) released on the 23rd of April 2015 the first of its kind globally recognized Feed LCA Guidelines¹. These guidelines represent a significant milestone for the global feed industry in order to enable consistent and transparent reporting of environmental performance. The GFLI will implement the FAO/LEAP methodology and has established a working relationship with the LEAP Steering Committee to ensure methodological compliance.

The Feed Product Environmental Footprint Category Rules (PEFCR) currently being developed in the context of the Environmental Footprint (EF) pilot phase launched by the European Commission are also an important methodological input for the GFLI. In the EF pilot phase, sector-specific rules are developed from the horizontal Product Environmental Footprint (PEF) guide published by the European Commission in April 2013.

The Feed PEFCR is built on the LEAP/FAO Feed LCA guidelines and on the PEF. The GFLI database will therefore also ensure compliance with the PEF requirements.

¹ For more information on LEAP and on the Feed LCA Guidelines, please visit <http://www.fao.org/partnerships/leap/en/>

5. Scope of the GFLI activities

The GFLI activities are positioned as a module supporting environmental assessment of livestock products. The GFLI will therefore develop a cradle to farm-gate database. All life cycle stages up to the delivery of the feed to the farm will be part of the database, including feed mill operations and logistics.

The GFLI database will support of broad range of impact categories, such as climate change, eutrophication, acidification, water footprint etc... Fifteen impact categories will be covered, to ensure compliance with the Product Environmental Footprint guide.

6. Interoperability with existing LCA tools and software

The GFLI is involved in and will take into account the achievements of the global network for interoperable LCA databases, led by the United Nations Environment Programme in order to define its database infrastructure. The GFLI database aims at software neutrality/interoperability to facilitate uptake of the GFLI data by practitioners working on environmental assessment of animal products.

7. Innovative governance mechanism

The GFLI relies on an innovative governance mechanism, based on regional project which will populate the database. Regional projects are led by a consortium of feed companies and associations. All regional projects follow the same procedure for data collection, to ensure global consistency. The executive body of the GFLI is the GFLI Management Board, composed of representatives of the regional projects, a chairperson which does not represent any project and a representative of the International Feed Industry Federation (IFIF). The LEAP Partnership is also sitting in the GFLI Management Board with an observer status. The GFLI Management Board oversees all activities of the regional projects. Economies of scale are made possible through synergies between regional projects.

8. Active projects / Members

There are currently two operational regional projects, in the EU and in the USA/Canada and one sector project dealing with fish feed. Discussions have started to launch projects in China, Brazil and Australia as well as for specialty feed ingredients. The objective is to add new regions and sectors on a continuous basis.

In addition to IFIF, the following companies and associations are already members of the GFLI

- Europe Project Steering Group: AB AGRI, Agrifirm, AIC, Bemefa, Cargill Animal Nutrition, Evonik, FEDIOL, FEFAC, For Farmers, Nevedi, SNIA, Nutreco, USSEC.
- USA/Canada Project Steering Group: AFIA, ANAC, ADM Alliance Nutrition, Alltech, Cargill Animal Nutrition, CHS Nutrition, Diamond V, Elanco Animal Health, Evonik, Hi-Pro Feeds, LandO'Lakes Purina, Mosaic Feed Ingredients, National Soybean Board, Potashcorp.
- Fish Feed Project Steering Group: Biomar, Cargill Aqua Nutrition, IFFO, FEAP, FHF, Skretting.

9. More information / membership enquiries

For more information about the GFLI or for enquiries about membership, please contact Nicolas MARTIN, GFLI Project Manager, nmartin@fefac.eu