

Category 3 animal fat - an important pet food ingredient

The Pet Food Industry and a Circular Economy

The pet food industry is proud of its thriving circular business model. We use many by-products from the human chain, which include Category 3 animal fats. This prevents the need for final disposal and also supports farmers. Manufacturers are skilled at adding value to these ingredients by converting them into nutritious pet food. This supports our contribution to the circular economy.

Animal By-Products (ABPs)

Animal by-products (ABPs) are materials of animal origin that people do not consume. They do not enter the human food chain. In Europe, animal by-products are classified into three categories: Category 1, Category 2 and Category 3 depending on the source of the raw material and the intended use[i]. The pet food industry can only use Category 3 ABPs.

Category 3 ABPs are from animals declared fit for human consumption. These are ideal pet food ingredients due to their high nutritional and energetic value and should be used in the best possible way to preserve resources. Category 1 and 2 animal fats are forbidden for animal feeding for safety reasons but allowed for biofuel production.



The Vital Role of Category 3 Animal Fats in Pet Food

Category 3 animal fats are essential raw materials for our pets' diets. They provide a source of energy and palatability but above all essential fatty acids. They are subject to strict requirements on sourcing and collecting, animal origin materials processing, and control. Category 3 animal fats cannot be easily replaced as a pet food ingredient.

The EU & The Pet Food Industry's Waste Hierarchy

FEDIAF firmly believes that surplus food, such as Category 3 animal fats, which is not intended for human consumption, should be repurposed according to the food waste hierarchy, i.e.: pet food (re-use animal feed) rather than energy (recovery) as indicated below[ii]. This sits well above energy use in the EU's own hierarchy of most-preferable options for food waste disposal.



The Pet Food Industry and the Future

Unfortunately, there is increasing pressure due to Category 3 animal fats being used in other sectors such as biofuels, which are much lower in terms of waste hierarchy. The pet food industry will continue to communicate the importance of Category 3 animal fats in pet food. They are vital ingredients, which contribute to our circular business model and they cannot easily be replaced.

For further information:

REGULATION (EC) No 1069/2009 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 21 October 2009 laying down health rules as regards animal by-products and derived products not intended for human consumption and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1774/2002 (Animal by-products Regulation)

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[i] https://food.ec.europa.eu/safety/animal-products_en

[ii] https://food.ec.europa.eu/safety/food-waste/eu-actions-against-food-waste/food-waste-measurement_en