



Safe Animal Feed Formulation Educational Registry (SAFFER)

SCOPING SESSION

MAY 6, 2026



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF
FOOD & AGRICULTURE

What is SAFE?

SAFE



 SAFE ANIMAL FEED EDUCATION 

- Funded by 15% of the Commercial Feed Regulatory Program (CFRP) inspection tonnage tax.
- Dedicated to research and education regarding the safe manufacture, distribution, and use of commercial feed.
- Under guidance of the Feed Inspection Advisory Board (FIAB), which is comprised of 9 members of the feed industry.

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Recommendation of the FIAB

- In 2025, the FIAB recognized a need to increase awareness of feed laws and regulations among custom formulators (nutritionists, consultants), as they are vital to ensuring animal health, food safety, and safe use of commercial feed within California's production animal agriculture systems.

We need an Educational Pilot Program

The FIAB recommended:

Utilize SAFE to develop an educational program.

Industry feedback is critical to development.

Safe Animal Feed Formulation Educational Registry

A SAFE Pilot Program

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What is SAFFER?

Voluntary

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graph TD; A[Voluntary] --> B[Free]; B --> C[Pilot Program]; C --> D[Registration];
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Free

Pilot Program

Registration

Who is Eligible?

Individual formulators
of commercial livestock feed
that is distributed and fed
in the state of California.

What SAFFER is NOT

- SAFFER is NOT:
 - A certificate
 - A license
 - An endorsement
 - A test
 - A guarantee of compliance with all laws and regulations

GOALS

- Develop and deliver focused educational materials regarding feed and food safety laws and regulations that are specifically applicable to formulators and nutritionists.
- Foster connection between formulators/nutritionists and SAFE as a resource for questions and a trusted source for relevant updates, such as feed industry notices and changes to laws and regulations.

Why FIAB, CDFA, and the Feed Industry Support SAFFER

Food and Agricultural Code Section 14901:

The Legislature hereby finds and declares that it is the intent of this chapter to do all of the following:

(a) Enable the feed and feeding industry, with the aid of the state, to ensure in every way possible a clean and wholesome supply of meat, milk, and eggs for the benefit of the consumer.



**Why FIAB,
CDFA, and the
Feed Industry
Support
SAFFER**

Nutritionists and custom formulators are vital to ensuring animal health and food safety in California's production animal systems.

Food Safety

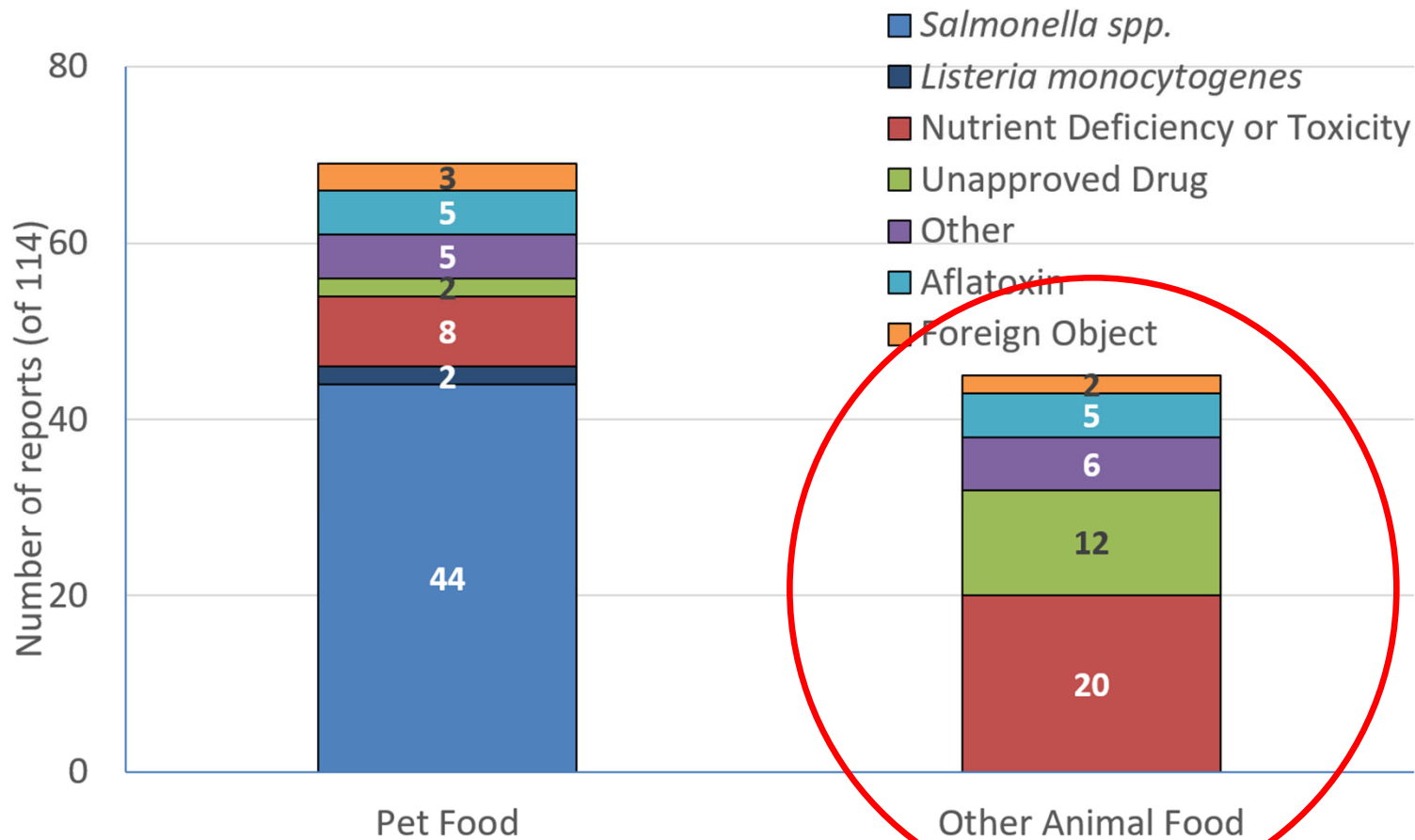
The Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA), signed into federal law in 2011, has transformed both human and animal food systems to proactively work to prevent incidents of illness or injury from hazards associated with food.

FSMA requires each manufacturer to prepare a Food Safety Plan which includes a hazard evaluation to consider the effect of the following on the safety of the animal food:

- the formulation of the animal food,
- ingredients,
- and intended or reasonably foreseeable use

The food safety plan must identify, evaluate, and mitigate ALL known or reasonably foreseeable hazards.

Reportable Foods Registry Reports for Animal Food 2009 - 2014



Livestock Feed:

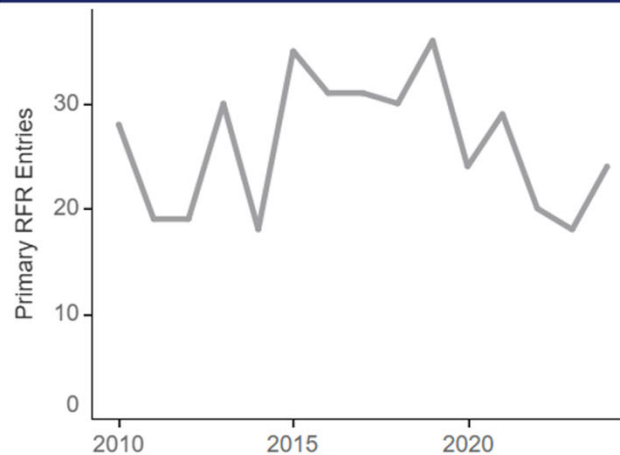
#1: Nutrient
Deficiency/
Toxicity

#2: Unapproved
Drug

Current Data:
Nutrient
Imbalance
still #1 in RFR

Reportable Food Registry 2009-2024

Number of ANIMAL FEED/PET FOOD
Primary Entries per Year




Percentage of ANIMAL FEED/PET FOOD
Primary RFR Entries by Hazard*



Known and Reasonably Foreseeable Hazards

- Under state and federal law, manufacturers are responsible for the safety of any feed they produce, even custom formula feeds.
- Formulation is an integral part of the “most likely to occur hazard,” from a national statistical standpoint.



**Why is there a need for
outreach and
education?**

Use of Unapproved Drugs

Feed manufacturers have reported receiving requests from nutritionists to add unapproved drugs into the feed, such as aspirin.



All drugs must be specifically approved for use in the species and class of animal by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Only those drugs specifically approved for use in feed may be added to feed, when used according to the limits in the approval by FDA.

Unapproved Use of Animal Drugs

All drugs and medicated feed must be used at the specific rate designated in the Code of Federal Regulations.

Off-label use of approved drugs and use of unapproved drugs may result in:

- Illegal residues in meat, milk, and eggs
- Toxicity or animal illness
- Ineffectiveness
- Loss of production

Unapproved Ingredients

In 2025, an ingredient not approved for use in lactating dairy cattle was illegally fed on farm to dairy cattle, resulting in decreased milk production and major economic loss to the farmer.

CDFA staff have had multiple conversations with various nutritionists/formulators that were unaware that an ingredient was not approved or safe for use in the diet.

“Innovative” Feed Additives

We are in an era of feed ingredient innovation and pressure to focus on environmental outputs.

Our program receives many inquiries from industry with interest in feeding a product that is not approved for use by U.S. FDA.

What could go wrong?

Every ingredient added to feed must also be approved for use by U.S. FDA or generally recognized as safe.

Use of an unapproved ingredient may result in animal illness, accumulation of contaminants in meat, milk, or eggs, or loss of production.

If the safety of an ingredient is UNKNOWN, then it is UNSAFE.

Real-life examples of formulations sent to feed manufacturers

An error in the level of Vitamin D at 10x the safe dosage, resulting in animal deaths.

Levels of medicated articles that result in a feeding rate that is not in accordance with the federal approved dosage level or intended use.

Levels of selenium in conflict with federal regulations which may result in toxicity or environmental contamination.

Formulas containing multiple substances and not balanced to provide the appropriate dosage of all.

Need for Outreach and Education: On-Farm Mixing

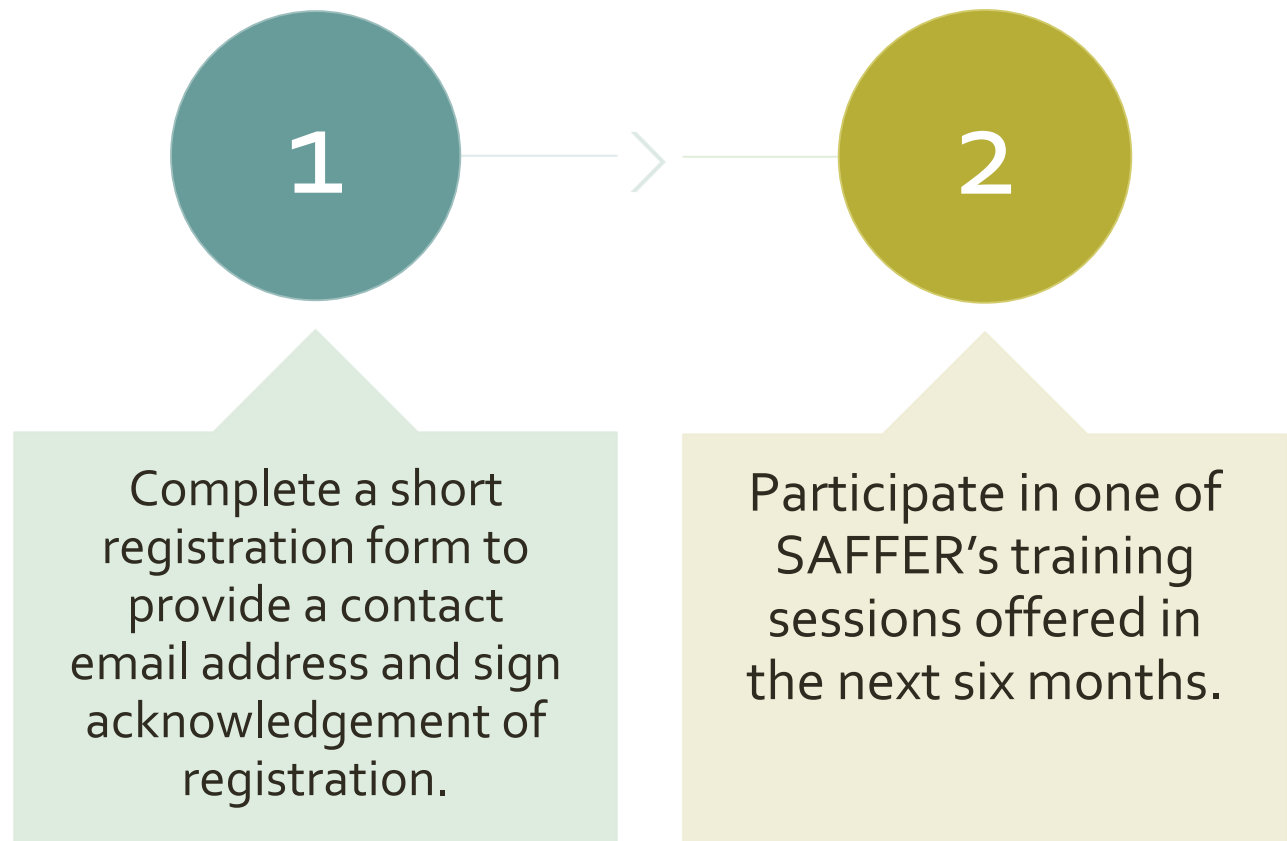
The examples we have shared were caught and prevented by the feed manufacturer's review and implementation of their Food Safety Plan.

Custom formulators also formulate feeds on farm that never go through a feed manufacturer.



Proposed Registration Process

Registration Process



SAFFER Acknowledgement Form

Safe Animal Feed Formulation Educational Registry Acknowledgement Form

Name: _____

Company Name (if applicable): _____

Email Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Please answer and initial the following statements:

I am an individual person that formulates livestock feed that is distributed within or into California and/or fed to livestock in California. Yes / No

If yes, I formulate feed for the following species of animals:

In the next 6 months, I will participate in SAFE's initial SAFFER training program to learn about applicable feed and food safety laws and regulations.

Initial _____

I understand that SAFFER is a voluntary educational program, and does not endorse my qualifications as a professional, or guarantee compliance with laws and regulations.

Initial _____

I understand that SAFE will use the above email address to provide important updates regarding feed and food safety notices, proposed law and regulation changes, and guidance materials.

Initial _____

I understand that I will need to annually renew my voluntary registration with SAFFER to continue participation.

Initial _____

Understanding all the above, I acknowledge my voluntary registration with SAFFER.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Annual Renewal

Confirm contact information and sign acknowledgement of registration annually to continue participation.

Proposed Educational Topics

Training materials will not be drafted until after feedback from the scoping session

Ingredients



Feed Ingredient Laws and Regulations



Pathways to Feed Ingredient Approval



Resources to Determine Ingredient Status

Regulated Substances

Medicated
Feed

Selenium

Non-Protein
Nitrogen

Insect Growth
Regulators

Methane
Reducing Feed
Additives

Others

Understanding Manufacturer / Guarantor Label Requirements

Basic Label Requirements for Commercial Feed

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graph TD; A[Basic Label Requirements for Commercial Feed] --> B[Adequate Directions for Use]; B --> C[Likely and Capable of Being Followed]; C --> D[Required Caution and Warning Statements];
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Adequate Directions for Use

Likely and Capable of Being Followed

Required Caution and Warning Statements

Timeline

Today's
Scoping
Session

2026

Additional scoping sessions may be held, depending on interest.

2027

SAFE will continue to work collaboratively with industry groups to spread awareness of the new program.

After reviewing feedback, SAFE will develop and finalize a program registration form, educational materials, training content and format.

SAFE will open registration and host the initial training sessions.



Q & A Session

Survey

Please scan this QR to take the survey

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