

In His Own Words

Anthony Bamber of RMC explains the concept of commodity claims, and how the service he offers to manage the process can lead to thousands of pounds being returned to compounders each year, with no upfront cost, confidentiality guaranteed, and little effort on their behalf.



“Every year thousands of pounds remain unclaimed from the major shippers and merchants for out of contract specs on certain imported commodities.

“When vessels enter the UK ports they are probed and samples taken from the holds to be independently tested by the likes of Salamon and Seaber and other labs to determine, amongst others, the protein, oil, fibre and moisture content and of the commodity in question. Once

the results have been obtained, they are sent to the shippers and then filtered down the line to merchants.

“This is not the same as on-site testing, which happens when vehicles arrive at the mills’ weighbridges and are sampled for testing prior to being tipped. It is a common misconception in the industry, but this is not the case with imported raw materials, unlike domestic wheat and barley etc. A recent company I dealt with were very surprised with what I did for them through a merchant who supplied them. They thought it was all on site testing in their own labs and doing NIR and wet chemistry tests on various raw materials. By all means, on site tests can happen for imported raw materials as well, but it is more important to go to shippers and ask for the independent results of analysis undertaken on samples taken in the ports.

“Not all raw materials have allowance claims available. In fact, these apply to only a handful of imported commodities like Hipro Soya, Sunflowers (whether lowpro or hipro), Distillers, Maize Gluten, Palm Kernel and Rapemeal. These all have contract specifications when it comes to the quality of the material. For example Hipro Soya, whether GM or Non GM, is generally sold at 49% profat / 3.5 fibre and, if the official analysis results do not match this, then claims can be made against it to match the quality which was specified and has been paid for.

“The GAFTA 109 agreement covers all the legalities of this arrangement with the shippers and the buyers at animal feed mills, whether the commodities are sold on as straights or used in the manufacture of animal feed. Every contract arranged with shippers and merchants comes under this agreement.

“The whole area of vessel analysis can be very tedious indeed, and at times very time-consuming, and it causes headaches when there are limited resources within some feed mills to continually monitor this area and request the relevant documentation. Some mills also are concerned about trying to claw back funds from the major shippers and have a slight fear of upsetting them. However, it is any customer’s right to get what was previously paid for, regardless of the price being paid. Using a Commodity Claims Management service such as I offer through RMC takes the tedious and time-consuming work out of the hands of very busy feed executives, while also making it more arms-length from the shippers. The service is no claim, no fee, so there is no risk involved – and I also manage every aspect

personally, so confidentiality is guaranteed.

“Even using 100 tonnes a month of Hipro Soya will yield good claims, although the more tonnage bought the higher potential for bigger returns. There are rarely any claims in my experience for the likes of distillers, pk, gluten and rapemeal. On the other hand, over the last couple of years Hipro Soya has had many different claims available ranging from 0.2% up to 2.5%. Taking an average of 1% claims on Hipro Soya, 1000 tonnes of this can return up to £3000. The same is true for 29% Sunflower which also has a history of allowance claims available; not so much the hipro suns although occasionally they do drop out of spec according to the official analysis documents.

“So, in short claims are available now for Hipro Soya and Sunflower. Remember this is all history regarding contracts that have been closed with your suppliers. Results are only issued once the contract or the DO is complete.

“Cargill issue monthly analysis statements which have all the necessary contract and analysis details to determine if any claims are applicable, although they do take some time to go through. It is essential that these documents do not get just filed away or disregarded as has sometimes been the case within the industry. All that is required is for a professional eye to go through each statement and do the necessary calculations to maximise returns if any are available

“Other shippers and merchants will not automatically send the relevant analysis certificates and it is the responsibility of the customer to request these for each load of all commodities purchased by them. Once received, which does not happen overnight, each one will need looking at and matching against the contract, and then the calculations can begin if required.

“This is where my service can come into play, if you are not doing this already, or if you have let things fall behind and get too frustrated with the whole process, or you simply do not understand the inner workings of it all.

“I have personally been doing this for 20 years and looking after a range of animal feed companies from large to small. If you think this is not relevant to you, my advice would be ‘Think again – funds are available so it’s better these should be in your pocket and not someone else’s’. One of my smaller clients thought it would be totally pointless given the amounts they buy from shippers, but he was proved wrong when certain commodities were way off the contract spec. Now, he just leaves me to deal with things as and when required. This applies even if you are only buying one load a month.

“I have made some good contacts throughout the whole industry in the last 20 years, with shippers and merchants and many mill traders, and all of my clients are happy with the whole service I provide to them. They know they are in safe hands and if there is only £1 to claim back then so be it, businesses can relax and know that the whole area of vessel analysis claims is being looked after. With no claim no fee, surely it will be a relief to those who are not actively doing this or have let things fall by the wayside.

“I do, of course, require certain details to get things underway and also aim to look at the previous 12 months and further to get things up to date and running effectively and efficiently. We have claimed back substantial sums for many animal feed companies throughout the UK and have a great base of references for the service.”

For further information regarding RMC’s service please call Anthony F Bamber directly on 07841 198733 or email at rmccommodityclaims@yahoo.co.uk