

MEDIA RELEASE

The Animal Feed Manufacturers Association (AFMA) Media & Industry Day underscores key priorities for sector resilience

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Feed industry plays pivotal role in South Africa's food security

AFMA hosted its first Media & Industry Day on 6 May 2025, offering a window into the organisation's strategic direction and its ongoing efforts to strengthen South Africa's feed and livestock value chains. Bringing together a wide range of stakeholders, including media, AFMA members, industry partners, and representatives from government, the day focused on the role of feed in food security and the practical steps AFMA is taking to ensure an efficient and competitive sector.

Reinforcing the link between feed and food

AFMA's Executive Director, Liesl Breytenbach, opened the Media and Industry Day by reinforcing AFMA's central role in the animal protein value chain, bridging the gap between grain and the consumer's plate. She underscored the importance of every stakeholder in the chain acting responsibly to ensure resilience, especially during challenges such as disease outbreaks.

Breytenbach emphasised AFMA's commitment to feed and food safety, support for vaccination strategies, and active participation in both local and international standard-setting forums. As she noted, "*Long gone are the days that the feed chain is separate from the food chain*" highlighting that collective progress requires united action.

AFMA's four strategic focus areas

The day provided an opportunity for AFMA to share updates on its four key focus areas, which underpin its work in supporting the broader animal protein value chain:

- Ensuring the consistent supply of sufficient and **affordable animal feed** for the production of meat, milk, eggs & fish.
- Using **innovative nutritional strategies** to produce nutritious animal feed in a responsible and sustainable way
- Promoting good manufacturing practices in the provision of **safe feed** to enhance **consumer confidence**.
- Supporting **training opportunities and skills development** in the animal feed industry

These areas guide AFMA's strategic interventions and serve as the blueprint for building a competitive, resilient, and sustainable animal feed sector.

Spotlight on feed affordability and soybean oilcake

Feed affordability is crucial not only for the feed industry but also for the entire animal protein sector. AFMA has placed particular focus on soybean oilcake, a vital raw material in animal feed. The industry has made notable progress in reducing reliance on imports through increased local crushing capacity, marking a significant step toward improving cost efficiency and supply stability. To further support this, AFMA is advocating for a review of the current soybean oilcake import tariff, aiming to ease cost pressures on feed manufacturers and downstream livestock producers. This forms part of a broader strategy to promote market stability, including

discussions around the listing of a soybean oilcake futures contract on the JSE, a move that could offer the sector improved price transparency.

Promoting self-regulation and food safety

The importance of self-regulation was reinforced. AFMA's Code of Conduct, which is mandatory for all its Full and Associate members, remains a key mechanism for maintaining trust and credibility in the sector. It sets out clear expectations for compliance with legal, ethical, and safety standards- including adherence to Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP), feed safety systems, and the ethical use of professional registered nutritionists. In recent years, the Code has evolved to include risk-based auditing principles, promote continuous improvement, and incorporate elements of international food safety. Through this approach, AFMA demonstrates that industry-led accountability can strengthen both public trust and regulatory outcomes.

Investing in skills: the Feed Mill Operator program

As part of its focus on industry capacity, AFMA emphasised the value of the Feed Mill Operator (FMO) Blended Learning Program, created to address the need for skilled operators in feed manufacturing. Skilled operators play a vital role in maintaining feed safety, quality, and efficiency. The program offers a combination of structured online theory and practical, on-site training at feed mills, making the workplace itself a training environment. It aims to upskill current staff while preparing new entrants for the operational demands of the industry.

From resilience to growth

AFMA Chairperson, Anina Hunter, brought the day to a close by emphasising the importance of building an enabling environment that supports long-term growth. *"We thrive in a challenging environment, but with the right partnerships, we can move from resilience to growth,"* she said. Hunter stressed that industry and government collaboration is essential to overcome persistent challenges such as infrastructure constraints, rising energy costs, and market volatility.

"If we want to feed a food-secure nation, we must invest in systems that work, and create the conditions where innovation, trust, and opportunity can thrive."

About AFMA

AFMA's vision is to be the dynamic animal feed thought leader influencing food security through partnerships with all stakeholders. AFMA is the official representative of the formal animal feed manufacturing industry in South Africa, accounting for approximately 58% of national feed production. It plays a central role in regulatory development, feed safety oversight and training with a focus on creating a feed sector that is safe, smart, and sustainable.

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