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By Aerin Einstein-Curtis, 09-Feb-2017

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Nor-Feed plans to bring plant-based, antibiotic alternatives to the US market, says company CEO.

The French company had not previously focused on expansion into the US market, said Olivier Clech, CEO.

"Nor-Feed is still a small company so we have to focus commercially on some territories more than others," he told us at last week's International Processing and Packaging Expo (IPPE).

However, developments within animal production systems in the US and increased focus by multiple companies on shifting away from antibiotic use have generated more interest, he said.

Currently, the company is taking part in the **Agri NEST** program to support its expansion into the US market, said Clech. That sees the company's business development manager, Lucie Ozenne, in the US for the next year.

"We have the ambition to create a few Nor-Feed [branches]" said Clech. *"Not to cover the world, but to make the Nor-Feed flag be visible."*

US expansion

Market pull away from the use of antibiotics in animal production has been one of the factors that led the company to reconsider efforts in the US, said Clech.

"Unlike Europe, where it was a regulatory driven change ten years ago, here it's a market-pulled change," he said.

The company is in meetings with multiple groups ranging from direct inclusion in products, to research trials or work with distributors.

The company is looking at opportunities in the poultry and swine production sectors along with a focus on certain aquaculture species and ruminants, he said.

"Using these saponins you can target the protozoa in the rumen of the animal and you can reduce the production of methane," he said. That reduction offers both an environmental benefit and improves feed efficiency, he added.

Research and development

Several of the company's plant-based products are already considered generally recognized as safe (GRAS) by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), said Clech. However, the company has had to compile a dossier for its grape-based product before it can be approved for use.

"It's unfortunate that it's not approved in the US," he said. *"Everyone is drinking grape, eating grape but you cannot feed your pigs some grape extract."*

Its grape based extract has **recently been authorized in the EU** as a botanical sensory additive for use in animal nutrition.

"We think at least a significant part of what we developed for Europe, and the rest of the world, is relevant for the US," he said.

Asian development

The company has recently set up a joint venture in Vietnam, said Clech. There is a long history of using plants in feed, food and medicine in that country and neighboring markets, he said. *"We've already identified a few plants that grow there that will be of interest to us, so it will not only be a commercial venture, it will be a product development venture,"* he added.

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