Reflections on the Danish soy dialogue in DIEH (Danish Ethical Trading Initiative)

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A brief history of the Danish soy dialogue

• The initiative came into existence after a prolonged period of slow and random dialogue among the main stakeholders

• Members: Retailers, brand owners, NGO’s, Animal feed companies, Ministry of Environment and Food

• Agenda: information about the sustainability challenges in the soy commodity chain, foreign experiences (from retailers, NGO’s, ethical trade initiatives, specialists), dialogue about policies and targets
A real dilemma

- Intake of salt
- Pesticide residues
- Climate change
- Responsible sourcing
- Pro-biotics
- Diabetes
- Water-footprint
- Unequality in health
- Obesity
- Global responsibility
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Sustainable soy and palm oil

- Health claims
- Misleading product information
- Nutritional information
- Hygiene
- Well-being
- GMO’s
- Co-creation
- Animal welfare
- Endocrine disruptors
- Products for singles
- Recycling
- Fairtrade
- Dietary guidelines
- Grass fed
- Aid through trade
- Gluten-related disorders
- Transparency
- Chain responsibility
- Unwanted chemicals
- Organics
- Poverty
- Health
- Food safety
- Food education
- Antimicrobial resistance
- Charity
- Equal distribution of profits

Support local communities
Allergens
Privacy
Whole grain
Anti-corruption
Teach children how to cook
Child labour
Health

Teach children how to cook

Aid through trade
A real dilemma

Soy is:
- Not present in the final product
- Unknown to many consumers
- Legally grown, exported, and used
- A real agro-commodity with all the benefits (and risks)
- Even local products are based on imported soy feed

A battle between legality and legitimacy!
The dilemma

• Consumers expect us to handle all concerns regarding products we sell
• Value chains are global – even "local" products are based on imported raw materials
• Our traditional approach (CoC’s, PQR’s, audits) does not necessarily address the use of ingredients in feed...

• Awareness of the effects of agricultural practices in South America is low
• But awareness of whether supermarkets take responsibility is considerably higher...

• Supermarkets are thus the natural targets of NGO’s, journalists, and consumers who want to raise awareness about (questionable) agricultural practices
• How should we react to the pressure?
What we have done

1. Joined the DIEH Soy Dialogue group
2. Developed Danish conversion factors for calculating the use
3. Mapped the total direct and indirect use of soy in own brand products
   - Thresholds?
   - Only 2% direct use
4. Joined RTRS
5. Asked suppliers about soy policy
   - Traceability?
   - Certifications?
   - Credits?
   - Targets?
6. Deforestation policy
   - Legal and transparent
   - Not linked to deforestation
   - Not linked to conversion of native vegetation
7. Next steps?
Some reflections

- Soy is a very valuable commodity with a great combination of proteins for human and animal consumption – it will be hard to replace!
- There are problematic practices in the primary production: deforestation, heavy pesticide exposure, violation of human rights, large monocultures...
- Practices are (mostly) legal, though local enforcement are not always top notch...
- We need to find ways to address responsibility in global commodity chains, but without imposing requirements we cannot check!
- Certification schemes like RTRS and Pro Terra is a help towards achieving higher standards, traceability, and better enforcement

The Danish soy dialogue:

- A civilized battleground about legitimacy of the present soy production and import
- A valuable platform for cross-sector dialogue
- A source for inspiration and information
- A way of keeping the subject alive...
- An excuse for not acting?