**Association des Amidonneries
de Céréales de l'Union Européenne**

# AAC statement on food safety management systems

The AAC is committed to take all necessary measures to ensure that the food / feed ingredients and additives provided to its customers are of the appropriate quality (including food / feed safety) for their intended use.

In particular, as regards food / feed safety, the AAC has an important role to play in the global food / feed safety approach "from farm to fork" as defined in the white paper on food safety and further defined in the "food law" regulation 178/2002/ EC.

Since 2000 the General Food Safety Initiative, strongly supported by retailers under the umbrella of CIES (the food business forum), has decided to put emphasis on certification of food safety schemes (to be applied throughout the food chain); it has published guidelines updated in 2003 notably for developing food safety schemes and to provide guidance on how to seek compliance and develop compliant standards. Already four national standards (namely BRC technical standard, IFS, EFSIS and HACCP Netherlands) have been published on the basis of these guidelines and considered to be compliant by GFSI. These standards have been developed independently and inevitably competition between them developed.

The lack of systematic mutual recognition between the four existing standards (and others may come), the increasing number of countries involved, the possible choice of a different standard by different retailers in the same country lead to a complex situation for suppliers operating on the worldwide market: this situation entails demands of certification to several standards for suppliers of retailers' own brand products who, in turn, ask the same to their ingredient and additives suppliers such as the European starch industry.

The AAC is operating in the world market and, as such, needs a coherent approach of food safety management. Overlapping requirements from different standards, together with the increasing demand for audits from individual suppliers will not reinforce food safety and will only bring due costs for businesses. Mutual recognition of food safety standards should therefore become the rule.

Moreover ISO is developing an international standard on food safety management systems (ISO 22000) foreseen to become available by the end of 2004. The AAC is in favour of the involvement of the whole food chain, taking into account existing guidelines, in the development of this standard; in the medium term it should become the internationally accepted and recognised umbrella for food safety management.

December 2003