

NEWSLETTER 03/2017

Dear VERA stakeholder,

Another four months were filled with intensive work for the International VERA Secretariat, the International VERA Board and the VERA expert groups. Read more about the latest news and developments:

International VERA Board

First positive reactions of new VERA countries

As already mentioned in our last newsletter in June, the door is now open for new European member countries. Gabriele Wechsung, German member of the Board, presented VERA within the framework of the Task Force on Reactive Nitrogen workshop in Aarhus, Denmark on 29 June 2017 to internationally spread information on the cooperation.

Subsequently, the International VERA Secretariat has sent official invitation letters with all necessary documents to the relevant ministries of agriculture and/or environment of various European countries using their network. We have already received some very positive and promising feedback. They will be invited to join one of the next VERA Board meetings.

Reaching out for a potential cooperation with EU-ETV

During the next meeting in December we might get the chance to discuss a possible cooperation between VERA and the European ETV system (<https://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecoap/etv/>) together with the European Commission. First contacts have been made during the EU-ETV stakeholder meeting in Brussels 28 September.

Interested in becoming a new member? - Contact us at info@vera-verification.eu!

Expert Activities

The revision work on all VERA test protocols is still in full swing in order to update these document to the latest state-of-the-art.

Land application: The expert group came together on 03 September 2017 within the framework of the RAMIRAN Conference in Wexford, Ireland, to discuss the last amendments and supplements for the revision of the test protocol 'land applied manure'. Currently, the some adaptations are elaborated which the International VERA Secretariat will include in a final document for later approval by the expert group.

Air cleaners: After a successful "VERA Stakeholder meeting" in 2009 before the publication of the last version of the test protocol, another meeting of that kind was held 26 October 2017 in Hanover in order to present and further optimize the revision of the VERA test protocol on air cleaners both The audience was composed by representatives of test laboratories and manufacturers, mainly from the VERA member countries Germany, Denmark and the Netherlands. Fruitful discussions followed the presentations of the new VERA verification process by Iris Beckert and of the main technical amendments in the revised VERA test protocol, presented by Roland Melse, member of

the VERA expert group. After adding the last comments and the final approval by the international experts, the VERA test protocol will soon be ready for publication.

Housing systems: Some minor editorial alignments in the revised version of the test protocol still need to be completed. The new version will be published on the VERA website.

Odour Workshop: 25 October 2017 VERA hosted a VERA Odour Workshop together with specialized experts on odour from research as well as from test institutes. As the measurement of odour holds ready some challenges, the aim was an intensive exchange of experiences and results of the latest research and new measurement methods to find the best suitable solution for each application. The recommendations of this workshop will be shared and discussed in the VERA expert groups now.

Audits

In summer 2017 the International VERA Secretariat performed an on-site audits in a test laboratory in the Netherlands. In addition, a test institute in Austria was visited to provide consultancy on the requirements for performing a VERA test.

Trade fairs, meetings and conferences

“Öko-Feldtage” (Organic Field Days)

The 1st organic field days from 21 – 22 June at the Hessische Staatsdomäne Frankenhäusen, Germany, offered a platform for the exchange of ideas between conventional and organic farmers. The VERA stand was well-situated in the fair special on ‘manure separation’. Despite the wet weather good conversations and sharing of ideas was possible.

RAMIRAN Conference

From 04 - 06 September VERA and especially the revision of the VERA test protocol "Land application" was presented by Sven G. Sommer, one of our Danish VERA experts for land applied manure, to a broad audience of scientists, authority representatives and other stakeholders within the framework of the 17th international RAMIRAN conference in Wexford, Ireland.

The targeted extension of the VERA cooperation to other EU member countries was also emphasized. During the final summary of the conference, VERA was again mentioned as a system for the standardisation of test methods and conditions and as a reference method according to BAT.

BTU Conference

At this year's "BTU conference on building construction, technology and environment" from 18 - 20 September at the University of Hohenheim, Stuttgart, Germany, VERA and especially the revision of the test protocol "housing systems" was presented in a poster and brief oral presentation. The implementation of new measurement methods for emission reduction in naturally ventilated cattle houses was received well by the audience as this is a frequent item in current research studies.

250 participants from research, administration, associations, education and consultants as well as manufacturers discussed latest research results and developments in the field of animal-friendly husbandry of cattle, pigs and poultry as well as on emission reduction.

Dutch VERA Stakeholder Meeting for cattle floor producers

In cooperation with the Rijksdienst voor Ondernemend Nederland (RVO) a day of action on the testing of cattle floors took place in Utrecht on 26 September 2017. 30 representatives of Dutch manufacturers of cattle floors and test laboratories attended the meeting to learn and discuss about the national Dutch regulations and on the approval procedure for the listing of floors on the RAV list. The afternoon was reserved for discussing VERA and its new verification process as well as the amendments of the revised VERA test protocol and their impacts on the testing of cattle floors which were presented by Julio Mosquera being a Dutch representative in the international VERA expert commission "Housing systems".

EU-ETV Stakeholder Meeting

On 28 September 2017 the responsible project leaders for EU-ETV hosted a stakeholder meeting at the premises of the EU Commission in Brussels, Belgium. As a potential cooperation of the VERA initiative with EU-ETV could be fruitful the VERA idea, Iris Beckert in her role as Head of the International VERA Board, participated in this meeting, where the current status of the evaluation of the pilot phase of EU-ETV was presented and discussed. Find all the presentations here: https://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecoap/etv/news/3rd-etv-stakeholder-forum_en

Upcoming events

The autumn 2017 holds ready trade fairs and conferences where the International VERA Secretariat will be present. We are looking forward to seeing you there!

AGRITECHNICA

From **12 – 18 November** VERA will be an official exhibitor at AGRITECHNICA, the world's leading trade fair for agricultural machinery and equipment at the trade fair grounds of Hanover, Germany. You will find us in **hall 21, stand C31d** - directly at the stand of the German Federal Ministry for Food and Agriculture (BMEL). <https://www.agritechnica.com/en/>

ManuREsource with 2 VERA Workshops

The 3rd edition of the ManuREsource conference from 27 - 28 November 2017 in Eindhoven, The Netherlands, focuses on recycling economy topics in the agricultural sector with regard to an optimized manure management. <http://www.manuresource2017.org/>

On the second conference day, **28 November 2017**, we will have the opportunity to present and discuss VERA during two one-hour workshops. Besides the contents and targets of the VERA cooperation in general, the focus will lie on the current revision of the VERA test protocol "Slurry separation", which provides a concrete measure in optimizing manure management.

In the meantime, we are happy to answer any questions regarding VERA you might have.

Kind regards

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About VERA

VERA is a multinational collaboration between Denmark, the Netherlands and Germany for testing and verifying environmental technologies within the agricultural sector. It includes test protocols for the following technologies for:

- ✓ air cleaning
- ✓ livestock housing and management
- ✓ slurry separation
- ✓ land applied manure
- ✓ mitigation systems for stored manure.

Beside farmers and authorities also manufacturers of such technologies benefit of this collaboration with regards to approval processes. Manufacturers get the possibility to have their technologies tested by a neutral and recognised test. The VERA test protocols were developed by well-known experts of the participating countries and guests. They provide comparable and substantiated results with a high level of acceptance. A VERA Verification Statement confirms that the technology was tested by a competent test laboratory according to the requirements of the relevant VERA protocol. The results allow to derive efficiency levels which can be considered with regards to emission evaluations, e. g. in approval processes. The authorities receive secured data which at the same time supports the farmer when planning new investments. The manufacturer bears all costs for the test; costs for the evaluation and issuing of the verification statement will be covered by the responsible national ministries via the VERA Secretariat.