

NEWSLETTER 02/2018

Dear VERA stakeholder,

The International VERA Secretariat is now speeding up to finalise the priorities set by the VERA Board and prepare a smooth transfer to the Netherlands at the end of September. The first revised VERA test protocols are now being published. Furthermore, the extension of our collaboration with new countries and closer collaboration with the EU Commission are in full swing. Here is some of the important news:

- **VERA test protocols ‘Covers’ and ‘Slurry Separation’ start the series of revisions**
- **German versions of the revised VERA test protocols planned**
- **VERA Glossary with German translations and List of Abbreviations available**
- **2nd Workshop of ‘bioaerosols’ task force in Berlin**
- **1st VERA Board meeting with potential new members**
- **Meeting with the EU Commission on EU ETV in Brussels**
- **VERA Session at AgEng in Wageningen**

VERA test protocols

VERA test protocols ‘Covers’ and ‘Slurry Separation’ start the series of revisions

In the last few years, all the VERA test protocols have been under revision to reflect the latest state-of-the-art. The new documents were discussed and reworked in several VERA Committee meetings, telephone conferences and emails with the respective VERA experts.

We are proud to publish the first two revised VERA test protocols of this revisions series:

- **‘Covers and other Mitigation Technologies for Stored Manure’** – Version 3:2018-07
- **‘Slurry Separation Technologies’** – Version 3:2018-07.

The amendments of the revised versions are part of the document and can also be found in the respective news articles on our website.

Status of revision of the other VERA test protocols

- The protocol **‘Housing and Management Systems’** has just been sent back by our professional proofreader located in the UK and is being optimised by our layout expert. After official approval by the VERA Board, it will be published on the website. As a sneak preview, you can download one of the presentations on the amendments.
- The protocol **‘Air Cleaning Systems’** just needs agreement on one final detail. We hope to start the publication process in August and assure its publication before the transfer in September.
- The last of our VERA test protocols for **‘Land Applied Manure’** still needs some more details to be defined. In addition to the already permitted test design based on the micrometeorological mass balance technique, the wind tunnel method will be described in the VERA protocol in the future.

German versions of the revised VERA test protocols planned

German versions of these documents are already being prepared. Some only need approval by the German experts for publication, which is expected to be in September this year.

Many thanks again to our VERA experts for all their effort and their excellent job!

Website

VERA Glossary with German translations and List of Abbreviations available

Using defined terms helps to understand each other better. As a helpful tool and a valuable 'by-product' of our revisions of the VERA test protocols, we have summarised all the terms and definitions in these documents and the abbreviations in two new files.

Expert activities

2nd Workshop of 'bioaerosols' task force in Berlin

One year after the first workshop on bioaerosols, the VERA working group for bioaerosols met again in Berlin on 17 May 2018. The one-day workshop provided an opportunity to share the latest results on studies conducted in Germany and the Netherlands as well as to discuss the holistic literature research carried out by Marcus Clauss. The participants included experts from an environmental (emission) background as well as those with a focus on aspects of occupational and residential health (immission).

Despite the high political importance, there are very few regulations in the member countries in this regard. To compare the performance of a technology in terms of bioaerosols, unanswered questions about the correct measurement methods and test parameters still remain. Should the bacteria count, the total cell count (where several VDI guidelines already exist) or endotoxins be investigated? To date, a dose-response relationship has only been proven for endotoxins. According to the group, it is still too early to integrate bioaerosol measurements into a VERA test protocol. More research, especially field studies on emissions, is required in addition to aiming for a more extensive exchange between experts, which could be a valuable topic for a COSTaction in the future.

Moreover, several consultations on new VERA verifications have been conducted.

Expanding the VERA cooperation

1st VERA Board meeting with potential new members

The VERA Board meeting on 7/8 May 2018 was the first with two potential new members: the Belgian Flanders region and Switzerland. The afternoon of 7 May 2018 was reserved for the existing group of VERA Board members to discuss some unanswered questions regarding ongoing projects and verifications. The second day included an exchange on current VERA activities, the status of ETV and its potential options for VERA, as well as discussions on the future strategy of VERA. During the day, the representatives of the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment and the Belgian ILVO had the opportunity to get to know the work of the VERA Board first-hand as well as to learn more about our collaboration and future targets. After the meeting, they intend to report on their experience and then decide on further steps. We will inform you when they have officially joined the VERA initiative.

Meeting with the EU Commission on EU ETV in Brussels

In a personal meeting between VERA and the contact person of the DG for EU ETV in June in Brussels, the status of the two programmes was shared and specific questions were raised and discussed. The DG now has a relatively clear idea about the future of EU ETV. At this stage, there seems to be a realistic chance and benefits of adding VERA to ETV or at least collaborating more

intensively. Even though the aim of supporting regulatory needs under ETV is not as strongly linked as in VERA and the aspect of harmonisation in terms of defining common requirements and test procedures will probably not be covered by ETV, there could still be ways to use a collaboration and improve the efficiency in running verifications. In August, the VERA Board will decide on the future strategy in terms of EU ETV.

Conferences

VERA Session at AgEng in Wageningen

During the International Conference on Agricultural Engineering (AgEng) in Wageningen, VERA was given the opportunity on 17 July 2018 to run a 90-minute session about the status of VERA with regard to organisational and technical aspects. After an introduction by Iris Beckert to the newest developments within VERA, our VERA expert Julio Mosquera gave an overview of all the amendments made in the revised VERA test protocols.

As usual, the latest news will be published in the news sections of our website first, which is another reason to check out our website regularly!

The next and final newsletter before the transfer of the International VERA Secretariat will follow in September.

Kind regards

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About VERA

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

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

As well as farmers and authorities, manufacturers of such technologies also benefit from this collaboration with regard to approval processes. Manufacturers can get their technologies tested by a neutral and recognised test. The VERA test protocols were developed by well-known experts in the participating countries and other collaborators. 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 in accordance with the requirements of the relevant VERA protocol. The results allow for the determining of efficiency levels with regard to emission evaluations, e. g. in approval processes. The authorities receive secure data that, 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.