

NEWSLETTER 03/2018

Dear VERA stakeholder,

Time to say goodbye and thank you!

With this newsletter, the International VERA Secretariat located in Germany bids you farewell. From 1 October, the Dutch organisation NEN will take over VERA's organisational tasks and responsibilities and will be your new contact for any matters regarding VERA.

It has been four exciting years together with you, with many different common activities – ranging from technical-scientific aspects when revising and presenting the VERA test protocols or accompanying applications, gaining insight into national and European political approaches towards different processes, and establishing a quality management system for VERA to discovering the fun of moderating groups seeking the best possible solutions as well as creating and maintaining a website.

VERA truly has a strong network, with excellent people in all its groups – YOU! It was a great pleasure and honour for me to work with all of you!

Together, we have added to VERA's vision of professionalising our VERA system, both in an organisational regard, e.g. when publishing the General VERA Guidelines, and in a technical regard, e.g. when revising the VERA test protocols so as to reflect the latest state-of-the-art. In a variety of communication activities, VERA's importance and level of awareness has been increased, including tackling a more European route to verification.

Many thanks again for all your effort and input into achieving all of this!

Before I finally say goodbye, I will gladly inform you, as usual, of the activities that have been accomplished in previous months, including the following important news:

- **Two German versions of VERA test protocols available**
- **VERA Glossary includes now English-German and German-English definitions**
- **VERA test protocols 'Housing Systems' and 'Air cleaners' go live any day now**
- **DLG TestService GmbH authorised as German Verification Body by the VERA Board**
- **VERA Board decides on a strategy for collaborating with EU-ETV**
- **Flanders signs VERA rules to become an official VERA member**
- **Transfer of the International VERA Secretariat to the Dutch NEN**

VERA test protocols

Two German versions of VERA test protocols available

German versions of the VERA test protocols have frequently been requested. Now, with the revisions finalised, we have started with the translation of the newly revised VERA test protocols.

The test protocol 'Slurry Separation Technologies – Version 3:2018-07' and the protocol for 'Covers and other Mitigation Technologies Reduction of Gaseous Emissions from Stored Manure – Version 3:2018-07' have just been published. For the convenience of our German stakeholders, it is available for free download on our sub-page 'test protocols', as for the English versions.

The German versions for 'Housing' and 'Air Cleaners' are on their way and already in the process of laying out.

VERA Glossary includes now English-German and German-English definitions

The VERA Glossary summarises all terms and definitions of the VERA test protocols. Based on the new German translations, the VERA Glossary was updated and contains now the glossary both in English-German and German-English with the relevant definitions in both languages. It is available on our website.

VERA test protocols 'Housing Systems' and 'Air cleaners' will go live any day now

After some very recent political discussions on odour measurements, the VERA Board has decided to approve probably the two most popular and most eagerly awaited revisions of VERA test protocols. With the last official approval letter, they can go live any day now and will be made available for free download on our sub-page 'test protocols'.

VERA test protocol 'Housing Systems'

After four busy years with six official meetings in person, involving up to 15 international experts from six different European countries, the VERA test protocol 'Housing Systems' has been thoroughly revised to reflect the latest state-of-the-art. For users' convenience, it comes with an Excel spreadsheet that provides detailed equations for the calculation of the emissions when using tracer gas measurements.

As dairy farms are coming into focus in terms of ammonia emissions, the challenge of measuring in naturally ventilated animal houses shows up more frequently, and several VERA verification processes are targeting this application area. At several scientific conferences last year, the presentation of this work repeatedly caught the interest of the auditoriums.

VERA test protocol 'Air Cleaners'

Of all the emission reducing technologies in agriculture, air cleaners are probably the most regulated in the different countries, a situation that posed a particular challenge for achieving common agreement during the revision of this VERA test protocol. In this regard, the task here was to formulate a test protocol with measurements that would fit the requirements of all three countries and reflect the latest state-of-the-art.

The new document indicates the requirements and recommendations much more precisely, especially with regard to the description of sampling and testing certain parameters, in addition to providing a more detailed description of data treatment and calculation of different parameters, such as emissions and N balances.

VERA Board activities

DLG TestService GmbH authorised as the German Verification Body by the VERA Board

Exactly one year after the authorisation of the Danish ETA Danmark A/S as the very first VERA Verification Body, a VERA Verification Body has been authorised by the VERA Board in Germany: the DLG TestService GmbH.

The DLG group has a long history in testing and certifying agricultural equipment, in addition to a long history with VERA. In this sense, from the very beginning of VERA, DLG staff have been involved in several VERA expert groups. Today, the DLG is also involved in performing VERA tests as a test institute and has been involved in the tasks of the international VERA Secretariat over the last four years. The DLG TestService GmbH has indicated that the VERA Verification Body will be strictly separate from the testing activities by employing staff from different departments for testing and verification.

Furthermore, it aims to extend the scope of its ISO 17020 accreditation, with which its impartiality and independency can also be proven.

Apart from the International VERA Secretariat and ETA Danmark, DLG TestService GmbH can perform VERA verifications from now on, meaning that applicants now have the choice of these three institutions.

The VERA Board decides on a strategy for a potential collaboration with EU-ETV

Based on the latest information on EU-ETV, the VERA Board has discussed the different options and the future strategy for VERA in relation to EU-ETV.

The VERA Board assumes that EU-ETV provides a promising possibility for the further development of the VERA scheme. It would be valuable to be included in a large programme like ETV, and it is a good sign that ETV will be continued and is open for including VERA in its activities. However, the aspect of harmonisation is central for VERA and should remain.

Therefore, our approach is to split current VERA activities in the future:

- All verification activities could go via the EU-ETV structure as soon as the VERA test protocols are accepted for ETV verification. A manufacturer would subsequently apply for an ETV verification process based on a VERA test protocol.
- The harmonisation activities, like the revision or creation of VERA test protocols or adding new parameters, would remain within our VERA system.

Thus, the verifications could be further professionalised while still maintaining our standardising activities. For the moment, we have to wait for the acceptance of our test protocols by ETV and for the final decision on EU-ETV in the EU parliament, probably in spring/summer of 2019.

Flanders signs VERA rules to become an official VERA member

We are delighted that Flanders is now the first additional country to join the VERA initiative and expand it the cooperation within Europe!

For becoming a VERA member, it is necessary to sign the 'Rights and obligations of VERA member countries'. A VERA member agrees to the general aim of the cooperation, the processes in terms of verification and harmonisation of test procedures laid down in the General VERA Guidelines as well as accepts VERA verifications as one of the options to facilitate a national approval of environmental technologies. On the other hand, it has a right to vote and subsequently, participate actively in the process of developing VERA and steer its strategy.

Flanders represented by ILVO has now signed these documents. After the official confirmation of Flanders acceptance by the VERA Board, they can start helping shape VERA. We are looking forward to collaborating more with Flanders in the future!

Transfer of the IVS

NEN takes over the IVS

Since the beginning of the collaboration, the agreement has been that the management of the international secretariat will rotate between the countries every four years. Therefore, from 1 October 2018, the Netherlands will take over international responsibilities. Financed by the Dutch Ministry of Environment and Infrastructure, the tasks will be taken over by the NEN. Your new contact will probably be Caroline van Hoek – welcome to VERA, Caroline!

We wish her all the best in this new role and are confident that she will tackle the challenges the future holds for VERA!

All the best! Goodbye! Farwell! Vaarwel, and 'Auf Wiedersehen'!

Kind regards,

Iris Beckert

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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, whereas costs for the evaluation and issuing of the verification statement will be covered by the responsible national ministries via the VERA Secretariat.