



# A HELPING HAND

To ensure public health, rules and regulations for food contact materials are becoming ever more complex and strict. Netherlands-based Viaware B.V. addresses these challenges by providing FOCOS®, a web-based tool supporting food contact compliance work and communication in the supply chain, as well as consultancy and IT services. Elisabeth Skoda spoke to Wim Jansen, the company's sales and account manager, to find out more.

Viaware was founded in the Netherlands in 2013 as a joint venture between two companies with over 20 years of experience in both plastics and IT. The objective was and still is to deliver IT solutions to the plastics industry.

The company offers a range of services around food contact compliance, as Mr Jansen explains: "With FOCOS and our supporting services, we focus on food contact materials. Next to the implementation of FOCOS, we provide training, workshop and information sessions. We advise our customers on testing strategies and food contact materials in general.

"Furthermore, we offer food contact related IT solutions, helping organisations to handle food contact subjects. For example, last year we helped a group of plastic and packaging federations develop a web based compliance tool that helps users to calculate exposure assessment of NIAS and non-listed substances. The tool is free of charge and can be found at [www.matrixcalculation.eu](http://www.matrixcalculation.eu)"

## Compliance made easier with FOCOS®

The combination of broad knowledge about food contact materials, legislation and IT resulted in the development of FOCOS®, a web-based tool that supports food contact compliance work and communication in the plastics supply chain. A great deal of work has been put into Viaware's dedicated food contact software product.

"FOCOS is a secure web based tool that allows users to access their food contact related data and documents from remote locations. It enables them to manage compositional information for raw materials, create and communicate customised Documents of Compliance or documents with adequate information, perform calculations and manage supporting documents. FOCOS provides a structure that helps users to understand food contact legislation and to fulfill their legal obligations," Mr Jansen says.

In recent months, FOCOS® has continuously been updated to offer more functionality, incorporating customer feedback. "We offer FOCOS as a cloud solution for two reasons. First of all, we want to continuously deliver new features to our users. A cloud environment gives us the opportunity to release new versions whenever we want. Second, we want to make FOCOS available to all companies in the food contact materials supply chain, including medium and small sized companies. Users must be able to easily communicate with each other.

"With our knowledge and experience we help customers with the implementation of FOCOS. Last year we introduced an implementation pack which includes four days of consultancy as well as a full year FOCOS License. This approach has proven to be a very efficient way to fully implement FOCOS and create food contact awareness within an organization. Food contact gets more embedded within the entire organization and not just within the quality and legal department. Implementation of FOCOS should be seen as a strategic choice."

According to Mr Jansen, retention of knowledge is another key advantage of FOCOS. "All food contact related information is stored in FOCOS and therefore embedded in the company. An organization that uses FOCOS will be less vulnerable to key employees that are leaving the company." ▷







### Supply chain demands

“There is increasing pressure from the food industry to get complete and correct information. It maximizes the level of security, in order to minimize the risk of reputational damage. After all, if anything happens in relation to food or food contact it might damage a food company’s reputation and brand. We are talking to companies in the food industry, to see how they can be involved in and benefit from our platform of data sharing.

“As a result of the publication of new guidance documents by the EU in 2013 and 2014, awareness in the market is growing rapidly.

The demand for food contact compliance knowledge is increasing because small and medium sized companies often do not have access to the appropriate knowledge. FOCOS helps them to increase the level of knowledge on food contact compliance in a structured way.”



### Showcasing strengths

“Viaware promotes its solutions at trade shows in the Netherlands and at international seminars and conferences. Every month we organise workshops on food contact legislation and FOCOS® in the Netherlands and Belgium, free of charge.

On request, we also provide demonstrations, presentations and workshops for a group of companies or for companies in other countries. In 2015 we want to further increase our visibility in the market by attending and visiting conferences and trade fairs. We want to get people acquainted with the opportunities of data sharing within FOCOS, Mr Jansen says.

### A winning combination

Viaware takes pride in being a reliable partner for its customers. “We offer a winning combination of IT solutions and food contact material knowledge. We know what we are talking about and we do not make any false promises,” Mr Jansen is happy to report.

He goes on to tell us that companies appreciate the fact that Viaware is a great help in an environment where users in the supply chain are increasingly confronted with questions from the food industry.

FOCOS consists of four key elements: data management, compliance assessment, communication and change management. “With data management a FOCOS user is forced to review all available supplier information. Data from suppliers about raw materials and product information is registered in a structured way. If a user has access to all necessary information on its raw materials and product composition, he can prove that he is compliant to legislation on food contact materials by performing compliance assessment in FOCOS.”

“Probably the most important element of FOCOS is communication. While entering raw material information in FOCOS you can directly send your supplier a request for information and do the follow up. Secondly, generation and communication of a well-structured Document of Compliance is one of the key features of FOCOS. Use the change management capabilities in FOCOS to remain in control of your raw materials, products and compliance work.”

Viaware’s main focus is on European legislation, but the company also keeps up with demand from companies exporting to diverse countries such as the US and China. FOCOS® offers the possibility to register and manage legislation from all over the world in a so-called non-listed section. Work continues to further improve and expand FOCOS® in particular and Viaware in general.

### Future expectations

“With FOCOS, we will work hard to improve functionality, offer multi-language support and communication within the supply chain, add migration modeling capabilities and connect FOCOS to other systems. With Viaware we are looking at expanding to other countries through partners, and sell our software within countries and regions such as the UK, Italy, Spain, Portugal, France, Germany and Scandinavia,” Mr Jansen adds.

He sees great potential for the future, thanks to the combination of data warehousing, migration modeling, screening methods and exposure calculation, based on the effective data from the FOCOS® user’s supply chain.

“FOCOS will increasingly become a total solution for compliance assessment in food contact. The combination of a big data warehouse and integration of available assessment tools is a key success factor. With FOCOS the members of the food contact supply chain can easily exchange compositional information in order to save costs on compliance assessment and screening of listed, non-listed substances and even NIAS.” □

Visit: [www.focos.eu](http://www.focos.eu)

# FOCOS®

FOOD CONTACT SOFTWARE

*A tool to support food contact compliance work within the plastics supply chain*

Data management

Communication

Supply Chain

Raw materials

Plastics

Worst case calculation

**Food contact  
Change management**

Timesaver

Supporting documents

Products

**Compliance work**

Up-to-date

Cloud

**Software**

DoC

Legislation

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