Biosecurity inside the chicken –

a new view of maintaining health in chicken flocks with little use of antibiotics.

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Introduction

One of the classic tools to maintain or restore the health of livestock was and still is biosecurity. If antibiotic reduction has to be achieved, it is logical to look at the defences already available to the bird as well, biosecurity at gut level. Previous studies have shown Bacillus subtilis (B.s.) PB6 to have a beneficial effect intestinal health making hens potentially more resistant to pathobionts. The present studies aimed to compare a research trial setting with a trial run in a commercial farm using a similar setup. The two trials were aimed at comparing results to show scientific proof of improved health and in parallel prove the economic viability of the solution.

Layer research trial design

80 old laying hens (64 – 73 weeks)
3 random groups
Fed 0 / 0.5 / 1kg of the Bacillus subtilis PB6 additive (2x10⁸ CFU/g)
Parameters: egg production, weight, mass, eggshell weight and thickness bone mineralisation, gut microbiota, gut morphology

Selected Results

(B.s. PB6 ) | 0 kg (control) | 0.5 kg | 1 kg |
---|---|---|---|
Tibia ash (%) | 54.4ᵃ | 55.8ᵇ | 56.1ᵇ |
FCR | 3.0ᵃ | 2.8ᵇ | 2.6ᶜ |
Lactobacillus | 7.26ᵃ | 8.86ᵇ | 9.31ᶜ |
Bifidobacteria | 8.08ᵃ | 9.16ᵇ | 9.74ᶜ |
Clostridium | 9.25ᵃ | 8.80ᵇ | 8.20ᶜ |
Coliforms | 9.03ᵃ | 8.43ᵇ | 8.12ᶜ |

ᵃ,ᵇ,ᶜ Means in the same row with different letters are significantly different

Layer commercial trial design

144 Lohmann brown laying hens
52 – 72 weeks
Two random groups (9 replicates)
Fed 0 / 1kg of a Bacillus subtilis PB6 additive (2x10⁸ CFU/g)

Parameters: egg production & quality, FCR, body weights (at start and finish)

Selected Results

(B.s. PB6 ) | 0 kg (control) | 1 kg |
---|---|---|
Egg production % | 82.51 | 86.41 |
Egg mass (g/ hen/day) | 53.57 | 56.19 |
FCR (g feed/g egg) | 2.154 | 2.040 |
Number egg/hen | 93.24 | 97.65 |
Shell strength | 32.12 | 34.40 |
Total protein production (g) | 680 | 715 |

Discussion

The probiotic B. subtilis PB6 strain (CLOSTAT®) significantly improved the microflora composition and production parameters in the research trial, however performance was on a different level compared to commercial conditions. In the commercial trial production parameters improved as well as egg quantity and quality, proving thereby the findings from the scientific study.

Conclusions

The probiotic B. subtilis PB6 strain (CLOSTAT®) is used for economical reasons. However due to its effect on the microflora, which in turn can help to explain the performance improvements, it has also potential for use in programs to improve the internal biosecurity of poultry.

Abdelqader, et al.. Trop Anim Health Prod (2013) 45: 1017
Internal Kemin internal reference: TL-16-00015

Read more about B. Subtilis PB6 here

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PCO-15-00008