

Phytogenic feed additives as natural performance enhancers are increasingly accepted by the industry and consumers

Known for broad-spectrum efficacy, phytogenics are a promising group of feed additives for the livestock industry

Bangkok, March 15th, 2017. The consumer's demand for a transparent and sustainable feed-to-food chain is rising. As alternative feeding programs receive increased attention among scientists, nutritionists, feed manufacturers and producers, phytogenic feed additives are moving further into the spotlight due to their holistic and broad-spectrum efficacy. Despite the small dosage, they provide a wide range of modes of action, unfolding a huge potential to strengthen gut health and integrity, improve performance while providing also benefits for consumers and the environment.

It is not surprising that natural solutions such as phytogenic feed additives have aroused a great deal of interest and are moving into the spotlight, while the use of antibiotic growth promoters is pushed back by legislation and consumer pressure for health reasons.

Throughout the history, herbs, spices, other plants and their extracts have been used for human health and veterinary applications. Today, powerful botanical compounds are accepted in animal husbandry due to their their modes of action addressing challenges in livestock nutrition. "Our aim is to help our customers by developing and providing effective solutions, for producers, animals, consumers and the environment," explains Markus Dedl, CEO of phytogenic feed additive manufacturer Delacon. The company has built a strong category of science-based phytogenic feed additives around the globe, with proven impact on performance and sustainability, while maintaining feed and food safety. The term phytogenic feed additives was coined nearly three decades ago by Markus Dedl's father, the founder of Delacon, who even then recognized the potential of plants to meet challenges in animal husbandry.

Phytogenics harness the power of nature

Delacon's phytogenic feed additives contain more than 100 natural ingredients being part of many different active ingredient groups, such as essential oils, bitter substances, pungent substances, saponins, flavonoids, mucilages and tannins. "Owing to this wide range, phytogenics offer much more than just flavoring properties," Markus Dedl says. "The effects are many, mostly targeting the enhancement of livestock performance." Impacts can include sensorial stimulation and palatability, increased enzymatic activity in the intestinal tract, improved nutrient utilization, anti-oxidant effects, enhanced quorum sensing inhibition, effects on intestinal mucosa and improved reproductive performance.

"At Delacon, we have gained scientific expertise in the powerful physiological effects and the specific application of botanical compounds. Such knowledge is crucial to fully use the power of nature. However, science is only starting to fully understand phytogenics, particularly potential synergism amongst numerous active plant components," illustrates Dr. Jan Dirk van der Klis, Director of Products and Innovation for Delacon. "Notably, phytogenic feed additives based on

botanical compounds and plant extracts show wider modes of action compared to chemical, nature-identical single substances, which is due to the synergistic effects of all active components within the plants we use.”

“Since the very beginning in the 1980s, we have been discovering the complexity of botanical ingredients and their synergistic effects as none other in order to carefully select and formulate the active ingredients that work best. We strongly believe in the power of nature,” states Markus Dedl. “To solve specific challenges, belief is not enough. By proving the effects of phytogenic feed additives in numerous trials all around the globe, we have replaced belief with scientific knowledge.” Delacon has supported partners worldwide in the transition phase to antibiotic-free.

Value along the feed-to-food chain

Phytogenic feed additives are addressing the rising demands of various stakeholders along the entire feed-to-food chain. For feed manufacturers, livestock producers and farmers, efficacy may be the most important factor. Improved digestion results in a more efficient use of nutrients from feed, and therefore reduced feed costs per kg animal product. The consistently improved animal performance leads to higher profitability for farmers and producers. The animals benefit from strengthened immune system, reduced occurrence of intestinal inflammation, support for an optimal intestinal flora, and reduced ammonia emissions. The environmental benefits include the reduction of methane and ammonia and emissions, by up to 20 and 50 percent respectively.

For consumers, it has become a concern to know where their food comes from, how animals are raised, and what they are fed. Besides the maximum safety for consumers as evaluated by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), the benefits of phytogenic feed additives resonate positively with consumers. A recent survey among millennial foodies in the U.S., commissioned by Delacon, reveals high acceptance for phytogenic feed additives. For 87 percent of millennial foodies, meat and poultry produced with phytogenic feed additives would make a positive impact on their brand choice. “Phytogenic feed additives are a natural choice for producers, and a cornerstone for both conventional and antibiotic-free feeding programs,” says Markus Dedl. “Furthermore, our survey findings indicate the story of phytogenics resonates with consumers.”