

APRI FACTS

Atlantic Poultry Research Institute



PO Box 550
Truro, NS B2N 5E3
CANADA

Tel: (902) 893-6657
Fax: (902) 895-6734

apri@nsac.ns.ca
<http://www.nsac.ns.ca/apri>

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NUTRIENT AVAILABILITY AND PERFORMANCE OF BROILERS FED CULTIVARS OF MARITIME CANADIAN WHEAT

J.L. Rafuse¹, K.L. Budgell¹, F.G. Silversides^{1,2}

¹ Nova Scotia Agricultural College, ² Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

Introduction

In Nova Scotia, corn is the main cereal used as an energy source in poultry rations, but wheat is sometimes more economical to feed than corn. Wheat is a valuable source of feed energy for chickens, and published sources provide estimates of the Apparent Metabolizable Energy (AME) that it contains. The AME of wheat is variable and is dependent on both cultivar and the environment in which it is grown, and wheat may contain deleterious levels of soluble non-starch polysaccharides (NSP). When exogenous enzymes are not provided for their digestion, NSP become soluble in the gastrointestinal tract of broilers and result in sticky droppings, reduced uptake of nutrients, and decreased weight gain (Bedford 1995).

Wheat cultivars are highly variable in their AME content. Scott et al. (1998b) reported that the AME of nine Western Canadian cultivars grown in three locations ranged from 3280 to 3650 kcal

kg⁻¹ DM, and that xylanase supplementation of diets containing these wheat samples improved the AME and performance of the chickens and reduced the variability between wheat samples. Supplementing the diet with xylanase enzymes can improve the growth performance of broilers fed wheat-containing diets. Bedford (1994) found that addition of xylanases to wheat/triticale based diets resulted in an improvement in weight gain and FCR of broiler chicks. Enzyme addition to low ME wheat based diets can improve performance to a level equal to that of birds fed a corn-based control diet.

The AME of wheat cultivars grown in the Maritime provinces of Canada has not been studied. The objective of this study was to examine variation in feeding value and the need for feed enzymes for cultivars of wheat grown in two crop years in the Maritimes of Canada.

Trials

Four hard red spring wheat cultivars (Belvedere, Glenlea, Norboro, and Walton) were grown at the Crops and Livestock Research Centre in Charlottetown, PEI in each of 2000 and 2001. For each year, a sample of hard red spring (Katepwa) wheat was obtained from Western Canada and a sample of corn was obtained from local sources.

Broiler Chick Bioassay

The bioassays followed procedures similar to those described by Scott et al. (1998a). Half of the diets included a commercial enzyme (AVIZYME[®] 1302, supplied by Danisco Animal Nutrition). The five wheat samples, each with and without enzyme, represented a total of 10 diets (Table 1).

Table 1. Diet Composition

Ingredient (%)	Bioassay		Starter Diets		Grower Diets	
	Yr. 1	Yr. 2	Wheat	Corn	Wheat	Corn
Cereal	80	80	54.3	51.4	62.1	58.7
Isolated Soy Protein	13.8	13.9	1.55	0.00	1.60	0.00
SBM	0.00	0.00	34.0	40.2	24.6	32.7
Poultry Fat	1.00	1.00	5.37	3.78	6.35	4.38
Corn Gluten Meal	1.21	0.99	1.06	0.00	1.07	0.00
Dical. Phosphate	0.00	0.31	6.65	1.12	7.43	0.97
Vit/Min Premix	0.50	0.50	6.50	0.50	7.50	0.50
Enzyme	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05

Growth Trial

For the growth trials, diets containing the Maritime cultivars or corn obtained from local sources were fed to a total of 720 male broilers (Starbro x Arbor Acres) with or without enzyme supplementation (Table 1). Half of the wheat diets included a commercial enzyme (AVIZYME[®] 1302) while one of the corn diets contained AVIZYME[®] 1502, both supplied by Danisco Animal Nutrition.

containing Glenlea wheat consistently had the highest AME values in the present study. This was possibly related to its low *in vitro* viscosity in both crop years (Table 2), because the increase in viscosity from feeding wheat high in NSP reduces nutrient availability in poultry. The AME was improved with addition of supplemental xylanase/protease enzyme mixture to the diet.

Results

Broiler Chick Bioassay

Wheat cultivar, enzyme and crop year were all significant for AME at 7d (Table 2). Glenlea yielded the highest AME but was not significantly different from Belvedere, Walton, and Katepwa. Diets

Wheat cultivar, year, and their interaction were significant for AME at 16d (Table 3). The significant effect of the wheat cultivar on the measures of AME was expected because other studies have reported significant variation in AME among wheat cultivars. Digestible crude protein

(DCP) at 16d was affected by both wheat cultivar and enzyme supplementation (Table 3). Norboro, Glenlea, and Belvedere yielded the highest values. Enzyme supplementation improved DCP.

Table 2. *In vitro* Viscosity (centipoise, cP)^z of Wheat Samples Used in the Experimental Diets

Cultivars	Year 1 (cP)	Year 2 (cP)
Belvedere	10.20	5.23
Glenlea	5.05	4.58
Norboro	6.50	6.07
Walton	7.35	6.99
Katepwa	17.95	9.62

^z Determined by Danisco Animal Nutrition

Table 3. The AME and DCP of Excreta Samples

Cultivar	d7	d16	d7	d16
	AME Kcal/kg	AME Kcal/kg	DCP %	DCP %
Belveder	3017a	3189c	55.0a	58.3a
Glenlea	3088a	3449a	53.7ab	58.3a
Norboro	2742b	3306abc	50.8bc	58.4a
Walton	2964ab	3265bc	50.5bc	53.9b
Katepwa	3067a	3354ab	49.6c	54.2b
Enzyme				
+	3037a	3358	54.6a	58.7a
-	2911b	3268	49.2b	54.6b
Year				
2001	3284a	3475a	57.6a	56.2
2002	2658b	3151b	49.2b	57.1

a-c Means in a column within the main effects followed by no common letter are significantly different at $P \leq 0.05$

Growth Trial

Crop year and the diet by crop year interaction were both significant for starter BWG (Table 4). Norboro wheat with enzyme had the highest starter BWG during the first year but was not different from Walton and Glenlea. Among the diets fed in the second crop year with enzyme, corn and Glenlea gave the highest BWG. During the

grower period diet and the crop year, and their interaction were all significant for BWG (Table 4). Among diets fed in the first year without enzyme supplementation, the highest BWG occurred when broilers were fed diets containing Walton, Norboro, and Glenlea wheats or corn and the lowest when they were fed Belvedere wheat. Results of the present study suggested that enzyme supplementation was not needed to achieve ideal growth performance when these Maritime-grown wheat cultivars were included in broiler diets, and it was actually detrimental in diets containing Walton wheat. However, previous studies have reported improvements in body weight gain when xylanases were included in wheat-based diets (Bedford 1994).

The diet had no effect on the starter FCR, which also indicated that enzyme supplementation had no effect on FCR (Table 5). The grower FCR was significantly affected by the diet and crop year (Table 5). Diets containing Belvedere wheat both with and without enzyme and Norboro wheat without enzyme had the highest FCR values. During the grower period, enzyme supplementation significantly lowered the FCR when diets containing Norboro wheat were fed.

The diet had no significant effect on the feed intake (FI) of broilers during the starter period, which indicates that there also was no significant effect of enzyme supplementation (Table 5). The general lack of response to enzyme for growth performance variables may be related to the relatively low viscosity values since poor wheats tend to have greater responses to enzyme.

Table 4. Starter and Grower BWG

Grain	Enzyme	Year	Starter BWG (g/bird)	Grower BWG (g/bird)
Belvedere	+	1	319c	560def
Belvedere	+	2	274efgh	515gh
Belvedere	-	1	330bc	574cde
Belvedere	-	2	265gh	518fgh
Glenlea	+	1	338ab	635a
Glenlea	+	2	286de	539efg
Glenlea	-	1	332abc	611abc
Glenlea	-	2	282defg	540efg
Norboro	+	1	350a	646a
Norboro	+	2	268fgh	528fgh
Norboro	-	1	343ab	619ab
Norboro	-	2	277defgh	551defg
Walton	+	1	339ab	627ab
Walton	+	2	262h	488h
Walton	-	1	335abc	635a
Walton	-	2	284def	544defg
Corn	+	1	327bc	607abc
Corn	+	2	292d	607abc
Corn	-	1	342ab	623ab
Corn	-	2	279defgh	586bcd

a-h Means in a column within the main effects followed by no common letter are significantly different at $P \leq 0.05$

Table 5. Starter and Grower FCR and FI

Grain	Enzyme	Starter FCR	Grower FCR	Starter FI g/bird/d	Grower FI g/bird/d
Belveder	+	1.40	1.82abc	29.2	88.4d
Belveder	-	1.52	1.90a	32.3	93.8abc
Glenlea	+	1.35	1.70d	30.0	89.6cd
Glenlea	-	1.44	1.73cd	31.5	91.3bcd
Norboro	+	1.37	1.73cd	29.9	90.6bcd
Norboro	-	1.41	1.86ab	31.0	97.6a
Walton	+	1.43	1.74cd	31.3	87.2d
Walton	-	1.35	1.72cd	29.6	90.4cd
Corn	+	1.43	1.76bcd	31.8	95.4ab
Corn	-	1.41	1.79bcd	31.1	96.7a

a-d Means in a column within the main effects followed by no common letter are significantly different at $P \leq 0.05$

For more information on this project contact Fred Silversides at: silversidesf@agr.gc.ca

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Conclusions

The Maritime wheat cultivars were equal or compared favourably to both Western wheat and locally obtained corn. In this study, enzyme supplementation had a beneficial effect on AME and DCP that was generally not seen in performance. Locally grown wheat appears to be a viable alternative to corn for Maritime broiler producers, particularly when wheat prices make it more economical to feed than corn.

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