

SUPPLEMENTARY THERAPY

Dehydration

Dehydration occurs when an animal is in a negative water balance i.e. is losing more fluid than it is taking in. A hydrated bird is in equilibrium. Reduced fluid intake and/or increased fluid loss will result in dehydration. If this situation persists then the bird can be in a life-threatening crisis.

The modern poultry enterprise is dependent on the water consumption graph for the producer to ascertain whether its birds are consuming the expected amount of water. A reduction in consumption can occur if there is a problem with supply. If the availability is not compromised but the consumption is down then this is normally symptomatic of a health problem. Birds can stop drinking when severely stressed e.g. changes in temperature, movement, vaccination etc or when diseased e.g. Gumboro or Infectious Bronchitis challenge.

Extra fluid loss is most dramatic with an intestinal disease e.g. coccidiosis or enteritis. The gut wall is damaged during these diseases resulting in a reduced ability to absorb fluid from food material and water thus giving rise to wet droppings/litter. Any disease that results in the birds becoming feverish will increase fluid loss. Snicking and nasal discharges seen in infections like IB, ART and Mycoplasmosis will result in fluid loss through the production of excess mucus.

Electrolytes

To combat the effects of dehydration electrolyte replacers may be added to the birds' drinking water. The powdered electrolytes can cause a problem with blocked lines thus increasing the chance of reduced water supply. This is less of a problem with liquid electrolytes.

Electrolytes are appropriate for use throughout life. Their use is an aid in the management of metabolic disorders associated with dehydration and encourages the establishment of a good immune system and healthy gut to ensure strong, even-sized birds.

The use of electrolytes has also been shown to increase water consumption and, therefore, food consumption. This is especially important in the early stages of growth.

We recommend the use of Mintech electro-vit in cases of dehydration. This electrolyte replacer can also be used as a part of routine management during the rearing period or though the life of the birds.

VITAMIN DEFICIENCIES

Vitamin deficiencies can lead to poor growth and production, poor feathering, emaciation and reduced egg hatchability. Young birds are especially susceptible to show clinical signs associated with vitamin deficiencies. The clinical symptoms would be associated with the deficient vitamin. For instance, a deficiency in vitamin A would produce lesions around the eyes, nasal sinuses, oesophagus and trachea.

A deficiency in vitamin D3 would produce inadequate mineralization of the bones and also thin egg shells.

The use of multi-vitamins preparations at strategic times during the life of the birds can help prevent these vitamin deficiencies and also promote growth, health and performance. Mintech multi-vit is a concentrated liquid vitamin supplement that provides the birds with a readily available form of essential vitamins.

COMPETITIVE EXCLUSION PRODUCTS

The principle of these products is to introduce natural, live intestinal microflora into the gut of chicks. When hatched the chick's gut is devoid of bacteria and takes a considerable time to be seeded with bacteria forming the normal healthy flora (up to 3 weeks). During this time the gut is at risk of being colonised by pathogens eg Salmonella . The competitive exclusion products markedly reduce the risk of this occurring as gut bacteria are established within a few days. They may also dramatically improve food conversion efficiency by aiding digestion. These products may not only be used in chicks but also later in life after bouts of stress or extensive antibiotic therapy.

The competitive exclusion products are supplied as freeze dried live bacteria. It is important, then, that they are not used alongside antibiotics either in feed or in water. Using these products from day old should negate any necessity for early antibiotics.