

Opinion Article

Significance of poultry feed and its terminologies

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ABOUT THE STUDY

Poultry feed is a type of feed used by farm poultry such as chickens, ducks, geese, and other domestic birds. Poultry were generally kept on general farms before the twentieth century, and they foraged for much of their food, eating insects, grain spilt by cattle and horses, and plants around the farm. Grain, kitchen scraps, calcium supplements like oyster shell, and garden waste were frequently used to augment this. Many farms kept flocks too large to be fed this way as farming got more specialised, therefore nutritionally complete chicken feed was produced. The majority of modern chicken meals are made out of grain, protein supplies such as soybean oil meal, mineral supplements, and vitamin supplements. The amount of feed and its nutritional requirements are determined by the weight and age of the chickens, as well as their pace of growth, rate of egg production, weather, and the amount of nutrition obtained from foraging. As a consequence, a wide variety of feed formulae can be created. The use of less expensive local ingredients results in further variants.

A suitable amount of protein and carbs, as well as the necessary vitamins, dietary minerals, and an acceptable supply of water, are required for healthy poultry. Feed that has been lactose fermented can help chickens obtain more vitamins and minerals. Laying chickens need 4 grams of calcium per day, of which 2 grams are needed in the egg. Oyster shells are a common source of calcium in the diet. Certain diets also call for the inclusion of grit, or small rocks such as granite fragments, in the meal. By crushing food as it passes through the gizzard, grit promotes digestion. If commercial feed is utilised, no grit is required. Iodine is supplemented using calcium iodate.

Contaminated feed can infect chickens, so keep it clean and dry. Fungal growth thrives in damp feed. As one example, mycotoxin poisoning is “one of the most common and undoubtedly under-reported causes of toxicoses in chicken.”

Diseases can be avoided by keeping the feed and feeder in good working order. The apparatus that feeds the chickens is known as a feeder. Feed can be given using jar, trough, or tube feeders for privately raised hens or birds kept as pets. Food foraged from the environment can be used to enhance chicken feed. Plant material consumed by grazing livestock is known as forage. Historically, forage has exclusively referred to plants consumed directly by animals, such as pasture, crop residue, or immature cereal crops, but it is now used more broadly to refer to similar plants cut for fodder and transported to animals, particularly as hay or silage.

Machinery is employed in industrial agriculture to automate the feeding process, lowering costs and increasing the scale of farming. Feed is the most expensive part of a commercial poultry farm's operation.

Terms for poultry feed are namely, mash, pellets, crumbles, scratch grain.

- Mash pertains to ground poultry that is nutritionally full. This is the first full-fledged poultry ration.

- Pellets are made from mashed potatoes that have been pelletized, or crushed and moulded into pellets in a pellet mill. Unlike mash, where the ingredients can split during shipping, the contents in a single pellet stay together and the poultry eat the pellets whole. Pellets are frequently too big for newly hatched chickens.

- Pellets that have been broken down into granules by rollers are known as crumbles. This is a common ingredient in chick feed.

- Scratch grain is made up of whole, cracked, or rolled grains in various forms. Scratch feed is another name for it. Scratch grains are often dispersed on the ground, unlike other feeds that are fed in troughs, hoppers, or tube feeders. As a result, a big particle size is preferred. Scratch grains are not a complete ration because they just include grains; hence they are used to supplement a balanced feed.

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