

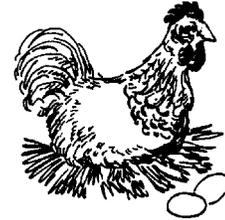


The University of Georgia

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COMMERCIAL EGG TIP...

MEAT AND BONE MEAL: SAFE, EFFICIENT, AND ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY

The last several years have been extremely difficult for animal producers in Europe, and in particular the United Kingdom. Outbreaks of "mad cow" disease, and more recently hoof and mouth disease, have been extensively covered in the worldwide media. Fortunately, North America has been kept free of these two diseases through a combination of safeguards. In the United Kingdom elimination of meat and bone meal from animal feeds is considered to have been a key step in preventing the spread of mad cow disease, more accurately termed BSE (bovine spongiform encephalopathy). The agent which transmits the disease, a protein-like substance called a prion, is extraordinarily stable and not destroyed by temperatures or pressures used in rendering animal by-products. It is generally conceded that delays in recognizing the problem and implementing solutions have had a disastrous effect on the credibility of the feed industry in the United Kingdom. Thus, it is reasonable to ask whether the U.S. poultry industry should take a proactive stance and suspend the use of animal by-products in feeds for broilers, turkeys, and layers. At this time, the answer is a very resounding "No." There are four very solid reasons for continuing the use of animal by-products in poultry feeds:

1. Mad cow disease (BSE) has never been found in the Americas. The declining number of cases in the United Kingdom strongly suggests that programs in place are successfully controlling spread of the disease.
2. The syndrome has never been observed in poultry. This is not particularly surprising. Innumerable diseases may affect one or a group of animal species, but have no infective capability for others. For example, humans are not affected by diseases such as Newcastle, Gumboro, and most other diseases known to be serious threats for poultry.
3. Animal proteins complement very well the amino acids found in soybean meal and other plant protein sources. Many nutritionists prefer to include in their rations protein from a number of

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sources so as to avoid relying exclusively on a single high protein ingredient.

4. Use of meat and bone meal reduces phosphorus excretion. The importance of this attribute is frequently overlooked. When meat and bone meal replaces a portion of soybean meal in the diet, it brings with it a great deal of highly available phosphorus. By contrast, the phosphorus in soybean meal is only about 1/3 digestible, meaning that about 2/3 passes into the excreta. As phosphorus is widely viewed as being an environmental contaminant, the use of meat and bone meal is an effective means of reducing the environmental impact of poultry manure.

Unless mad cow disease is identified in North America, there is absolutely no reason to suspend the use of this feed ingredient in poultry rations. As the incidence of the disease seems to be decreasing in Europe, there is every reason to be optimistic that it will not become a concern in the United States and neighboring countries. Until such time, meat and bone meal and other animal by-products should be strongly considered not only for their high nutritional value, but also their environmentally friendly mineral composition.



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****Consult with your poultry company representative before making management changes.****

“Your local County Extension Agent is a source of more information on this subject.”