

MCFA technology: New option for swine producers' toolbox



Swine producers have a number of new advances in feed additive technology to consider.

Among these, a clear standout to help provide solutions in alignment with today's new rules, trends and challenges is medium chain fatty acids (MCFA) technology.

MCFA technology is the focus of a growing body of science. It represents a leading area of innovation that can play a central role in helping to meet today's challenges, as pork production continues to shift toward a new toolbox for the 21st century.

The latest generation options are now becoming widely available across the U.S. and Canada. Interest and adoption are quickly increasing. Strategies and opportunities for sustained full pig life cycle programs, even across borders, have recently emerged.

But what makes MCFA technology different and what can swine producers and companies count on with the latest options?

Four fundamentals

Here are four important fundamentals to consider based on the latest knowledge and science:

1. Unique technology, broad potential

MCFAs are molecules consisting of 6 to 12 carbon length chains that have shown advantages for use as a feed additive for swine diets. Certain MCFA are known to have functional properties meaning they have the ability to support benefits beyond basic nu-

trition.

Leading commercial feed additive products containing the latest generation MCFA technology are designed for use as part of strategies that support overall health and performance. The primary focus of utilizing MCFA technology is to influence gut morphology and thereby support gut integrity, ultimately optimizing performance. This includes supporting parameters such as daily gain and feed conversion ratio, while also providing support against wellness challenges.

2. The way of the future

MCFA technology is considered a particularly strong fit for swine production in the context of today's changing industry landscape in both the U.S. and Canada.

There is a shift toward eliminating the use of antimicrobials for production purposes such as growth promotion and feed efficiency. There is also a shift toward eliminating or greatly restricting the use of antimicrobials considered medically important for humans, in order to combat the threat of antibiotic resistance. Overall, there is a transition toward increased veterinary oversight for all aspects of antimicrobial use to ensure they are used judiciously and only when appropriate as determined by a veterinarian to address specific health challenges.

Over the past several years the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in the U.S. has implemented the requirement of a veterinary feed directive for the use of antimicrobials considered medically important and is moving through phases to eliminate the use of antimicrobials for production purposes such as growth promotion & feed efficiency. Canada has taken a similar approach and has set December 2018 as the deadline for moving all use of antimicrobials to prescription only.

3. Beneficial for all types of production

MCFA technology is one of the many alternative strategies being tested to replace or support the feed efficiency advantages of medicated feed. Research shows leading commercial blends of MCFA are beneficial when pigs are fed diets with or without antimicrobials. However, with the shift toward greater restrictions on antimicrobials use and stricter judicious use principles, they have garnered increasing attention as a top option to help producers transition to these new realities.

Because MCFA are considered naturally occurring and a bio-based feed additive ingredient, they also fit the type of input increasingly preferred and well accepted in the current and future marketplace. The opportunity for MCFA technology to support animals through stressors and wellness challenges, also makes it a preferred technology in an increasingly animal-welfare conscious environment.

4. Focus on gut integrity

The gastrointestinal tract (GIT) has become an increasing focus of strategies aimed toward supporting health and performance of pigs. It is a highly complex microbial environment influenced by microorganisms both present and ingested as well as by nutritional and dietary approaches. It is also a potential pathway for contaminants and pathogens.

A growing body of research shows the health status and integrity of the GIT directly correlates with overall swine health and performance. It's an area where feed additives with functional properties have the opportunity to play an important role in influencing gut morphology to help optimize animal gut health and performance.

Watch for more updates on MCFA technology as interest and adoption continues to increase. •

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