

An 'i' for nutrition is essential to optimise poultry performance

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There are many challenges facing the poultry sector at present, from high and volatile feed ingredient prices, to rumours of limited ingredient supply and significant disease challenges.

The ability to not only survive, but prosper in such difficult circumstances is dependent on optimising the performance of our animals, be they breeding or growing animals.

Alltech has recently launched an online version of the Alltech Poultry iSolutions program, an interactive computer program that gives a quick and easy assessment of current performance, and suggests strategies to improve particular areas of concern.

As a company Alltech aims to help support the poultry industry by solving issues in the food chain.

Key areas

There are several key areas essential to address industry issues:

- Feed availability and cost: where the aim is to extract the maximum value from all raw materials.
- Performance and profitability: where the aim is to promote consistent high performance through natural feeding programs.
- Addressing consumer concerns: where the aim is to promote consumer health, food safety and traceability.

The Poultry iSolutions program fits into the second area, performance and profitability, and allows shareholders in the poultry industry to assess current performance and options for improving profitability.

Objectives of the program

The objectives of the program include:

- To highlight the current performance of a particular flock or flocks with respect to feed usage, feed costs and poultry pricing related to overall profitability of the poultry business.
- To compare the customer's current performance with the breeders' standards and to identify areas of under-performance or



Fig. 1. Assessment of control performance (actual) versus breeding standards (standard performance) and the treatment group (Bio-Mos).

non-conformance which need to be addressed.

- To recommend solutions, both in terms of management and nutrition, as well as flag potential issues in an operation based on this tailored assessment.
- To highlight areas for continuous improvement while referring to the comprehensive Alltech Poultry Reference manual.
- To provide relevant solutions and management strategies in a timely manner to achieve even greater levels of performance on-farm.

All of this means customers have the opportunity to use Poultry iSolutions to increase profitability by focusing on new income opportunities. Also they can minimise business losses due to unidentified non-performance or non-conformance to breeder standards.

Finally, Poultry iSolutions allows this assessment to be done quickly, with experi-

enced users taking mere minutes to run an assessment and identify potential areas of improvement.

The easiest way to review the effectiveness of the Alltech Poultry iSolutions program is to run through an example.

Based on a recent trial (data in Table 1), this example will show us how the breeder section of Poultry iSolutions can identify potential areas of concern in a breeding flock and how these areas can then be addressed.

The first step in using the Alltech Poultry iSolutions program is to enter the current performance data of the farm so it can be compared to breeds' standard performance.

Fig. 1 shows the number of chicks/hen housed (chicks/HH). Hatchability is well below the breed standards, even though the total shows hatching eggs per hen housed is more than 4% above the standard.

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Chicks/HH appears to be the area where this group of birds are having the most problems. By clicking on the orange link 'chicks/hen housed' a new page will be opened that gives a list of possible factors affecting chicks/HH with possible solutions.

In the current trial one of the solutions suggested for poor chicks/HH was the use of a product to improve gut health and immunity, Bio-Mos.

Cost benefits

The results of the trial show that this treatment certainly improved both Chicks/HH and hatchability, but leaves one question unanswered: is the cost of the treatment worth the additional benefits in performance?

By inputting information about local feed costs, product costs, inclusion rates and selling prices, the return on investment (ROI) for the treatment can be assessed using Poultry iSolutions (Fig. 2).

This information takes into account any changes in performance, along with current pricing and feed cost changes. As can be seen in the current example, the inclusion of the product to improve gut health and immunity did increase the cost of the feed slightly, but also produced a dramatic improvement in performance parameters.

Ultimately the ROI for a flock of 10,000 breeders was 7.35 to one, which translates based on the costings used in this example to an improved overall profit of \$24,000.

Table 1. Data from the breeder trial comparing a control group against a treatment group (Bio-Mos).

Parameters	Control Group	Bio-Mos Group
Number of breeders	1,000	1,000
Breed type	Ross 308	Ross 308
Age (weeks)	58	58
Total eggs/hen housed	166.60	166.90
Hatching eggs/hen housed	156.90	157.90
Chicks/hen housed	124.1	129.8
Hatchability (%)	79.1	82.2
Livability (%)	93.0	93.6



Fig. 2. Profitability and ROI assessment for a specific nutritional treatment (Bio-Mos) using the Alltech Poultry iSolutions program.

This very simple example shows how iSolutions can be used to assess performance, suggest a solution and then evaluate the potential benefit of that solution.

The key benefits of the Alltech Poultry iSolutions program include:

- Minimised business losses due to non-performance and non-conformance to targets.

- Increased profits by focusing on income opportunities.
- On-time decision making, preventing occurrence of possible poultry issues.
- Poultry performance analysis in minutes.

To run a successful business we need to be quick at identifying issues in order to improve profitability and performance. We can no longer afford to waste time waiting for things to get better when there is a tool that can pinpoint issues and suggest improvements at our finger tips.

The Alltech Poultry iSolutions program can be used by any individual at any time without the help from outsiders, so you know that what you are assessing is tailored to your business.

With an assessment of profitability and ROI you can see straight away which strategies should be applied that will not only improve performance but also secure higher profitability. ■