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RUMEN FUNCTION VITAL FOR GREATER GAINS IN BEEF AND DAIRY HERDS

Optimising rumen function is a primary way to unlock greater gains for beef and dairy producers, according to a nutritional expert.

Dr Nicola Walker, Ruminant Product Development Manager at AB Vista, is advising producers to stabilise rumen pH and improve fibre digestion in order to see better milk yield and components and feed efficiency in dairy cows, and improve average daily gain and FCR in beef cattle.

“Feeding the ruminant is very challenging because there is a complex variety of available feed ingredients, and diet digestibility can fluctuate significantly depending on ration composition,” Dr Walker says.

“By optimising rumen function, we are trying to reduce the incidence of metabolic disorders such as sub-acute ruminal acidosis (SARA), when rumen pH drops below 5.8. This is because it impacts negatively on fibre digestion, because the activity and number of fibre-digesting bacteria are reduced.”

The advice comes as part of a new video in AB Vista’s Extraordinary Science Brought to Life series. In the latest film, Dr Walker explores the challenges in feeding ruminants and the role of live yeast and fibre pre-treatment for boosting rumen function.

“When we consider feeding the ruminant, a key point to remember is that first of all we’re feeding the rumen microflora – essentially a very complex microbial eco-system; rumen pH can have a significant impact on the number and activity of these rumen microbes, and synchrony of supply of nutrients to these microbes is also vital.

“This means that diet digestibility is important, because plant cell wall material can only be digested in the rumen by up to 65%, and as more concentrates are added to the ration to provide energy, fibre digestion can drop to as low as 35%. This can also be negatively impacted by the variability and consistency in the mixing of the ration.”

Dr Walker says it’s vital to keep the rumen microflora in balance, therefore keeping rumen fermentation in balance.

“This can be achieved by synchronising nutrient supply to the rumen microbes themselves through effective ration formulation. We can also consider adding live yeast to the ration to stabilise pH and optimise rumen function, or reducing lag time to digestion through use of a fibre pre-treatment to improve fibre digestibility.”

To view the new video, visit www.abvista.com

For more information, contact AB Vista on +44(0)1672 517 650 or info@abvista.com.

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Notes to editor:

AB Vista is an animal nutrition technology company offering pioneering products and technical services to the global animal feed industry. Since its establishment in 2004, AB Vista has grown to be a top-three player in feed

enzymes and is also one of the largest suppliers of natural betaine to the global animal nutrition industry. The company invests heavily in research and development and has a growing portfolio of products and services spanning the poultry, swine, ruminant and aquaculture sectors. AB Vista is headquartered in the UK, with regional offices located in the USA, Brazil, Singapore, Spain, India, China, Germany and Finland.

AB Vista is part of AB Agri, the agricultural division of Associated British Foods, one of Europe's largest food & retail companies with a market capitalisation of £22 billion.

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