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Specific threat of DON mycotoxin requires targeted approach to protect pig profitability

Of all the mycotoxins commonly found in pig diets, perhaps the greatest threat to pig health, productivity and efficiency comes from deoxynivalenol (DON). According to Dr Derek McIlmoyle, AB Vista EMEA Technical Director, the nature and scale of that threat requires specifically targeted counter-measures if pig unit profitability is to be safeguarded.

“DON may not be as toxic to pigs as fumonisin and zearalenone, but it’s still highly damaging and is by far the most prevalent mycotoxin found within pig feeds, feed ingredients and even straw bedding,” he explains.

“Past analysis by Micron Biosystems, for example, found DON in nearly every feed sample where mycotoxins were detected. Mycotoxins like DON also rarely occur in isolation, and the presence of multiple mycotoxins will often act additively or even synergistically.”

Produced by the *Fusarium* moulds that infect growing cereal crops, DON inhibits protein synthesis within the pig. Damage to the gut lining reduces nutrient digestion and utilisation, leading to poor feed intake, live weight gain and feed conversion efficiency with both immune function and fertility (litter size) also often compromised.

“DON is particularly challenging to neutralise, and traditional clay-based binders alone have limited effect. What’s needed are additional active ingredients – such as the *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*-derived yeast components and extracts in Ultrasorb S – that can physically transform the DON molecule, rendering it harmless or more easily bound.

“The species-specific nature of the threat also needs to be considered, with pigs potentially exposed to as much as seven times the mycotoxin load (per kilogram of bodyweight) as poultry. It highlights just how important it is to use de-activators specifically designed to counter the nature and level of the mycotoxin threat faced by pigs.”

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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 £26 billion.

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