



Release date: 27 November 2019

International Fibre Summit spotlights 'rising star' of animal nutrition

Fibre took centre stage in Barcelona last week, as global researchers and industry experts joined the first International Fibre Summit, a three-day event exploring the changing role of dietary fibre in monogastric nutrition.

Organised by AB Vista, the event brought together specialists from 16 universities across six continents to share cutting-edge insights into the ways in which fibre can be exploited for better animal performance.

AB Vista's Research Director Dr Mike Bedford explains that an advanced understanding of fibre is opening up new horizons for feed formulators:

"For a long time, it was thought that fibre caused a negative impact – and so diets were formulated without it. However, it has become increasingly clear that fibre plays a vital role in the development of the microbiota, since it is a key substrate for bacterial growth.

"As the total dietary fibre content of monogastric diets tends to be higher than people expect when measuring only crude fibre, there is a huge opportunity for nutritionists to harness the 'treasure trove' of potential laying within. As we further unravel the complexities of fibre, so we improve the provision of nutrients to the gut microbiota – for better performance. This is of course especially significant in the age of antibiotic-free diets."

Speakers at the event shared a broad range of research and advice, with topics including the modulation of feed intake in pigs and chickens; the influence of fibre on gut physiology and feed intake regulation; new strategies influencing gut functionality and animal performance, and challenges in the analysis of oligosaccharides and other fibre components.

There was also a key focus on enzymes, with speakers exploring the use of enzymes as alternatives to antibiotics, the 'single vs multi' question, the modification of fibre by enzymes, and future trends in application.

Discussing the adaptability of the microbiome towards fibre digestion, Professor Christophe Courtin (University of Leuven) shared the results of a pioneering broiler trial:

"The trial showed that the microbiota of the broiler develops with age. We discovered that if you add arabinoxylan oligosaccharides to the broiler diets at a very young age, but also at very low levels, these will actually kick-start the potential of the microbiota to deal with arabinoxylans."

Explaining that the currently emerging perspectives on fibre represent a new frontier in animal nutrition, Dr Bedford concludes:

"It seems we may be on the verge of entering an exciting new era: one where nutritionists simultaneously consider nutrition for the microbiota – or the 'second brain' – in addition to nutrition for the animal. This is where the better understanding of dietary fibre in the diet and the impact of enzymes and oligosaccharide provision in the hindgut shows an exciting future for animal nutrition."

A suite of exclusive video interviews from the event, with insights into how best to exploit fibre for the benefit of the host – in both poultry and swine – is available at AB Vista's International Fibre Summit hub: <https://bit.ly/2NSi8dY>. Visitors will also find exclusive Q&As and all event abstracts, as well as a competition to win a copy of the Proceedings book.

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Notes to editor:

AB Vista is a global 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. Working in close collaboration with

academics and customers, AB Vista is committed to developing new nutritional applications based on scientific insight. This is achieved through research, nutritional expertise and the ability to analyse nutritional factors – the combination of which is referred to as “feed intelligence”. This serves to bring an improved nutritional picture to the industry. AB Vista has a portfolio of products and technical 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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ABV/655/19