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Insects, Algae and Plants: Enhanced Poultry Health and Productivity

Jane Jun Wook*

Department of Biology, Madda Walabu University, Robe, Ethiopia

Commentary

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***For Correspondence:**

Jane Jun Wook, Department of Biology, Madda Walabu University, Robe, Ethiopia

E-mail: wook@gmail.com

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DESCRIPTION

Poultry is one of the most important sources of animal protein, with chicken being the most widely consumed meat in the world. The global demand for poultry products is steadily increasing, and this has created a need for alternative feed sources to sustain the industry. The conventional feed sources for poultry production, such as soybean meal and corn, are becoming more expensive and limited. A shift toward alternative feed sources is necessary to ensure economic sustainability and to reduce the environmental impact of the industry. In this article, we will explore the potential of alternative feed sources for poultry nutrition.

Insects are a rich source of protein, and several species, including black soldier fly larvae, crickets, and mealworms, have shown great potential as alternative feed sources for poultry. Insects are nutrient-dense, rich in digestible protein, and have a favorable amino acid profile. They also contain high levels of essential micronutrients, such as iron, calcium, and vitamin D. The use of insects as a feed source has many environmental benefits, such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions, water usage, and land use. Insects can be raised on organic waste and other by products, reducing waste and providing a source of income for small farmers. Insects can be used as a replacement or supplement to conventional feed sources for poultry, and research has shown that their inclusion can improve growth rates and egg production.

Algae are photosynthetic organisms that grow in various aquatic environments, including freshwater, marine water, and wastewater. Algae are rich in protein, carbohydrates, lipids, and vitamins, and they have a promising role as an

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alternative feed source for poultry. Algae can be easily grown in a controlled environment, and they do not require arable land, freshwater, or pesticides. Algae have a high protein content and are known to contain essential micronutrients, such as omega-3 fatty acids, carotenoids, and vitamins. Algae are also a source of pigments that give poultry products their characteristic yellow colour. The use of algae as a feed source for poultry has the potential to reduce the environmental impact of the industry and improve the nutritional quality of poultry products.

Plant proteins, such as soybean meal, are a common feed source for poultry. However, there is an increasing demand for plant-based alternatives to soybean meal due to environmental concerns and the potential for genetic modification. Several plant proteins, such as sunflower meal, canola meal, and cotton seed meal, have shown potential as alternative feed sources for poultry. Plant proteins have a lower environmental impact and can provide a sustainable source of protein for the industry. In addition, plant-based feed sources have a lower risk of contamination with antibiotics and hormones, which can improve the health and safety of poultry products.

Fermented feed is a traditional method of feed preparation that involves the use of microorganisms to ferment feed ingredients. Fermentation improves the digestibility of feed and increases the availability of nutrients. Fermented feed has been shown to have many benefits for poultry, including improved gut health, immunity, and growth rates. Fermented feed can be prepared using a wide range of feed ingredients, including grains, legumes, and by products, making it a versatile feed source for poultry.

Alternative feed sources have the potential to revolutionize the poultry industry by providing sustainable and nutritious feed sources for birds. Insects, algae, plant proteins, and fermented feed are some of the alternative feed sources that have shown great potential for poultry nutrition. These alternatives have several environmental and health benefits over conventional feed sources, and their use can help ensure the economic and environmental sustainability of the poultry industry. As global demand for poultry products continues to increase, the exploration and adoption of alternative feed sources are crucial for the long-term success of the industry.