FEEDING STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE FOREGUT DEVELOPMENT IN BROILERS

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Broiler chickens (*Gallus gallus domesticus*), commonly referred to as broilers, are meat-type chickens raised for marketing at a young age, usually 5 to 7 weeks. Since their domestication in Southeast Asia around 7 to 10,000 years ago, they have been developed into the most efficient terrestrial production animals. They are twice as efficient as swine and four times more efficient than cattle in converting nutrients present in the feed into muscle/body weight.

In spite of innately exhibiting an intermittent feeding behavior, broiler chickens have been reared in commercial operations throughout the past decades on either continuous or near continuous illumination (23 hours of light and 1 hour or dark) or with daily, human-like schedules (16 to 18 hours of light and 6 to 8 hours of dark) and fed ad libitum, and continue being so in most operations, in the certainty that this practice maximizes feed intake and growth rate.

With further progress in terms of performance being sought, and following decades of research focusing on distal GIT segments, it is about time to explore the impact foregut manipulation can have on growth and health of broiler chickens.