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Wet feeding reduces the feed conversion ratio of young broiler chicks

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Wet feeding has been found to increase growth and, in particular cases, feed efficiency and utilization of phytate phosphorus in poultry. The objective of this study was to determine the effects of wet feeding on growth performance, feed and water intake, some faecal qualities and gastric transit time (GTT) of young broiler chicks from 11 to 21 days. From day 11 to day 21, broiler chicks in 16 pens were fed a commercial broiler starter diet either in dry (DF) or wet (WF) form. WF was prepared every morning by mixing water and feed at 11:9 ratio, giving a porridge-like consistency. Daily intakes of water and feed were recorded. Intake of feed from wet feed container was corrected for water in the feed and for evaporation losses. On day 21, one bird was selected from each cage and GTT was determined. Faecal samples were collected and analyzed for nitrogen (N) and ash. . Growth performance parameters such as live weight on day 21 (998 g), weight gain (751 g) and feed intake (888 g) of the chicks given dry feed were not significantly different from those of the birds given WF (998g, 751 g and 855 g, respectively). Importantly, the feed conversion ratio of the DF given chicks\s (1.18) was significantly reduced to 1.14 when WF was given. Birds given WF drank significantly less water from drinkers compared to those given DF. However, the total water intake (water from drinker + water from feed) of the birds given WF was significantly higher than that of birds given DF. GTT, faecal N and ash contents were also not affected by the form of feed. It was concluded that wet feeding increased the feed efficiency and water intake of young broiler chicks.

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