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Marketing language is repositioning broiler additives

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This issue examines how the language used to market broiler additives has changed and argues that better terminology can improve understanding, but it can also distract from the real problem.

Most broiler additives are not new. Organic acids, enzymes, phytogenics, trace minerals, yeast products, betaine, emulsifiers, antioxidants, prebiotics, and probiotics have been used for years. What has changed in the past few years is the language around them.

Yet, the same broad problems remain: poor digestion, enteric pressure, heat stress, oxidative load, excess nitrogen, variable ingredients, and inconsistent performance.

But these problems are now described through newer commercial terms such as resilience, oxidative balance, nitrogen flow, stress support, precision nutrition, and gut integrity. This is not necessarily wrong. In many cases, the newer language reflects a better understanding of biology. The risk is that language can become more important than diagnosis. When that happens, the product is repositioned, but the real limiting factor may remain unidentified.

Resilience

Resilience is now used to describe the bird's ability to maintain performance under commercial pressure. Trace minerals, phytogenics, probiotics, postbiotics, betaine, antioxidants, and other additives can all be positioned under this term. The biological idea is useful, because broilers do face multiple pressures at once. But resilience is an outcome, not an additive category.

The real question is whether the flock is limited by intake, gut function, immune activation, heat load, litter pressure, or ingredient variability.

Oxidative balance

Oxidative balance is a better phrase than simply adding antioxidants, because it recognizes the tension between metabolic stress and antioxidant capacity. Selenium, vitamin E, copper, zinc, polyphenols, and plant extracts may all support this system. But oxidative stress should not become a universal explanation for poor performance. The nutritionist must first ask whether oxidative damage is truly limiting growth, meat quality, immunity, or recovery, or whether the problem begins with heat, disease, rancid fat, or poor feed intake.

Nitrogen flow

Nitrogen flow is an interesting way to rethink low-protein broiler diets. Amino acids, protease, enzymes, and reduced-crude-protein programs can all be discussed under this heading. The benefit is that it moves attention from crude protein alone to digestion, absorption, retention, uric acid, litter nitrogen, and ammonia. The risk is that nitrogen flow can become a modern label for cutting protein too aggressively without accounting for nonessential nitrogen, feathering, gut repair, immune demand, and ingredient digestibility.

Stress support

Stress support is now used for products that help birds during heat, vaccination, transport, corticosterone response, intestinal challenge, or management disruption. Betaine, electrolytes, antioxidants, osmolytes, phytogenics, and vitamins can all fit this language. The concept is valid, but stress is not one condition. Acute heat stress, chronic heat stress, immune stress, and enteric stress do not require the same nutritional response. The flock's stress must be defined before a stress-support product or range of products can be evaluated.

Precision nutrition

Precision nutrition is used to position models, sensors, enzymes, ingredient databases, feed additives, and formulation tools. The term is attractive because modern broiler systems need better control of variation. But, precision is not achieved by adding more decimal places or more software. It requires accurate ingredient values, real intake data, age-specific needs, health context, and economic targets. Otherwise, precision becomes a marketing word attached to uncertain assumptions. Data without interpretation has no value.

Gut integrity

Gut integrity is a narrower and more useful term than gut health, because it points toward barrier function, tight junctions, permeability, inflammation, mucus, and epithelial repair. Organic acids, butyrates, probiotics, phytogenics, yeast products, fibers, and minerals can all be linked to this function. But even this term can become too broad if not measured. Better villus height, microbiota shifts, or biomarker changes matter only if they explain improved digestion, lower disease pressure, better litter, stronger growth, or more predictable flock performance.

In brief, marketing language is repositioning broiler additives because commercial communication now borrows more heavily from biology than it did before. That is progress when it helps explain real functions more clearly. But better words do not automatically create better nutrition decisions. Resilience, oxidative balance, nitrogen flow, stress support, precision nutrition, and gut integrity are useful only when they are translated back into the bird, the diet, the house, and the limiting factor. That's the job of the nutritionist. Products are tools. Language can help explain them, but diagnosis must still come first from the attending nutritionist.

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