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Title: Pre- and post-pellet whole grain inclusions enhance feed conversion efficiency, energy utilisation and gut integrity in broiler chickens offered wheat-based diets



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## ACCEPTED MANUSCRIPT

Pre- and post-pellet whole grain inclusions enhance feed conversion efficiency, energy utilisation and gut integrity in broiler chickens offered wheat-based diets

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## Highlights

- Whole wheat inclusions at 4.5, 9.0 and 18.0% had substantially greater impacts when added post-pelleting in comparison to pre-pelleting inclusions
- Post-pellet whole wheat inclusions increased relative gizzard weights, reduced gizzard digesta pH and reduced the incidence of dilated proventriculi
- Collectively, post-pellet whole wheat inclusions improved FCR by 4.25%, increased AME by 0.81 MJ and enhanced ME:GE ratios by 6.00% (0.742 versus 0.700)
- Post-pellet whole wheat inclusions collectively reduced distal ileal starch concentrations by 50.4% (7.21 versus 14.53 g/100g).
- This study confirms the advantages of whole grain feeding which appeared to be driven by greater extents of starch digestion allied to heavier relative gizzard weights.

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