

ZINC MINIMISES DOWNGRADING DUE TO SKIN SCRATCHES

Poultry processing companies around the world focus on the level of carcass downgrades due to skin lesions. Nutritional and management strategies can reduce the incidence of this issue. Skin scratches in the broiler industry are related to many factors, including stocking density, light and feed management, sudden climate changes, equipment in the broiler house, genetic susceptibility and nutrition.

Ten years ago Dr. Joe Hess and Prof. Sarge Bilgili from Auburn University suggested that by boosting the bird's immune function the severity of infections resulting from skin lesions could be reduced. Their recommendation was to use chelated zinc products as dietary supplements, and in particular those complexed with amino acids, due to their ability to strengthen skin, and enhance the healing of scratches, and other lesions. Complexed zinc has been shown to boost cellular and humoral immunity, increasing

the bird's ability to fight off skin infections that may slow the healing process. Given zinc's role in skin integrity and healing, the complexed mineral form has been shown in a number of studies to have a direct role in reducing skin-quality related downgrades.

Research from Auburn University showed the proportion of skin lesions decreased from 42.7% in birds given inorganic zinc sulphate to 9.6% in birds given complexed zinc in their feed (**Figure 1**). It also confirmed that broilers fed complexed zinc had decreased skin tears and scratches resulting in less incidence and severity of cellulitis (**Figure 2**).

Levels and source of zinc have a significant influence on broiler performance at farm level and in the processing plant, enhancing the quality and appearance of broiler carcasses.

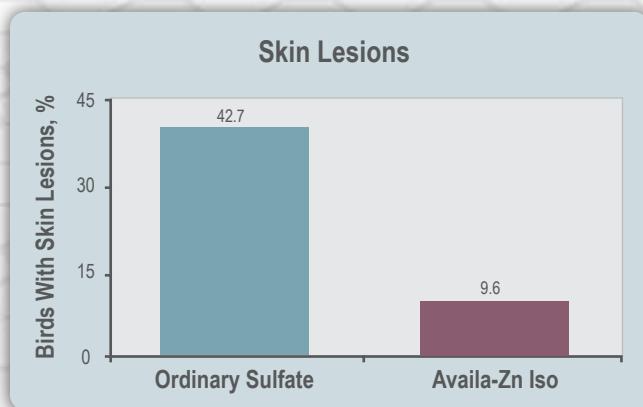


Figure 1

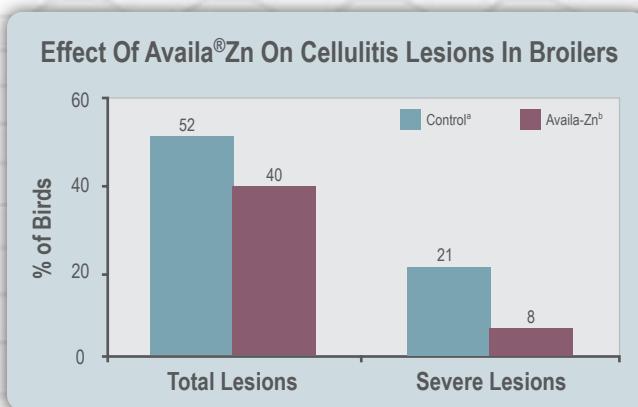


Figure 2

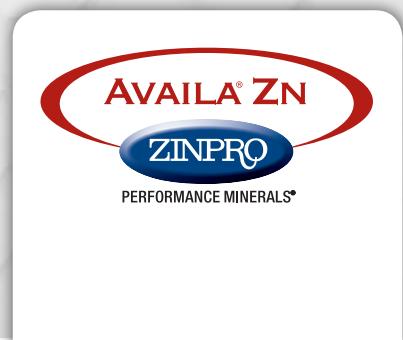
^a Zinc from zinc sulfate source
^b Control + 40 ppm zinc from Availa-Zn



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Please contact us should you have any questions on our product portfolio or any technical information.

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Some of the benefits of including essential trace minerals in broiler diets may include:

- Improved feed conversion
- Increased growth rates and breast meat yields
- Decreased skin scratches and cellulitis
- Improved foot pad quality



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