

Coccidial infection: A challenge for the poultry industry

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The word poultry refers to all domesticated birds which are mainly kept to produce meat and eggs such as chicken, turkey, ducks, etc. Coccidia contains a wide range of parasites which are unicellular animals in the subkingdom Protozoa of the phylum Apicomplexa. Coccidiosis is an intestinal disease of poultry birds caused by intracellular protozoan parasites of the genus Eimeria. Annually, the poultry industry suffers huge economic losses due to this disease. This disease seriously affects the growth and feed utilization of the infected birds. The clinical signs of this include diarrhea, blood loss, and even death. Currently, chemoprophylaxis is the predominant method for the control of Coccidial infection. The large flock of chickens which are kept at high stocking density on the floor and warm environment are highly favorable conditions for the transmission of the Eimeria infection. The prevalence of coccidial infection varies between 10% and 90% worldwide in the poultry industry. The frequent use of drugs results in the development of resistance and the increasing pressure of the consumers to ban the use of drugs in chicken urges the development of alternative methods. Moreover, the development of new drugs is very costly. Therefore, there is a strong need to move our treatment and preventive strategies towards vaccination against coccidiosis. In chicken, Eimeria parasites are highly immunogenic, and instead of drugs, vaccination with the formulations containing either attenuated live or virulent parasite has been considered the most efficient method for the protection of breeder and layer flocks from coccidial infections and prevention of the drug residues present in the poultry products.

Biography

Khurram Siraj has completed his F.Sc. at the age of 18 years from Punjab college, Okara, Pakistan. Currently, he is doing a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine from the University of Agriculture, Faisalabad, Pakistan.

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