



VITAMIN A IN BIRD DIETS (THE REAL FACTS)

There is some orchestrated confusion in bird circles about Vitamin A levels in food and possible toxicity from high levels.

The availability of vitamins in the diet and the absorption of vitamins from the gut is complicated and multi-factorial. I have tried to summarise some of the important aspects of Vitamin A as they relate to prepared bird food.

1. There are several different kinds of Vitamin A. This has to be considered when discussing the Vitamin A levels added to prepared foods.
2. Birds will convert β Carotene to Vitamin A in the body so that β Carotene levels are also significant.
3. There are different degrees of absorbability of Vitamin A from the gut. Not only are different types of Vitamin A selectively absorbed, but the level of fat in the diet will change the absorption because Vitamin A is fat soluble.
4. The NHMRC* range for Vitamin A requirement is 2,500 i/u/kg of feed to 10,000 i/u/kg. This is a poultry figure only, there is no caged bird figure available, and nutritionists extrapolate caged bird requirements from poultry data.
5. The NHMRC* toxic level for Vitamin A in poultry feed is 100 to 1000 times the nutritional requirement.
6. The Vitamin A level in feed depends on the processing method of the feed. Vetafarm uses dry extrusion and units of Vitamin A lost in production are allowed for in the formulation.
7. The age of the product from manufacture will affect the Vitamin A level. Vetafarm uses an expiry date and recommended storage conditions to optimise Vitamin A levels.
8. The Vitamin A level in Vetafarm Parrot Pellets Maintenance Diet is 10,000 i/u per kg at manufacture. Vetafarm has stringent quality controls to optimise the important Vitamin A level in its feeds.

*NHMRC = National Health Medical Research Council, (the only world body for recommended vitamin levels)

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This article last updated: March 2004

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