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The 2018 season is upon us, and here at Sportsman Game Feeds, we’ve marked the occasion with the launch of The Sportsman Review, our new seasonal publication.

In this first issue, we delve into the results of our breeder trial work with SRUC, get veterinary surgeon Alan Beynon’s views on antibiotic reduction, and look ahead to the challenges the industry faces as we approach the 2018 season. Plus, you can expect helpful advice for successful rearing and releasing, and our calendar of events throughout the season. It’s a jam-packed issue – we hope you enjoy it!

Introduction

Danny Johnson
Head of Commercial
Sportsman Game Feeds

Keep In Touch

Want to keep up-to-date with the latest developments from Sportsman as they happen? Here’s how:

Visit our website:
sportsmangamefeeds.co.uk

Follow us on LinkedIn:
linkedin.com/company/sportsman-game-feeds/

Join our email mailing list:
sportsman@abagri.com
with OPT IN as the subject line

You can opt out of emails from Sportsman at any time, either by clicking the relevant link in the email itself or emailing sportsman@abagri.com with OPT OUT as the subject line.
Sportsman Completes Pheasant Breeder Trial At SRUC

This season, a pheasant breeder trial was carried out in partnership with SRUC.

The purpose of this trial was to generate data to help us to further improve and develop our feed range. We tested the effect of a selected additive with the potential to improve performance, which was added over the top of the standard Sportsman diets. This is of particular current relevance due to the pressure to reduce the use of antibiotics.

In a trial carried out over a laying period of 8 weeks, pheasants fed the additive had higher egg production, fertility and hatchability and lower rejects. In total, there were 329 more saleable eggs laid by the additive fed birds over the same period of time. This equates to an additional 0.5 pence margin over feed per saleable egg, despite the increased diet cost due to the price of the additive. It is also worth noting that there was no difference in feed consumption between the standard and trial diets.

The increased egg production (Hen Day %) is seen in the graph left.

In addition to a higher number of saleable eggs laid, the pheasants fed the additive also saw a higher % fertility and hatchability leading to a higher number of saleable chicks. Fertility and hatchability were both higher for every hatch, fertility was 4% higher overall and hatchability 8% (N.B. there were no hatchability data for the separate treatments in hatch 1).

The higher fertility and hatchability means that despite the increased cost of the diet due to the additive, the margin over feed per chick was 0.91 pence higher for the additive fed birds, shown in the graphs to the left.

Overall, the additive had a positive effect on pheasant breeder performance, leading to higher production, fertility and hatchability. This in turn led to an increased margin over feed for the birds fed the additive; 0.5 pence additional margin per saleable egg and 0.91 pence increased margin per chick.

With a positive effect of the additive seen on both pheasant performance and financials in this trial, we will continue to conduct trial work in this area to further our understanding of feed performance and development.
Alan Beynon  
Veterinary Surgeon  
St David’s Game Bird Services

What progress have you seen with regards to antibiotic reduction?  
We’re very pleased to announce that as a sector we have reduced our usage of antibiotics in both feed and water by 36% compared to last year. The largest proportion of this reduction was in feed at over 50%.

At a recent meeting between UK game vets, we agreed that this year we would only prescribe the maximum amount in feed for use. Although this sounds like an increase, we felt it was illogical to treat a disease with a suboptimal dose rate which may require more time, or with the addition of in-water medicines as well.

We are keen to progress this route to reduce antibiotic usage further, as in the long term it will benefit the shooting sector as it becomes more efficient. It is imperative however that any disease is treated quickly, correctly and effectively and this still remains our primary focus. The important thing then is to really analyse what went wrong and correct it.

John Round  
Nutritionist  
Sportman Game Feeds

What should I be focusing on to ensure my birds are reared to a high quality?  
Alan: The key to success is attention to detail – planning, water quality, feed, and using your advisors. It should be a team effort. Get your nutritionists, vets and gamekeepers working together to look at gut health, biosecurity and farm management.

What changes have you seen on farms?  
Many game farms are deciding to have more birds in an age group and less age groups on the farm. I think this is a wise decision from a disease perspective and husbandry approach. Fewer age groups mean less disease, fewer antibiotics used and stronger, healthier birds for release.

Traceability is also becoming a common demand. People wish to know where their birds have come from. It’s unsurprising that for the first time I have had shoots requesting a full clinical history with their birds from game farms.

Alan gives his views on best practice game bird laying, rearing and releasing in our video series – watch them at: sportsmangamefeeds.co.uk/videos

The key to success is attention to detail.
Bag It Up

You may have noticed your Sportsman delivery was looking a bit brighter last season – that’s because, following feedback from our customers, we updated our feed bag designs to incorporate bands of bold, bright colours.

You’re probably thinking, “I’m pretty sure I didn’t ask for my feed bag to be more colourful”, and you’d be right. However, what we did get asked for was a way to make life easier for gamekeepers when ordering feed and distributing it across their farm, especially for those whose first language wasn’t English.

That’s where the colours came in – each feed bag was given its own distinct colour that is attributed to the type of feed. So, breeder feeds now come in the brown bag. Starter pellets in the red bag. Essential feeds in the black bag. And so on.

So, when you’re rifling through (no pun intended) your feed stocks and are on the lookout for a particular diet, you know that you need to be looking for a certain colour rather than reading the product name. It’s a small improvement, but it could save you some time.

To find out more about Sportsman’s range of diets, visit: sportsmangamefeeds.co.uk/range-products

Out And About

The Sportsman team will be attending various industry events throughout the season. Please contact your local sales manager for specific events, locations and dates.

We have confirmed our attendance at the below events – be sure to mark the dates in your calendar!

**West Of England Game Fair**
Somerset
**17th-18th March**
2018

**East Anglian Game & Country Fair**
Thetford
**28th & 29th April**
2018

**Northern Shooting Show**
Harrogate
**12th-13th May**
2018

**Highclere Country Show**
Newbury
**27th-28th May**
2018

**Scottish Game Fair**
Perth
**30th June-2nd July**
2018

**Game Fair**
Warwickshire
**27th-29th July**
2018

**Owls Lodge Game Fair**
Winchester

Sportsman Strengthens Relationship With The NGO

Sportsman Game Feeds are proud partners of the National Gamekeepers’ Organisation. We will be regularly featuring in their Keeping the Balance magazine, as well as on their website and in their emails to members, so look out for updates from us throughout the season.

In the February issue of Keeping the Balance, our Poultry Nutritionist John Round will be talking about the raw materials used in Sportsman feeds, looking closely at breeder feeds in particular.
Soya meal is an important component of Sportsman feeds as a high quality protein source. That’s why we’ve recognised the importance of protecting this natural resource through high levels of human and social responsibility in the soya supply chain.

Sportsman Game Feeds will therefore buy responsibly sourced soya for all of its requirements for 2018 onwards. This means that we will support growers that are members of a relevant assurance scheme that requires them to protect the environment, treat their workers fairly, engender good relations with local communities, farm using good agricultural practices and conform to local laws and land rights.

All responsible soya schemes supported by Sportsman meet the European Feed Manufacturer’s Federation (FEFAC) benchmark standard. The FEFAC benchmark standard was developed by the FEFAC Sustainability committee working with International Trade Centre (ITC) to establish a minimum EU standard for Responsible Soya schemes. Schemes submit their criteria to the ITC for an independent assessment that they conform to the required EU standard.

Essential criteria for all schemes approved by the FEFAC benchmark include the following.

Environment – the prevention of deforestation and the protection and preservation of land.

Good agricultural practice – minimising the impact of the use of agrochemicals to human health, wildlife, plant biodiversity, water quality, soil quality and air quality.

Human and social – workers are treated and paid fairly, in a safe working environment.

For more information, visit the FEFAC website at: [www.fefac.eu](http://www.fefac.eu)
Sportsman Launches
New Best Practice Videos

At Sportsman Game Feeds, we don’t just aim to provide high quality and high performing feed, but also exceptional service and advice to our customers. That’s why we’ve produced handy, best practice videos on how you can achieve the best possible results on farm, and the important role that feed plays.

Visit the Sportsman website to watch our videos: sportsmangamefeeds.co.uk/videos

What Our Customers Say

“"We’ve been working with Sportsman’s Game Feed for over 30 years. They supply all our feed. Brilliant company."”
Nick Pardoe, Bonsonwood Game Farm

“I've been using Sportsman’s game feeds for 32 years now. I've been pleased with Sportsman right from when I first started keepering. It really grows the pheasants on as I'd like as a head keeper.”
Robert Mitchell, North Molton Game Farm

Closing Comments

I joined the Sportsman Game Feeds team in October 2002. During my tenure every year has thrown up many challenges, some the same old chestnuts but often new ones to test our mettle... I do not expect 2018 to be any different! In our new newsletter, some of those challenges are highlighted in articles written by experts in their field.

As a business we are always looking to improve our product quality and performance. Equally, we strive to provide the best service levels to all of our customers. Should you wish to make a comment about us and our business please do not hesitate in contacting your local representative.
Thanks For Reading

We hope you’ve enjoyed this issue of The Sportsman Review. If you have any questions, comments, views on industry topics or if you’d like to share your experience with Sportsman Game Feeds please get in touch with us at sportsman@abagri.com. We’ll feature the best topics in our next publication.

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