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**Dose-response relationships between intake
and efficiency of utilisation of individual
amino acids in chicken**



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Dose-response relationships between intake and efficiency
of utilisation of individual amino acids in chicken

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Table of content	Page
1 Introduction	1
2 Approaches to study efficiency and requirement	3
2.1 The linear slope	3
2.2 Non-linear models and marginal efficiency	5
2.3 Cumulative efficiency	8
2.4 Estimation of amino acid requirement	9
3 Materials and Method	12
3.1 General procedures for the dose-response experiments	12
3.1.1 Animals, housing and diets	12
3.1.2 Killing and handling procedure	14
3.1.3 Processing of whole body samples	15
3.2 Details of the experiments	15
3.2.1 Lysine experiment	15
3.2.1.1 Dose-response experiment	15
3.2.1.2 Diets	16
3.2.2 Sulphur containing amino acid experiment	17
3.2.2.1 Dose-response experiment	17
3.2.2.2 Diets	18
3.2.3 Valine experiment	20
3.2.3.1 Dose-response experiment	20
3.2.3.2 Diets	20
3.2.4 Tryptophan experiment	22
3.2.4.1 Dose-response experiment	22
3.2.4.2 Diets	22
3.3 Digestibility studies	24
3.4 Chemical analysis	24
3.5 Calculations, statistical analysis and curve fitting	26
4 Results	28
4.1 Lysine experiment	28
4.1.1 Dose-response experiment	28
4.2 Sulphur containing amino acid experiment	37
4.2.1 Dose-response experiment	37
4.2.1.1 Response of broiler chicks to sulphur containing amino acid: Effect of methionine or methionine and cysteine supplementation	37

4.2.1.2 Response of broiler chicks to sulphur containing amino acid: Effect of crude protein level on methionine utilisation	47
4.3 Valine experiment	51
4.3.1 Dose response experiment	51
4.4 Tryptophan experiment	56
4.4.1 Dose-response experiment	56
4.5 Digestibility studies	59
5 Discussion	61
5.1 General discussion	61
5.2 Effect of increasing dietary amino acid concentration on the efficiency of amino acid utilisation	65
5.2.1 Efficiency of lysine utilisation	65
5.2.2 SAA utilisation	69
5.2.2.1 Efficiency of SAA utilisation	69
5.2.2.2 Effect of dietary crude protein concentration on the efficiency of methionine utilisation	70
5.2.3 Efficiency of valine utilisation	73
5.2.4 Efficiency of tryptophan utilisation	74
5.3 Amino acid requirement	77
5.3.1 Effect of increasing dietary lysine concentration on growth performance	77
5.3.2 Sulphur containing amino acid	78
5.3.2.1 Effect of increasing SAA concentration on growth performance	78
5.3.2.2 Effect of crude protein concentration on methionine requirement	82
5.3.3 Effect of increasing valine concentration on growth performance	84
5.3.4 Effect of increasing tryptophan concentration on growth performance	85
5.4 Effect of amino acid intake on chemical body composition	86
5.4.1 Effect of increasing amino acid concentration on protein deposition and composition of gained body protein	86
5.4.1.1 Amino acid composition of gained body protein	89
5.4.2 Effect of increasing amino concentration on lipid deposition and lipid concentration in gained BW	92
5.5 Net disappearance rate	95
5.6 Conclusions	97
6 Summary	99
7 References	107
8 Appendices	117

List of Tables	Page
TABLE 1. Lysine, methionine/SAA, valine and tryptophan requirements of broiler chicken derived from dose response experiments	10
TABLE 2. Supplemental levels of free amino acids added to basal diets (g/kg)	13
TABLE 3. Composition of the diets in the lysine experiment and analysed concentrations (g/kg)	16
TABLE 4. Composition of the diets in the SAA experiment and analysed concentrations (g/kg)	19
TABLE 5. Composition of the diet in the valine experiment and analysed concentrations (g/kg)	21
TABLE 6. Composition of the diet in the tryptophan experiment and analysed concentrations (g/kg)	23
TABLE 7. Results of the parameter estimate for growth performance criteria, accretions and lysine in gained body protein in male chicken of two different genotypes during d 8 to 21 of age (n = 3 pens of 10 birds per treatment) and the lysine concentration needed to achieve 95% of y_{\max}	30
TABLE 8. Effect of dietary lysine concentration on growth, intakes, and feed conversion of male chickens from a broiler (B) or a layer (L) genotype (Gt) during d 8 to 21 of age (n = 3 pens of 10 birds per treatment)	31
TABLE 9. Effect of dietary lysine concentration on accretion and composition of gain of male chickens from a broiler (B) or a layer (L) genotype (Gt) during d 8 to 21 of age (n = 3 pens of 10 birds per treatment)	32
TABLE 10. Effect of dietary lysine concentration on the amino acid pattern in body protein gained by male chickens of two different genotypes (B: broiler hybrid; L: layer hybrid) during d 8 to 21 of age (n = 3 pens of 10 birds per treatment)	35
TABLE 11. Results of the parameter estimate for growth performance criteria, accretions and methionine in gained body protein in growing male chicken during d 8 to 21 of age (n = 3 pens of 10 birds per treatment) and the SAA concentration needed to achieve 95% of y_{\max}	39
TABLE 12. Effect of dietary SAA concentration on growth, feed intake, and feed conversion of male broiler chicken during d 8 to 21 of age (n = 3 pens of 10 birds per treatment)	42
TABLE 13. Effect of dietary SAA concentration on fractions of gain in growing male broiler chicken during d 8 to 21 of age (n = 3 pens of 10 birds per treatment)	43
TABLE 14. Effect of dietary SAA concentration on compositions of gain in growing male broiler chicken during d 8 to 21 of age (n = 3 pens of 10 birds per treatment)	44

TABLE 15.	Effect of dietary SAA concentration on amino acid composition of body gained protein in growing male broiler during d 8 to 21 of age (n = 3 pens of 10 birds per treatment)	45
TABLE 16.	Results of the parameter estimate for growth performance criteria, accretions and methionine in gained body protein in growing male chicken during d 8 to 21 of age (n = 3 pens of 10 birds per treatment) and the methionine concentration needed to achieve 95% of y_{\max}	48
TABLE 17.	Effect of dietary valine on growth performance criteria, accretion and composition of gain in male broiler chicken (n=3 pens of 10 birds per treatment, growing from d 8 to 21)	52
TABLE 18.	Results of the parameter estimate for growth performance criteria and accretions in growing male chicken during d 8 to 21 of age (n = 3 pens of 10 birds per treatment) and the valine concentration needed to achieve 95% of y_{\max}	53
TABLE 19.	Effect of dietary valine on composition of amino acid in gained body protein in male broiler chicken (n=3 pens of 10 birds per treatment, growing from d 8 to 21)	54
TABLE 20.	Effect of dietary tryptophan on growth, feed intake, feed conversion, composition of gain and tryptophan in gained body protein in male broiler chicken (n=3 pens of 10 birds per treatment, growing from d 8 to 21)	57
TABLE 21.	Results of the parameter estimate for growth performance criteria, accretions and composition of gain in growing male chicken during d 8 to 21 of age (n = 3 pens of 10 birds per treatment) and the tryptophan concentration needed to achieve 95% of y_{\max}	58
TABLE 22.	Net disappearance rate of crude protein and amino acids in growing birds fed four EAA diets	60
TABLE 23.	BW gain and gain/feed from the present study in comparison to those given in recommendations	61
TABLE 24.	Effect of mathematical model on AA requirement derived using two non-linear functions (Eq. 2 and 3: see Section 3.5 for details)	64
TABLE 25.	Marginal efficiency of EAA utilisation as a function of dietary EAA intake in the dose-response experiments	76
TABLE 26.	Selected amino acid composition in gained body protein of growing male chicken fed increasing concentration of lysine, methionine or valine concentrations (g/16 g N)	91

List of Figures	Page
FIGURE 1. Schematic relationship between dependent variable (BW gain, nitrogen gain or amino acid gain and the predictor variable (amino acid intake)	3
FIGURE 2. Schematic comparison of slopes of two response variables depending on amino acid intake	5
FIGURE 3. Amino acid accretion and marginal efficiency of amino acid utilisation depending on amino acid intake	7
FIGURE 4. Effect of dietary lysine on BW gain and BW gain/feed ratio of male growing chicken of different genetic background (Av. and SEM; n = 3 pens of 10 birds per treatment, growing from d 8 to 21). Arrows show the x-value needed to achieve 95% of y_{\max} in the different measurement	28
FIGURE 5. Effect of dietary lysine on protein accretion and lysine in gained body protein in male growing chicken of different genetic background (Av. and SEM; n = 3 pens of 10 birds per treatment, growing from d 8 to 21). Arrows show the x-value needed to achieve 95% of y_{\max} in protein accretion	29
FIGURE 6. Effect of dietary lysine intake on lysine accretion (Av. and SEM) and marginal efficiency of lysine utilisation in male growing chicken of different genetic background (n = 3 pens of 10 birds per treatment, growing from d 8 to 21). Arrows show the x-value needed to achieve 95% of y_{\max} in lysine utilisation	29
FIGURE 7. Effect of dietary SAA on BW gain and BW gain/feed ratio (Av. And SEM; n=3 pens of 10 birds per treatment, growing from d 8 to 21). Arrows show the x-value needed to achieve 95% of y_{\max} in the different measurement	37
FIGURE 8. Effect of dietary SAA on protein accretion and methionine in gained body protein (Av. and SEM; n=3 pens of 10 birds per treatment, growing from d 8 to 21). Arrows show the x-value needed to achieve 95% of y_{\max} in protein accretion	38
FIGURE 9. Effect of dietary SAA intake on methionine accretion (Av. and SEM) and marginal efficiency of SAA utilisation (n=3 pens of 10 birds per treatment, growing from d 8 to 21). Arrows show the x-value needed to achieve 95% of y_{\max} in accretion	40
FIGURE 10. Effect of dietary methionine on BW gain and BW gain/feed (Av. and SEM; n=3 pens of 10 birds per treatment, growing from d 8 to 21). Arrows show the x-value needed to achieve 95% of y_{\max} in the different measurement	47
FIGURE 11. Effect of dietary methionine on protein accretion and methionine in gained body protein (Av. and SEM; n=3 pens of 10 birds per treatment, growing from d 8 to 21). Arrows show the x-value needed to achieve 95% of y_{\max} in protein accretion	49

FIGURE 12. Effect of dietary methionine intake on methionine accretion (Av. and SEM) and marginal efficiency of methionine utilisation (n=3 pens of 10 birds per treatment, growing from d 8 to 21). Arrows show the x-value needed to achieve 95% of y_{\max} in accretion	50
FIGURE 13. Response of broiler chickens to dietary valine in BW gain and gain: feed ratio (Av. and SEM, n=3 pens of 10 birds per treatment, growing from d 8 to 21). Arrows show the x-value needed to achieve 95% of y_{\max} in the different measurement	51
FIGURE 14. Response of broiler chickens to dietary valine in protein accretion and valine in gained body protein (Av. and SEM, n=3 pens of 10 birds per treatment, growing from d 8 to 21). Arrows show the x-value needed to achieve 95% of y_{\max} in protein accretion	53
FIGURE 15. Response of broiler chickens to dietary valine in valine accretion (Av. and SEM) and marginal efficiency of valine utilisation (n=3 pens of 10 birds per treatment, growing from d 8 to 21). Arrows show the x-value needed to achieve 95% of y_{\max} in accretion	55
FIGURE 16. Effect of dietary tryptophan on BW gain and protein accretion (Av. and SEM, n=3 pens of 10 birds per treatment, growing from d 8 to 21). Arrows show the x-value needed to achieve 95% of y_{\max} in the different measurement	56
FIGURE 17. Response of broiler chickens to dietary tryptophan in tryptophan accretion (Av. and SEM) and marginal efficiency of tryptophan utilisation (n=3 pens of 10 birds per treatment, growing from d 8 to 21). Arrows show the x-value needed to achieve 95% of y_{\max} in tryptophan accretion	58
FIGURE 18. Marginal and cumulative efficiency of lysine utilisation. Arrows show the x-value needed to achieve 95% of y_{\max} in lysine accretion	66
FIGURE 19. Marginal and cumulative efficiency of SAA utilisation. Arrows show the x-value needed to achieve 95% of y_{\max} in methionine accretion	69
FIGURE 20. Effect of low (M) or high (MP) dietary crude protein concentration on marginal and cumulative efficiency of methionine utilisation. Arrows show the x-value needed to achieve 95% of y_{\max} in methionine accretion	71
FIGURE 21. Marginal and cumulative efficiency of valine utilisation. Arrow shows the x-value needed to achieve 95% of y_{\max} in valine accretion	73
FIGURE 22. Marginal and cumulative efficiency of tryptophan utilisation. Arrow shows the x-value needed to achieve 95% of y_{\max} in tryptophan accretion	74
FIGURE 23. Effect of lysine and methionine intake on fat accretion in male broiler chicken. Methionine was supplemented to two basal diets differing solely in their CP content. Each data point represents one group of 10 birds	93
FIGURE 24. Effect of valine and tryptophan intake on fat accretion in male broiler chicken. Each data point represents one group of 10 birds	93

List of abbreviations

AA	amino acid
ALA	alanine
AME	Apparent metabolisable energy
ARG	arginine
ASP	aspartic acid
BW	body weight
°C	degree Celsius
Cm	centimetre
CP	crude protein
Cys	cysteine
d	day
expt	experiment
g	gram
GLU	glutamic acid
GLY	glycine
EAA	essential amino acid
h	hour
kg	kilogram
ILEU	isoleucine
kJ	kilojoules
Lys	lysine
Met	methionine
N	number
NEAA	non-essential amino acid
NDR	net disappearance rate
PHE	phenylalanine
P	probability
PRO	proline
SAA	sulphur containing amino acid
SE	standard error
SER	serine
Trp	Tryptophan
THR	threonine
Val	Valine
TiO ₂	titanium dioxide

1. Introduction

Optimising dietary amino acid supply to broiler depends on the amino acid requirement of broiler to be measured accurately. To achieve this, the knowledge of individual components of requirement and factors affecting these are needed. Modelling of quantitative amino acid requirement in growing animal requires the knowledge of maintenance need, rate of protein deposition, pattern of amino acid in the deposited protein and efficiency of amino acid utilisation. Feed efficiency and feed intake are also important when amino acid requirement is expressed as dietary concentration. The lack of data on the efficiency of utilisation of essential amino acids (EAA) is the major limitation in modelling amino acid requirement by the factorial approach (Fuller, 1994; Moughan, 2003; Moughan and Fuller, 2003).

Studies specifically aiming at determination of efficiency of amino acid utilisation are rare in growing chicken. Few studies that have been conducted were restricted to the ascending portion of the growth curve where growth appears to respond linear. Even then, protein and amino acid accretion were not measured in all of these studies. Studies on lysine (Edwards et al., 1999), methionine/sulphur containing amino acids (SAA) (Edwards and Baker, 1999), and valine (Baker et al., 1996a) in broiler in which protein and amino acid accretion were measured only cover the suboptimal level of amino acid supply. However studies in which amino acids covered both deficient and optimal supply of lysine in pigs (Gahl et al., 1994), and 9 EAA in rainbow trout (Rodehutscord et al., 1997) have indicated that non-linear relationships exist between intake and efficiency of amino acid utilisation in growing animals. Diminishing return is also apparent in the range of marginal supply from these studies. The nature of relationship observed (linear or non-linear) tends to be determined by the range of dietary amino acid supplementation and the mathematical approach. For non-linear relationship to be detected, levels covering both the sub optimal and optimal levels of amino acid are needed (Rodehutscord and Pack, 1999).

It is commonly assumed that different genotypes within the same species can utilise EAA to the same degree. This is yet to be studied systematically. Genetic selection for high growth rate and breast muscle development has been shown to alter the pattern of protein metabolism (protein synthesis and protein degradation) in growing chicken (Tesseraud et al., 2001) and may mediate these changes through modification of proportion of muscle mass, number of fibre per muscle and the diameter of fibre muscles (Simon, 1989). The implication of these changes in protein synthesis and protein degradation rates has not been examined for efficiency of utilisation of limiting EAA. Obviously higher retention of ingested EAA with

increased growth rate may influence efficiency of utilisation. Equal digestibility of amino acids from the distal ileum of different genotypes within the same species is also assumed.

The main objective of the present studies was to describe the efficiency of amino acid utilisation as a function of dietary intake, starting from a highly deficient situation (growth limiting doses) to more than adequate (maximum response) in male growing chicken. Amino acids considered were lysine, methionine and cysteine, valine, and tryptophan. Attempts were also made to derive amino acid requirements. Digestibility of amino acids from the terminal ileum was also studied. Additional and individual amino acid-related objectives are examined under the respective chapters.

Prior to the presentation of the experimental work, a brief overview about approaches to study efficiencies and requirements in relation to the relevant amino acids will be given.

2 Approaches to study efficiency and requirement

2.1 The linear slope

This method is based on the assumption of a linear relationship between the quantitative dependent or response variable y and the quantitative independent or predictor variable x . That means, the relationship between response (y) and predictor (x) can be sufficiently described with a straight line (Figure 1). This is calculated by fitting a linear regression model to a data set in which y has been plotted against x . This is usually achieved by method of least squares (Motulsky, 1999; Petrie and Watson, 1999).

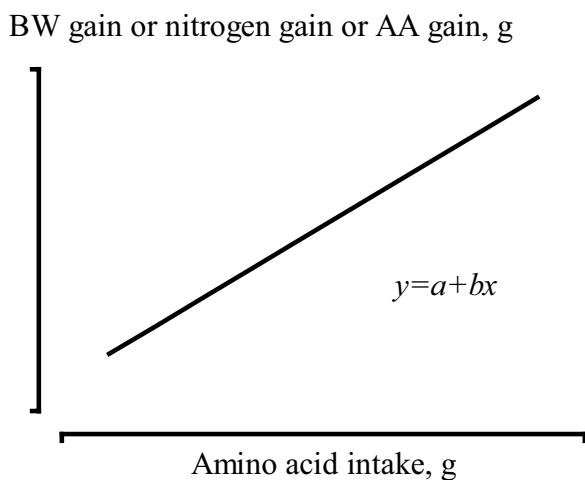


FIGURE 1. Schematic relationship between dependent variable (BW gain, nitrogen gain or amino acid gain) and the predictor variable (amino acid intake).

A simple linear equation is $y = a + bx$, where y is the dependent variable, a is the intercept i.e. the value of y at $x=0$, b is the slope of regression function and x is the predictor variable. With regard to calculation of efficiency of amino acid utilisation, quantitative dependent variable y may represent response in BW gain, nitrogen gain or amino acid gain expressed in grams. Estimated parameter a represents y -intercept or response to zero intake (maintenance requirement). The estimated parameter b can be interpreted as the efficiency of utilisation of the incremental amino acid intake. Predictor variable x represents the amino acid intake in grams.

The independent variable x is assumed to be measured precisely and without error, whereas the dependent variable y is assumed to be a direct consequence of x , i.e. based on the values of x , it should be possible to predict the value of y with accuracy within the scope of the data (cannot be extrapolated beyond data set), but not the other way round. Further assumptions of

linear regression include homoscedasticity, Gaussian distribution, and independence of data points. Details have been reviewed by Motulsky (1999) and Petrie and Watson (1999).

The use of linear regression to describe efficiency of utilisation of incremental amino acid intake is based on the assumption that efficiency of utilisation is constant within the range of amino acid supplied. This range usually covers between deficient supply and up to the range in which the amino acid requirement is met. Studies that focused on determination of efficiency of amino acid utilisation over a wide range of dietary intake for growing chicken are rare. Edwards et al. (1999) focusing on suboptimal level of lysine supply (5 to 95% requirement for maximal growth) employed a linear regression model to describe the efficiency of utilisation of lysine. 76% and 79% efficiency of lysine utilisation were reported for two strains of broilers. Han and Baker (1991) reported an efficiency of lysine utilisation for weight gain of 69% and 67% for two strains (fast and slow growing broilers). Efficiency was calculated by regressing weight gain on digestible lysine intake using a linear regression. Edwards and Baker (1999) studied the efficiency of SAA utilisation either as Met alone (with sufficient dietary Cys) or as a 1:1 mix of Met and Cys in starting male broiler chicks in a dietary range of 5 to 95% of that required for maximal growth rate. The slope of the linear regression of SAA retained depending on SAA intake declined when SAA exceeded 70% of that required for maximum growth rate for Met alone and Met and Cys. Therefore, only the dietary range between 5 and 70% of maximum growth rate was used for the calculation of efficiencies of retention. Efficiencies were reported as 68% for Met alone and 52% for Met plus Cys. Baker et al. (1996a) using a linear regression calculated an efficiency of valine retention of 73% for starting male broiler chicks fed increasing valine concentration covering the range of 5 to 95% of that required for maximal growth rate.

The slope ratio technique is an extension of the linear slope method. It is usually employed for comparisons. It is similarly based on the use of a linear regression model (Figure 2). All assumptions of a linear regression also hold for the slope ratio technique. Common intercept of the response curves (at zero amino acid intake) whose slopes are been compared can also be assumed (Littel et al., 1995). When comparing two responses, solving two linear equations in which a common intercept is assumed results in comparison of slopes i.e. $a + b_1x_1 = a + b_2x_2$ results in $x_1/x_2 = b_2/b_1$ (equation parameters for linear regression are already defined under Section 2.1) (Littel et al., 1995). The same principle is applicable to comparison of more than 2 slopes.

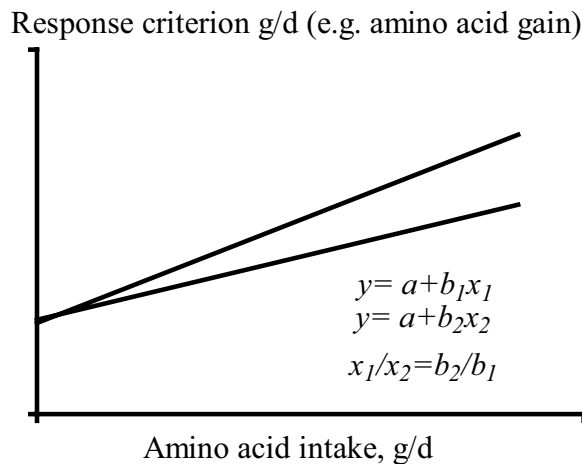


FIGURE 2. Schematic comparison of slopes of two response variables depending on amino acid intake.

This also assumes that efficiency of utilisation of incremental amino acid intake is constant up to the point where the requirement is met. Han and Baker (1991) compared efficiency of lysine utilisation for weight gain in two strains of male broiler (New Hampshire \times Columbian chicks and Hubbard \times Hubbard chicks) using the slope ratio technique. The fast growing (Hubbard chicks) and the slow growing (New Hampshire \times Columbian chicks) had 69 and 67% lysine efficiencies for weight gain, respectively. The slope of regression did not differ significantly between the two strains. Rodehutscord et al. (2000b) in a range of sub optimal dietary lysine supply compared the efficiency of lysine utilisation from L-lysine·HCl (H) and L-lysine sulphate (S) for BW gain and lysine gain in growing rainbow trout. Differences in slopes for BW gain (30 (H) vs. 29% (S)) and lysine gains (70 (H) vs. 66% (S)) between the two lysine sources were insignificant. Rodehutscord et al. (2000a) compared the efficiency of lysine utilisation in suboptimal lysine supply for rainbow trout at two dietary levels of crude protein. The difference of slopes of lysine gain was not significant and efficiency of lysine utilisation was 71% at high crude protein (550 g/kg) and 55% at low crude protein (350 g/kg), respectively.

2.2 Non-linear models and marginal efficiency

Marginal efficiency based on non-linear regression models assumes that the efficiency of utilisation of incremental intake of an amino acid is not constant even in the ascending portion of the response curve below the requirement. This is achieved by plotting the dependent variable y against the predictor variable x . The relationship between response variable y