



## IONOPHORE CASE STUDY NO. 1: RITCHIE-SMITH FEEDS, CANADA

# Continuous use of Maxiban® provides success for feed supplier for *over a decade*



Ritchie-Smith Feeds has supplied feed to farmers in western Canada for 40 years, so the company knows what's going on in its own backyard.

These days, hepatitis and *E. coli* represent the most significant health challenges for broilers, according to Dan Moody, poultry nutritionist at Ritchie-Smith. Coccidiosis and enteritis are rarely seen, he adds, and have been of little concern for over a decade now.

"We haven't had any gut health issues in a long time," Moody says.

What put an end to the coccidiosis and enteritis challenges?

"The change to the right medication."

When coccidiosis last struck, the company tried several medications. "We'd put a new drug in there, and sometimes it would be good and sometimes it wouldn't. Some of the drugs we were using were seriously failing," Moody says.

That changed when Ritchie-Smith turned to Maxiban.

"Things just settled down," he says. "This drug just keeps working, so I'm quite happy to keep on using it."

### History built on quality

Ritchie-Smith produces bulk feed in western Canada for broilers, turkeys, dairy cattle, hogs and layers, plus some specialty feeds. The business operates mills on two sites in British Columbia, one in Abbotsford and one in Grindrod. The company started in the broiler industry, and broilers (mostly Ross 308 and Ross 708) remain an integral part of the operation.

It was founded by Bill Ritchie and David Smith and has been privately owned since its

inception. The two men started out selling feed that performed better than the competition, Moody says, probably due to Smith's background as a nutritionist.

"We carried that on for a lot of years and became known as high-quality, performance-based feed suppliers," says Moody, who's been with the company since 1980. He holds a master's degree in nutrition from the University of Guelph.

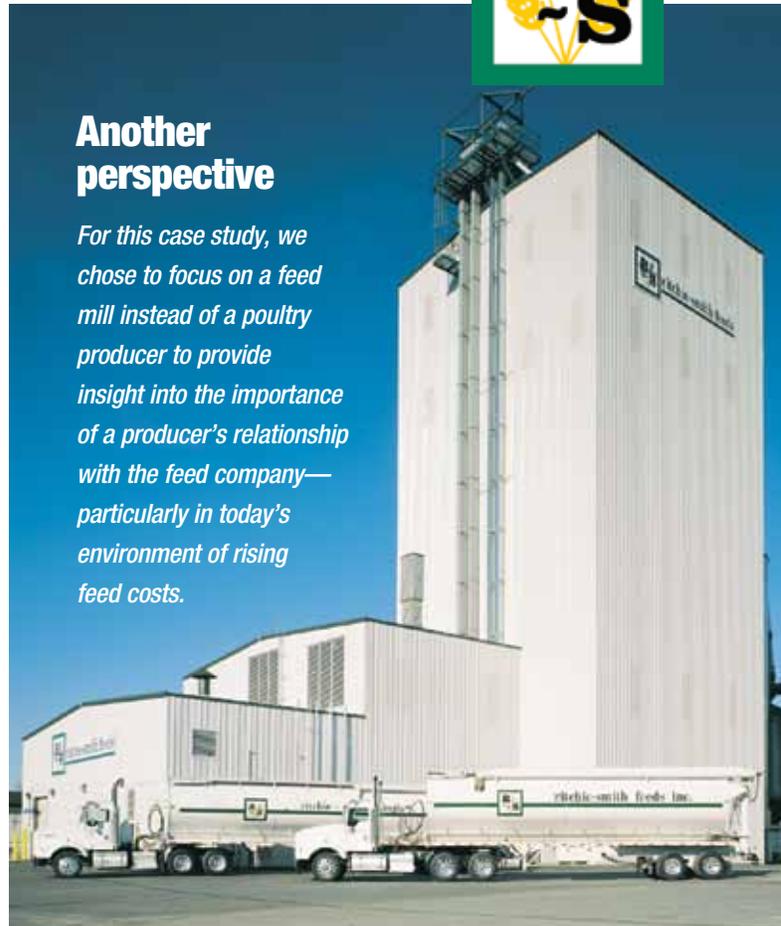
Today, Ritchie-Smith hones that reputation for excellence by providing quality feed and maintaining strong relationships with producers.

"We've got very loyal customers. There are probably customers who haven't bought a pound of feed anywhere else," Moody says. That's likely because the company:

- Helps producers track performance
- Pays for lab work when a poultry vet consultation is needed
- Strives for efficiencies in equipment, facilities and delivery
- Visits barns as warranted
- Compiles its own performance/production reports

### Another perspective

*For this case study, we chose to focus on a feed mill instead of a poultry producer to provide insight into the importance of a producer's relationship with the feed company—particularly in today's environment of rising feed costs.*



*Ritchie-Smith Feeds operates two plants in British Columbia. The company started off in the broiler industry in 1968 and today provides feed for broilers, turkeys, dairy cattle, hogs and layers, plus some specialty feeds.*

Sales personnel incorporate information from the hatchery, processing plant and farm into a production report. "We can look at how we are performing—chart it, graph it, whatever you want," Moody says. "You can see seasonal variation. Wintertime, things get tough; spring and fall, they're usually at their peak. Summertime heat has an influence on performance, and you can see that imprinted on the report."

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— Dan Moody, Ritchie-Smith poultry nutritionist



*Maxiban is for use in starter and grower programs to prevent coccidiosis, which helps protect Intestinal Integrity.*

### The last cocci problem

When the coccidiosis problem surfaced about a decade ago, the company noticed it first in mortality. “We had birds dying,” Moody says. But which came first, the cocci or the enteritis?

“I believe the cocci was the underlying issue and allowed the enteritis to come through,” Moody says.

Nicarbazin and Maxiban solved the coccidiosis problem, but the nicarbazin brought with it some heat-related challenges. Maxiban seemed like a better option than nicarbazin alone. Maxiban combines the strength of an ionophore (narasin) and a chemical (nicarbazin) to prevent coccidiosis in the starter and grower.

When Ritchie-Smith first settled on a Maxiban program, “We did a little switching off of Maxiban the first few years, and our subsidiary did not—and we had a few hiccups and they had none. And I said, ‘OK, I learned my lesson.’ And so I stayed on it since then.”

The company has performed a fair number of health checks over the years regarding resistance or other threats, “and we just haven’t had any problems,” Moody says.

“Once we realized cocci was our underlying issue, we wanted to protect our birds’ health and performance as much as we could, so I carried the anticoccidial right through—all the way to market. And I’m going to stick with it.

“We’ve also used Coban® for the last five or six years from late November. That’s the challenging time of year in terms of litter quality.”

### Stability and performance

Moody sees a big advantage to sticking with Maxiban long term: “I think it helps bring some stability to the gut that allows the program to succeed. When we were switching up the medication, I think we were creating all kinds of havoc and disrupting the stability.”

That stability has resulted in strong metrics for Ritchie-Smith customers. On average, Moody says, birds ship at 37 or 38 days (with a range of 29 to 43). He estimates average weight at about 2.15 kg (4.75 lbs.). Feed conversion stands at about 1.72, depending on the time of year. “In the summer, we expect about 1.7 and in the winter about 1.74.”

Because Ritchie-Smith is in the far end of the country, “freight is a huge issue for us. Nothing is grown locally.” That puts pressure on Ritchie-Smith to be as efficient as possible. “High feed conversions don’t work.”

Moody estimates the average cost to feed a flock today at \$400, and that means feed efficiency is more important than ever. “At today’s feed prices, you can’t afford to be inefficient,” he says.

#### Maxiban directions for use:

- Feed Maxiban at  
– 54-90 g/ton
- Feed continuously as the sole ration
- Requires a 5-day withdrawal

**CAUTION: Ingestion of narasin by adult turkeys, horses or other equine species has been fatal. Do not feed to laying hens.**

#### Coban directions for use:

- Feed Coban at  
– 90-110 g/ton
- Feed continuously as the sole ration
- Requires a zero-day withdrawal  
(when fed according to the label)

**CAUTION: Ingestion of monensin by horses and guinea fowl has been fatal.**

**The labels contain complete use information, including cautions and warnings. Always read, understand and follow the labels and use directions.**

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