

POWERING PROTEIN



Tell us a bit about your role at Tegel?

As Nutrition Manager, my role is to make sure our birds are getting exactly what they need at every stage of their development. That means carefully formulating feed so it supports growth, health, and overall bird wellbeing. It's a balance - giving birds enough nutrients to perform well, without oversupplying what they don't need.

Why is nutrition so important, and what goes into getting it right?

Nutrition is the foundation of animal welfare. When feed is well-balanced, birds absorb nutrients efficiently, which means less excess is excreted. That has a flow-on effect, it helps maintain a healthier environment in the shed and reduces the risk of bacterial growth and disease.

There's a lot that happens before feed reaches the farm. We carefully source and approve our raw materials, analyse nutrients in our labs, and test feed through both small scale trials and commercial farm conditions.

At the same time, we adjust diets depending on the bird's stage of growth - balancing amino acids for growth, calcium and phosphorus for bone strength, and vitamins and minerals for overall health and immunity.

How does your role help to get quality affordable protein on to Kiwi tables?

It starts with feed efficiency. If birds are getting the right balance of nutrients, they can convert feed into growth more effectively. That means less feed is required to produce the same amount of chicken. When feed is used more efficiently, we reduce waste and make better use of the resources going into production. That has a direct impact on cost and the planet.

What kind of innovation is happening in your space?

We're always looking at ways to improve feed performance and bird health. That includes refining nutrient profiles, testing different vitamin and mineral combinations, and introducing feed enzymes to support digestion. These enzymes help birds unlock nutrients that would otherwise go unused, improving efficiency while also supporting better health outcomes.

It's this focus on precision, innovation and continuous improvement that positions Tegel as a leader in delivering quality, affordable protein for New Zealanders.

Rodrigo Gravena - Nutrition Manager