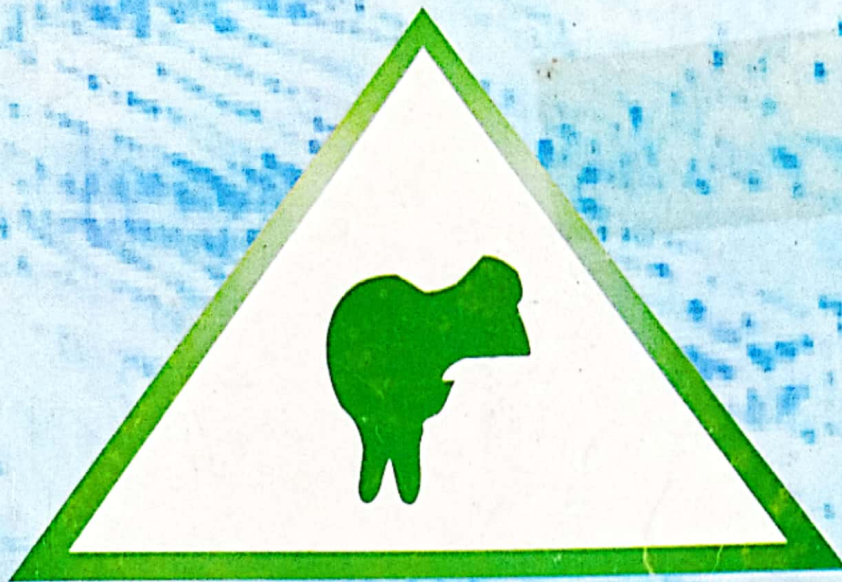


NEW CHALLENGE IN ANIMAL PRODUCTION: THE WAY FORWARD



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Editors

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Physiological and nutritional implications of the antinutritive constituents of jackbean (*Canavalia ensiformis*) seeds : a review.

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Introduction:

The use of untreated (raw) seeds of jackbeans (*Canavalia ensiformis*) in diets of livestock animals is restricted by the presence of various factors which are toxic. However, properly processed jackbean seeds have great potential for inclusion in animal diets when other sources of vegetable protein (soybeans, groundnut cake, and cotton seed meal) are either not available or are too expensive (Perez, 1984; Fabiyi, 1999). When considering toxic and antinutritional factors in the seeds jackbean or other seeds which may serve as potential feedstuff for livestock, it is worth noting that it is only the toxicity associated with oral ingestion of the factor that has any nutritional significance. This is because a factor which may be toxic if injected into the body may not be toxic if orally ingested due to possible modification by the gastro-intestinal tract (Carlini and Udedibie 1997).

Discussion: Anti-nutritive constituents of jackbean plant

The use of legumes for livestock nutrition is impeded by the anti-nutritional substances in their raw seeds and foliage. Anti-nutritional factors are substances that are found in feedstuff which reduce their nutritional value and also affect the animals adversely in various ways. The deleterious effects of ingested raw legumes have been attributed to the presence of anti-nutritional factors. Thus, feeding chickens on diets containing raw legumes depressed growth (Ologhobo, *et al.*, 1993), inhibited amino acid absorption (Santidrian *et al.*, 1988), induced pancreatic hypertrophy (Roebuck, 1986) and caused marked alterations in the normal activities of some hepatic and extrahepatic enzymes (Aletor and Fetuga, 1984). In common with a number of other tropical legumes, both the foliage and seeds of the jackbean plant contain anti-nutritional factors which affect its nutritional quality for monogastric animals.

Concanavalin A: Concanavalin A, a lectin found in jackbean was first described by Sumner and Howell (1936). Concanavalin A constitutes about 20% of the total protein of the seed (Dalkin and Bowles, 1983). Concanavalin A is a potent haemagglutinin and it is capable of agglutinating the erythrocytes of many animal species and can also react with the sugar components of intestinal cells causing a disruption in cell structure which leads to abnormalities in nutrient absorption. Jayne-Williams (1973) postulated that lectin-induced disruption of the intestinal cell structure permits invasion of lymph, blood and liver by bacteria normally confined within the lumen of the gut. Consequently the animal succumbs to otherwise innocuous organisms. Concanavalin A adversely affects nutrient absorption and utilization by various mechanisms. It binds to the glycoprotein and glycolipids of the digestive tract mucosa (Jaffe, 1980), interferes with the adherence of enterobacteria of the intestinal wall (Jayne-Williams, 1973) and inhibits the activity of the enzymes of the brush border of the enterocytes (Rosenthal, 1972). Concanavalin A has been implicated in the pathogenesis of coeliac disease (Kolberg and Sollid, 1985) and likely has several negative effects on protein metabolism, hormonal function, enzyme activities and immune functions (Pusztai, 1989). It induces severe reduction in feed intake of monogastrics (Liener, 1953; Larue - Achagiotis *et al.*, 1992).

Trypsin inhibitors: Trypsin inhibitors have been implicated in reducing protein digestibility and in pancreatic hypertrophy (Liener, 1976). They are polypeptides that form well-characterized stable complexes with trypsin on a one-to-one molar ratio, obstructing the binding sites and disrupting the enzymatic action (Carlini and Udedibie, 1997). Borchers and Ackerson (1950) reported that trypsin inhibitors in the seeds of jackbean were heat-labile. Babar *et al.* (1988) confirmed this by complete inactivation of trypsin inhibitors in jackbean seed and meal following 24 hours of soaking in water prior to cooking for just 20 minutes.

Toxic non- protein amino acids jackbean seeds : Toxic non-protein amino acids appear to play a major role in determining the nutritional value of a number of tropical legumes (D'Mello, 1982). It has been proposed that these amino acids act antagonistically towards certain nutritionally important amino acids (Liener, 1980). Fowden

(1971) suggested that the metabolic pathways culminating in the synthesis of certain non-protein amino acids might reflect subtle alteration in the genome responsible for directing the formation of crucial amino acids. Bell (1971) reported that while non-protein amino acids function primarily as storage metabolites, they may also provide an adaptive advantage to the plants, for example, to render the plant less susceptible to attack by various animals and lower plants. The seeds of jackbean contain two non-protein amino acids, canavanine and its degradation product, canaline (Duke, 1981).

Canavanine: The toxic, non-protein amino acid, canavanine, occurs widely in unbound form in various legumes plants of the family papilionoideae (Bell *et al.*, 1978) and abundantly in *Canavalia ensiformis* (L.) DC. by Katagawa and Tomiyama (1929). Canavanine toxicity in higher animals is not completely understood (Belmar *et al.*, 1999). Canavanine is believed to exert its toxic influence by virtue of its structural similarity with the nutritionally indispensable amino acid, arginine. The toxicity of canavanine to insects (Rosenthal, 1977) and other organisms (Walker, 1955) is well established and the role of this amino acid in plant defence mechanisms was reported by Bell *et al.*, (1978). The deleterious effects of *Canavalia ensiformis* for vertebrate animals have, in part, been attributed to the presence of canavanine (D'Mello *et al.*, 1985). Canavanine may antagonize arginine and interfere with ribonucleic acid (RNA) metabolism (Rosenthal, 1982). Canavanine has been demonstrated to reduce feed intake of non-ruminants but this was observed only at the equivalent of about 300/kg dietary level of raw jackbean (Tschiersch, 1962).

Enneking *et al.* (1993) and Michelangeli and Vargas (1994) reported reduction in feed intake of monogastrics when the feeding of pure canavanine was done. However, the effect of feeding pure canavanine may be different from its effect as a component of a feedstuff because of differences in release in the gut. The heat stability of canavanine poses a formidable problem with regard to detoxification. However, it has been reported that canavanine is hydrosoluble (Obizoba and Obiano, 1988; D'Mello and Walker, 1991).

Canaline: Hydrolytic cleavage of canavanine by arginase results in the production of urea and canaline, a structural analogue of ornithine which is a derivative of arginine. This non-protein amino acid is also found in jackbean seeds. It is also heat-stable, but solubilizes in water. The derivative of canavanine, canaline, inhibits the activity of transaminases (Rosenthal, 1982).

The structural similarity of canaline to ornithine allows canaline to react with the pyridoxal phosphate moiety of BG-containing enzymes to form a covalently bonded stable schiff base. Therefore, canaline has been shown to be a potent inhibitor of pyridoxal phosphate-dependent enzymes (Rahiala, 1973; Rosenthal 1981). However, canaline toxicity in animals has been suggested to occur in the following ways: by inhibition of enzymes, by competition with ornithine in the arginine urea cycle; or by forming a complex with pyridoxal phosphate cofactor in a manner similar to mimosine (Acamovic, 1987).

Saponins: Saponins have been reported to be detectable in jackbeans (Acamovic, 1987; Udedibie *et al.* 1988). Udedibie *et al.* (1988) found that saponins were not detected after boiling jackbeans for the hour. It has been reported that saponins can affect animal performance and metabolism in a number of ways as follows:- erythrocyte haemolysis, reduction of blood and liver cholesterol, depression of growth rate, bloat (ruminants), inhibition of smooth muscle activity, enzyme inhibition and reduction in nutrient absorption. (Cheeke, 1971). Saponins have been reported to alter cell wall permeability and therefore to produce some toxic effect when ingested (Belmar *et al.*, 1999).

Others: About 1.3% of polyphenols have been reported in *Canavalia* and, like trypsin inhibitors, they are destroyed by moist heat (30 minutes) rather than dry heat (Babar *et al.*, 1988). It has been reported that there is 108mg/kg hydrogen cyanide in raw jackbean seeds (SECAB, 1990), although the cyanogenic glycosides and terpenoids in *Canavalia* are eliminated within 30-60 minutes by boiling (Udedibie *et al.*, 1988).

Conclusion: Jackbean has a high potential as a protein replacer, but the toxicity conferred by the heat labile and non - heat labile toxins severely restricts its use in monogastric nutrition. Detoxification of the antinutritional factors is necessary for the improvement in the nutritional quality of the legume and to effectively utilize their full potential as livestock feed ingredient. Several authors have reported that soaking, cooking, toasting, autoclaving, extrusion cooking, sprouting, cracking and chemical treatment improve the quality of the legume, because of the removal or inactivation of the antinutritional factors. In many instances, for effective detoxification process, a combination of two or more methods may be required.

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