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Additional Information

1 Running title: Fishmeal replacement in diets for *S. dumerili*

2	Partial and total fishmeal replacement by a blend of animal and plant proteins in
3	diets for Seriola dumerili (Risso, 1810): Effects on performance and nutrient
4	efficiency.
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Abstract: A 154-day trial was carried out to assess the use of an alternative protein blend
(wheat gluten, corn gluten, krill and meat meal) as a substitute for fishmeal in diets for
juvenile yellowtail, using four isolipidic (140g kg⁻¹) and isoenergetic diets (24MJ kg⁻¹)
with the same digestible protein content (50%). The control diet was FM100, without
replacement and FM66, FM33 and FM0, fishmeal was replaced at 33, 66 and 100%,
respectively.

At the end of the experiment no differences in growth parameters were obtained. Fish fed the FM0 diet exhibited the lowest survival (23%), maybe for a dietary amino acid imbalance or some anti-nutrient factors contained in the alternative sources.

Feed intake, feed conversion ratio, digestible protein intake and protein efficiency ratio 30 were similar in all diets. However, the digestible energy intake and protein efficiency 31 32 retention were lowest in fish fed FMO diet. Apparent digestibility coefficients for protein, energy and amino acids diminished as fishmeal substitution increased. Significant 33 differences were observed in the ratio between diet and whole fish body profile (AAR) 34 for seven essential amino acids. In summary, total fishmeal replacement by the blend 35 assayed was not feasible for yellowtail. The FM66 diet obtained good growth, high 36 37 survival and good nutrient efficiency.

38 Key words: fishmeal replacement, survival, amino acids, digestibility, Seriola dumerili.

39

40 **1. Introduction**

Its fast growth, excellent meat quality, and its recent reproduction in captivity turns the greater amberjack (*Seriola dumerili*, Risso 1810) into one of the most promising species for Mediterranean aquaculture to enhance diversity of fish farms. However, to maintain a profitable commercial culture of the greater amberjack, it is necessary to formulate
specific, healthy, sustainable and low cost diets. In this sense, to avoid the current
dependence on fishmeal for fish diets, it is necessary to include alternative ingredients for
economic and environmental benefits by reducing costs for fish feed, while lessening
fishing pressure on species harvested for fishmeal production, many of which also serve
as important resources in the marine food chain.

Tacon and Metian (2008) reported that 75% of the world fish stocks are currently 50 51 considered fully exploited or overexploited, including many small pelagic fish species used to produce fishmeal for feed formulation worldwide. Since fishmeal production is 52 predicted to be unable to sustain the growth of the aquaculture sector, the quest for 53 54 alternative ingredients and protein sources and as well as the optimization of dietary 55 protein content are important goals. Studies carried out on the effects of alternative protein inclusion in diets for the greater amberjack are scarce. Hitherto, there is only one 56 57 study on the subject which reported a range of 20% to 30% as the maximum level of soybean dietary inclusion for the Mediterranean yellowtail, as the inclusion of a greater 58 amount led to poor growth and insufficient nutrient efficiency (Tomás et al., 2005). 59

60 However, there are some studies available with other amberjack species. Several studies on the nutritional requirements of the Japanese yellowtail (Seriola quinqueradiata) have 61 been published (Takeda et al., 1975; Shimeno et al., 1980; Shimeno, 1982, 1991; 62 Takeuchi et al., 1992b; Ruchimat et al., 1997a, b), including lipid (Takeuchi et al., 63 64 1992c), and carbohydrate requirements (Furuichi et al., 1986; Takeuchi et al., 1992a). Also, soybean meal as an alternative protein source has been considered as part of 65 66 Japanese yellowtail diets (Viyakarn et al., 1992; Watanabe et al., 1992), reporting 67 negative effects on growth with a fishmeal substitution above 30%. Blends of alternative proteins have been used to achieve fishmeal substitution by up to 10-40% (depending on 68

the ingredients and their proportion in the blends) without negative effects on fish 69 70 performance. Soybean, gluten, rapeseed and meat meal (Shimeno et al., 1993a, b), soybean, corn gluten, meat meal and blood meal (Aoki et al., 2000a), as well as poultry 71 72 and feather meal (Shimeno et al., 2000) have been tested in fishmeal substitution trials. However, these studies cannot be extrapolated to the Mediterranean yellowtail since it 73 74 has a lower growth than the Japanese yellowtail, which could have some influence on the 75 inclusion of optimum vegetable levels in diets, as its essential amino acid requirements 76 might be different.

77 Another amberjack studied is the yellowtail kingfish (Seriola lalandi), which is a highly appreciated fish in many Asian countries such as Japan, China, Singapore and Korea. 78 79 Some alternative proteins have been assayed as a replacement of fishmeal in the yellowtail kingfish. For example, the development of an experimental soy-based diet 80 (Jirsa et al., 2011) has demonstrated the potential of the inclusion of soy protein in diets 81 82 for this species. On the other hand, recent studies on the yellowtail kingfish have observed growth detriment and intestinal alterations with soybean meal and soy protein concentrate 83 use (Bowyer et al., 2013a, b; Bansemer et al., 2015) at 30% of dietary inclusion. 84

85 Amino acids (AAs) are responsible for the synthesis of most body tissues, enzymes, hormones and other metabolic molecules, and it is clear that no fish can grow or reproduce 86 without a continuous supply of protein (Limin et al., 2006). Since particular metabolic 87 88 functions require specific AAs, it is crucial that fish ingest, digest and bio-assimilate the 89 necessary AAs from protein sources. Therefore, protein quality is generally evaluated according to its amino acid content. The ideal dietary AA profile could be simulated with 90 91 a protein mixture, and, thus a high fishmeal substitution could be successfully achieved 92 as reported in other carnivorous species (Kaushik *et al.*, 2004; Kissil & Lupatsch, 2004; Espe et al., 2006; Sánchez-Lozano et al., 2009; 2011; Monge-Ortiz et al., 2016. 93

Nevertheless, high or total fishmeal dietary replacement may produce non-desirable 94 95 effects on fish, mainly caused by anti-nutrients particularly contained in vegetable proteins (Francis et al., 2001). Protease enzyme activity decreases and therefore low 96 97 protein digestibility (Spinelli et al., 1983), higher susceptibility to pathogenic infections (Maita et al., 1998), higher mortality (Estruch et al., 2015) due to immunosuppression 98 (Sitjà-Bobadilla et al., 2005), are some of the effects observed. The combination of animal 99 proteins (defatted krill and meat meal) in diets for fish could address some of these 100 101 deficiencies, reducing anti-nutrient compounds, the supplementation with synthetic AAs (Lu et al., 2015), lack of palatability and 'green liver' (Watanabe et al., 1995). 102

So far, experimental cultures aimed at the development of the greater amberjack in the Mediterranean have often failed due to parasite and/or pathogenic infections, particularly in juvenile fish. Considering the above-listed negative effects of fishmeal replacement, the design of specific diets suitable for the optimal rearing of the greater amberjack is crucial.

Taking into account these facts and the scarcity of nutritional studies in the greater amberjack on the effects of fishmeal replacement in diets, the aim of this work was to assess fishmeal replacement by a blend of proteins in diets for this species not only with regard to growth, but also evaluating nutritive and amino acid efficiency.

112

113 **2. Materials and methods**

114 2.1 Production system

The trial was carried out in 12 cylindrical fibreglass tanks (1750 L) inside a recirculated seawater system (75 m³ capacity) with a rotary mechanical filter and a gravity bio-filter (approximately 6 m³ capacity) at the Aquaculture Laboratory (Animal Science)

118 Department at Polytechnic University of Valencia, Valencia, Spain). The marine water in119 the system was changed once every three months.

120 The experimental period was 154 days (from January to June 2014). The water temperature was maintained at 21.5 ± 2.4 °C during the experimental period by a water 121 conditioning pump (TRANE CAN 490, 123.3 kW) installed in the system. All tanks were 122 equipped with aeration and the level of dissolved oxygen was $6.6 \pm 1.3 \text{ mg L}^{-1}$. Water 123 salinity was 31.5 ± 4.1 g L⁻¹, pH 7.3 ± 0.4 , NO₃⁻ (25-150 mg L⁻¹), NO₂⁻ (0.05-0.5 mg L⁻¹) 124 ¹) and the ammonium value was undetectable. The photoperiod was natural throughout 125 the experimental period (16L/8D in summer and 12L/12D in winter) and all tanks had 126 127 similar lighting conditions. All these parameters were measured on a daily basis from 128 Monday to Saturday.

129

130 2.2 Fish and experimental design

Greater amberjack (*Seriola dumerili*) juveniles were obtained from a fish farm (Futuna
Blue, Cádiz, Spain), transported live to the Aquaculture Laboratory of Polytechnic
University of Valencia and randomly distributed in experimental tanks.

Prior to the feeding trial, all fish were acclimatised to the indoor rearing conditions for 4 weeks and fed a standard diet (550 g/kg crude protein, CP; 140 g/kg crude lipid, CL; 110 g/kg ash; 22 g/kg crude fibre, CF; and 140 g/kg nitrogen free-extract, NFE). Groups of 137 19 fish (average weight 38.4 ± 11.6 g) were housed in 12 cylindrical fibreglass tanks (three per treatment). All fish were weighed every 30 days. Previously, fish were anaesthetized with 30 mg L⁻¹
clove oil (Guinama®), containing 87% eugenol. The fish were not fed for one day before
weighing.

At the beginning of the experimental trial, 5 fish were sampled and stored at -30°C for
subsequent whole-body composition analyses. The fish were slaughtered by a thermoshock in a melting ice bath.

At the end of the growth trial, all fish per tank were sampled to determine biometric parameters (viscerosomatic and hepatosomatic indices, condition factor and mesenteric fat) and three specimens per tank were randomly sampled to determine the proximate and amino acid body composition.

149

150 2.3 Diets and feeding

Four isolipidic (140 g kg⁻¹ of CL) and isoenergetic diets (24 MJ kg⁻¹ of gross energy, GE) were formulated (Table 1) with the same digestible protein (50%, DP), and from 530 to 633 g kg⁻¹ of crude protein (CP). For diet formulation, individual ingredient digestibility coefficients from a previous study (Tomás *et al.*, 2016) were taken to estimate protein digestibility.

FM100 was used as the control diet without any fishmeal substitution. In the FM66, FM33
and FM0 diets, fishmeal was replaced by an alternative protein blend (wheat gluten meal,
corn gluten meal, krill meal and meat meal) at 33, 66 and 100%, respectively.

20 g kg⁻¹ of vitamins and minerals were added in all the diets, and the FM33 and FM0
diets were supplemented with synthetic L-Met and L-Lys in amounts of 3 to 5 g kg⁻¹,
respectively, to simulate the digestible amino-acid profile of the fishmeal diet. The

primary lipid source in all feeds was fish oil, with levels of about 90 g kg⁻¹ of dry matter.
The composition of the experimental diets and their proximate values are shown in Table
1.

Diets were prepared by cooking extrusion processing with a semi-industrial twin-screw extruder (CLEXTRAL BC-45). The processing conditions were as follows: 0.63 g speed screw, 110°C temperature, 40-50 atm pressure, producing pellets having a 3 to 5 mm diameter. Experimental diets were assayed in triplicate. Fish were fed by hand twice a day (9:00 and 17:00 h) from Monday to Saturday until apparent satiation. Pellets were distributed slowly, allowing all fish to eat and the total amount of feed distributed was recorded.

172

173 2.4 Proximate composition and amino acid analysis

174 Chemical analysis of the dietary ingredients was performed prior to diet formulation. 175 Dietary ingredients, diets (Table 1), as well as the whole fish, were analysed according to AOAC (1995) procedures: dry matter (drying at 105 °C to constant weight), ash 176 177 (incinerated at 550 °C to constant weight), crude protein by the Kjeldahl procedure (N x 6.25) after acid digestion (2300 Kjeltec Analyzer Unit) and by the Dumas principle, crude 178 lipids were extracted with diethyl ether (ANKOM XT10). Energy was calculated according 179 to Brouwer (1965), from the C (g) and N (g) balance ($GE = 51.8 \times C - 19.4 \times N$). Carbon 180 and nitrogen were analysed by the Dumas principle (TruSpec CN; Leco Corporation, St. 181 182 Joseph, MI, USA).

Following the method previously described by Bosch *et al.* (2006), amino acids of diets
(Table 2), fish carcasses and faeces were analysed in a Waters HPLC system (Waters
474) consisting of two pumps (Model 515; Waters), an auto sampler (Model 717; Waters),

a fluorescence detector (Model 474; Waters) and a temperature control module.
Aminobutyric acid was added as an internal standard after hydrolysation. Amino acids
were derivatised with AQC (6-aminoquinolyl-N-hydroxysuccinimidyl carbamate).
Methionine and cysteine were determined separately as methionine sulphone and cysteine
acid after oxidation with performic acid. Amino acids were separated with a C-18 reversephase column Waters AcQ. Tag (150 mm x 3.9 mm).

All analyses were performed in triplicate except faeces analysis, which was performed induplicate.

194 2.5 Digestibility and retention estimations

195 Simultaneously with the feeding trial, 16 fish were used in a trial designed to determine 196 the apparent digestibility of the experimental diets. The digestibility system was constructed according to the Guelph System protocol (Cho, Slinger & Bayley, 1982), 197 198 using 4 digestibility tanks (4 fish/tank). The water temperature averaged $20.5 \pm 2.1^{\circ}$ C. The same four diets were used but chromium oxide (5 $g kg^{-1}$) was added as inert marker. 199 200 The fish groups were fed the experimental diets along a 30-35 day period, and wet faecal 201 content was collected and freeze-dried prior to analysis. Chromium oxide was determined 202 in the diets and in faeces using an atomic absorption spectrometer (Perkin Elmer 3300) 203 after acid digestion.

- The apparent digestibility coefficients (ADCs) for protein, energy, dry matter and amino acids for the diets tested were calculated with the following formula:
- 206 ADC (%) = 100 x [1-(F/D x DCr/FCr)],

207	where F is the percentage of nutrient or energy in faeces, D is the percentage of nutrient
208	or energy in the diet, DCr is the percentage of chromic oxide in the diet and FCr is the
209	percentage of chromic oxide in faeces (Cho & Kaushik, 1990).
210	Protein and AA retention efficiencies were calculated as follows:
211	• Ingested protein retention (IPR) or digested protein retention (DPR) :
212	IPR (%) = 100 X fish protein gain (g)/ crude protein intake (g)
213	DPR (%) = 100 x fish protein gain (g)/ digestible protein intake (g)
214	• Amino acid retention efficiency (AARE) or digestible amino acid retention
215	efficiency (DAARE):
216	Amino acid retention efficiency (AARE) (%) = 100 x fish amino acid gain
217	(g)/ingested amino acid (g)
218	Digestible amino acid retention efficiency (DAARE) (%) = 100 x fish amino acid
219	gain (g)/digested amino acid (g)
220	2.6 Statistical analysis
221	Results from growth data and nutritive parameters were treated using multifactor analysis
222	of variance (ANOVA), introducing the initial live weight as covariate (Snedecor &
223	Cochran, 1971) to assess the final weight and specific growth rate (SGR). Digestibility
224	and nutritive efficiency data were treated using a one-way ANOVA. The Newman-Keuls
225	test was used to assess specific differences among individual diets at 0.05 significant level
226	(Statgraphics, Statistical Graphics System, Version Plus 5.1).

227 2.7 Ethical statement

The *Seriola dumerili* study complied with European Union Council Directive 2010/63/ UE, which lays down minimum standards for the protection of animals, and was also in accordance with Spanish national legislation (Spanish Royal Decree 53/2013) protecting animals used in experimentation and for other scientific purposes. The experimental protocol was approved by the Ethics Committee of Polytechnic University of Valencia (UPV).

Fish in the tanks were checked on a daily basis. Also, fish were weighed individually every four weeks and their health status was assessed through observation, after sedation with clove oil dissolved in water (0.01 mg/l of water) to minimise animal suffering. Animals were euthanised by an excess of clove oil (150 mg/l) and then dissected.

238

239 **3. Results**

Survival of fish at day 119 of the experiment was around 90%, but was negatively affected at day 154 due to a non-specific fish disease causing high mortality (Figure 1). Fish fed the FM0 diet exhibited the lowest survival (23%), while fish fed the FM100, FM66 and FM0 diets presented similar survival rates (from 75 to 86%).

All experimental fish groups grew from the beginning of the trial, and at the end of the experiment no differences in growth were obtained as shown in Table 3. Although no significant differences were found, a clear tendency (P<0.05) of diminishing fish growth was observed when the protein mixture dietary levels increased.

With regard to nutritive parameters, no significant differences were obtained among the diets. The digestible energy intake was lower in fish fed the FM0 diet (26.6 kJ 100 g fish⁻¹ 1 day⁻¹) than in fish fed the FM100 and FM66 diets (33.0 and 30.2 kJ 100 g fish⁻¹ day⁻¹, respectively). No differences were found among diets in the protein efficiency ratio (PER), however, this index showed a significant diminishing tendency (P<0.05) with thedietary protein blend increase.

Concerning biometric parameters (Table 4), significant differences were observed in the
viscerosomatic index (VSI), showing the highest value in fish fed the FM0 diet (5.87%).
Neither the hepatosomatic index (HSI) nor the visceral fat index (MF) presented any
significant differences among diets.

In terms of whole-body composition, significant differences were found in protein contents. Fish fed the control diet (FM100) showed the highest value (192.2 g kg⁻¹) and fish fed the FM0 diet presented the lowest (177.7 g kg⁻¹). The moisture content, lipid and ash were not affected by the level of fishmeal substitution.

Only protein efficiency retention showed significant differences (IPR, %). The value of 262 fish fed the FM0 diet (17.5%) was significantly lower than that related to the FM100 and 263 264 FM66 diets (23.7 and 21.9%, respectively), but no differences regarding the FM33 diet 265 were found. In general, the FMO diet exhibited lower retention values than the other diets. Regarding the dietary EAA level (Table 2), a slight decrease of Leu was observed in the 266 FM100 diet (42.9 g kg⁻¹). The level of other dietary EAAs was similar among 267 experimental diets. The FM66 and FM0 diets showed the lowest Lys content (29.2 and 268 28.0 g kg⁻¹); although the latter had been supplemented with synthetic L-Lys. However, 269 the dietary Met level did not present any differences. Moreover, the EAA/NEAA ratio 270 271 was lower in the FM0 diet than the FM100 diet (0.82 vs. 0.99) as a consequence of the 272 increased NEAA dietary levels as of dietary fishmeal substitution increased.

Regarding the ADC coefficients (Table 5), no differences were found in ADC for dry
matter. However, the ADC for protein diminished according to the fishmeal substitution,
so that the FM0 diet obtained a lower value (75.7 %) than the FM100 and FM66 diets

(93.7 and 86.8 %, respectively). Likewise, the energy ADC coefficient in the FM0 diet
was the lowest (68.5 %), followed by the FM33 diet (76.5 %).

The same tendency observed in the ADC for protein was shown in individual amino acids
(ADC^{AA}). In general, considering the EAA only, ADC^{AA} increased with the fishmeal
dietary content, and only the Met, Val and Thr did not show any significant differences.
Lys presented the lowest digestibility in the FM0 diet (69.4 %). For NEAA, the ADC^{AA}
was affected with significant differences in the case of Ala, Cys, Glu, Pro and Tyr.

Figure 2 shows the digestible EAA intake ratio (g AA Kg of fish⁻¹ day⁻¹, DAA). ADC^{AA} had a high influence on this index, particularly on the Lys intake ratio, which resulted significantly higher in fish fed the control diet (FM100) than those fed the FM0 diet. Furthermore, no significant differences were detected between the FM66 and FM33 diets.

At the end of the trial, the experimental diets caused significant differences in the Arg, and Gly levels of the entire fish-body (Table 6). Fish fed the FM100 and FM0 diets, showed the highest and the lowest value, respectively, but no significant differences were observed between fish fed the FM66 and FM33 diets. The EAA/NEAA ratio of whole body was similar among all the experimental diets.

The amino acid retention efficiency (%) of ingested (A) and digested (B) EAA in fish fed 292 the experimental diets at the end of the experiment is shown in Figure 3A and Figure 3B, 293 294 respectively. Without considering the diet effect, His and Lys efficiency retention showed the highest efficiency values (27.83 and 33.14%), while Leu and Phe efficiency retention 295 presented the lowest values (18.88 and 18.12 %, respectively). Concerning the efficiency 296 retention of EAA ingested (%), fish fed the FM0 diet showed lower Met retention (19.79 297 %) than fish fed the FM100 and FM66 diets (26.16 and 30.25 %, respectively). In the 298 efficiency retention of EAA digested, fish fed the FMO diet exhibited the highest Lys 299

efficiency retention (50.99 %) and fish fed the FM100 diet the lowest (30.94 %). The
efficiency retention of digested Met resulted higher in fish fed the FM66 diet (33.83 %),
than in fish fed the FM33 and FM0 diets (27.42 and 24.03 %, respectively).

303 The AA index, or ratio between diet and whole fish body EAA profile, is show in Figure

- 4. In the present experiment, significant differences were observed in the AA index, for
- Arg, Ile, Leu, Lys, Met, Thr and Val EAA (Figure 4). Fish fed the FM0 diet exhibiting
- an AA index below that of than 100, except for Leu and Phe, and fish fed the FM100 diet
- 307 presented values higher than 100 for Ile, Leu and Phe EAA.
- In the AA index of Lys a tendency can also be appreciated, that decreased as the dietary
 level of fishmeal substitution increased, particularly, showing a drastic decrease,
 presenting the lowest values in fish fed the FM0 diet (45.43 %).

311

312 4. Discussion

The fish presented a satisfactory growth along the trial. The fact, the SGR average 313 obtained in the present experiment was higher than those obtained in previous studies 314 (Jover et al., 1999; Tomás et al., 2005; Takakuwa et al., 2006b; Tomás et al., 2008). The 315 lower protein crude dietary level (400-550 g kg⁻¹ of CP) formulated in all these 316 317 experiments, compared with those present experiment could be the main cause of a lower growth. However, in a recent study (Dawood et al., 2015), it has been demonstrated that 318 vellowtail fed with moist pellets exhibited a high SGR (2.9 % day⁻¹). In another study 319 320 (Takakuwa et al., 2006a), good growth indices were also obtained, but only considering the feeding period in juveniles. 321

Although, no significant differences were found in growth of fish fed experimental diets, 322 323 a significant negative tendency (P>0.05) was observed in growth when fishmeal 324 substitution was increased; this fact is in accordance with the results obtained in several 325 studies when soybean meal was used at the highest dietary levels as a partial substitute of fishmeal (Tomás et al., 2005; Dawood et al., 2015) or poultry by-product meal 326 (Takakuwa et al., 2006b). And it also agrees with S. quinqueradiata studies, in which the 327 fishmeal content in diets can be reduced to about 300 g kg⁻¹ diet by using alternative 328 329 protein sources (Watanabe et al., 1994; Aoki et al., 2000b), but further replacement of fishmeal by alternative proteins results in inferior growth and feed utilization as well as 330 the development of abnormal physiological conditions, such as anaemia and a higher 331 incidence of green liver originated by biliverdin pigment (Maita et al., 1997). Taurine 332 deficiency is the main reason for the outbreak of green liver in Japanese vellowtail 333 334 (Takagi et al., 2006) and in red sea bream (Goto et al., 2001). In our experiment, green 335 liver was not detected, because the diet contained high Tau concentration supplied in the 336 diets by defatted krill. Therefore, supplementary taurine into the substitute protein diets 337 to keep the hepatic taurine level higher will improve this abnormality by activating the metabolism of the bile pigments. 338

The main problem of total fishmeal replacement by alternative protein sources in this 339 340 experiment was the high mortality observed during the last 30 days, causing the death of 75% of the fish fed that diet. The survival of fish fed the FM0 diet before this episode 341 was 95%, similar to the other diets fed. However, a direct causal agent causing this 342 343 mortality was no detected. From the biopsies carried out in dead fish, three species of 344 Vibrio sp. susceptible to quinolones and having an intermediate resistance to 345 tetracyclines, enhanced sulfonamides and penicillin were detected. However, the bacterial 346 infection was ruled out as the main cause of the mortality, but rather Vibrio sp. acted as

opportunistic agents in fish with a suppressed immune system, possibly due to the dietary 347 348 effect. Similar to the Japanese yellowtail, fish fed a non-fishmeal diet initially fed actively and grew normally, but thereafter growth stagnated, and high mortality was found due to 349 350 a bacterial infection (Maita et al., 1998). In addition, fish fed a non-fishmeal diet exhibited anaemia and hypocholesterolemia (Maita et al., 1997, 1998, 2006; Dawood et al., 2015). 351 352 The susceptibility to opportunistic infections due to the weakening of the fish immune 353 system has also been seen in other species (Estruch et al., 2015), when were feed without 354 dietary fishmeal.

355 This weakening on the immune system can be also explained in the nutrient availability (there is a very clear decrease in the protein and energy digestibility of the FMO diet) 356 357 caused by some anti-nutrient factors contained not only in vegetable meals but also in 358 krill by-product. In the case of krill, arthropods are usually poor in carbohydrates, but they contain chitin, composed of an unbranched polymer of N-acetylglucosamine that 359 360 might reduce the access of chitinases or proteinases to their substrates and prevents 361 proteins and lipids absorption in the intestine producing a low nutrient efficiency and decreasing growth (Tanaka et al., 1997). In our experiment, lipid digestibility could not 362 be carried out, but the detriment of energy digestibility joined with the low content of 363 mesenteric fat according the dietary defatted krill meal increased would support this fact. 364 365 The reduction on nutrient digestion has previously been shown in mice and broiler chickens (Han et al., 1999; Razdan & Pettersson, 1994). However, the reduction of 366 367 nutrient digestibility in fish depends on the species; poor nutrient digestibility was 368 observed in rainbow trout fed 25% chitin and Salmo salar fed with 5% of dietary chitin (Lindsay et al., 1984; Karlsen et al., 2015), nevertheless, Gadus morhua or Atlantic cod 369 370 a decrease in nutrient digestibility was not observed is able to digest and utilize the chitin. 371 Another problem associated with the high content of krill meal is the dietary content of

fluoride derived from Antarctic krill could also affect the digestibility, inhibit fish growth(Yoshitomi & Nagano, 2012).

374 The relative low ADCs of energy obtained in fish fed the FM0 diet can be attributed to several factors: the high content of chitin, non-digestible carbohydrates (Aslaksen et al., 375 376 2007) and the high fibre content, that increase intestinal transit and reduce gut-retention 377 time of feed and time available for nutrient digestion (Fountoulaki et al., 2005). Also, the presence of chitin and its negative influence on lipid digestibility (Kroeckel et al., 2012) 378 379 could affect the energy digested by fish fed a diet with a high content of krill meal as in 380 the FM0 diet. The detriment of digestible energy intake was as consequence of ADC energy coefficients presented with this diet, and therefore, the efficiency retention showed 381 382 a clear tendency to increase when fishmeal substitution increased, although significant 383 differences were not observed, fish fed the FM0 diet showed an energetic deficiency.

Lys is one of the main limiting amino acid (Gatlin et al., 2007). Its dietary imbalance 384 385 could be the main reason of fish mortality, also observed in midas (Amphilophus 386 citrinellum) by Dabrowski et al. (2007). A justification of the lower Lys digestibility presented in the present trial can be related with the animal meal (meat meal) included in 387 388 high levels in the FMO diet. The excessive heat applied during its production might damage proteins, especially affecting Lys (Carpenter & Booth, 1973; Opstvedt et al., 389 390 1984), which may contribute to lower protein digestibility. In addition, the protein source 391 (muscle, connective tissue, bones, etc.) also affects the digestibility. In this sense, Allan 392 et al. (2000), observed a lower Lys digestibility coefficient in meal obtained from bones than in fishmeal. 393

Also, EAA digestibility diminishes with increasing dietary vegetable protein (Masumoto *et al.*, 1996; Yamamoto *et al.*, 1998). Vegetable meals contain undigestible components,

but also protease inhibitors, lectins, phytic acid, saponins, phytoestrogens, antivitamins, allergens (Francis *et al.*, 2001), that cause low protein availability, histological gut alteration, an imbalanced microbiota (Estruch *et al.*, 2015), that may alter the immune regulatory functions of the gut and contribute to the development of diseases (Pérez *et al.*, 2010). Yellowtail kingfish (*Seriola lalandi*) fed with solvent-extracted soybean meal and soy protein concentrate produced a development of subacute enteritis in the hindgut that it may compromise fish health to long term feeding (Bansemer *et al.*, 2015).

403 Overall, the low EAA digestibility of FM0 diet caused the lowest intake of digested EAA
404 of fish fed with this diet. However, only digested Lys efficiency retention of fish fed FM0
405 diet exhibited the highest values. This indicates that Lys is the limiting amino acid for
406 protein synthesis in fish fed FM0 diet, on the contrary of Met.

407 The amino acid index is the result of the ratio between the EAA profile in experimental diets and the whole body fish at the end of the trial. When this index is below 100, it 408 409 might indicate that the AA is deficient in the diet, as a consequence it would have a high 410 retention. Nevertheless, if the AA index is higher than 100, this AA could be in excess in the diet, therefore the whole body efficiency retention would be low (Sánchez-Lozano et 411 412 al., 2011). Moreover, the Lys amino acid index in the present experiment corroborates that the percentage of digestible Lys in the FM0 diet did not cover the yellowtail Lys 413 414 requirements.

The results indicated that yellowtail did not decrease their feed intake (FI) with respect to the fishmeal dietary substitution. On the contrary, Tomás *et al.* (2005), observed an increase of FI when yellowtail was fed a high content of dietary soybean meal (40%) as Watanabe *et al.* (1992) and Viyakarn *et al.* (1992) found in Japanese yellowtail. One possible explanation could be attributed to an inadequate amino acid profile in diets with high levels of fishmeal substitution, as an attempt of fish to compensate the deficiency of
some EAAs with a higher intake. In the present experiment, diets did not present negative
effects on palatability. Takakuwa *et al.* (2006b) observed that FI diminished when the
level of the dietary poultry by-product was increased, probably due to its lower
palatability.

In summary, from the results of this experiment it can be concluded that the total fishmeal replacement by the alternative protein blend assayed was not feasible for yellowtail feeding, causing a detriment of digestible EAA and energy and high mortality in long term feeding. Fishmeal substitution at 66% dietary level obtained good growth and nutrient efficiency and high survival.

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437 6. References

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