



SOUTH AFRICAN POULTRY ASSOCIATION

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MEDIA STATEMENT

GAUTENG MEC RAMOKGOPA: “POULTRY SECTOR KEY TO FOOD SECURITY, JOBS, AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH”

At AVI Africa 2025, Gauteng MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development, Ms Vuyiswa Ramokgopa, reaffirmed the strategic importance of South Africa’s poultry industry and called for a united effort to support its growth amid mounting challenges.

“Poultry is not just about the birds – it’s about resilience, the spirit of entrepreneurship – about a path out of poverty,” said Ramokgopa. “Every broiler sold is a brick in the foundation of rural economic revival.”

Ms Ramokgopa praised the poultry sector as one of the country’s core commodities and emphasised the importance of platforms like AVI Africa, the flagship event of the South African Poultry Association (SAPA), in uniting industry stakeholders.

Gauteng, she said, plays a pivotal role in this national story. The province accounts for 35% of Africa’s agro-processing output and remains the most industrialised and diversified economy on the continent. Yet, the agricultural sector faces sobering realities. It experienced a 29% contraction in Q4 of 2024, hit by global shocks, rising input costs, currency volatility, infrastructure challenges, and the devastating impact of bird flu, which decimated operations and forced many emerging farmers out of business. “The local industry is fighting on multiple fronts,” she said. “But this is also an opportunity — to strengthen our resolve and reignite our shared purpose.”

Central to Gauteng’s strategy is the Poultry Sector Master Plan (PSMP), launched in 2019 and jointly developed by government, industry, and labour. “The PSMP is more than a national initiative — it’s a roadmap to creating a globally competitive poultry industry,” said Ramokgopa.

The PSMP rests on five pillars:

1. Expanding and improving local production
2. Driving domestic demand and affordability
3. Growing exports (3–5% now, aiming for 8% by 2028)
4. Strengthening regulation and compliance
5. Enforcing trade measures to protect against predatory practices

“To date, the poultry industry has invested over R1.8 billion, creating 1,900 new jobs, and significantly increasing national production capacity,” continued Ramokgopa. She stressed the need for inclusive growth, with support for emerging farmers at the center of Gauteng’s poultry agenda. Over the past two years, more than 120 poultry farmers in the province have received support. The MEC highlighted ongoing investments in agro-processing infrastructure, including mini abattoirs and packaging facilities, and the blended finance scheme, which combines grant funding and loans to

enable broader access to capital. “We haven’t even tapped 1% of this funding mechanism. It’s a vital tool to open up access for small-scale farmers.”

Training and development are also being scaled up, with an emphasis on youth and women. Ramokgopa announced the expansion of farmer training centres in partnership with SAPA and tertiary institutions. In 2024, the province also launched an egg aggregation programme to further integrate small-scale producers.

The MEC acknowledged that more must be done — particularly around biosecurity, which she called an economic imperative. “If biosecurity fails, everything else fails too,” she warned. “It requires national, provincial, and local action to prevent the devastating effects of diseases like HPAI.”

“Addressing Gauteng’s infrastructure crisis — from roads and ports to energy and water — remains urgent,” Ramokgopa stated, confirming that public-private partnerships are being explored to alleviate load shedding for agro-processors and to improve critical infrastructure.

The province is also confronting a harsh food security reality: 28% of households in Gauteng suffer from moderate to severe hunger. “We must bring healthy, safe, affordable food closer to communities. That means supporting our local industry to reduce costs and stimulate local economies.”

Ramokgopa acknowledged past frustrations with slow government delivery and pledged to change that. “It’s our time, our chance, to step it up. The government must cut red tape, act faster, and build structures that support new entrants into the sector.”

She concluded with a rallying cry for unity: “The poultry sector can be a symbol of what we can do when we unite to take positive action. Let’s recommit to making this industry work — and work for everyone.”

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