R60

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Poultry Bulletin

THE TRADE ISSUE

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN POULTRY ASSOCIATION

AVIAN INFLUENZA: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW RIGHT NOW!

BEVERLY MHLABANE

THE FARMER WHO INSPIRED PARLIAMENT

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Nothing in life is certain except death and taxes, they say, and to that I would like to add, the sniffles.

This winter, may the sniffles be as bad as it gets for you in a world where COVID-19 threatens a third wave alongside the outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza that we predicted in the previous issue of *Poultry Bulletin*. Here's to steering clear of viruses as far as we can.

Amid all of this our farmers have stepped up biosecurity while wearing masks, sanitising, and carrying on with the business of making and trading chickens and eggs for the nation. Finding a market for those chickens or eggs is the first challenge any farmer faces, and in this issue we focus on all things trade related. We hear first-hand accounts of farmers who identified their unique gap, and the challenges that they face (page 56), and we visit one producer whose passion for her farm and the legacy she wants to build is so infectious that she was singled out in parliament (p 28). We find out how the European Union manages its poultry market alongside what the ostrich industry can teach us about exports (p 34), and ask the experts at the IDC how to apply for funding, to be able to enter the market (p 60).

From the micro focus of a small farmer identifying a chisanyama to buy 30 chickens, to the macro task undertaken by the SA Poultry Association of negotiating trade measures on behalf of the whole industry to safeguard our market against predatory imports, trade is central to our survival, and our prosperity.

We hope you find a few new insights in these pages!

Stay warm, stay healthy.

Melinda
editor@poultrybulletin.co.za

THE TRADE ISSUE

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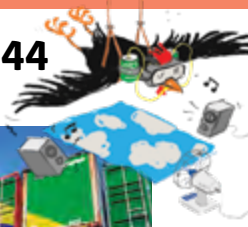

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Awards season

The 115th Annual SAPA Congress was held on 25 May as a combined virtual and in-person event due to ongoing social distancing measures required by the COVID-19 pandemic.

One of the highlights of the congress every year is the announcement of the awards to industry achievers, who are honoured for their contribution to the poultry sector. This year 12 winners were recognised with awards. *Poultry Bulletin* would like to congratulate all the winners – it is thanks to passionate individuals and forward-thinking companies like you that our industry is such a key player in the South African economy, and the hearts of the nation.

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Francinah Teffo

TRANSFORMATION AWARD
Clive Tigere

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Nick Elliot
In recognition of his service and contribution to the industry

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For her contribution to SAPA

SPECIAL AWARD
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For her contribution to SAPA

TRANSFORMATION AWARD
Quantum Foods
For assistance provided to small farmers

TRANSFORMATION AWARD
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TRANSFORMATION AWARD
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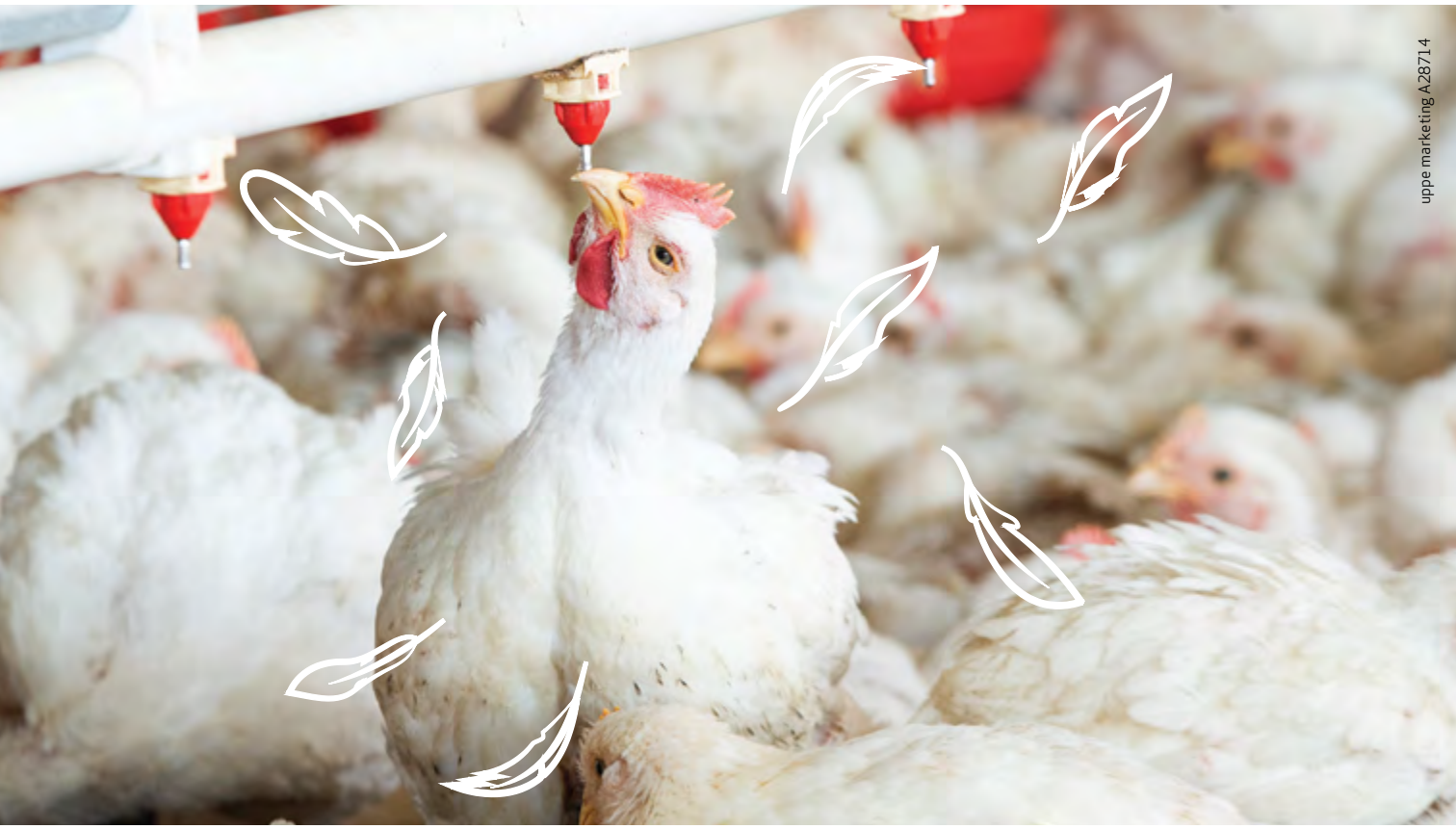
HONORARY LIFE MEMBER
Chris Schutte
In recognition of his service and contribution to the industry

CERTIFICATE OF MERIT
Colin Steenhuisen
For his commitment and work on behalf of the egg industry

POULTRY PERSON OF THE YEAR
Izaak Breitenbach
In recognition of the work done on behalf of the broiler industry and SAPA

LET'S RUFFLE SOME FEATHERS



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LETTERS

Support for the poultry industry and *Poultry Bulletin* from organisations that have South Africa's best interests at heart

Telling stories to #MakeSAbetter

Your impressive new *Poultry Bulletin* gave insight into the way the poultry industry has provided food and other assistance to poor communities hit by coronavirus lockdowns. Tons of chicken and thousands of eggs – please keep it up because the need remains massive. And please keep telling those stories, to encourage others.

Poultry producers and Siyabuya! are on the same wavelength, so I urge your members to join up to #MakeSAbetter. It's free and we believe it's going to be very good for South Africa.

The Siyabuya! movement is founded on the belief that, with the support of individuals and communities, South Africa can emerge stronger from the coronavirus pandemic than it was when we entered it. We aim to build networks of people who act on this belief, including by feeding the millions who go hungry.

In addition, we encourage people to look after their own health and those of their families – wear a mask, sanitise and get vaccinated when the rollout reaches you. We also believe in providing jobs wherever possible to help counter the devastating rise in unemployment. Every job feeds lots of people. Put up your hand for South Africa! Find @SiyabuyaSA on Twitter and Facebook or visit the website at www.siyabuya.org.za.

Melene Rossouw
Co-founder, Siyabuya!

Saluting the poultry industry

Proudly South African began working closely with the poultry sector in 2017 when we hosted a sector-specific forum for industry stakeholders. We shared information regarding the state of the industry with a focus on the impact that imports were having and the consequent need to drive localisation in support of this industry. We also vowed to play a bigger role in the recovery of the sector, through the entire supply chain.

We subsequently had inputs into the Poultry Industry Master Plan and have inducted a number of companies into the Buy Local movement. These include Grainfield Chickens, Sovereign Foods, Chubby Chick (and its retail group, OBC) as well as Country Bird Holdings.

Our conversations at the highest levels of government, with industry bodies and retail chains, are aimed at ensuring that the major retailers and wholesalers heed our call to stock only locally produced poultry products, or at least work towards significantly increasing their levels of local stock, gradually phasing out imported poultry products in their stores.

We have created synergies for our members in the sector, making

YOUR VIEWS COUNT

Mail us at editor@poultrybulletin.co.za. The best letter wins the chance to pick an industry expert's brain, in a one-on-one Zoom/Skype consultation. This month the MD of RCL Foods Chicken Division, Marthinus Stander, is ready to answer your questions about the poultry business.

Photograph: Shutterstock.com

READERS ASK

I need advice: what is the best insurance to use for broiler farming as a small-scale farmer? This is a very important subject for beginner farmers like me.
@Tsogang3
We'll find out – look out in the next issue - Ed.

connections between diverse companies, and hope to create similar linkages between poultry producers and bulk buyers of chicken, including hospital groups, hotels, schools and franchise groups.

During the 2020 festive season, we rolled out a campaign rallying consumers to buy locally produced chicken during that period and beyond. We are planning similar, bigger campaigns during 2021 where we will again cast the spotlight on this very important industry, encouraging consumers always to choose locally produced chicken.

We would like to salute the sector for its resilience and to commend the new *Poultry Bulletin* for highlighting issues that face everyone involved with this industry along the entire poultry value chain.

We will continue to play our part and support the industry wherever we can, because together we can do so much more.

If you are interested in joining Proudly South African, please email Alicia@proudlysa.co.za for more information.

Eustace Mashimbye
CEO, Proudly South African

Winner!

Congratulations to Clive Tigere, who wins a seat at the Food Safety Summit, to be held online on 8 and 9 June. The two-day summit is hosted by Anelich Consulting and Food Focus, www.foodsafetysummit.co.za

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NEWS IN BRIEF

All the latest news that you need to know about the poultry industry

Compiled by **Charmain Lines**

Astral's Goldi plant outside Standerton

Astral secures groundbreaking intervention in Standerton

Leading poultry producer Astral made history in April when it was awarded an order from the Pretoria High Court that compels the national government to intervene in Lekwa Municipality. Together with Treasury, the municipality now has to prepare a financial recovery plan for the beleaguered local authority.

Astral first took the municipality to court in 2018 due to the impact of poor service delivery on its Goldi processing plant outside the town of Standerton in Mpumalanga.

Political commentators view the outcome of Astral's legal action as groundbreaking, and a potential blueprint for businesses in rural areas that are crippled due to municipalities' inability to provide basic services.

Commenting on the outcome, Astral pledged its full support to the national government and Treasury: "We look forward to cooperating further in the interests of resolving the serious issues currently being faced by the Lekwa Municipality, and the impact this is having on our operations as well as the community living and working in the area."

SAPA welcomes a new general manager for the Egg Organisation

Photographs: Gareth Gilmour; supplied

In May, Dr Abongile Balarane stepped into his new position as general manager of the Egg Organisation of the SA Poultry Association.

He joined SAPA from the National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC) where, as an agricultural economist, he was responsible for forecasting the availability of major grains and oilseeds in South Africa.

Previously, Dr Balarane worked as an economic researcher at the Landbank and as an agricultural advisor at the Northwest Department of Agriculture.

Dr Balarane speaks seven of South Africa's nine official languages, completed his PhD in agricultural economics in 2013 and has published and presented several papers in the past two years.

*Poultry Bulleti*n welcomes Dr Balarane to the SAPA family and looks forward to his contributions to the poultry industry in general and eggs in particular.

Nando's exec takes on Kilimanjaro for a great cause

The poultry community has a big heart, and that goes for our farmers, our suppliers and also our customers. Nando's supply chain director for Africa, Middle East and India, Linda Reddy, has been training up a storm to prepare herself for a very taxing expedition up Kilimanjaro as part of Trek4Mandela this July.

"We are raising money and awareness for the Caring For Girls initiative that provides sanitary hygiene, feminine support and education to indigent girls. Empowering girls so that they don't miss school days during their menstrual cycle, and get their confidence and their dignity back is so worth climbing Africa's highest peak for," says Reddy. "Education and giving dignity to women were also close to Madiba's heart, and the plan is to summit Kilimanjaro on his birthday, 18 July."

Reddy says she sees this trek as a way to honour Madiba's legacy, the girls who will benefit from the funds, her fellow summiteers, and her sponsors, who include RCL Foods and Nando's.

"My goal is to raise a total of R180 721– adding all the relevant figures of the symbolic day when we summit: 18th of the 7th month, '21." This money will change the lives of 1 000 girls. Will she be carrying a Nando's flag to the summit? Follow Linda on LinkedIn for the story of her journey.

Linda Reddy

Are you or your company able to join Linda to make an impact?

A donation of R18 makes a difference to a girl a month. Scan the QR code with your smartphone to make a donation or enquire about an invoice.

World-class training for emerging farmers

Emerging poultry farmers from across the country recently benefited from hands-on training in state-of-the-art new chicken houses at the KwaZulu-Natal Poultry Institute (KZNPI). The facilities and training were financed by the US-based World Poultry Foundation (WPF).

The training allowed farmers to experience the use of climate controls, automated feeding systems, and hi-tech scales as part of an ongoing campaign by the WPF to improve capacity among poultry sector stakeholders in South Africa.

Xolisani Mtolo, one of the 200 farmers who underwent the training, says: "The course helped me to reduce mortality in my chickens. I also learnt more about the importance of biosecurity and following the right procedures."

Contact KZNPI for information on further WPF-sponsored courses scheduled for 2021: training@kznpi.co.za

Hands-on training at KZPNI

Spreading the biosecurity message

Over the past four months, a joint initiative between SAPA, the Poultry Disease Management Agency (PDMA) and Afrivet has seen a team carrying out a vast biosecurity auditing, training, education and upliftment programme with small-scale and small rural farmers around the country.

Afrivet, South Africa's biggest wholly locally owned animal-health company, provides the boots on the ground for the initiative. Working in communities, the team meets with farmers, key role-players, government departments, extension officers and distributors to carry out the on-farm audits and host farmers' days and training sessions.

"Where possible, we also use our networks of suppliers of day-old chicks, feed, equipment and health products to give farmers access to quality, cost-effective products, as well as sound advice on all aspects of farming," says Nick Stevenson, Afrivet's poultry key account and SAPA audit manager. "Farmers in the remote areas are hungry for knowledge about poultry farming, and seeing our teams in their districts gives them hope that their farms can be successful too."

The project has already reached the Western Cape, Eastern Cape, Free State, Gauteng, Mpumalanga and Limpopo. KwaZulu-Natal will be coming online shortly.

Zuziphe Mlangaso of Afrivet does a SAPA biosecurity audit with Brian Ngonidzashe

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Will tariffs alone be enough?

by **Dr Sifiso Ntombela**

The world's dominant poultry exporters, such as Brazil, have built their industries, in part, on stable feed prices

Tariffs are a key trade instrument designed to level playing fields in trade. It is often used to encourage domestic production or safeguard domestic industries. According to the Bureau for Food and Agricultural Policy (BFAP), local poultry production expanded rapidly between 2004 and 2008, reaching nearly 1.8 million tonnes. Since then, production has fluctuated around 2.1 million tonnes/annum, with imports increasing sharply in the same period. Between 2000 and 2010, poultry consumption in South Africa increased by 680 000t, and local farmers supplied 86% of this additional demand. However, between 2008 and 2018, consumption rose by 380 000t, and only 27% of this additional demand was supplied by local production, with imports dominating.

Between 2015 and 2020 the industry successfully lobbied for various forms of tariff protection, and while South African Revenue Service (SARS) data indicate that tariff escalations have slowed the rate of imports it didn't increase domestic production significantly. The continued need for tariff protection amid a lack of growth in domestic production has led to trade partners questioning the competitiveness of the local industry. BFAP attended to this concern and its analysis found that South Africa can compete with leading global producers on a cost-per-bird basis. However, to compete with cheap imports of bone-in portions and replace imports the local industry will likely have to obtain access into premium export markets for chicken breasts, enabling a profit on the total carcass even when bone-in portions cost less.

The industry seeks maximum protection against unfair imports to safeguard local production and investments. However, the lack of significant improvement in local production despite the tariffs suggest that the answers don't lie in trade policy alone. Fortunately, the Poultry Industry Master Plan provides four other strategic areas to put the industry on a sustainable growth path.

Though pursuing tariff protection is necessary, the same energy must be directed to transformation to broaden the base of local suppliers. The grain and oilseeds sectors, in particular, have a role to play. Volatile feed costs are a major challenge facing SA poultry, as feed makes up 50-70% of SA broiler production costs.

Therefore, for stability and expansion of poultry production, the grains and oilseeds sectors will equally need to pursue these expansion objectives. The world's dominant poultry exporters, such as Brazil, have built their industries, in part, on stable feed prices.

Exports of premium meat cuts will have to be increased; and the government must play its part to improve biosecurity and enhance border capacity to mitigate trade distortions, including mislabelling and underpricing of poultry products.

The poultry industry remains an essential subsector of agriculture and contributor to food security, but efforts to revive it will require many interventions. Tariffs alone will not be sufficient.

Sifiso Ntombela (Ph.D) is chief economist at the National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC). Twitter: @Ntombela_SM • email: sifiso@namc.co.za

Is there life after antibiotics?

When it comes to keeping poultry flocks healthy, antibiotic-free production is all the rage, but is this a feasible reality in 2021? **Charmain Lines** investigates the trend

In the production of poultry as with other food animals, antibiotics are part and parcel of the arsenal of tools used by farmers to boost output and productivity. But indiscriminate use of antibiotics in farmed animals have also seen a rise in bacterial resistance which reduces the effectiveness of the medication and allows superbugs to develop. In addition, in some markets consumers increasingly want antibiotic-free (ABF) meat. As a result, the rallying cry is "out with the bad, in with the good". But of course the issue is far more nuanced than that and, truth be told, far less sexy.

When it comes to keeping chickens in robust health, it's about good old-fashioned prevention rather than cure.

Studies have shown that mass medication, known as metaphylaxis, and the use of broad-spectrum antibiotics are common in intensive animal farming, because it is often impractical to treat animals individually. However, such low-level use over long periods results in bacteria becoming resistant to antibiotics.

The seriousness of the situation is under–scored by a multi-institutional study currently underway in the UK to find a nonmicrobial antidote to superbug infections on poultry farms. Funded by the UK's Department of Health and Social Care's Antimicrobial Resistance

(AMR) fund, the study is part of a wider project involving UK-based GAMA Healthcare and the Shanghai Veterinary Research Institute.

"The same antibiotics are used to treat infections in humans and animals," explains Professor Pieter Gouws from the Centre for Food Safety at Stellenbosch University. "This means that once bacteria become resistant, they cannot be stopped during food production, food processing or as part of human health care." Resistance also increases the risk of zoonotic diseases (illnesses that spread from animals to humans).

It is true that bacteria have an innate ability to adapt and develop resistance in order to survive. However, the extensive use of antibiotics in the farming industry is a contributing factor to their diminishing effectiveness and the increase in resistant bacteria.

And as crucial as antibiotics are today, Professor Gouws warns: "Antibiotics will not be in use forever. The sooner we start adopting alter–natives, the better it is for human, animal and environmental health."

ABF production can only be achieved with a holistic quality-management process that includes stringent hygiene practices

A new, holistic mindset

"Nothing can replace the target-specific efficacy of antibiotics," says Nell Wiid, animal scientist, poultry nutritionist and director of Super Agri Science, a South African company that develops and markets products that support ABF production. "Complete ABF production is simply not possible in intensive farming environments, such as poultry farms

Bacteriophages breakthrough

While Europe leads the charge for and the technology to achieve ABF poultry production, South Africa recently recorded an industry first in the use of bacteriophages to reduce *Salmonella* loads in chicken-processing facilities.

A bacteriophage is a type of virus that infects and destroys bacteria. In fact, the word "bacteriophage" literally means "bacteria eater".

The beauty of bacteriophages is that they only kill their target organism, with no impact on other organisms or the background environment. They are also completely natural and occur abundantly in nature.

The role bacteriophages can play in food safety is a well-researched discipline, but up to now studies were confined to laboratories. That all changed in 2020 when the Centre for Food Safety at Stellenbosch University conducted a field study in an operating chicken abattoir to determine the efficacy of bacteriophages to destroy *Salmonella* on chicken carcasses. (*Salmonella* is particularly worrisome, given that it is becoming resistant to almost all antimicrobials.)

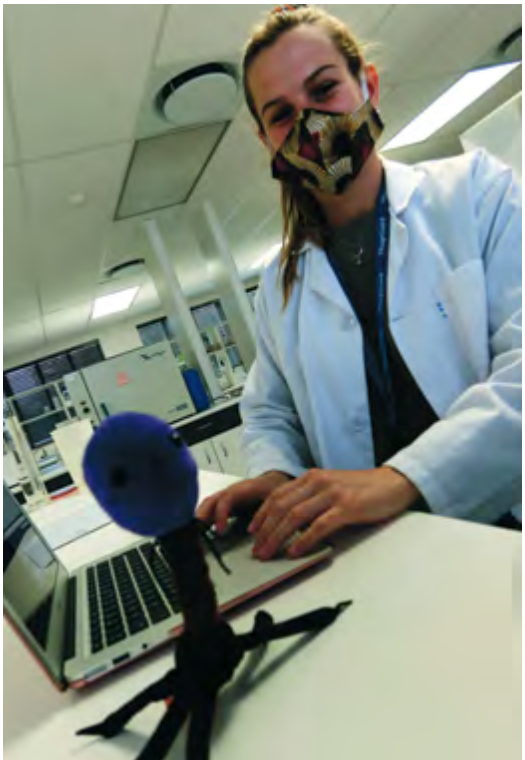
In the study, more than four million carcasses were treated with a commercial bacteriophages cocktail over a period of four weeks. The carcasses were sprayed and sampled before entering and after exiting the spin chiller.

Professor Gouws says the study proved that bacteriophages, combined with chlorine wash,

Photographs: Shutterstock.com

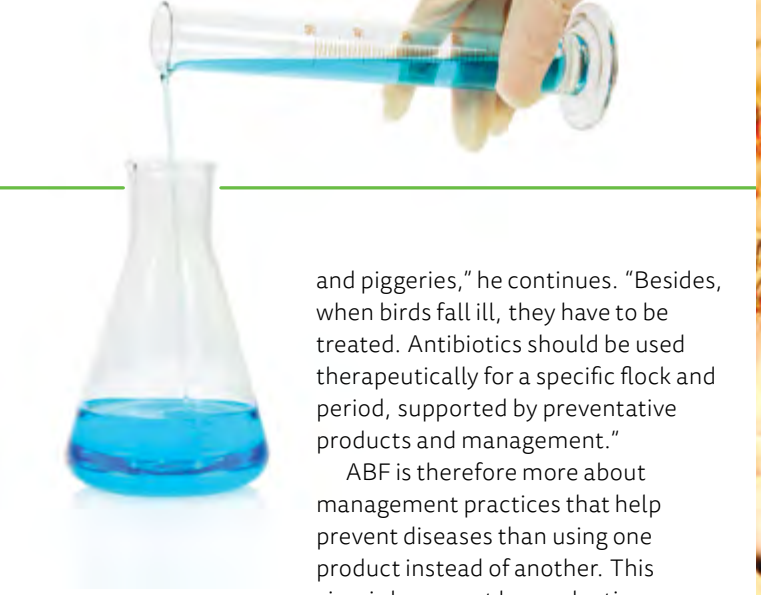
are effective against multidrug-resistant *Salmonella*. "When applied correctly, bacteriophages can greatly improve food safety, with no adverse impact on abattoir workers, consumers or the environment," he says.

In commenting on the study, the GM of SAPA's Broiler Organisation, Izaak Breitenbach, said that the association supports the move away from antimicrobials. "Bacteriophages can greatly enhance food safety in South Africa, especially given our warm climate in which bacteria multiply quickly and easily," he says.



Michelle Gouws and Kirsten Wessels studying the effect of bacteriophages on Salmonella growth on XLD agar at the Centre for Food Safety at Stellenbosch University

Kirsten Wessels analyses the data obtained from the abattoir trial



Dr Scott Elliott

and piggeries," he continues. "Besides, when birds fall ill, they have to be treated. Antibiotics should be used therapeutically for a specific flock and period, supported by preventative products and management."

ABF is therefore more about management practices that help prevent diseases than using one product instead of another. This view is borne out by production veterinarian Dr Scott Elliott.

He asserts that ABF production can only be achieved as the outcome of a holistic quality-management process that includes stringent hygiene practices throughout the production chain, uncompromising biosecurity, vaccinations and, particularly, hatchery hygiene and high-quality chicks. Products that help prevent diseases by boosting birds' immune systems and enabling them to better cope with environmental stressors and pathogens that cause diseases must be included, as well as antibiotics when birds fall ill.

The issue, Dr Elliott points out, is the blanket use of antibiotics to ward off diseases that could be prevented in other ways. "Producers might do this because they get good results, as the birds do not waste energy on fighting off infection," he says. But this practice allows bacterial resistance to develop.

DID YOU KNOW?

Although other factors come into play, the food chain is one of the main routes of transmission of antibiotic-resistant bacteria to humans.

It can be done

Anca Farms near Stutterheim in the Eastern Cape is a smaller-scale poultry producer that doesn't use antibiotics as a standard practice in raising its broilers. Bruce Green, the agricultural director, says that ABF production was implemented over time with the help and support of Anca's vet. "It is a mindset change that needs to be accepted by people from the ground up. People are often

Antibiotics use in poultry farming

There are four categories of antibiotic use in poultry farming, says poultry specialist Dr Scott Elliott:

1. No antibiotics ever (NAE) is exactly what the name suggests, and is not a reality in South Africa.
2. Antibiotic growth promotors (AGPs) are added to feed to promote gut, or intestinal, health. They protect birds' intestines from harmful bacteria and their effects, and promote the development of healthy intestinal bacteria. As a result, the birds are healthier and more resilient to diseases, and fewer harmful bacteria end up in the environment. These products stay in a bird's digestive tract and do not enter its bloodstream. Consequently, they are not consumed when humans eat poultry meat or eggs.
3. Antibiotics at sub-therapeutic levels are given to birds to promote health and to ensure that they don't spend energy on fighting off infections.
4. Critical antibiotic therapy is used to treat life-threatening diseases.

Sub-therapeutic and critical antibiotics do enter the bird's bloodstream and are subject to residue-level regulations. Usually this means that treatment has to stop at least five days before the bird is slaughtered. Where layer birds are treated, the eggs are withdrawn and pulped. The pulp may only be sold if it is mixed with ABF pulp to reduce the residue level to below legal limits.

resistant to change, and it takes time to get them to believe," he says.

Instead of relying on sub-therapeutic antibiotics, the Anca team ensures the health of their flocks with tight biosecurity and good cleaning and disinfection protocols. "We also deal very closely with the hatchery to ensure we get good quality chicks," notes Green.

Anca Farms still uses anticoccidials to treat diseases and also antibiotic growth promotors (AGPs), which are both classed as antimicrobials. "You can get away without them, but there is generally a negative impact on performance," says Green.

The economics

Anca Farms reports a cost benefit to not using antibiotics, and a general increase in effectiveness when they have to be used to treat life-threatening illnesses. From a marketing point of view, however, only high-end consumers appear interested.

Wiid's view is that ABF is not about marketing at all. "Antibiotics are not cheap, but some multinational companies are positioning ABF as an elite product. This allows them to charge a premium for preventive natural medicines. In South Africa, our focus is to make ABF economically viable for the entire industry. We have a responsibility to ensure that the country's cheapest and most widely available source of protein is produced in the healthiest way possible for all consumers."

'Nothing can replace the target-specific efficacy of antibiotics'

Helpful alternatives

The Super Agri Science website contains a wealth of ABF information that explains the benefits and use of natural products in poultry farming:

Organic acids help to maintain optimal health in layer hens. They inhibit the growth of micro-organisms in the gastrointestinal tract, modify pH levels and improve feed utilisation, all of which result in an increase in egg production and quality.

Leg problems in broilers, as well as cage layer fatigue, poor internal egg quality and poor eggshell quality, are symptoms of vitamin D3 and calcium shortages that can be corrected with water-based supplements.

Eucalyptus, peppermint (menthol) and oregano oils, all added to drinking water, can help prevent and alleviate respiratory discomfort and diseases in chickens. In addition, peppermint oil shows strong antibacterial activity, especially against *E. coli*, while oregano oil's antiviral and antifungal properties protect birds against infections.

DID YOU KNOW?

Certain AGPs pierce the armour of bacteria like *E. coli* and *Salmonella* and make them more sensitive to antibiotics, which means antibiotics are more effective when they have to be used.

MEMBERS' NOTICEBOARD

The SA Poultry Association regularly updates members with key industry info. Here we boil it down to the essentials for you

Compiled by **Michael Acott**

A view from Broiler HQ

Broiler Organisation GM **Izaak Breitenbach** updated the board about current crucial matters

Izaak Breitenbach shares the latest developments in dealing with unfair trade

Photograph: Chadolfski / Shutterstock.com

The industry focus at the moment is on containing the spread of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). SAPA is in constant contact with the government, and with producers.

For details of SAPA's actions, and the assistance we provided to producers, see page 20.

There is another critical matter facing the poultry industry, and that is unfair trade.

Unfair trade – in particular unfairly priced imports – is a major cause of distress in our industry. It has three main components, and SAPA is pressing for action to address each one of them.

The first is dumping. We already have antidumping duties in place against four countries – Germany, the Netherlands, the UK and the US – and have applied for new antidumping duties against four more. They are Brazil, Denmark, Ireland, Poland and Spain.

The second is the need to implement revised trade measures through a review of our tariff structures. This was agreed in the Poultry Industry Master Plan and the government has just instructed the International Trade Administration Commission (ITAC) to undertake that review. We are optimistic about the outcome.

The third is the need for the SA Revenue Service (SARS) to crack down on fraud and tax evasion in chicken imports. This, too, is part of the master plan, and we have pressed government in our meetings with them to ensure that this happens.

The three worst areas of illegal trade are underdeclaration of imported product, declaration of imported product under the wrong tariff heading, and round tripping, where imported chicken is supposedly

SAPA works to ensure that locally produced chicken gets market preference, to promote food security and local jobs

A review of our tariff structures will lead to revised trade measures being implemented

just transported through South Africa for further export, but in reality it stays in South Africa without import tariffs being paid.

In all these cases, not only is the industry being harmed through unfairly priced imports, but the country loses desperately needed tax revenue.

We are also actively promoting food safety, and calling for increased inspections of imported product as well as the proper labelling of imported chicken.

All this is happening while we do our utmost to contain the outbreak of HPAI and prevent it doing further damage to the industry. It's a very busy period for SAPA.

Transformation stats

- In response to SAPA's efforts the number of SMME poultry producers applying for membership is steadily increasing.
- The latest figures, from the end of March 2021, show 130 small businesses have joined up. We now have 68 SMME members in the Egg Organisation, and 62 on the broiler side. In addition, our allied membership has increased to 22 small businesses.
- SAPA helps members with regular information on both egg and broiler production, and has organised online courses to help producers increase their skills and profitability. We also encourage and answer questions our members may have.
- Last year we responded to 471 queries from SMME poultry producers, and so far this year we have helped a further 156 farmers, excluding all the information sent out about HPAI.

Avian flu tops priorities

The poultry industry is working to contain the impact of the outbreak after HPAI was confirmed in Gauteng in April. Update from **Izaak Breitenbach**

The outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) have spread to a number of layer, broiler breeder and broiler farms around the country. The strain identified has been H5N1, and not H5N8, the strain which hit South Africa in 2017. That outbreak caused the loss of 20% of the national layer stock, and some 700 000 broilers, and cost the industry some R1.8 million.

The cooperation of all farmers is going to be crucial in containing the outbreak and preventing it spreading. SAPA has become an information hub, distributing information nationally to egg and broiler producers, providing up-to-date advice and answering hundreds of questions from farmers.

We have instituted regular HPAI bulletins to provide members with the latest information. Two-way communication is essential and surveillance is key – SAPA and the government need to know what you observe in your flocks and surrounding areas. In addition to the statutory requirement to report any suspected HPAI outbreaks, members are asked to report unusual bird mortalities or morbidity on the new alert website, jdata.co.za/hpaialert.

The information you share is handled confidentially and is used to develop a risk profile for the different geographical areas. The website displays all results and risk areas on a map, making it easy to see if your facility is in an affected area.

What we know at the moment is that wild birds infected our poultry, and that the strain is the same one seen in wild birds in Europe, where there have been widespread outbreaks – around 400 farms affected. So far all affected farms in SA are in close proximity to open water, and none of the outbreaks implicate a spread from chicken to chicken – which means that the systems we have set in place are working.

In this regard we are monitoring 936 farms closely for early symptoms of disease, and the moment any symptoms are picked up, the flock is isolated while tests are conducted. Should the tests show positive results, all birds on the site are culled under the supervision of the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development and disposed of according to regulations.

No product from a contaminated farm makes it into the food chain, be it chicken meat or eggs. All farms within a three-kilometre radius of an infected farm are locked down and no movement of product is allowed unless sanctioned by the state veterinarian.

So far the disease has not caused any shortages of chicken meat or eggs, although that might change. We expect the current outbreak to follow the same general pattern as that of 2017 when there were outbreaks on 10 farms in the first month, 30 in month two, 40 in month three, and then it started tapering off. We foresee that the outbreak will peak by August or September of this year, with isolated cases appearing here and there for the next year after that.

Vaccination is not at this stage a strategy that we are considering, as it would mean the loss of export status.

Much of the responsibility for containing the HPAI outbreak lies with farmers themselves. That means maintaining biosecurity of the highest order, across the country.

Scan the QR code with your smartphone to access SAPA's new alert website where you can report bird mortalities or morbidity, and also check whether your farm is in a high-risk area.

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Egg Board insights

Colin Steenhuisen talks egg levies

Improving collections and reducing underpayment of egg levies remain a priority

The national egg levy is being put to good use, including through a public relations campaign to promote egg consumption.

The campaign is an important part of our strategy to raise average egg consumption from 159 eggs per person a year to 209 eggs a year, which would be a boost for all our producers.

The levy, paid by all egg producers based on production volumes, is the sole source of national income to fund matters pertaining to the egg industry as a whole. It is channelled through SAPA's Egg Organisation, which administers the funding.

The PR campaign is aimed at consumers. We keep our Eggcellent page on Facebook fresh and relevant, with information about the nutritional value of eggs and various recipes involving eggs.

Given the importance of the levy to fund activities that are in the best interests of the whole egg industry, we are looking at ways to improve collections and reduce underpayments.

Even before the HPAI outbreak, the Egg Organisation has been getting good cooperation and support from the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD), which has recently been of great assistance with issues that include facilitating accreditations and export permits.

On the subject of HPAI, here's a reminder to egg producers about free-range eggs. Recommended biosecurity measures during the current high alert include confining birds where possible to reduce possible contact with wild birds. This can affect your "free-range" labelling.

The egg regulations allow for a maximum period of 24 weeks' continuous confinement under virulent-disease circumstances with farmers allowed to continue using "free range" on their packaging. Any longer confinement and the labels on packaging must be changed to "barn eggs. "

Colin Steenhuisen was interim GM of the Egg Organisation until Dr Abongile Balarane took over as the new general manager in May.

Biosecurity audits for small poultry producers

The outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in Gauteng will lead to an acceleration of the SA Poultry Association's programme to fund biosecurity audits for emerging new-generation farmers.

The programme, one of SAPA's transformation initiatives, was started last year because of the prevalence of HPAI in Europe.

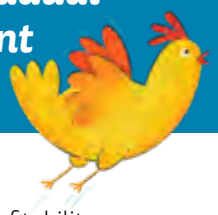
Investment in the project, agreed by SAPA through its transformation committee, is part of South Africa's Protect the National Poultry Flock Initiative.

The national alert because of the current national HPAI outbreak shows why the audits are necessary and how better biosecurity measures protect flocks and farmers' businesses.

Cautious optimism from Rabobank

Feed prices get a bit of help from a stronger rand

The outlook points to gradual improvement



Continuing high feed prices in South Africa will be slightly tempered by the strengthening of the rand against the US dollar, resulting in gradual improvement for the South African poultry industry. This very cautiously optimistic view is offered in Rabobank's Poultry Quarterly for the second quarter of 2021.

However, Rabobank cautions that global feed prices are expected to stay high and volatile, and poultry farmers in South Africa and around the world will need to remain disciplined in a fragile market with many challenges.

Despite high feed prices, Rabobank is "moderately optimistic" about the outlook for the global poultry industry in 2021. This is because COVID-19 vaccination programmes are likely to allow restrictions to be lifted gradually, restoring food service (35% of global distribution) and tourism.

Feed represents 60% to 70% of the cost of poultry production. Rabobank expects feed prices to remain high for the rest of 2021, but slightly down on prices in the first quarter. "Prices for maize and soybean meal will, however, remain more than 50% higher than in the first half of 2020," it warns.

Increased focus on feed efficiency, procurement and feed formulation in this challenging feed market could lead to big differences in performance.

In its South African section, the bank says a slight recovery in chicken prices in early 2021 was not enough to bring the industry back into profitability, because feed prices increased by 30% over the same period.

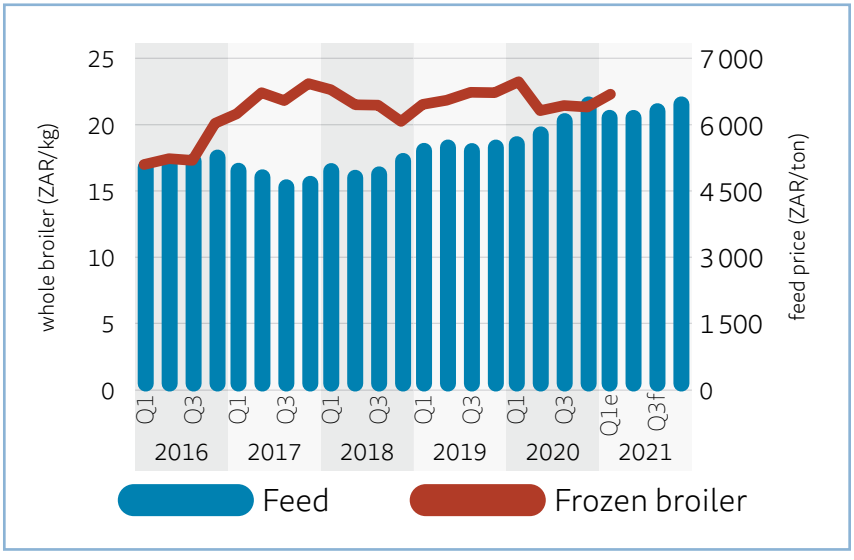
"The biggest challenge for the South African industry since the start of COVID-19 has been to fine-tune supply to the very volatile demand. Restrictions on people movement have created volatility in demand, especially in food-service channels. At the same time, the government and industry were in the process of expanding local production as part of the Poultry Industry Master Plan."

This resulted in a 7% increase in production in 2020, while imports have been reduced by 55 000 metric tons as a result of import tariffs and restrictions.

"The outlook for the industry is for gradual improvement. Although feed prices are expected to stay high, a strong maize harvest outlook (+10%), together with a strengthening of the ZAR relative to USD will lead to a more stable to slightly bearish outlook for grain prices (in line with early March SAFEX future prices)."

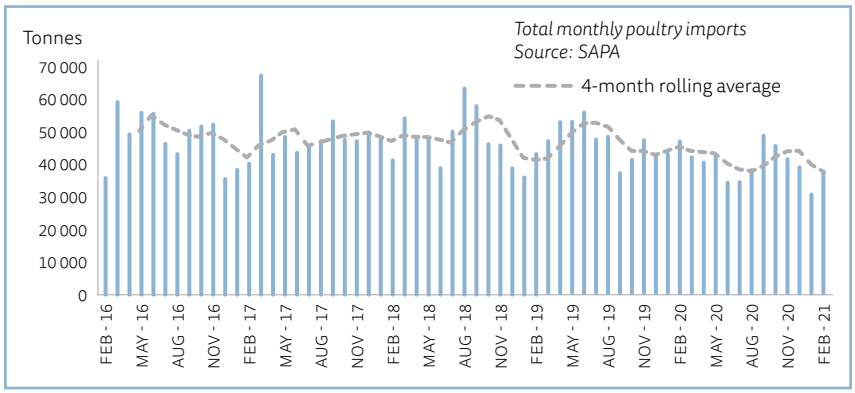
"South Africa's move to the lowest COVID-19 alert level will help to boost food-service sales. The combination of the recovering market, together with stabilising bearish feed prices, will help to improve margins in the coming months," the report says.

South African broiler and feed price trend, Q1 2015-Q4 2021f
Source: Source: SAPA, News24, SAFEX Rabobank 2021



EU's avian flu shows in imports

Sources of imported poultry are shifting



Outbreaks of avian influenza across Europe are shifting the source of South Africa's poultry imports. As European Union (EU) volumes decline, so there is a rise in poultry imports from Brazil, Argentina and the United States.

The volumes are not large, because of the continued impact of the coronavirus pandemic on local and global markets, but the trend is being watched.

SAPA's imports report for February 2021 shows how poultry imports from the EU have declined because of AI outbreaks. All of the major suppliers to South Africa have been affected, with the exception at this stage of Spain. February imports from the EU comprised 1 715 tonnes from Spain, 25 tonnes from Ireland and 23 tonnes from Germany, with nothing from any other EU country.

By contrast, imports from Brazil are up 9.7% in the first two months of the year. Imports from the US are 20.9% up on January, while Argentinian imports rose 62.9% over the previous month. Import volumes from Argentina and the US remain significantly below the levels seen in February 2020.

Brazil remained the primary source of South African poultry imports in February, but its contribution shot up to 76.9% from 73.3% in January and the 2020 average of 55.5%. The EU share dropped from 18.7% in 2020 to 4.8% in February 2021.

The imports report highlights some import prices of Brazilian bone-in chicken this year. Despite a tariff increase to 62% on Brazilian bone-in imports last year, import prices in 2021 are below the average South African producer prices.

In 2021 so far, Brazilian leg quarters were imported at R21.54/kg (including the new tariff), compared to the South African producer price of R23.25 for IQF (individually quick frozen) portions.

Wings were imported at R34/kg, compared to South African producer prices of R38.27/kg (frozen) and R33.30/kg (IQF). The price of Brazilian wings (including tariff) increased by 38.5 % in February 2021 compared to the 2020 average.

Drumsticks were imported at R26.96/kg, significantly below the SA producer prices of R31.55/kg (frozen) and R30.50 (IQF).

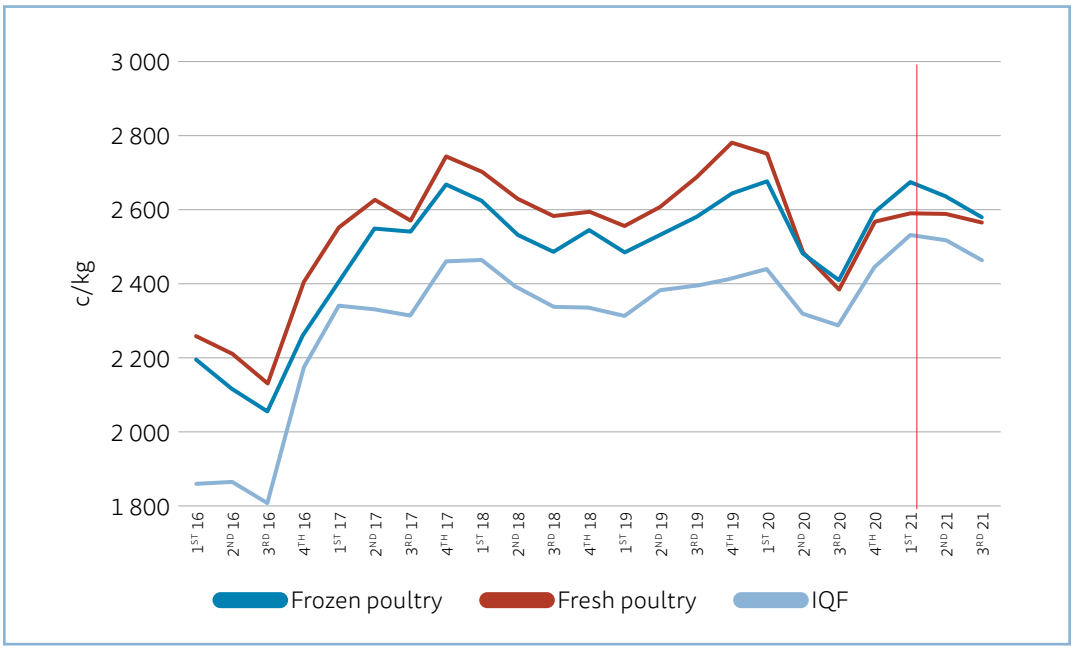
AGOA quota sends imports upwards

The latest import report by SARS shows figures for March skyrocketing because of the United States using up its quota at the end of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) cycle. The US is allowed to export 65 000 tonnes of poultry meat to SA tariff free every year in terms of the AGOA agreement. Figures are expected to come down in the next month's report.

- **Total imports:** 48 404 tonnes with a free on board (FOB) value of R526.4 million
- **Imports from Brazil:** 29 944 tonnes, of which 18 187 tonnes was mechanically deboned meat (MDM)
- **Imports from the US:** 12 027 tonnes
- **Imports from Argentina:** 2 467 tonnes
- **Imports from the EU:** 3 260 tonnes, of which the bulk is from Spain at 3 210 t

AMT expects lower meat prices

A slight decline in imports predicted for Q2



Poultry prices are expected to decline towards the second and third quarter of 2021, following the trend in red meat prices
Source: AMT

Poultry prices increased slightly in the first quarter of 2021, but are expected to decline in the second and third quarters of this year.

This is the view of AMT, a local company specialising in the analysis and forecasting of national and regional agricultural industry and market information.

Its quarterly livestock report for the first quarter of the year noted that poultry prices increased by 2.5% on average over that period. Prices are 0.75% lower than in the first quarter of 2020.

"Poultry prices are expected to decline towards the second and third quarter of 2021, following the trend in red meat prices," the report said.

The EU leg quarter price declined by 2% during the first quarter, while broiler prices increased 15%. Local prices of fresh whole poultry increased slightly in the first three months of 2021.

Reviewing poultry imports, most of which came from Brazil, AMT said imports in the first quarter comprised 75% mechanically deboned meat (MDM) and 22% leg quarters.

"Total imports declined by 15.7% from the previous quarter. Imports are expected to decline slightly towards the end of the second quarter of 2021 as local prices are expected to decline," it said.

Producer prices of frozen chickens averaged R26.75/kg, up 3.06% on the previous quarter but down 0.16% on the first quarter of 2020. Fresh chickens averaged R25.91, up 0.87% on the previous quarter but down 5.96% on 2020. IQF portions averaged R25.32, up 3.58% on Q4 2020, and up 3.8% on Q1 of last year.

Lively trade in cull hens

Report looks at how live birds make their way into the informal economy

Province	Chickens bought	Chickens sold	Chickens remaining	Number of deaths	Comments on the possible causes of death
Eastern Cape	203 275	201 734	0	1 541	No signs of illness. Transport, weather
Free State	3 582	3 582	0	0	N/A
Gauteng	305 346	302 304	2 460	582	Natural causes and weather
KwaZulu-Natal	524 508	504 159	20 349	0	N/A
Limpopo	0	0	0	0	
Mpumalanga	2 100	2 073	7	20	Unknown
North West	1 530	1 500	30	0	N/A
Northern Cape	0	0	0	0	N/A
Western Cape	38 727	37 800	472	455	Mostly prolapses
Total	**1 079 068**	**1 053 152**	**23 318**	**2 598**	

Reconciliation of trader statistics
Source: SAPA

More than a million live chickens were sold to cull traders in the first quarter of 2021 for distribution in the informal economy.

The statistics are contained in SAPA's cull traders report for the first three months of the year.

"A thriving and lucrative live bird market exists in townships and rural areas, and is part of the poultry value chain," the report says.

"The informal economy provides livelihoods for thousands of South Africans, especially women, and is an important source of food for lower-income households. Chicken meat remains an affordable and healthy source of animal protein, with a per capita consumption of 38.9kg in 2020."

Since the first outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in South Africa in June 2017, the movement of live birds has been regulated to manage the risks posed by their transportation. Handling live birds potentially exposes humans to viruses such as HPAI.

Cull buyers have to be registered, and both producers and cull buyers must report transactions, which are consolidated. Permits are required to remove flocks from farms, and to move live birds across provincial and national boundaries.

A national database of nearly 5 000 producers and traders has been compiled by the Poultry Disease Management Agency, which has been delegated to monitor the movement of live birds by the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD). The registration is managed via an online platform at poultrydiseases.co.za

During the first three months of 2021, a total of 1 079 068 live birds were purchased by cull traders and 1 053 152 birds were distributed into the market. Some 2 598 birds died while in the possession of cull traders but no disease symptoms were noted.

Nearly half of the trade occurred in KwaZulu-Natal, followed by Gauteng and the Eastern Cape.

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Spreading is done as per stipulations set out by the farmer and we pride ourselves in handing over neatly prepared houses to the farmer upon exiting their premises.

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Beverly Mhlabane has involved her family in farming and hopes to leave a legacy of empowerment

Beverly Mhlabane *a* small farmer *with a* big dream

An engineer by training, egg farmer by passion, **Beverly Mhlabane**'s enthusiasm about her poultry business attracted the attention of none other than the Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition, who mentioned the Benoni businesswoman by name in his February state of the nation (SONA) address in parliament. We visited this dynamic entrepreneur on her farm

Words **Melinda Shaw**
Photographs **Neil Weideman**

What might it be like to hear your name in parliament, held up as an example of positive developments in agriculture? For Beverly Mhlabane, the managing director of Zapa Farm Fresh, the moment when Trade and Industry Minister Ebrahim Patel singled her out during SONA, signified hope and possibility, and it meant the world.

"It confirmed for me that I'm on the right track in ensuring food security for our country, contributing to reducing unemployment by creating jobs and building a legacy for my children," says Mhlabane, a member of SAPA since 2019. "And most importantly, it offered recognition, to be a role model for women and young people by showing that it is possible to own a farm from humble beginnings."

Born and bred in Benoni, Mhlabane is the eldest of three siblings, and a qualified chemical engineer with 20 years' experience in the engineering field. Her farming life started nine or so years ago after a visit to her local grocery shop left her thinking that eggs were really expensive and that there had to be another way. She decided to do it herself, with her own backyard chickens. "Initially I was only planning on eggs for home consumption, so I acquired 10 chickens. It was very informal, but after only two months we had more eggs than we could eat and my neighbours started to buy from us. We then converted a garage into a chicken coop and installed battery cages." That was 2012.

In 2014 Mhlabane bought a piece of land on which she hoped to build a home. "Because it was an agricultural holding, we learnt that we'd need to rezone to residential to be able to build a home," she says. "At this point, we had about 500 chickens in my garage! So I then moved the chickens to the agricultural holding, where we built a 2 000-layer capacity house." That was the start, and over the intervening years she slowly increased capacity. Today she has 7 000 layer hens that produce 6 500 eggs per day, but with big dreams for expansion.

'The processes to get government support are cumbersome and unrealistic'

She sells her eggs to local restaurants, spaza shops and a supermarket.

"We have three generations working on the farm – my mother, Gloria Marokane, who is a retired nurse, my brother Linda Marokane and my eldest daughter, Success, who has just completed a BCom degree. I also have two younger daughters, Ayanda is finalising a BSc and Thandi is still in primary school," says Mhlabane. "What I'm trying to instil in my daughters is that they need to be educated so that they are equipped to create jobs and not be job seekers."

Mhlabane applied for and self-funded an environmental impact assessment (EIA) for 120 000 layers, and environmental approval was granted in 2019. After becoming a SAPA member she has been assisted in the further process of obtaining a water-use licence, and in terms of demand, Zapa Farm is ready to ramp up production.

"Currently our demand exceeds our supply. We source more eggs from other farmers in order to meet the demand for our eggs, and unfortunately this is sometimes a challenge because stock is not always available," she explains. "We urgently need to expand our operations. If I had my way, I would like to reach my approved 120 000 layers and go into the production of liquid and powdered eggs as well."

The biggest hurdle to achieving this dream is obtaining capital for infrastructure expansion, and for that Mhlabane needs government support. "There's a lot of talk around support for the farmers by government; however the processes to get that support are cumbersome and unrealistic," she says. It's not for lack of trying; she applied to the government's Jobs Fund in 2019 and

This page: *Three generations pitch in at Zapa Farm – Bev Mhlabane's mother Gloria Marokane (top), daughter Thandi Mhlabane (middle), and brother Linda Marokane (bottom left) along with his daughter Tshepiso Marokane (bottom right)*

Opposite: *Mhlabane and family start sorting the eggs every day around 10am*

got a stamp of approval from the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD). This Fund had earmarked R9 billion in 2011 to co-finance projects by public, private and non-governmental organisations that would significantly contribute to job creation. "The application is still with the Land Bank, and I'm yet to get a response," says a frustrated Mhlabane.

The second requirement for expansion, she says, is retail access. "I wish retailers would allocate a portion of their shelves to emerging farmers so that they can also play a role to ensure that farmers like me can grow and prosper."

Empowering new-generation farmers is a cause very close to Mhlabane's heart, and as a member of SAPA's Transformation Committee, she participates in monitoring that the objectives set for the transformation of the poultry industry are achieved. She sees herself as a mouthpiece for emerging farmers, and in her time on the committee has already seen more active interaction and information sharing with new-generation farmers regarding activities and developments in the industry.

Before the COVID-19 lockdown Mhlabane was also running a holiday programme with a local primary school, where she brought learners to the farm to experience farming and introduce them to the career possibilities it offers.

"It started quite informally, because it pained me to see that during school holidays, many kids would loiter around with nothing to do. I grew up in a township and we had a lot of activities and role models – I saw that this was sorely lacking in our neighbourhood. So I started giving career guidance to the kids from our church. One of the church members, a primary school educator, suggested that I give a talk to Grade 7 learners. This is where the programme started, and we might still be doing that if the pandemic didn't shut it down."

'I'm trying to instil in my daughters that they need to be educated, to be equipped to create jobs and not be job seekers'

This page: *Mhlabane's priority is to secure capital for infrastructure expansion so that she can grow operations to her approved capacity. Corporate sponsors who are able to contribute are invited to contact her at bev.mhlabane@gmail.com*

Mhlabane has no illusions about the rigours and demands of farming, and believes that new farmers must take the time to tick the right boxes before they start, if they want to be successful. "Farming is not for the faint-hearted. You need to be patient, work hard and be disciplined," she stresses.

What advice does she have for someone who is considering the life of a poultry farmer? Says Mhlabane, "Before you start with production, you need a clear understanding of a number of aspects. Firstly, the market, or where you will be taking your product. You must be clear on the requirements for production, or the system you want to use – for instance cages or free-range, including the pros and cons of both. Thirdly, you need to understand the risks, and how to mitigate them with, for instance, biosecurity. And finally, you have to understand the capital requirements to start the operation.

"The easiest way to start is to source eggs from existing producers and create your customer base so that by the time you start production, you have a feel for your market," she says.

Mhlabane's dream is big, but it is not unattainable. It is a dream of increasing the size of her layer flock to the levels she was approved for so that she can expand production to include liquid and powdered eggs, extending the shelf life of her product. In the process she wants to create jobs and empower a growing circle of people, while contributing to South Africa's food security. This is the sort of dream that deserves formalised backing that can be held up, as Minister Patel did in parliament, as a true example of what is possible in South Africa.

'Farming is not for the faint-hearted. You need to be patient, work hard and be disciplined'

FARMER FOOD FACT

What is your favourite way to eat eggs?

"I don't do a lot of cooking but God has blessed me with daughters who are very good cooks! My favourite recipe is French toast and Eggs Benedict."

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THE TRICKS OF TRADE

COMMERCE & THE POULTRY MARKET

A business, and industry, can only be successful if it has a market. Without customers there is no trade. **Glenneis Kriel** takes a look at market forces that impact our industry and strategies to overcome the hurdles

Unchecked poultry imports from Brazil and the EU have hampered the SA industry's expansion

No farmer operates in a vacuum, and the issues that affect the national poultry industry as a whole has a way of trickling down to be relevant even to subsistence farmers. Identifying and understanding your market, including how to access it, are pivotal for success, and an understanding of the bigger picture allows for effective business planning.

Trade issues are very complex, not least because trade agreements with international trade partners typically cover more than one industry, and decisions that are taken for the benefit of the country as a whole have in the past demanded a sacrifice from one sector to benefit another.

The African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), for instance, signed with the United States in 2000, allows duty-free access to the American market for thousands of goods, but in return, required some concessions. One example is the duty-free quota of 65 000 tonnes of American chicken that come into the SA market annually, which has had a suppressing effect on the poultry industry.

This sanctioned dumping by the United States has in recent years been overtaken by unchecked dumping by Brazil and the EU, with the net effect of displacing local expansion and local jobs.

Evaluating the effects of these market forces and negotiating with the government about tariffs and duties to minimise damage to the local industry are two of the priorities on the South African Poultry Association's annual to-do list.

Learning from ostriches

HPAI and its potential to devastate local production is top of mind currently. A large-scale outbreak can change the face of our industry, widen the door to imports and dumping, and leave consumers at the mercy of rising prices.

As breeder, layer and broiler producers shore up their defences, there is value in considering disease management and trade lessons from our bigger cousins in the ostrich sector.

In spite of product and market differences, ostrich producers have, over many years, gained valuable insights into ways to limit disease and market risks; many of which could help to future-proof the broiler industry.

Firstly, the industry identified and took charge of weaknesses in the supply chain.

Piet Kleyn, CEO of the South African Ostrich Business Chamber, explains that when a permit system to move ostriches was first introduced in 2005 to prevent the spreading of diseases, such as Newcastle Disease and highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), the industry realised that government had neither the resources nor capacity to manage the movement of ostriches during disease-control efforts.

The industry responded by putting systems in place to take this responsibility into its own hands. "Government accredited us to manage the system, which entails that farmers have to apply for a permit to move ostriches from their compartments. The permit is only issued if ostriches test negative for Newcastle and HPAI," Kleyn says.

The National Chemical Residue Control Programme collapsed after an EU audit in 2016, which led to the industry forming a public-private partnership with government in 2018 to monitor chemical residues in ostrich meat.

An extensive traceability system allows every individual ostrich that is sold or slaughtered in South Africa to be traced back to its farm of origin

"Produce cannot be exported in the absence of proof that it complies with the maximum residue levels allowed by a targeted country. Testing is done at a reputable laboratory that complies with international standards and has quick turnaround times to provide the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) with complete reports," Kleyn says.

The ostrich industry also worked closely with government to set up a Veterinary Procedural Notice (VPN) in 2012, that lists the requirements for registering, keeping and controlling ostriches in approved compartments, the movement of ostriches between compartments, slaughtering at EU-approved abattoirs, as well as actions to be taken in case of disease outbreaks or suspected disease outbreaks.

"The EU does not necessarily acknowledge our compartments, meaning that an HPAI outbreak usually leads to a blanket export ban. But farms registered as a closed ratite holding, more than a 100km away from an area where an outbreak occurred, can apply to continue exports, while those outside a 10km radius from an infected compartment may continue exporting heat-treated meat," Kleyn explains.

As part of this, the industry introduced an extensive traceability system, allowing every individual ostrich sold or slaughtered in South Africa to be traced back to the farm of origin.

Most ostrich meat was exported raw until the first HPAI outbreak. Since then, the heat-treated market has been developed to alleviate the impact of trade bans during avian influenza outbreaks, with the result that heat-treated meat represented 68% of exports in 2020.

A lot of work and money has also been invested in the development of the local market since then, with roughly 50% of production now being marketed in South Africa.

Photographs: Shutterstock.com

The ostrich industry has many useful lessons for poultry producers

"Local consumers were fairly unfamiliar with ostrich meat up until then, so the industry ran a campaign to raise awareness of the health benefits of ostrich meat and the best ways to prepare and serve the meat. Since South African consumers are already familiar with chicken meat, an awareness campaign for the broiler industry should rather focus on the benefits of buying local," Kleyn says.

Local is lekker

Encouraging consumers to buy local is indeed one of the ways in which the Poultry Industry Master Plan aims to increase broiler production by 9% over the next three years.

To this end, the Consumer Goods Council of South Africa (CGCSA), Proudly South African and the SA Poultry Association (SAPA) have collaborated to launch a buy-local campaign.

Says Eustace Mashimbye, CEO of Proudly South African, "It will actually be our second campaign; the first was run over the 2020 festive season. The next campaign will run around the same time this year, but probably start earlier – perhaps from October."

Local sales definitely increased during the previous campaign, but Mashimbye says it is difficult to tell whether this was solely because of the campaign or other factors, such as trade disruptions caused by COVID-19 lockdown measures.

The Department of Trade Industry and Competition (dtic) and Business Unity South Africa (Busa) have also conceptualised a localisation campaign.

"The programme aims to identify products that have the potential to be manufactured in South Africa or increase local manufacturing. We also aim to substitute imports where possible and look

at regulatory policy and other matters needed to improve local manufacturing competitiveness," says Cas Coovadia, CEO of Busa.

So far, 35 products spanning various sectors have been included in the programme.

The programme was launched in March, with Marthinus Stander, managing director of the chicken division at RCL Foods, and Rudi van Schoor, CEO of KFC South Africa, asked to serve as champions for poultry products.

It is still early days and initial discussions have simply focused on the why as opposed to the what and how the programme will be implemented.

Says Van Schoor, "I assume a key task would be to work across industries and come up with recommendations on ways in which the public and private sector can kick-start an eco-virtuous cycle, where localisation and local consumption will create more jobs. With more employment the economic activity bubble will widen, consumption will increase, leading to even more local production and jobs."

He foresees that more companies will participate in the programme as time progresses.

Izaak Breitenbach, general manager of SAPA's Broiler Organisation, says that CGCSA, Proudly South African and the dtic have been highly successful in calling for self-regulation by retailers to include at least 35% local content in the textile industry and 95% in the sugar industry.

He envisages that retailers will be asked to do the same with poultry products and also to buy a certain percentage of local poultry from small and medium enterprises.

'SA is definitely more efficient in producing a whole chicken than European countries'

HOW EUROPE DOES IT

There is a certain irony in the EU challenging trade measures aimed at safeguarding the South African poultry industry, when the EU itself makes use of various measures to protect its own interests, says trade consultant Dr Paul Goodison of GDC Partners, which runs the website epamonitoring.net.

For one, the EU uses carefully managed tariff-rate quotas to protect its domestic industry against imports. "The regime means that EU producers are always the primary beneficiaries of any expansion of EU poultry meat consumption," Goodison explains.

The industry also indirectly benefits from direct aid payments to cereal and protein crop farmers, which helps to stabilise European feed prices. In some EU countries poultry producers further benefit from investment support, as well as crisis-management programmes in the event of animal-disease outbreaks or market-crisis situations.

In addition, the EU is much more powerful than developing countries when it comes to negotiation as well as settling trade agreements and disputes.

As a case in point, numerous African countries have experienced dramatic increases in EU poultry meat imports, despite EU broiler prices being over 43% higher than the Brazilian price offering and nearly 23% higher than average US broiler prices, according to Wageningen Economic Research, Competitiveness of the EU poultry meat sector, base year 2015.

Goodison explains that the EU achieves this thanks to favourable trade agreements with these countries in combination with the cross-subsidising of poultry exports by the high poultry breast-meat prices maintained on EU markets.

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The layer industry has launched various campaigns to raise per capita egg consumption in South Africa over the past few years, and is currently applying for a continuation of the statutory levy, to finance further campaigns and support South African egg producers.

"The aim is to get SA consumption in line with the world's top egg-eating nations, which have a per capita consumption of over 300 eggs in comparison with South Africa's 159 average," says Colin Steenhuisen, who served as interim general manager of SAPA's Egg Organisation until May this year.

Unfair and predatory trade

Despite these positive developments, South African broiler producers continue to face unfair competition and predatory trade practices.

Layer producers, fortunately, are less affected. "We started importing fertile hatching eggs to address shortages in the broiler and layer breeder flocks during the HPAI outbreak in 2017, and table eggs were later also imported to meet demand after 20% of the national egg layer flock was lost," says Steenhuisen. "We have not imported any more table eggs since mid-2018 thanks to local egg prices being quite competitive in comparison with international prices."

A Bureau for Food and Agricultural Policy (BFAP) analysis revealed that the South African broiler industry was very competitive between 2015 to 2017, with the total cost of production being lower than all the European countries included in the sample, namely Netherlands, Germany, France, Italy, Spain Denmark, Poland and Hungary, as well as the United Kingdom.

Tracy Davids, manager of the commodity markets and oversight division of BFAP, says that little has changed since then as rising feed prices are a result of global dynamics that affect all these countries.

"Within the sample of countries considered, the top exporters such as Brazil and the United States produce at a lower cost than South Africa. But we are definitely more efficient in producing a whole chicken than European countries, and at the higher end of the spectrum compared to smaller exporters."

Even so, the broiler industry has been struggling to grow because of unfair trade. Aziz Sulliman, chairman of SAPA, says the industry has been under assault from major foreign producers, including the EU, for at least two decades, and been in crisis for nearly ten years because of a steadily rising flood of imports.

"Unfair and predatory practices, including dumping, have steadily stolen 30% of our market share, whereas European import figures never exceed 7%," he says.

The situation might even worsen in the absence of a Brexit deal. "If trade does not continue as usual between the UK and EU the threat is that they might divert more poultry meat to other countries, and South Africa is already a major export destination for both these regions," explains Izaak Breitenbach.

According to Breitenbach, things will only reach a tipping point in 12 to 18 months, once appropriate antidumping measures have been approved against Brazil and the four EU countries most recently identified as problematic; trade measures have been revised; and the SA Revenue Service (SARS) has been empowered to act against transgressors.

Encouraging consumers to buy local is one way in which the Poultry Industry Master Plan aims to increase local production

Food safety

The international trend in most countries is to move away from tariffs to non-trade barriers, such as sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures, to protect their markets.

Breitenbach explains that current trade agreements with the EU and UK allow South Africa to export poultry meat duty-free to both regions. South Africa, however, is unable to do so because of the strict

SPS requirements with which meat products have to comply to gain access to these markets.

"Our situation is complicated by the fact that we have a multilayered production environment – with highly integrated commercial enterprises that have world-class facilities on one hand, and informal backyard chicken farming by households and subsistence farmers on the other. The problem is that our disease status is judged based on the country as a whole and not the individual entities that wish to export."

Steenhuisen points out that the same trend is evident in egg export destinations: "We export eggs to Mozambique, Swaziland, Namibia and Lesotho, with most of these SADC countries using a combination of permit systems and tariffs to control import volumes.

'We aim to get SA in line with the world's top egg-eating nations, with a per capita consumption of over 300 eggs'

Namibia also has really high SPS standards, making it difficult to enter this market. South Africa, in contrast, has a zero import tariff on table eggs from these regions."

In other African countries, the combination of high tariffs, non-tariff barriers and SPS measures simply don't justify exports.

"We used to export thousands of cases of eggs to Angola each year, but Angola has since increased import tariffs to 30% and introduced measures that are really hard to comply with. Eggs, for instance, have to arrive in the Angola within 30 days after date of lay," Steenhuisen explains. He adds that the industry would possibly be able to increase production if it was not for these unilateral market barriers within SADC, if SADC rules were applied even-handedly and if more viable export markets beyond Africa were opened up for South African eggs.

But health and safety issues have also enjoyed increased priority here in South Africa, especially after the HPAI outbreak in 2017.

Trade solutions must allow the industry room for expansion, and not stifle new entrants to the market

Says Breitenbach, "We're working with double standards, with some countries selling chicken here that South African producers wouldn't be allowed to sell and which would definitely not meet food-safety regulations in their home countries."

The dispensation that allows the listing of multiple countries on a bag will therefore be withdrawn in September 2021, as the practice makes it difficult to trace food to its origins in case of food-safety breaches.

Finding trade solutions that will allow the South African poultry industry room for expansion, and will not stifle opportunities for new entrants to the market, is a key objective in an industry of such strategic importance.

"There are no easy answers to the questions that face us when we consider how to grow and develop this national asset. However, what is certain is that we have to develop and protect our market to unlock the full economic potential of the industry," Breitenbach says.

SA is unable to export to the EU due to strict SPS requirements for access

THE BIG TRADE ISSUE

TRADE MEASURES

What are the trade measures SAPA and government use to level the playing field and grow the broiler industry? A closer look:

Frozen chicken portions are at the root of SA's dumping problem

MFN duties

MFN stands for "most-favoured nation", and in March 2020 South Africa increased MFN duties on imports of bone-in chicken from 37% to 62%, and from 12% to 42% for boneless portions. These duties apply to chicken imports from the United States and Brazil, but not the EU, due to the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) which gives the EU free market access in South Africa.

Antidumping duties

Antidumping duties are aimed at countries that sell chicken portions into SA at prices lower than their production costs, and/or lower than what it is selling at in their home markets.

SAPA is currently seeking antidumping duties on chicken from Brazil and four EU countries, based on the difference in price at which portions are selling in South Africa and in their specific home countries.

SAPA has also applied to renew antidumping duties against the UK, Netherlands and Germany, which has been in place since 2015, and expects an outcome later this year.

Safeguard duties

Safeguard duties were approved against all EU countries in 2018, with the rate set at 35,5%, reducing incrementally over a period of four years until March 2022, when SAPA will apply to have these revised and reinstated in some form or another.

Revision of trade measures

The entire tariff structure for poultry is under review. For instance, evaluations are underway to determine whether the ad valorem duty, which is percentage based, should be replaced by a specific duty to address underdeclaration of chicken products. Ways are also being considered to simplify the structure to stop declaration of chicken products under the wrong category headings.

The possibility of other measures, such as an entry price system, which is used to address under-declaration of prices in the EU, and the introduction of appropriate systems of rebates, whereby tariff levels on certain imports can be reduced where parties are achieving exports, are also under consideration.

Doing the funky chicken

Music to calm the flock

BirdBuds™ and Squawkify™

Words **Alyn Adams**
Illustrations **Jason Bronkhorst**

Farmers of the future will keep their chickens happy and productive with the best tricks science can come up with. We consulted some very inventive, demented inventors for a sneak preview.

Back in 1914 SAPA's first members could not have imagined chicken houses with temperature regulators and automated feeding systems; yet here we are! One thing is certain – technology keeps charging ahead, and it's anyone's guess what we'll be used to by the time 2030 rolls around, just a few years from now.

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No other poultry-management system allows bird population densities this high, while still maintaining health and hygiene, reducing aggression and giving the chickens lots of healthy exercise. Our super-lightweight, comfy VR helmets are designed to allow free beak movement for eating and drinking normally.

Powerful irrigation nozzles and rubber squeegees built into the NEO™ clear any solid waste from the surface of the balls while disinfecting them. Gutters then funnel the run-off to your treatment facilities. Thanks to the overhead harness, this means that the top of each ball – the only part of the apparatus ever in contact with the bird's feet – remains completely sanitary.

A Wi-Fi connection to the VR helmet, controlled via your smartphone app, allows you to take the chickens on any adventure imaginable, within the safe, secure environment of FOWLPLAY™.

Your birds can fight imaginary dinosaurs while sustaining no harm, or search for bugs in a predator-free virtual jungle. Feeding tubes in the real world appear on their VR screens to take care of food and water. They can run, jump and flap in all directions, chasing whatever you choose to play on their screens and earphones.

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What crazy future poultry tech would you like to see?
Let us know at editor@poultrybulletin.co.za and we might instruct our "inventors" to imagine it!

The current yearly Poulet du Faso production in Burkina is around 1.3 million day-old chicks.

CROSSBREED CHICKEN OPENS DOORS IN AFRICA

A project in Burkina Faso has allowed around 1 000 small-scale chicken farmers to increase their productivity a hundredfold with a crossbreed of local chickens and slow-growth French Sasso hens

By **Natalie Berkhout**

Farmers benefit from the crossbred chicken's lower mortality rate and faster achievement of market weight

The project, which has been five years in the making by animal health company Ceva, set out to produce this crossbreed of chickens, known as Poulet du Faso, with greater production capacity to provide smallholders with more, and healthier, day-old chicks. The chicks are all vaccinated in the hatchery using Ceva's vectorised vaccines, which, according to the company, gives them life-long protection against Newcastle Disease, which is prevalent in Africa. Mortality rate among Poulet du Faso is just 5% compared to 50% among traditional breeds. Furthermore, the crossbred chicken reaches market weight (1.2 to 1.4kg) in 75 to 90 days compared to the typical six months' rearing required for its local counterpart in Burkina Faso.

The first avian selection centre in sub-Saharan Africa

Ceva partnered with Sasso-Hendrix Genetics to breed the chickens at the first avian selection centre in sub-Saharan Africa, Coq du Faso, which opened in 2016 in rural Boussé, 50km north of the capital city. According to Pierre-Marie Borne, the programme initiator and public affairs director for Africa and the Middle East at Ceva, "The avian selection process at the centre is focused on pure local breeds. The Coq du Faso selection centre was established to undertake selection work in order to preserve and, in parallel, improve the local Burkina poultry breed referred to as the *poulet bicyclette* or 'bicycle chicken'. After four years of carefully measuring and analysing different parameters as part of five selection rounds, the fifth generation of pedigrees now have double the laying capacity of their

local counterparts. The approach has enabled the local adaptability and rusticity of the *poulet bicyclette* to be preserved while improving its productivity. And more importantly, the phenotype, or the way the birds look, the *poulet grillé*, or grilled chicken, has remained unchanged, much to the delight of the Burkinabé who are very attached to their familiar local breed."

Characteristics of *poulet bicyclette*

The local breed is favoured in Burkina Faso mainly for its taste. "The meat is darker and more flavoursome; the Burkinabé prefer that to the taste of white standard broiler meat," says Borne, adding that in terms of phenotype, "they have very long legs and so run very fast. Obviously, their performance in terms of productivity is not their best feature, but they are rustic and therefore more resistant to the Burkinabé context and climatic conditions than other genetics."

'The Coq du Faso selection centre was established to undertake selection work in order to preserve and, in parallel, improve the local Burkina poultry breed'

US$3 million income

Overall, each Poulet du Faso generates US$2 across the different elements of the value chain, meaning that since the start of production around three years ago, the project has generated around US$3 million in income, 70% of which has directly benefited smallholder farmers.

Enormous potential

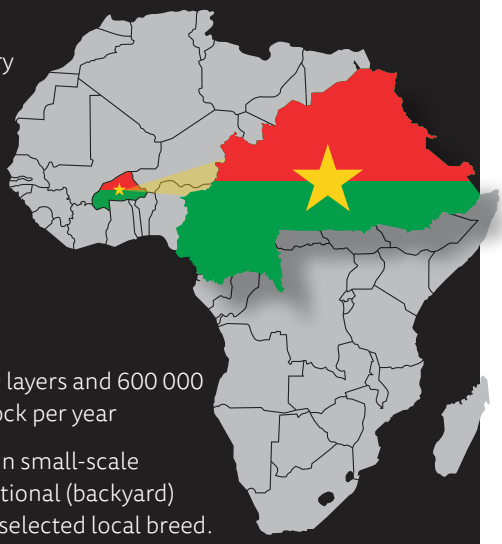
"The current yearly Poulet du Faso production in Burkina is around 1.3 million day-old chicks, which is far below the huge demand for this product. There is enormous potential to scale up this system further to improve rural livelihoods and contribute to greater food security in Burkina Faso," says Borne.

The project has partnered with a local private hatchery to produce the crossbred day-old chicks, starting with the main one based in the south of the capital city Ouagadougou. Production has been extended with another private hatchery located in Burkina's second largest city after the capital, Bobo-Dioulasso, and, thanks to the demand from local farmers, production was due to start at a third private hatchery.

This feature was first published by Poultry World

Burkina Faso's poultry industry at a glance

- Potential demand for poultry meat: 58 455 tonnes
- Current supply: 25 031 tonnes
- Broiler production per year: 31 288 273 broilers (2015)
- Egg production per year: 109 788 433 eggs (2015)
- National flock size: 700 000 layers and 600 000 broilers of exotic genetic stock per year
- The remainder is produced in small-scale commercial farms and traditional (backyard) rural systems using the nonselected local breed.
- Except for eggs, the avian production remains in the hands of small commercial farms and traditional farmers.



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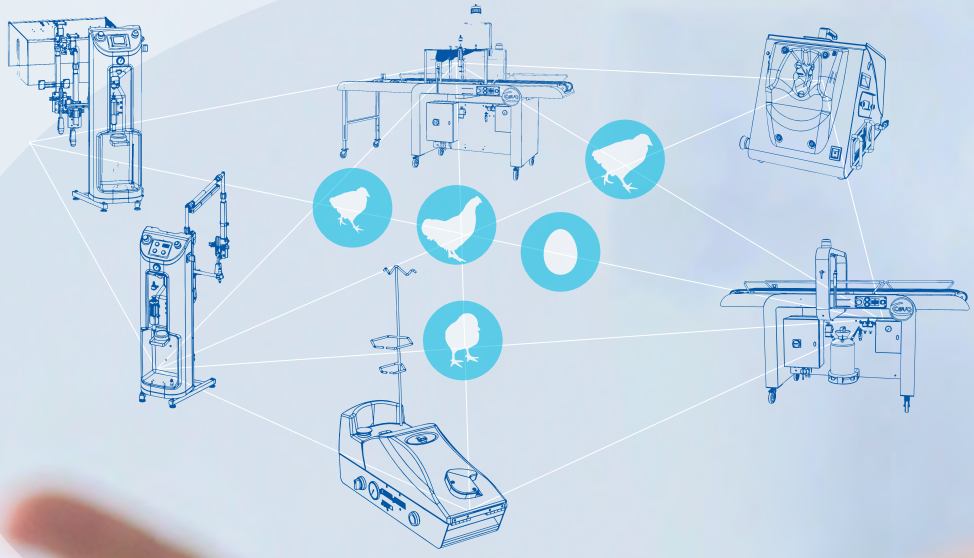

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Together, beyond animal health

ON THE WIRES

Tune in here for the latest news on the international poultry front

Compiled by **Charmain Lines**

Swedish producer reduces food waste

A programme to reduce floor waste in its production plants has already reduced losses by 38% since 2019, reports Scandi Standard, a Swedish chicken producer.

Once edible parts of the chicken hits the floor, they are no longer suitable for human consumption. Realising the food waste and financial losses, Scandi set up a programme to minimise waste by identifying and correcting deficiencies in the production chain. Steps taken range from putting up guide rails on conveyor belts to replacing an entire process and working differently.

The company's next goal is to reduce floor waste by 50%, also when compared to 2019.

More hemp, better eggs?

Egg quality "may improve" when laying hens are on diets that contain hemp seed. This is according to a researcher who evaluated the Hemp Feed Coalition's application for hemp to be approved as animal feed in the United States.

The safety and efficacy trials behind the application evaluated multiple key performance metrics in 800 laying hens fed diets containing up to 30% hemp-seed cake. While overall performance did not change much, eggs from these hens contained more omega 3 and lutein, and generally had a more favourable fatty acid composition.

Nutritionally, hemp-seed cake has more phosphorus and a good mineral content. While the study concluded that it was not necessarily a direct replacement for soya-bean meal, hemp-seed cake appears to have great potential as a feed ingredient.

Photographs: Shutterstock.com

Namibian sector eyes self-sufficiency

Namibia currently depends on imports to meet poultry demand, but its poultry producers' association says the country can become self-sufficient in terms of egg production in the next year or two. The country's six egg producers, which are all located near the cities of Windhoek and Okahandja, and close to markets, as well as feed and other input suppliers, sell about 100 million eggs per year.

In terms of chicken meat, monthly demand is about 3 000 tons, of which only 1 700 tons are produced locally. Challenges in the way of increasing production include the effects of the coronavirus pandemic, cheap chicken imports and the high cost of imported inputs.

However, the increase in demand for chicken towards the end of 2020 points towards opportunities for investment that will boost local production.

Vaccine project targets small farmers across Africa

Up to 150 000 small-scale poultry farmers in eight African countries are to benefit from a new four-year project which aims to help make their businesses more productive and efficient.

The PREVENT (Promoting and Enabling Vaccination Efficiently, Now and Tomorrow) Project will see more than 50 million hatchery-vaccinated day-old chicks distributed every year. By providing the owners of backyard flocks with better quality chicks, together with improved flock health and husbandry advice, the project aims to cut waste and make poultry production across the target countries much more sustainable.

Improvement in poultry production is one of the most promising options to provide affordable protein and other essential nutrients to Africa's growing population.

Currently, there are more than 250 million people on the continent who are undernourished and almost 1 billion cannot afford a healthy diet.

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Eggs in abundance

As our industry is largely rural-based, poultry producers are often majority employers in the towns where they operate, and very involved with the surrounding community. Egg farmer **Willie Bosoga** and his business, Aldabri Agricultural, train graduates, support learners, and donate eggs to alleviate hunger

Palesa, Kopano and Bonolo, here with the GM of Aldabri Agricultural Calvin Molokoane, visit Aldabri to receive their monthly care parcels

Siphethelo Mnguni and Nyakallo Montse are learning the business as part of Aldabri's training programme

Willie Bosoga believes business has a responsibility to help government alleviate hunger

How is Aldabri Agricultural involved with the community?
We support four learners at our local school, Rand Gold Primary Farm School. We sponsor their uniforms and also buy monthly groceries for Palesa, Kopano, Bonolo and Karabo. It all started when we learnt about the local crèche at Tsholopele Village, where a number of our employees live. When we heard that the crèche did not have enough food to provide meals for the children, we started donating eggs. Then we discovered that as the learners move to the primary school, they face similar challenges, and now have to buy uniforms too. So we offered to help.

We believe you are also involved in knowledge transfer to graduates?
We've been training graduates since we started Aldabri Agricultural in 2007. Most recently we trained four agricultural graduates from the Gauteng Department of Agriculture and Rural

Bosoga and Aldabri support Chefs with Compassion with eggs to use in the meal-assistance programme the NGO started during lockdown

Development (GDARD) for two years, and subsequently employed two of them. They're doing very well, helping us to establish a feed mill and an egg-packing house. At the moment we have two new student trainees: agricultural graduate Siphethelo Mnguni from GDARD, and Nyakallo Montse, from Cape Peninsula University of Technology, who also receives a stipend from us.

Last year during lockdown you contributed to the #FightingHunger project of SAPA. Tell us more.
We participated in the Department of Agriculture's food-assistance project at the start of COVID-19 which SAPA brought to our attention, with a donation of eggs and spinach from our farm. Then, when we heard about Chefs with Compassion's welfare programme, we also donated 1 000 eggs and 25 litres of liquid egg. I was told that the eggs were used to bake bread and make a variety of meals for distribution among impoverished communities. We remain in contact and have made further donations as required. Chefs with Compassion recently celebrated its first birthday and we were happy to donate the same volume of eggs for its ongoing programme to keep hunger at bay in vulnerable communities.

Why do you think it is important for the private sector to help with social responsibility projects?
It is important to be part of the community you operate in. Your employees come from there – 15 of our 25 staff live in the surrounding community – and in our case, this is also where our market is. Our neighbours support us and it is only right that we support them. One day these learners will graduate and become CEOs and CFOs in their own right, and if they had the benefit of support when they were in school, they are likely to give back in the same way. This is how we build a healthy, positive society, where we help others and don't only work for ourselves. Besides, it is simply not right for a company to turn a profit in a community that does not have clean drinking water, or a local school without a playground. We have a responsibility to assist government in reducing unemployment and poverty.

Willie Bosoga is the chairman of SAPA's Egg Organisation, head of its transformation committee and the owner of Aldabri Agricultural (Pty) Ltd, which is based in Mogale City, Gauteng

HACKS&TIPS

Small-scale farmers share their tips on how to find a market for one's products

We asked

1. **How did you identify your market and how has it evolved?**
2. **What advice would you give a new farmer about finding a market?**
3. **What do you wish you knew when you were starting out, and now?**

Emmanuel Gumede

Khondlo Poultry Farm
Verulam, Durban
SAPA member since 2020

Follow Emmanuel on Twitter: @ydb_ZN

@ydb_ZN

1 I started in 2019 with 10 New Hampshire chickens. The only thing that I have ever known in my work experience is selling; so I used that to my advantage.

I told myself that I was going to sell these chickens no matter what. So I loaded my chickens in the back of my car and drove to nearby communities and started selling on the street. I can sell anything to anyone, and closing a sale is so gratifying!

The informal market is where I do business – it is hard as it's not a straightforward market: demand can be up one month and completely down the next. I scale up and down depending on the deals I have in place, up to about 3 000 chickens in a cycle.

2 Get a bakkie as soon as possible! I started out using what I had at the time, which was my SUV Jeep, and the "chicken car" didn't always create the right impression with customers! To find your market, my advice is to check out your town's chisanyamas and to make them an offer that they can't refuse. Around here those outlets sell 35 or more braaied chickens every day between Monday and Thursday and they double those numbers over weekends, so if you line a few of these up as clients you are off to a good start as a farmer.

3 I really wish I knew more about production costs when I started out. Like many start-up poultry farmers I did not look past the cost of chicks and feed, and one doesn't realise the costs of transportation and delivery, medication, wood shavings, electricity and so on... it all adds up. What has worked for me is to record every single cost on a spreadsheet, every mortality, every aspect of production, so that you have an overview of your business.

I've learnt many lessons during my journey in the poultry industry, and the biggest one is that as a small-scale farmer there's a thin line between making a profit and making a loss.

Photographs: Jason Leung @ninjason on Unsplash

Maphate Rakoma

Farming with Maphate Pty (Ltd)
Nobody, Polokwane

Follow Maphate on Twitter

@maphate_rosina

1. I realised that people consume chickens every day and they don't have time to buy live chickens and prepare them. I saw a gap in offering freshly packaged chickens, because customers prefer the taste of fresh chicken.

2. Talk chickens, advertise on a daily basis and supply the best in the market. Don't sell chickens on credit, especially when you just started your business.

3. Finding and securing a long-term contract is a little bit difficult, but if you start small – I started with 100 chickens – you can grow as the demand grows.

Francinah Teffo

Knockout Trading
Randfontein
Member of SAPA's Egg Board

1. I started with 500 layers in 2016. After marketing myself to the big butchers in town with no success I decided to start selling in the busy and crowded streets of my town. I then realised that most of my customers on the street reside in the townships, so I extended my market into the townships. Today I have 7 000 layers.

2. Prepare to start from the ground up. Go out there and establish your product even if it means standing on a street corner shouting "fresh eggs" until your market is well established. Finding a market is not easy but good customer service is an important aspect in this regard. Happy customers make a successful business.

3. I wish I knew the costs involved in producing an egg against the selling price of an egg. I also wish I knew that the price of eggs is not regulated and therefore controlled by the big retailers, and as a small egg producer I have no control over that. It would be great to know more about online marketing, and to understand the price dynamics of my product so that I can prepare for the worst times.

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Bessemer Poultry erected 60 poultry houses in Mauritius

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How poultry paid the price for a free trade agreement

FairPlay founder Francois Baird on why the movement has sided with the poultry industry in the battle against predatory trade

Trade between countries is a two-way blessing, but predatory trade can be a weapon that benefits one side and wounds the other. That is the basis of the battle against dumped chicken imports that the South African poultry industry has fought for more than two decades.

FairPlay was founded in 2016 to join the fight against predatory trade. We believe in fair competition, within World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules. We have supported the South African chicken and sugar industries in their efforts to halt or reduce the deluge of dumped imports that have harmed these industries and cost thousands of jobs.

Dumping is predatory trade – it aims to gain market share and dominate a market so that it gains pricing power, at the expense of local industries and their workers – ultimately providing importers with fat profit margins, and undercutting local prices through unfair competition.

Dumping is against the rules of the WTO, which allows antidumping duties to counter unfair pricing. In its current application for antidumping duties against Brazil and four European Union countries, the South African Poultry Association has produced evidence that chicken is imported at far less than the same products are sold for in the producing countries.

Because it is unfair trade, dumping can't be countered by stiffer competition and greater efficiencies. For years the SA poultry industry has been rated as more efficient than the EU, producing chickens at lower cost. Yet less efficient EU countries dump chicken here, because they're disposing of unwanted surplus meat and will sell at any price.

'Predatory trade can be a weapon that benefits one side and wounds the other'

It is ironic that South Africa's problems with EU dumped chicken began with a free trade agreement. A trade and development agreement signed in 2000 was upgraded in 2016 to an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with South Africa and neighbouring states. While other industries benefited from improved two-way trade, the poultry sector paid an unfair price for it. Given free access to the SA market by the new trade deals, EU producers dumped an ever-increasing flood of chicken portions in this country. Their two-decade assault has been interrupted only by bird flu outbreaks in 2016 and again in 2021.

Chicken industries in West Africa also suffered from similar agreements as EU chicken was dumped in Ghana, Ivory Coast and elsewhere. Having promised to promote sustainable development and poverty eradication, the EU has instead helped spread unemployment and misery in Africa's poultry-producing countries.

This is why international trade rules were created in the first place, and must be now be enforced to ensure trade agreements are fair. Africa's poultry industries show what can go wrong when free trade deals result in predatory trade.

Where can new farmers go for funding?

One source of help is the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC). **Kgampi Bapela**, head of agro-processing and agriculture, gives *Poultry Bulletin* the details

Barabakama Poultry created 29 new jobs

The IDC, in partnership with the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform & Rural Development (DALRRD), funds and supports local agro-processing projects and businesses. The new Agri Industrial Fund, launched in March, invests in new projects and existing businesses with expansion potential, to develop resources to supply domestic demand, and to boost our agricultural sector, including the poultry industry, in international trade.

What does the IDC consider when assessing applications?
We take a holistic approach and look at the entire value chain, because it is all interlinked and one sector affects the other. For instance, an increase in the capacity of the outgrowers leads to an increase in the demand for feed and day-old chicks. So we'd consider support for feed mills, hatcheries, growers and abattoirs, to assist where there is a need for expansion.

How does the IDC decide on funding?
We focus on operating entities that have grower contracts with processors, and additional letters of intent to increase their production capacities by building houses, for example. So growers should have completed environmental impact assessments and meet the relevant regulatory requirements, for example, water rights.

How does a poultry farmer qualify?
Businesses or projects must be at least 60% black-owned, operate on privately owned or land-reform farms and require funding for investment in capital equipment and infrastructure, or for working capital. Contract-grower operations has to farm a minimum of 200 000 birds per cycle, and layer farms a minimum of 50 000 birds.

Can the IDC also help an applicant to buy land?
The IDC, traditionally, doesn't fund the purchase of land. However, an exception can be considered if a grower has a contract and the land they're operating on limits their expansion. The acquisition of land should never be a significant portion of the project.

How many applications does the IDC typically receive from poultry farmers?
Since the fund launched on 18 March, we've received over 10 applications per month, and are currently assessing 15 applications. The approvals are expected in June/July 2021.

Are you able to share a funding success story?
In 2016 the Moloko family of Baramakama Poultry, a 100% black-owned, independent egg producer, packer, marketer and distributor operating from a rural village in the North West, identified a market opportunity in the area. They had seven hen houses and with IDC funding they constructed five more with 172 000 capacity plus a pack house. The increased capacity at the facility enabled Barakama to access the formal market and 29 jobs were created. Today, the company delivers more than 230 000 eggs per day to TopLay in the Ventersdorp area.

To apply, submit your business plans to the IDC offices by emailing callcentre@idc.co.za.

Photograph: Baramakama Poultry

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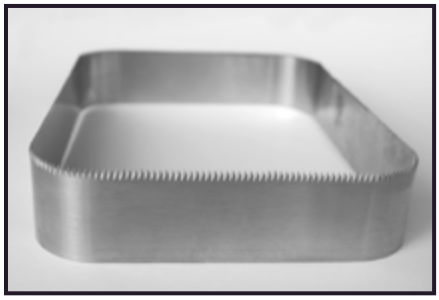

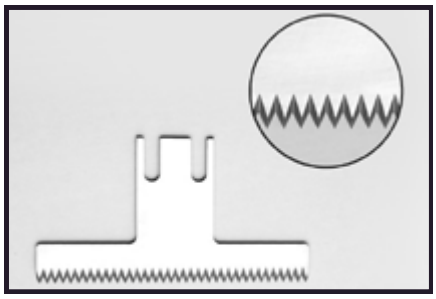

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Have you joined SAPA yet?

Now is the time to reap the benefits that membership brings to egg and chicken producers

The South African Poultry Association (SAPA) acts on behalf of its members and the greater poultry industry of South Africa and works tirelessly towards the growth and wellbeing of poultry producers large and small. Our efforts ensure the coordination of the aims and objectives of both the Broiler and Egg Organisations.

Whenever the industry faces a crisis, such as the current avian influenza outbreak, SAPA ensures that our members have the latest information, updated regularly, to enable responsible decision-making about their businesses every step of the way.

In the last month we have advised hundreds of farmers on the correct protocols to protect their flocks from highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), and we worked in close collaboration with government to contain the outbreak.

We also work with government and regulatory bodies to address trade issues and to protect our producers' markets against adverse legislation and other systemic aggression such as dumping by international trade partners.

We commission scientific studies as required to identify solutions and best practices, and to enable us to provide the counsel our members require of us, and to represent the industry on all relevant forums.

SAPA also provides guidance regarding transformation and we form public/private partnerships with government departments and other public bodies, ensuring that our producers have a voice when it comes to the development of regulatory frameworks.

All producers of eggs or broilers in South Africa are eligible to apply for membership of SAPA. If you want to have a voice in the poultry industry, there is no better place to start.

How to join:

1. Request the official application form by sending an email to reception@sapoultry.co.za, or calling 011 795 9920. Return the completed form as stipulated.
2. The Egg or Broiler Board will evaluate your application, which will then be ratified by the SAPA Board. The board reserves the right to accept or reject any application at its discretion.
3. Once your application is approved, your annual membership fee of R405 will be payable. An additional fee based on slaughter volumes for broilers or a statutory levy for eggs is payable. Get further details at www.sapoultry.co.za

'Our EIA has been approved! Words cannot describe how grateful we are to SAPA for doing this for us. Not having environmental approval for our farm has been such an impediment, and has seen us miss out on a lot of growth opportunities. Recently, DALRRD did not want to include us in their 2021/2022 plans for this very reason. Thanks SAPA for your assistance'

Nthabiseng Yolanda Philison
Phirima Agrarian Services

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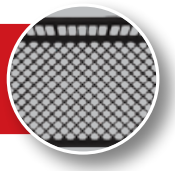

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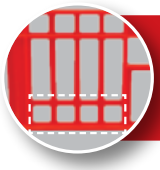

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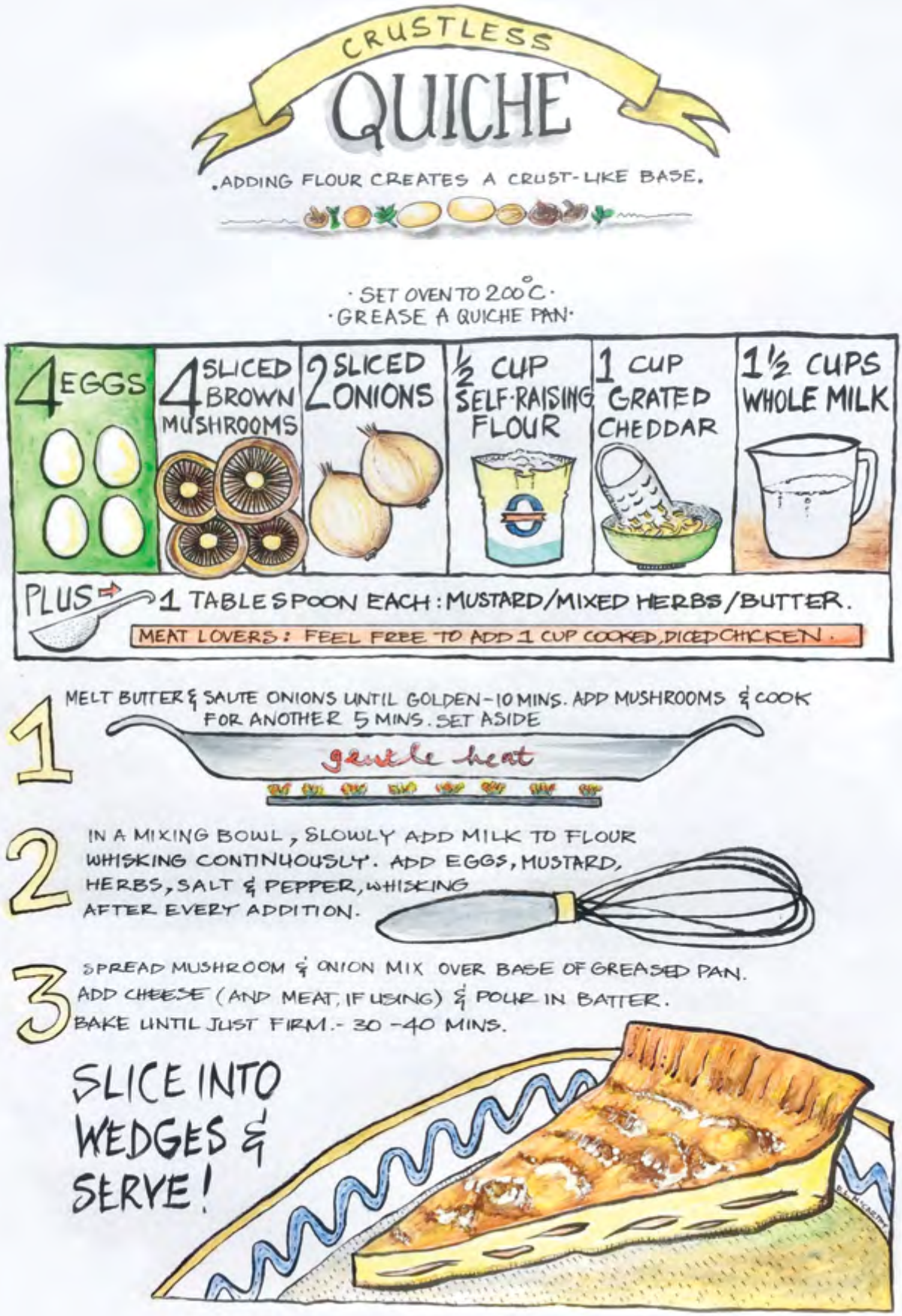

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