

# Poultry Bulletin

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN POULTRY ASSOCIATION



ISSUE 21

AUGUST / SEPTEMBER 2024

R60

**THE GROWTH ISSUE**

**HOW POULTRY PRODUCERS MADE A DIFFERENCE ON MANDELA DAY**



## **GROWING AN EGG MARKET**

*the cooperative way*

## **FUN ON THE FAIRWAY**

*SAPA's first golf day hits a hole in one*

# **BABY STEPS TO PROFIT**

*All grown up: the business that started it all*

**THE WOMEN EMPOWERED BY POULTRY IN RWANDA**

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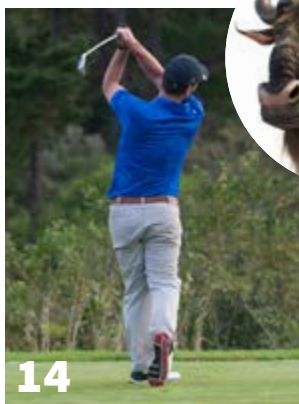
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**W**E ARE ALMOST AT THE END of a harsh winter and I don't know about you, but I can't wait for those first buds of spring to show their faces. This has also been the season for welcoming a brand-new government, and a fresh set of ministers and senior officials with the power to decide on the welfare of the poultry industry. It is our sincere hope that the new dispensation will ring in positive changes that will lead to a stronger rand, a crackdown on illegal imports, and attention to the infrastructure failings that have added to farmers' woes in the recent past.

Our theme for this Women's Month issue is growth, and we know that our readers, who picked themselves up and dusted themselves off after the last bird-flu outbreak, would like nothing better than to continue to grow in output, food production and job creation.

Enjoy the stories of resilience and innovation that we tell in these pages.

Melinda  
@melshaw001  
@poultrybulletin



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# IT'S AWARDS SEASON!



**A** HEAD OF THE FIRST-EVER SAPA Golf Day at Pezula Nature Retreat in Knysna (see page 14), association members attended the annual general meeting. In keeping with tradition, a number of industry achievers were honoured with SAPA Awards at this occasion.

We would like to congratulate all the 2024 recipients, whose contributions to the industry are highly valued. 📸



Gary Arnold of Astral was named Poultry Person of the Year. Here he is with Aziz Sulliman and Brendon de Boer

## Poultry Person of the Year

Gary Arnold

## Honorary President of SAPA

Willie Bosoga

## Honorary Life Member

Hennie Lourens

## Special Awards

Jimmy Murray, Tumi Mokwene, Clive Tigere

## Transformation Awards

Shumbaset Consortium, Aziz Sulliman, Christopher Mason

## Certificates of Merit

Deltamune, DALRRD: Department of Food Safety and Quality Assurance, NAMC, Protactic, HPAI Task Team



Willie Bosoga is named Honorary President of SAPA



Tumi Mokwene, here with Aziz Sulliman and Gary Arnold, won a Special Award



Johan Oberholzer and Willie Bosoga of Shumbaset Consortium accept their Transformation Award from Aziz Sulliman and Colin Steenhuisen



Jimmy Murray with his Special Award



Christopher Mason with Aziz Sulliman and Willie Bosoga



Dr Stephen Swanepoel accepts Deltamune's Certificate of Merit



Billy Makhafola accepts a Certificate of Merit on behalf of DALRRD's Department of Food Safety & Quality Assurance, from Aziz Sulliman and Colin Steenhuisen



Leon de Villiers accepts Clive Tigere's Special Award on his behalf

Photographs: Black 'n White Visual Media



# LETTERS

We want to hear from you. Send your letters to [editor@poultrybulletin.co.za](mailto:editor@poultrybulletin.co.za)

## THE LOVE OF CHICKS

**T**HERE IS NOTHING LIKE newly hatched chicks! I have to share my photos because these little beauties made my day, and even more so having my daughter visit to share the love. Now I just have to hope that the baboons and other wildlife on the farm where I live will leave them alone... the battle is real!

**Elna Trautmann**  
Knysna



## GRATITUDE OVER AWARD

**A**FTER THE HIGHLIGHT of being featured in *Poultry Bulletin* ("Compliance is everything", February/March issue), it is such a privilege to share that we experienced another amazing highlight, winning a KZN Bambela Business Award. A total of 210 SMMEs applied, 160 were shortlisted, and 81 pitched for funding. Sir Rooster was one of 17 runners-up. It was my first time pitching for funding – I loved the experience and am so grateful for the opportunity. I know it can only get better and we can only grow from here. Our prize money of R30 000 will go towards purchasing more equipment. And as much as I would like to say I nailed it, I know it was only possible because I am loved by God and I am simply putting my trust in Him.

**Zinzi Manana**

Sir Rooster Farms, KZN

*Ed: Congratulations! May the milestones (and awards) keep coming.*



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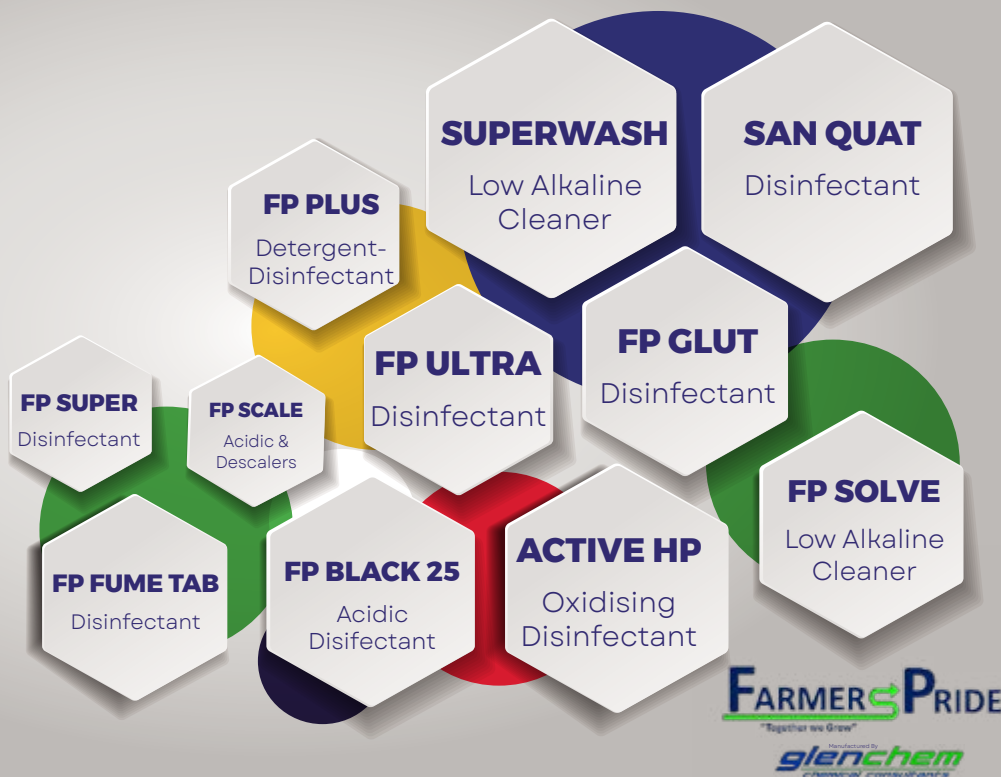
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# KEY DRIVERS FOR POULTRY PROFITABILITY

By **Nkhensani Mashimbyi**

**T**HE POULTRY INDUSTRY remains the largest contributor to agriculture revenue in South Africa. Throughout the years, this industry's ability to maintain relatively stable prices through high levels of productivity and economies of scale played a pivotal role in retaining price-sensitive consumers. Strong local demand, driven by the relative affordability of chicken compared to red meat, benefited the poultry industry even during the higher commodity price cycle. Despite its resilience, the industry faces significant challenges in an increasingly difficult business environment, including issues such as loadshedding, high feed costs, a weaker rand and cash-strapped consumers. But it was the recent avian influenza (AI) supply shock that dealt the hardest blow to the industry, leading to a rise in demand resistance.


Consumers remain pressured and while the timing and

speed of interest rate cuts remain uncertain, the deceleration of consumer inflation suggests a favourable outlook for potential rate cuts. Analysts forecast that at least one 25bp rate cut remains on the cards for 2024. This will help alleviate some consumer pressure by improving South Africans' spending power, which should gradually improve demand. Producers will need to maintain a delicate balance between managing supply growth as the industry returns to normalcy and the relatively sluggish pace of demand growth.

Feed costs remain high on the back of yellow maize prices trading at around 8% higher compared to last year during the first half of June. While global maize prices remain notably lower compared to last year, SAFEX maize prices are expected to remain at the current highs for the next few months supported by lower production estimates coupled

**'A rate cut would alleviate consumer pressure by improving South Africans' spending power, and improve demand'**

with increased regional demand for both yellow and white maize. Forecasts of the return of a La Niña weather phenomenon bode well for the 2024/25 production season which could bring some reprieve in yellow maize prices when the 2024/25 season kicks off.

On the other hand, the local exchange-rate outlook is optimistic, underpinned by expectations of interest-rate cuts by the Federal Reserve (FED) in the United States later in the year. A stronger rand presents some price resistance and could limit excessive price gains in grains. The nature of the new government of national unity will play a pivotal role in determining the direction of the rand. A stronger rand is also likely to weigh on chicken prices, however some relief to the consumer, lower feed costs, and firm global chicken prices bode well for the local poultry industry over the coming months. 



*Nkhensani Mashimbyi is an agricultural economist at Absa AgriBusiness SA*



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# NEWS IN BRIEF

New ministers in the ring, Rainbow becomes independent, Astral and Nutri Feeds at Nampo & bright new packaging for Supreme

Compiled by **Charmain Lines**

## NEW CABINET RINGS CHANGES FOR POULTRY



**T**HE CABINET APPOINTED TO oversee South Africa's seventh administration includes new ministers in the two portfolios that directly influence the poultry industry.

DA leader John Steenhuisen is the new minister of agriculture and Parks Tau takes charge of trade, industry and competition. Tau replaces Ebrahim Patel, who retired after the May general election, while Thoko Didiza vacated DALRRD when she was elected speaker of the National Assembly. PAC president Mzwanele Nyhontsho is the new minister of land reform and rural development.

As an industry we can only hope that Tau, Steenhuisen and Nyhontsho

will heed economist Wandile Sihlobo's plea that agriculture should not be "a casualty of politics" in the new administration. Sihlobo noted in a recent article that the Department of Agriculture "has all the necessary programmes to achieve this goal [that is, ensuring agriculture is a source of economic growth and job creation in rural South Africa], but a focus is required on the relentless implementation and professionalisation of civil servants, particularly at provincial and municipal levels".

Will ministers with divergent views scupper this outcome? Fingers crossed they don't, as our industry can ill afford more own goals. 🍗

## RAINBOW RECLAIMS INDEPENDENCE



**O**N 26 JUNE Rainbow was listed on the JSE under the code RBO and on 1 July trading in its more than 890 million ordinary shares started. Rainbow listed on the main board under food products and had a market cap of R3.56 billion at the end of its first day.

The listing marked the end of a long and careful process to separate Rainbow from RCL Foods, allowing it to operate once again as an independent business.

CEO Marthinus Stander says that Rainbow's years as the chicken division of RCL Foods were not the success company leadership had planned it to be. "We now aim to re-establish and rebuild our chicken and feed businesses as best-in-class in terms of customer-centricity, delivering value via innovation and leveraging our heritage. This bold move heralds a wave of exciting opportunities for growth in both our business and our people."

To read an extract from the company's new commemorative book, *The Rainbow Story*, turn to page 38. 🍗



## SAPA MEMBERS AT NAMPO

**S**OUTH AFRICA's largest agriculture show, Nampo, takes place annually in May near Bothaville in the Free State. Over the four days, more than 86 000 people visited the 2024 event – a new record in its history.

This year, Astral and Nutri Feeds represented the poultry industry at Nampo in diverse and creative ways.

As in the past, Nutri Feeds once again sponsored the Nutri Feeds Hall and had a stand that attracted hundreds of visitors. The company used the opportunity to launch the new 20kg box of its popular feed tubs and hosted an hour-long talk every day on how to start a successful layer or broiler business.

"With an auditorium that could seat 39 people, our expectations on the first day were exceeded when more than 60 people attended," says Santa Ferreira, Nutri Feeds marketing manager. "It highlighted the tremendous need that exists among upcoming farmers for information."

Astral was visible on the opposite end of the chicken value chain with its sponsorship of the Syngenta/Landbouweekblad Plaaskombuis. This pop-up restaurant was a new initiative at Nampo 2024 and, says



Astral Commercial's marketing executive Colin Smith, it was a perfect partnership opportunity.

The featured dish prepared with Astral's Goldi and Festive brands was butter-chicken sosaties, which was a massive hit, judging by the demand for it over the four days of Nampo. 📺



## BOLD NEW BRANDING FOR SUPREME

**S**UPREME CHICKEN's lineup of value-added chicken products has been popular ever since its first range of schnitzels, nuggets, patties and strips were introduced, and now the brand has launched eye-catching new packaging to make these products stand out even more on the shelf.

The bright yellow-and-red packaging is just what the doctor ordered to ensure that consumers don't miss the expanded range that now also includes crumbed sliders and pops, and a hot and spicy variant, in 1kg and 2.5kg packs. Making a quick and nutritious dinner has never been easier! 📺

Photograph: Bay\_Media / Shutterstock.com



# BIRD-FLU WATCH

Where we keep an eye on HPAI developments on our own perch and around the world

Compiled by **Charmain Lines**



**A** REPORT RELEASED on 18 June warns that once the H5N1 bird-flu virus becomes transmissible between people, the world will likely be overrun by a pandemic that could be worse than Covid-19.

The report was co-authored by Liberia's ex-president Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and former New Zealand prime minister Helen Clark, who previously served as co-chairs of an independent panel advising the World Health Organisation (WHO) on the topic of pandemic preparedness.


Despite the advice from the panel

in 2021, "the funds now available pale in comparison to the needs, and high-income countries are holding on too tightly to traditional charity-based approaches to equity," Clark said at the launch of the report.

The report pointed out that WHO members have still not finalised a much-discussed pandemic agreement, mainly due to differences between well-off nations and those who felt cut adrift during the Covid crisis.

The spread of H5N1 among mammals is of particular concern in the context of a pandemic among humans.


By mid-June, H5N1 has been reported in 102 cattle herds in the US, but the true number could be higher based on the presence of inactivated virus in commercially available pasteurised milk.

The fact that US poultry operations have reported cases likely linked to dairy farms indicates that the virus may be making its way back from cows into birds. The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) reported in June that genomic analyses are showing that the virus is now mostly spread between cattle farms by human activity and not migratory birds. 

## CULL COMPENSATION ON THE CARDS?

**A** SIGNIFICANT JUDGEMENT was handed down in the Them-balethu Circuit High Court in late June when Judge Judith Cloete ordered DALRRD to reconsider its decision to not compensate George Moerasrivier Boerdery for the more than 380 000 chickens and 5.3 million eggs it had to destroy due to HPAI.

Judge Cloete said that in reassessing

the farmer's application, the DALRRD director must consider that the hens and eggs, valued at R31 million, were in a healthy state when they were destroyed. The original claim, lodged in 2021, was turned down because, according to DALRRD, "HPAI infected and in-contact chickens have no value and therefore nil compensation was payable." 



## HPAI HITS IN THE EAST




**A**USTRALIA, JAPAN, SOUTH KOREA, Taiwan and two states in India have all confirmed HPAI cases since June.

While the well-known H5N1 occurs in most of these territories, three other strains have been confirmed in Australia in 2024. The first confirmed case in a commercial flock was identified as H7N3, while two days later, another commercial flock tested positive for H7N9.

Late in June the first instance of H7N8 killed 8 000 of the 235 000 hens on an egg farm near Sydney in New South Wales. There has also been a human case of H5N1 in a child in Australia. The child, who reportedly contracted the virus while visiting India, has since recovered.

In response to developments in Australia, the Poultry Industry Association of New Zealand (PIANZ) has announced stricter measures to keep its poultry safe. "New Zealand and the Pacific Islands remain the only countries without a strain of HPAI, however our remote geographic location does not make us exempt from risk. As such, New Zealand's biosecurity measures are moving to a new phase of vigilance and coordination," PIANZ stated.

"Our egg and poultry farmers remain the frontline force for early detection at a local level. Nationally, extensive work is underway to best prepare for a response, including business continuity and biosecurity resilience. Industry is working closely with the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI), Biosecurity NZ and Food Safety NZ. Together we are part of a coordinated response called 'One Health'." 

## VACCINATION ROUNDUP


**T**WO HPAI VACCINES CURRENTLY being tested in a field study in the Netherlands are yielding positive results.

Scientists from Wageningen University & Research (WUR), animal health organisation Royal GD and Utrecht University's Faculty of Veterinary Medicine vaccinated 1 800 laying hens housed on two commercial poultry farms. Eight weeks after vaccination, some of the vaccinated hens were taken to WUR where they were infected with HPAI and tested again. The results confirmed the efficacy of both vaccines in terms of virus transmission after vaccination, survival rate, virus excretion and immune response.

The trials on these two farms began in the fourth quarter of 2023 and will conclude in the third quarter of 2025. Four more groups of the birds will be infected with HPAI throughout the study.

Meanwhile, there has not been progress in the rollout of a large-scale vaccination programme in South Africa as no poultry producer has yet been able to meet the requirements set by DALRRD.

Ironically, human vaccinations in other parts of the world could start before South Africa's chickens are protected.

The World Health Organisation reported during May that of the 889 people known to have been infected with the H5N1 virus, 463 had died. Nearly all these people worked with poultry and other farm animals, and it is these workers that the 665 000 vaccine doses ordered by the EU from pharmaceutical companies will aim to protect. The US has ordered 4.8 million human vaccine doses. 





# FAIRWAY TO HEAVEN

SAPA's first-ever golf day rocked, and *Poultry Bulletin* was there at Knysna's five-star Pezula Championship Golf Course to capture all the moments ►

Photographs: Africa Black & White Visual Media, Diane McCarthy, Melinda Shaw







THE SAPA AGM AND GOLF WEEKEND, held at Pezula Nature Retreat in Knysna on 6 and 7 June, was a great success, despite the dire weather predictions. By Thursday afternoon, with the AGM out of the way, talk shifted seamlessly to the next day's golf tournament, and the weather forecast. Over evening drinks and heaving platters of snacks in the packed bar someone released a weather map. It went viral: alarming forecasts of high winds, horizontal rain and flooding. Blood ran cold, but no-one was willing to give up. Nothing another beer couldn't drown out. The chilling forecast led to a sleepless night for many. Then again, it could have been indigestion.

Friday dawned steel grey and freezing. Seemingly undaunted on



*At the gala dinner and charity auction R204 000 was raised for worthwhile causes*



*Barend Pretorius of Cargill won Closest to the Pin on the 4th hole*



*Nic Elliot and Willie Bosoga get warm at the fireplace*



*Ryno van den Berg of Unitrans catches up with Rainbow's Marthinus Stander*

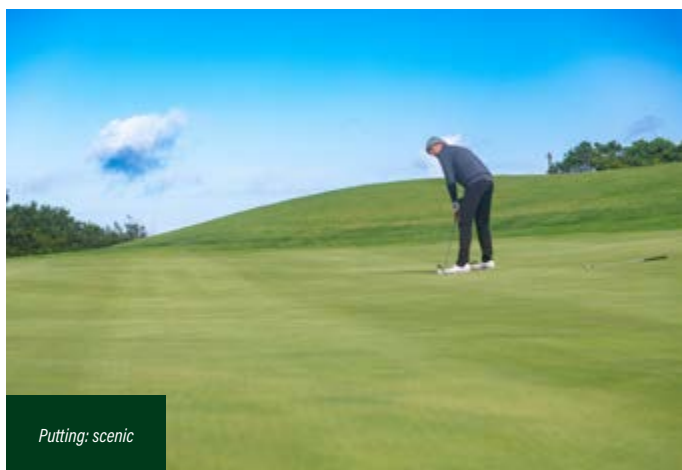


*Astral's Gary Arnold helps Alistair Seegers auction off a zebra skin*





Loren Laker, Danie Carstens and Willem Muller of Epol brave the purple shooter at Super Agri Science's popular watering hole



Putting: scenic



The day started overcast and chilly

its high perch overlooking both the Knysna lagoon and the Indian Ocean, the Pezula Championship Course was wreathed in morning mist, presenting a seductive challenge to all who dared. After a hearty breakfast of everything anyone could possibly want at the start of the day, the golfers made their way down to the clubhouse, registering in their numbers.

And they were off. A shotgun start, just in case the weather deteriorated, but fortuitously it did the opposite. By lunch time the sky was blue and the rivalry intense, fuelled by handy refreshment tents marking the wet holes dotted around the course. A particularly fierce purple shooter at Super Agri Science's pit stop at the fifth hole raised the level of competition, no doubt improving many a putt.

As the day drew to a close, weary golfers retreated to their suites to freshen up for the gala dinner ahead. Some chose to man up and head



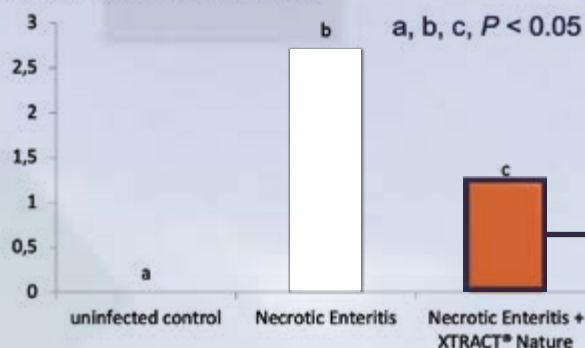
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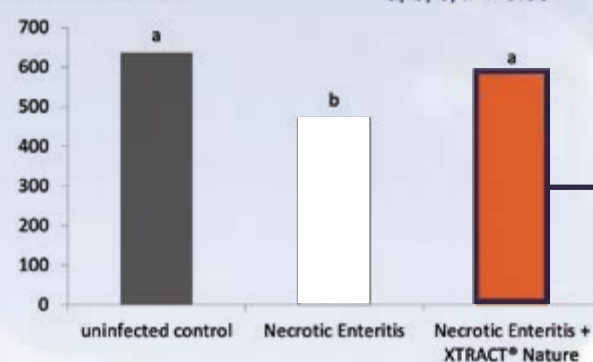
Necrotic enteritis: lesion score



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straight for the bar, forgoing the pleasures of a luxurious soak in the tub. There were just too many tall stories to tell about the one that got away.

The gala dinner, chaired by Astral COO Gary Arnold and MC-ed by Alistair Seegers was a hoot. Like a well-oiled comedy duo, they were a perfect foil for one another, keeping the rowdy crowd in fits of laughter, persuading the golfers to dig deep and bid high for the various donated items on auction. A total of R204 000 was raised for charity, with the funds divided equally and donated to the Knysna NSRI station and the George Round Table, both worthy and worthwhile causes.

It was a marvellous occasion, a chance for everyone to relax, catch up and engage in a different kind of competition, far removed from the



None other than Percy Montgomery turned up at the cocktail event. Here with Sheila Ross and Pieter Mussmann



Marjolein Mansvelder of Seaboard



The organising team made sure all ran smoothly



Our magazine was there



Astral's Chris Schutte takes a spin



Izaak Breitenbach, Tumi Mokwene, Chris Mason and Christo Meeding at the Ecowize watering hole



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pressures of competing for chicken business. Pezula Nature Retreat proved the perfect venue for a bit of well-earned rest and relaxation. The roaring log fires, the misty mornings, the magnificent accommodation, the wonderful staff and delicious food... it all came together in a glittering package making brilliant memories.

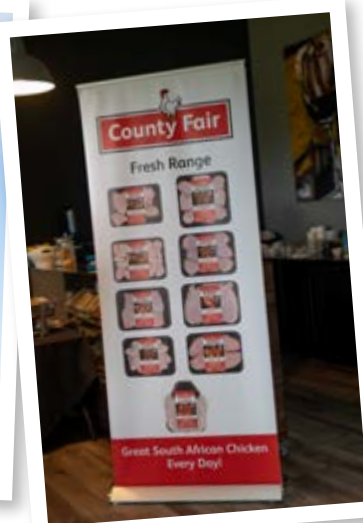
Well done to Gary Arnold, Louisa Nel, Sheila Ross and the able team who made it all happen. You've set a high bar. Until next time! 📷



Gary Arnold, Alistair Seegers, Chris Schutte and James Williams

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Achmat Brinkhuis, the new independent non-executive board member of Farmer Brown, celebrates with Marthinus Stander

## GOLF DAY PRIZE WINNERS

Members of the winning teams all won ProShop vouchers.

### FIRST PLACE:

Ecowize – R2 000 each



Ecowize's team with MC Alistair Seegers: Cecil Viljoen, Zandro Steyn, Christo Meeding, Kurt Yon

### SECOND PLACE:

Bosman Droërs – R1 500 each



Bosman Droërs had fun taking second place: Johan Buitendag, Ben Hefer, Jacques Smith, Tommie Hurter

### THIRD PLACE:

NSRI – R1 000 each



NSRI's team won bronze: Cliff Barnard, Elsabé Gray, Rodney Gray, Frans van Heerden



CBH's Brendon de Boer demonstrates his golf skills



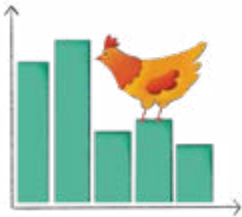
Gary Arnold and Izaak Breitenbach welcomed the guests



# MEMBERS' NOTICEBOARD

Industry intelligence shared with members over the last month, summarised for easy access

Compiled by **Michael Acott**



## BRAZIL'S BIG PUSH TO SELL HALAAL POULTRY

Broiler GM **Izaak Breitenbach** brought back valuable insights from the annual meeting of the International Poultry Council (IPC) in Buenos Aires, which he attended in May

**O**NE OF THE PRESENTATIONS that the South African poultry industry can learn from concerned Brazil's decades-long focus on developing halaal chicken exports, particularly for the Middle East.

The halaal market is huge, encompassing not only the millions of people in 57 mainly Muslim countries, but also the substantial Muslim populations in non-Islamic countries such as China, France, Germany, Japan and the United Kingdom.

The world's Muslim population is expected to increase by 47% between now and 2050, creating a massive market opportunity. The food sector of the global Islamic economy is expected to grow by 6.1% per annum until 2027.

Brazil has spent 70 years developing this market for its halaal poultry products, and nearly half of its halaal poultry goes to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates – two of the countries that South Africa's exporters

are also seeking to develop.


There is an Arab-Brazil chamber of commerce that facilitates halaal trade.

Brazil has become the world's top producer of halaal poultry, ahead of Indonesia, Pakistan, the United States and Saudi Arabia. The countries consuming most halaal poultry are Indonesia, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh and Iran.

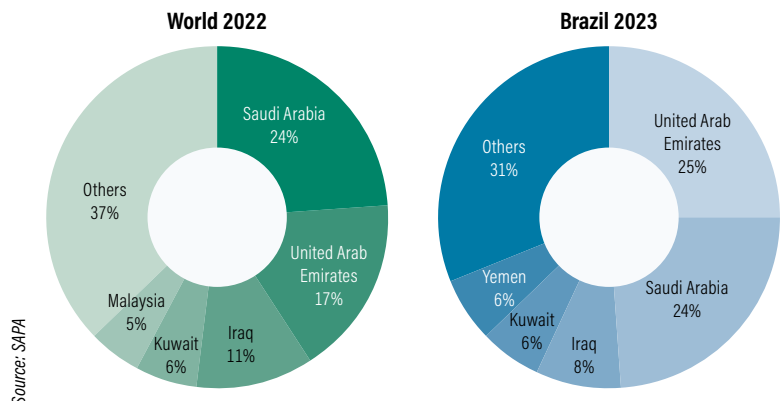
There are a number of challenges in exporting to Muslim countries – they

have different requirements, there is competition from local producers and developing a new market can be difficult, especially for small companies.

On the other hand, there are opportunities, including in value-added products and in re-export among Islamic countries. Another advantage is the non-Muslim consumers who view halaal as a synonym for quality.

Please contact SAPA if you would like a copy of the presentation. 

MAIN POULTRY-IMPORTING ISLAMIC COUNTRIES (all types, including processed)



## Maize price will be 'slightly up' in October

**Y**ELLOW MAIZE is expected to be slightly more expensive in October this year than a year ago, while sunflower oilcake and soya meal would be cheaper than in October 2023.



These forecasts are contained in SAPA's latest feed-ingredient report.

In its outlook to October, it predicts that yellow maize will sell at R3 847 per ton in Randfontein and R3 997/ton in Pietermaritzburg, an increase of 0.7% over the previous October.

Sunflower oilcake is expected to drop 7.6% from October 2023 prices, fetching R6 100/ton at both centres. Soya meal is forecast to be 0.7% down at R8 937/ton in Randfontein and R9 137/ton in Pietermaritzburg.



The report says local maize prices dropped slightly in July, in line with international price moves, but this year's smaller South African maize

harvest would continue to affect prices. The crop estimate at the time of writing was 13.4 million tons compared to 2023 when it was 17 million tons.  

## Feeding growth in Africa.



## Slight recovery in producer prices

**C**HICKEN PRODUCER PRICES rose slightly in March, after the usual seasonal declines at the start of the year. Prices were also marginally higher than in March 2023.

SAPA's broiler producer price report for March 2024 shows that the total average price for chicken was R31.53/kg, 0.74% higher than the R31.30/kg that farmers received in February. It was nearly 1% above the price the previous year.

The average over the first three months was R31.66/kg, a 2.5% increase over the first quarter of 2023 but a 0.1% drop from the average of R31.70/kg achieved over the 2023 year as a whole.

The total average price includes the producer price for fresh chicken (15% of the market) and frozen chicken (85%).

In March fresh chicken averaged R40.17/kg at producer level, which is a drop of 0.7% from the R40.46/kg realised in February. Frozen chicken averaged R30.03/kg, up 1.2% on the previous month.

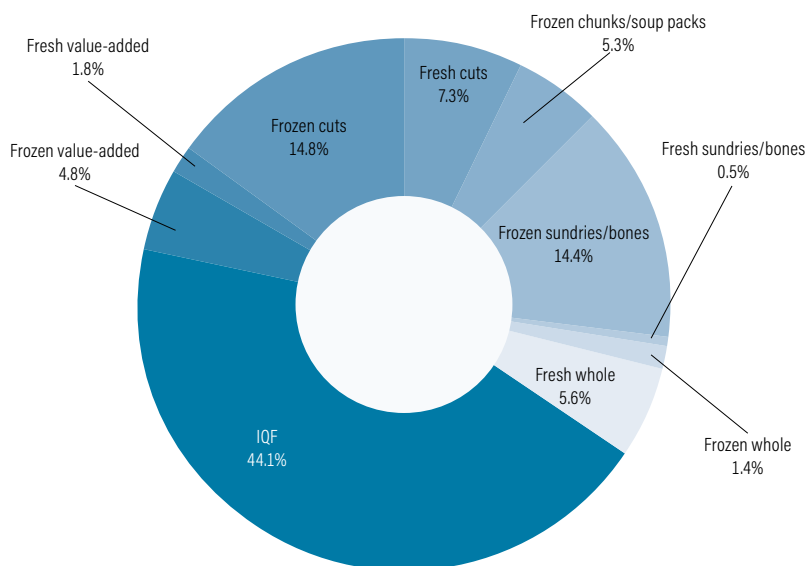
Individually quick frozen (IQF) mixed portions averaged R29.98/kg in March, 1.8% below February's R30.52/kg, and 1.1% lower than the R30.31/kg received in March 2023. Over the first three months of the year, IQF portions fetched an average of R30.62/kg, 1.2% above 2023's annual average.

In the first quarter of this year, 41.7% of producer sales volumes went to retail markets. Wholesale customers took 40.1% and food services took 14.9%. Exports accounted for a mere 0.6% of sales volumes.

The producer product mix in Q1 was dominated by frozen products. IQF accounted for 44.1% of sales volumes, followed by frozen cuts (14.8%), frozen sundries (14.4%), frozen chunks or soup packs (5.3%) and frozen value-added products (4.8%).

The largest fresh category in producer sales for the period was fresh cuts (7.3%) followed by fresh whole chicken (5.6% of sales volumes).

BROILER PRODUCT MIX ACCORDING TO VOLUME, 1Q 2024



Source: SAPA

## OBITUARY

### JEFF WRIGHT

16/4/1958 – 31/05/2024



**S**APA WAS SAD TO LEARN of the untimely passing of poultry-industry veteran Jeff Wright. He was known for his dedication to his family and his friendships as well as his professional excellence.

Wright built a remarkable career, holding numerous significant roles such as MD of Meadow Feeds, CEO of Tiger Agri and Poultry, and CEO of Country Bird Holdings. He also served as the Group MD of Afgri, where his leadership and interpersonal skills were highly respected.

Wright's contributions to the poultry industry and agriculture were immense, reflecting his deep commitment to these fields. He was not one to seek the limelight but instead focused on leading and motivating his teams with his quiet yet impactful presence.

His passing is a significant loss, and he will be remembered for his talent, intelligence and the long-lasting friendships he built across his professional and personal life. Our thoughts are with his widow, Ronél, and their children during this very difficult time.



## Broiler production up in first quarter

**B**ROILER PRODUCTION RECOVERED in the first three months of this year, after the bird-flu setbacks of 2023.

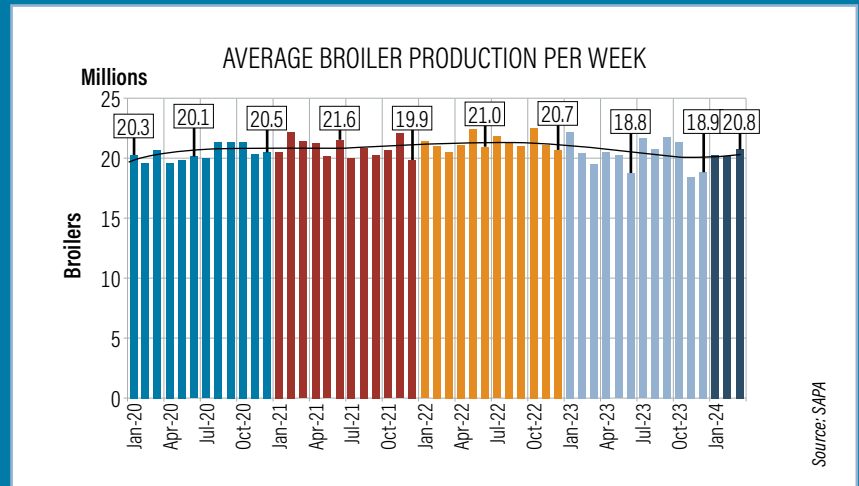
SAPA's broiler-production report for March 2024 shows average broiler production rising to 20.8 million birds per week in March from 18.9 million birds per week in December.

Average production for the first three months was 20.4 million birds per week, up 0.2% on 2023 and similar to the annual totals of 20.4 million in 2020 and 20.9 million in 2021. Production then rose to 21.3 million in 2022, but bird flu cut it back to 20.3 million birds per week in 2023.

South Africa's chicken-meat consumption in the first quarter was

520 818 tons, of which 98 358 tons came from imports. Chicken imports equalled 22.6% of local production and

18.8% of consumption over the first three months, very similar to the totals for the previous year. 📊



**Big Dutchman.**

**Egg & Poultry**



Spare Parts

\*

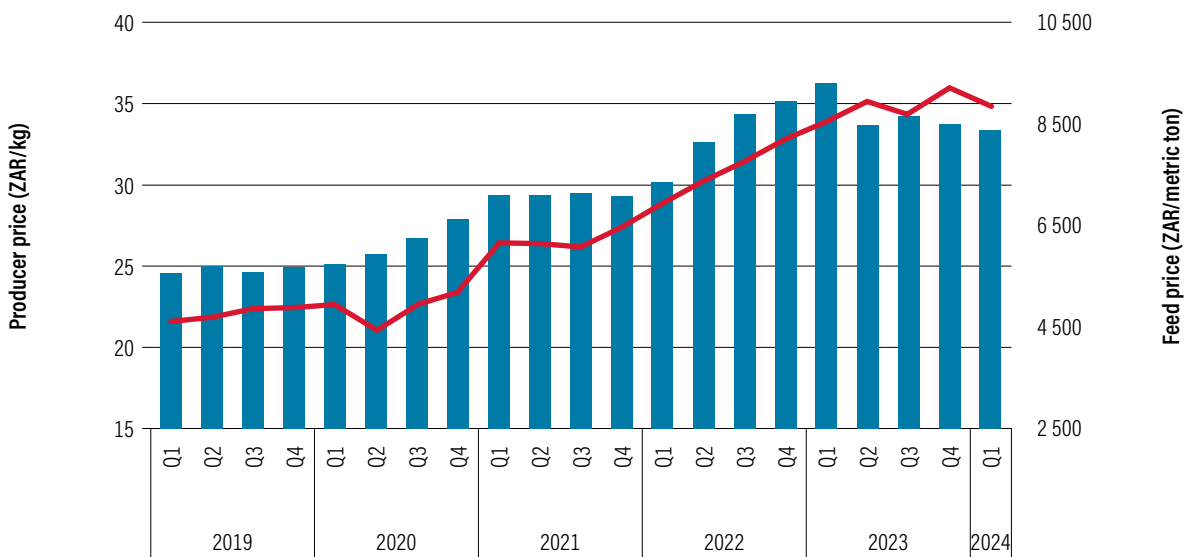
**SPRING SALE**

\*T's & C's Apply

# RABOBANK: BIRD FLU RISKS COULD RETURN



BROILER PRICES RETURNING TO PRE-AI LEVELS



Source: Rabobank

**L**AST YEAR'S AVIAN-INFLUENZA outbreaks had a huge impact on the South African poultry sector, and infections are likely to rise again in the Southern Hemisphere winter months, according to the latest quarterly report from agricultural bank Rabobank.

This puts Brazil at risk again, it said, because any outbreak in commercial flocks there could have a substantial impact on global trade. Several Latin American countries have started vaccination programmes.

The South African outbreaks had led to the culling of 15% of the country's breeding stock and more than 40% of the laying hen flock. Rabobank said the industry's response, including

importing large volumes of hatching eggs, was "impressive".

The report, for the second quarter of 2024, stated that chicken prices in South Africa were "returning to pre-AI levels". Industry optimism was fading due to supply concerns following the industry's rapid restoration of production after bird-flu outbreaks, and the import rebate scheme.

"Recently, there has also been pessimism around the 2023/24 crop harvest, due to El Niño-related drought, especially in the northern regions. March SAFEX prices for yellow maize and soya beans increased by 10% to 15% compared for February levels.

"These drought-related issues come

on top of ongoing loadshedding and water-availability challenges for the industry," according to the report.

In its global outlook, Rabobank said the global poultry trade grew by 1% in 2023 to 14.4 metric tons. It expected additional growth of between 1% and 2% in 2024, in line with global consumption growth. It predicted rising poultry imports in South Africa, South Korea and Malaysia.

The biggest challenge to trade came from the effect of the turmoil in the Middle East, the bank reported. This could increasingly impact trade flows to Europe, Asia and the Middle East, which could well result in higher costs and supply delays. 🌐



## Chicken imports drop back in May

**C**HICKEN IMPORT volumes declined in May this year, after a sharp increase the previous month. The trend is still downwards, and year-to-date volumes for the first five months were 10% below 2023.

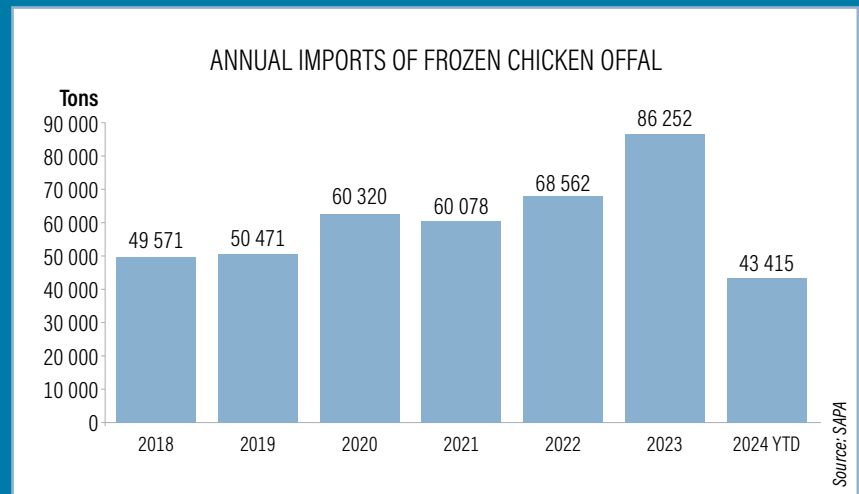
Bone-in portions dropped 13.3% on a monthly basis, boneless cuts were down 35.1% and imports of chicken carcasses were 57% below April.

Offal imports were down too (-53% after rising 108% the previous month) but offal and mechanically deboned meat (MDM) are exceptions to the downward trend. The 2023 totals for offal and MDM were the highest since 2020, and import volumes have remained high this year.

Offal volumes (chicken livers,

feet, heads and so on) have risen substantially over the past six years. They have doubled from 43 000 ton in

2017 to 86 000 ton last year. They are up 10% to May 2024, and are possibly heading for another annual record. 📊



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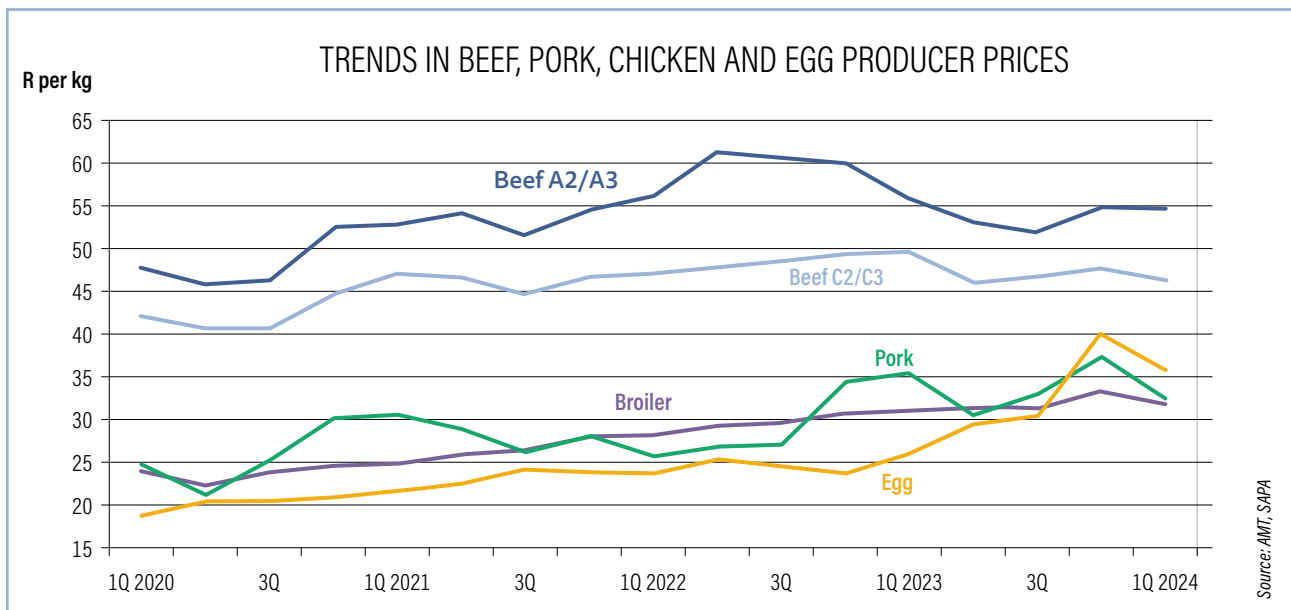
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# BIRD FLU ROBBS EGGS OF CHEAPEST SPOT



**I**N THE FIRST THREE months of this year, chicken remained the cheapest source of animal protein, ahead of eggs which have become substantially more expensive since bird flu ravaged South Africa's layer flocks in 2023.

Eggs have traditionally been cheaper than chicken and pork on a per kilogram basis, but bird flu changed that. Compulsory mass cullings resulted in shortages of eggs, but not of chicken meat, because of the measures taken by producers to ensure supply, including

importing millions of hatching eggs.

As a result, egg prices rose 30% in 2023, compared to the 8% increase for chicken. Pork prices were up just under 20% over the year, according to SAPA's Key Market Signals report for the first quarter of 2024.

Egg prices shot up in the fourth quarter of last year, when the producer price of eggs averaged R39.95/kg compared to R25.89/kg in the first quarter, a time when eggs were easily the cheapest animal protein.

Egg prices dropped in early 2024. They were down 10.8% in the first quarter to R35.65/kg at producer level, but still higher than pork (R32.32/kg) and chicken (R31.66/kg).

The quarterly comparison showed

that the producer price of eggs was 37.7% higher in the first quarter of 2024 than in the same period the previous year. The average chicken producer price was 2.5% above the first quarter of 2023, while pork prices had dropped 8.5% over 12 months.

Despite the difficulties faced by poultry farmers, chicken prices have remained below the food-price index since 2020. The gap between the two price indexes widened as poultry prices dropped in 2024.

SAPA warns of the continuing risk of bird-flu outbreaks. The report urges farmers and all poultry keepers to review and improve their biosecurity measures and to report ill and dead birds to state veterinarians. 📺







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ADVERTORIAL

# PROCESSING SUCCESS VIA **ISHIDA X-RAY** SOLUTIONS

Leading UK poultry-processing specialist Smithfield Murray is reaping the benefits of two IX-G2 X-ray poultry solutions from Ishida Europe to detect and remove bone and cartilage from its products. This technology is now also available in South Africa



**A**S ONE OF EUROPE'S LEADING suppliers of fresh and frozen poultry, Smithfield Murray handles around 250 tons of meat each week, which is ultimately supplied to major retailers and food-service companies including the UK's leading supermarkets.

The dedicated Ishida X-ray inspection systems for poultry were installed in 2021 at Smithfield Murray's BRC Grade AA purpose-built plant in Manchester, UK. The investment in X-ray inspection technology

supports the company's drive to be, as managing director Damien Murray explained, "the best in the world at what we do".

The systems use advanced dual-energy technology incorporating two line sensors, one of which takes images at high energy and one at low energy. These are then compared, which provides a better overall image of the product with a clearer contrast between the product and any low-density foreign bodies, such as bone fragments. Should any foreign body be





## ADVERTORIAL

identified, the product is rejected and returned for re-trimming.

Dual-energy X-ray inspection is particularly appropriate for the needs of the poultry industry where the density of the meat and bone is very similar. Removal of bone and cartilage is essential for boneless poultry products that are used in ready meals, children's meals, deli products and pies.

"Consumer expectation is that meat is boneless, but due to the relatively young age of many chickens at slaughter, their bone development isn't at full density. This can leave cartilage or soft bone fragments in the meat, which we need to remove before supplying product to our customers," explained Smithfield Murray's operational production manager, Pawel Charazmusiewicz.

Previously, Smithfield Murray's foreign-body inspection process was manual, with an initial check during trimming and a more thorough search further down the line. This was not only time-consuming but exposed the meat to several stages of manual handling. The team knew there was a better way of doing things but they also needed a solution that would fit the compact footprint at its Manchester site.

The answer came via one of the company's industry peers, which was already using the Ishida IX-G2. Following a site visit, it was clear that the technology would suit Smithfield Murray's set-up.

"We believe in sharing best practice in the industry. If it makes better product and improves standards, everyone wins," says operational technical manager David Hrubos.

This honest, friendly attitude to business is matched by Smithfield Murray's commitment towards its employees. "We're a work family – and often a literal one too," said Damien Murray. "We have plenty of husbands and wives, or fathers and sons, working together in the factory.



"This has a bearing on the Ishida machines, because it's important that anything we invest in is well maintained and cared for. David and Pawel lead a very close-knit team running them, who take real ownership and responsibility for the X-ray equipment. You might say the Ishida machines have become part of the family!"

The IX-G2 offers a cost-effective, compact solution for poultry processors, who need high accuracy in detecting low-density bone, bone fragments and cartilage. To match the high speeds of poultry processing, the IX-G2 models used at Smithfield Murray are the dual-lane variant, giving throughputs well in excess of 100 fillets per lane.

The first model was installed in the primary preparation area, where chicken is trimmed. This environment was ideal for training and calibration, with Ishida supporting Smithfield Murray to achieve the perfect balance for each application. Once calibration was complete, the second IX-G2 formed part of a new line, which was configured as a plug-and-play installation, with the anticipation of an X-ray machine being included.

Prior to installation, Ishida explained best practice for positioning chicken products as they enter the IX-G2.



Smithfield Murray's engineering team created a practical solution by adding prominent markers onto the conveyor so that employees know exactly where to place the poultry cut.

Since installation, both X-ray inspection systems have been running daily and their advantages continue to reveal themselves. "It's about quality of product and a key part is improving food safety. By adding the IX-G2s to our operation, we can deliver 300% inspection – trim, machine check, visual recheck – and our customers are delighted," confirmed Pawel Charazmusiewicz.

"X-ray inspection means less manual handling, quicker feed and improved productivity. The team has quickly adapted to using the machines and we've added training in X-ray technology as part of our standard induction," added David Hrubos.

For Damien Murray, the investment has been money well spent. "I can recommend Ishida to other companies in our sector. The value their X-ray machines are adding to our operation has been significant, and they've been a joy to work with. 📺

*For info on IX-G2 X-ray poultry solutions in South Africa, contact Melika Seiderer on [melika.seiderer@ishidaeurope.com](mailto:melika.seiderer@ishidaeurope.com) or 011 9976 2010/11.*

# MILLIONS OF EGGS IN ONE BASKET

Collective power is the key to growth, says Pieter Pienaar, CEO of egg co-operative TopLay. He spoke to **Diane McCarthy** about their business model and how they ensure their members' eggs get a smooth, swift ride from farm to table



*A typical pack station at a co-op member's farm, in this case Barnsley Farming in Dargle, KZN*





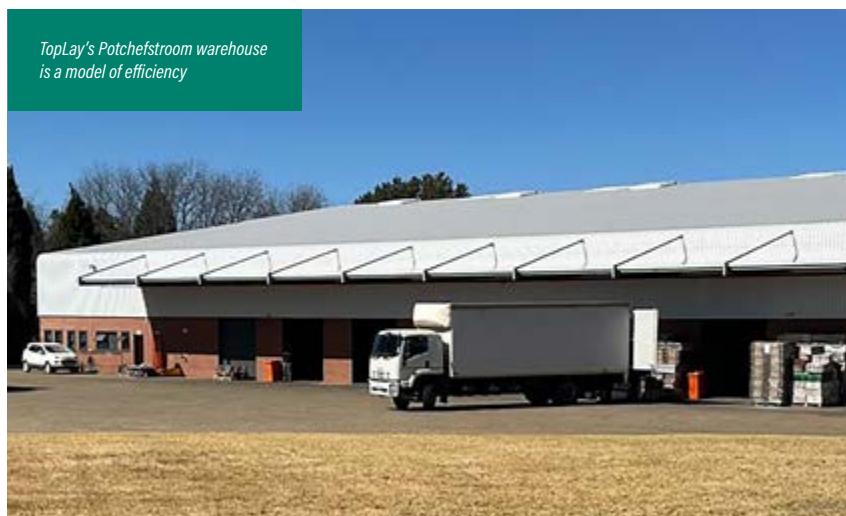
**B**EING A MEMBER OF TopLAY, the only commercial egg-to-table cooperative in South Africa, is a game changer. "We can do what we do best; and that's farming. Farmers don't have time to visit all the buyers." So says Johan van der Schyff, owner of highly successful Dagbreek Eiers and himself the son of a TopLAY founding member. "TopLAY brings the market to the members. It takes care of negotiations, marketing and packaging so that we don't have to."

At TopLAY's premises in Potchefstroom everything runs smoothly. The co-op has invested heavily in a highly automated, electronic system, and little is left to chance. This is just one way TopLAY can ensure it delivers on its core business mandate; to offer its members a seamless entrance to the egg market. From the first, this has always been its primary goal.

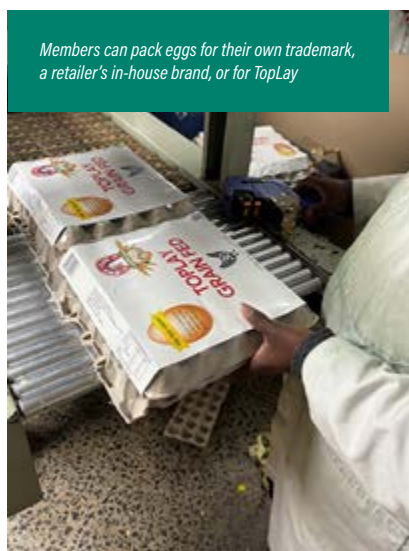
## LONGEVITY

The business, originally known as Highveld Eggs, was established in 1987 by a group of small farmers who were finding it difficult to penetrate the formal retail market. There were many agricultural co-ops in operation at the time, but none dealt with eggs. By forming a co-op they could enter into trade agreements with the big players in the formal market. As the business grew and became national, the name no longer fit, and 10 years ago it started trading as TopLAY.

Although the company's primary goal remains the same, the profile of its members has changed. "As in agriculture overall, you will find fewer small farms, and our members have grown their own businesses. Now a small farmer is someone with 10 000 birds," says company CEO Pieter Pienaar. "We have bigger enterprises on our books; farmers who have grouped together and formed large commercial enterprises, but they still see a benefit in conducting their business through us."



*TopLAY's Potchefstroom warehouse is a model of efficiency*



*Members can pack eggs for their own trademark, a retailer's in-house brand, or for TopLAY*



Their automated system is a big drawcard for members. Using one of their many major retail customers, Shoprite, as an example, Pienaar explains how it works.

"Shoprite's system generates orders. If it is one of our member's orders, that order comes electronically to TopLAY head office. Our system scans the order, checks the product code and the pricing, and if everything is correct, that order is allocated to the correct pack station.

"The member will open the order and confirm it. Once they have confirmed, within seconds the TopLAY system generates an invoice which

is sent to the pack station, the eggs are packed and delivered to market, together with the invoice.

"Once the delivery has taken place the invoice is on both the Shoprite and TopLAY systems. TopLAY reconciles and Shoprite pays. TopLAY pays the egg producer on time, on fixed payment terms, no matter how the retailer pays. The member is never out of pocket."

All members have pack stations on their own premises, which they run independently, but which are audited by TopLAY on a regular basis. The co-op keeps them updated with the necessary regulations and makes



sure that all members are food-safety accredited and up to date with their audits. All paperwork has to be uploaded onto the TopLay system, so it is easy to detect any problematic issues before an audit takes place. TopLay also handles any marketing queries the members might have.

In addition to the TopLay brand, co-op members supply and pack the in-house brands for many of the major national retail outlets. Depending on the orders they have, members will pack for the retailer's in-house brand, the

TopLay label or their own established trademark. One member can have many different labels running through their pack shed at any given time.

Another major benefit of being a member of the co-op is the investment

that TopLay has made in human resources. "We invest in professional people with vast experience who can negotiate on our members' behalf in the formal market, thus levelling the playing field. The large retailers appoint professional people to squeeze every

## **In addition to the TopLay brand, co-op members supply and pack the in-house brands for many of the major national retail outlets**

cent out of you, so if you do not have experience negotiating at their level, your margins will be under constant pressure," says Pienaar.

TopLay has implemented a quality-control system to ensure high service

delivery levels, which are monitored using "strike rates". These rates measure the consistency of egg supply to retailers compared to the orders received. Meeting market demands is crucial for growth, making it essential to adhere to supply requirements.

If a member faces challenges or is unable to meet the required service levels for any reason, TopLay management provides support and assistance. This collaborative approach helps members to stay on track. To maintain market stability, TopLay may reallocate

supply responsibilities to another member when needed, and this ensures that performance benchmarks are maintained.

"TopLay's success lies in our owner-driven pack stations where members



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are committed to service excellence," explains Pienaar. "They are actively involved in the production, grading and distribution of eggs, which ensures consistent high quality."

## GROWTH AHEAD

TopLay has big plans for the future, with a growth trajectory that underlines its vision to optimise value for the benefit of its members, customers and communities. Pienaar explains that, as they already bulk-procure industry-related products for their members, it seemed a natural step forward to expand the business and create an online platform, where they sell the same products to the wider poultry industry.

"We'll offer equipment, packaging, detergents, PPE... everything but feed. We hope to launch it in the next couple of months, and watch: we'll be the Takealot of the poultry industry!"

For Johan van der Schyff, partnering with TopLay is the only way to do business.

Since the co-op went national, Van der Schyff's egg business has expanded dramatically, affording him access to the key market – the big players in the formal retail trade. "TopLay is a reliable resource, so once you're in, you're in," he says. "Thanks to having this secure market, we can keep pace with rising costs. In our business, if you stay with the same production and same output every year, you are farming backwards. You need to expand along with the market, and TopLay makes this possible by securing your markets for you." 📺

## CONTACT DETAILS

To find out more about TopLay, see the website: [www.toplay.co.za](http://www.toplay.co.za)



*Dagbreek Eiers layers hard at work*



*Dagbreek trucks prepped to deliver to TopLay's warehouse*



*Johan van der Schyff*



*TopLay CEO Pieter Pienaar ensures the co-op's members have a seamless entrance to the egg market*



# THE BUSINESS THAT STARTED SA'S POULTRY INDUSTRY

South Africa's original commercial poultry company, Rainbow, once again became an independent business in June following its legal separation from RCL Foods. In this extract from the new commemorative book *The Rainbow Story* we look at how it all started and how the company arrived at its breed of choice

IT IS DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE a world without chicken as a staple menu item. Yet, that world existed less than 100 years ago. Broilers are very much a post-WW II development. Before the war, chicken was a luxury and poultry farming was, by and large, something farmers' wives did as a sideline.

Eggs, in contrast, were consumed far wider and the egg industry became commercialised and integrated much earlier than its broiler equivalent. This is evident, for instance, in the fact that in the early years of its existence, the bulk of the SA Poultry Association's activities centred on egg production.

The development of the broiler industry benefitted greatly from the arrival and growth of supermarkets in South Africa, particularly from the mid-1960s onwards. Rainbow was able to take advantage of this development thanks to the groundwork laid by its entrepreneurial founder, Stanley Methven, in the 1950s, even though not even he could have foreseen the impact supermarkets would have on society.

Rainbow listed on the JSE in June as part of its unbundling from RCL Foods



Photographs: supplied

*Stanley Methven and his father, John*



*The Rainbow Story is the brainchild of Rainbow CEO Marthinus Stander*

#### **IN THE BEGINNING**

In 1949, Stanley's father, JC Methven, sold the hotel he had in Drummond, a small town around 45km from Durban in KwaZulu-Natal, and bought a farm with the intention of building another hotel. A shortage of building materials, however, saw him going into chicken farming.

At the time Stan joined his father in 1956, the Methven farm produced table eggs and dabbled in live-bird sales. Stan, however, had a dream that emerged as he read about the broiler industry that was developing overseas. He convinced his father to send him to the UK and the US to study the most up-to-date methods, and returned with a vision compelling enough and

supported by enough knowledge to convince his father to exchange eggs for broilers.

Those who knew him recall that from the very beginning Stanley Methven had a clear and concise plan and spoke about it freely. His confidence and courage knew no bounds and he aimed to build up the largest and most efficient broiler operation in South Africa.

Within a year, Stan had convinced his father to empty the layer houses and put in more broilers. In a 1982 interview, he recalled how thrilled he was taking a thousand broilers to market instead of 500. Next came the hand plucker and the beginnings of a dressed-bird operation. ►

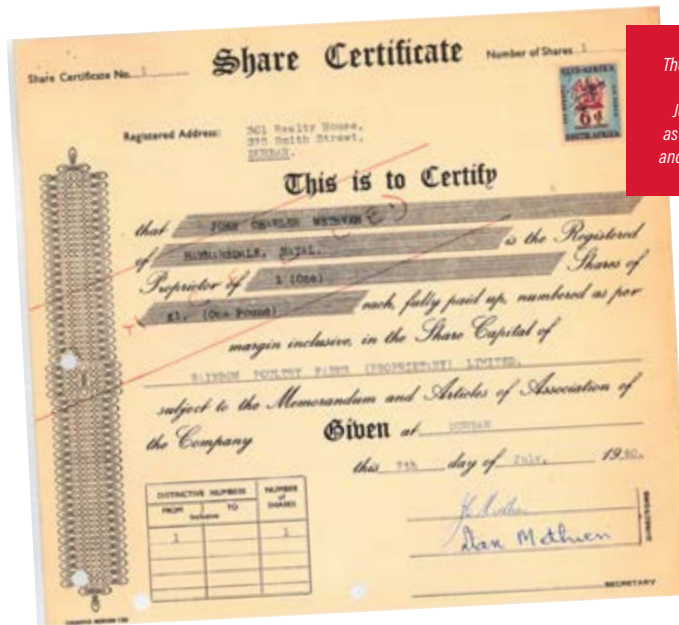
## BOOK EXTRACT: THE RAINBOW STORY

By 1958, the Methvens' first cut-up plant was in business and on 23 June 1960 Rainbow Poultry Farm (Pty) Ltd was registered. At that time, production stood at 3 000 birds per week.

### FINDING THE RIGHT BREED FOR THE JOB

When the Methvens first turned their hands to chicken farming, they worked with the New Hampshire breed. When the government imported and grew a small number of Cornish Game cocks and White Rock hens for distribution among South African breeders in 1960, Rainbow Farms switched to the Cornish-Rock cross.

Initially, fertilised eggs were hatched at Hammarsdale, but in the early 1960s Rainbow bought land at Manderston near Pietermaritzburg and established Cornish Rock Hatcheries. A subsidiary company called Rainbow Poultry Farm was formed and Stan travelled to the UK to recruit experts to set up Rainbow's breeding programme.



The first Rainbow share certificate declared John Charles Methven as the owner of the one and only Rainbow share

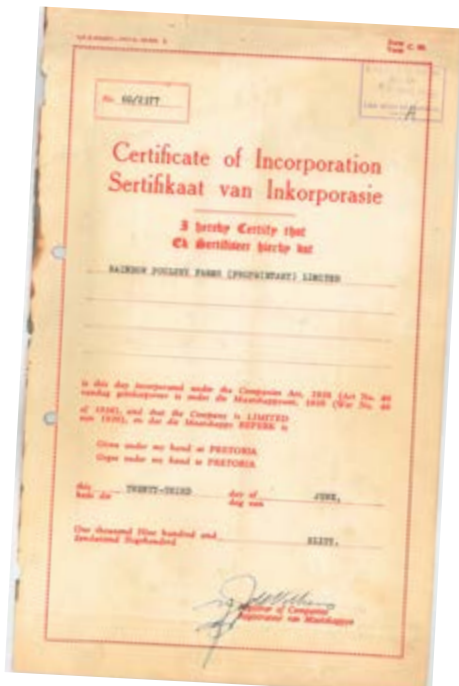
John Hawkins was 25 when he emigrated to South Africa to head up that programme. He was set a target of producing 16 000 broilers a week, up from production at the time of 6 000 a week. "Within three years we were producing 40 000 and in five years we reached the 100 000 broilers-a-week mark."

Hawkins recounts that at the start, the breeders were trap nested and eggs from the heaviest birds were hatched out and wing banded. The same procedure was followed for subsequent generations and all the data stored on a computer in Durban.

In 1964, Hawkins and Stan attended

a poultry show in London where the UK's leading poultry geneticist, one Dr Carter, suggested Rainbow asks for advice from a Dr Allen at Stellenbosch who studied under Dr Carter. "Dr Allen's advice changed our breeding programme to population genetics," says Hawkins. "This boosted our growth rate so much that in a random sample test with Colt in the United States, we were only 0.11 of a pound behind them."

In 1969, Hawkins was off to the UK again, this time to recruit more staff to support the massive expansion programme Rainbow had embarked upon. The goal was to increase



Rainbow Poultry Farms was registered on 23 June 1960. On 29 November 1967, the company name was changed to Rainbow Chicken Farms (Pty) Ltd



In 1973 the area around Rainbow's Hammarsdale plant had the highest concentration of chickens in the world



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production from 100 000 birds per week to 240 000 within five years.

By then Rainbow's needs had outgrown the breeding farm at Manderston and expansion was a natural next step. Land was eventually purchased in Nottingham Road where the pure line, breeding and broiler parent stock could be bred.

The breeding programme did so well in those early years that day-old chick production outstripped demand from Rainbow's broiler farms. Hawkins, by then a company director, proposed at a board meeting that Rainbow should sell its excess chicks. "Stan said no one would buy from us, but by the end of that year we were selling 60 000 chicks a week, to customers as far afield as Angola."

After the state relaxed its grip on imports, a Rainbow team went overseas in search of the best breeding

stock, and settled on the Hendrix-Hybro from Euribrid in the Netherlands. In accordance with the state regulations, a quarantine facility was established at Irene near Pretoria.

An excellent relationship with Euribrid continued until 1982, when Rainbow imported its first batch of Hubbard great-grandparent chicks from the US. As Joe Diekman, director and manager of live-bird production at the time said in an interview, "The Hubbard gives us a little added weight at commercial broiler level, and that's what we are after – masses of meat."

By 1982, Rainbow brought in great-grandparent chicks once a year. After the 12-week quarantine period in Irene, the chicks earmarked for the Hammarisdale operations were brought to Rainbow's pure-line facilities at Nottingham Road, 110km from the broiler sites. Grandparents stayed there



The rainbow over the waterfall that gave Rainbow its name



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too, but once the parent breeders had hatched, they were taken to rearing sites close to the commercial farms. After 20 weeks at the rearing sites, the parent breeders were transferred to laying units where they remained for up to 64 weeks. The rearing and laying farms were in the Umlaas Road region. Hammarsdale was served by two breeding farms, eight parent-rearing farms, 16 parent-laying farms and 21 broiler farms.

Average weight at slaughter was 1.7 kg with a feed-conversion rate of 1.95 at 48 days. The hatch rate across the company was between 87% and 88% (occasionally peaking at 90%), yielding 1.7 million chicks per week. Of those, some 200 000 were sold outside of Rainbow.

#### FURTHER EXPANSION

The Rustenburg expansion programme demanded more chicken, so in 1988, a new facility was established to rear great-grandparent stock. In the interest of biosecurity, the new facility was located well away from the rest of the breeding operation situated in Nottingham Road.

In 1992, Rainbow acquired a small breeding facility near Carolina in Mpumalanga. Mbusi Dlamini, today agriculture and breed director, was recruited to manage and develop the facility. "I was tasked with extending the breeding programme so that Rainbow could transition from producing 65% of its broiler parent stock to becoming self-sufficient, no longer having to rely on genetics from competitors," he remembers.

A critical part of the Carolina expansion programme was to rid Rainbow's broiler gene pool of a susceptibility to ascites (water belly). Having noticed high broiler mortalities due to the disease in Rustenburg but not on the lower-lying Western Cape and KZN farms, the high-altitude breeding site in Carolina was purposefully developed to run

a selection programme to breed out ascites. "The success we had in this regard set the foundation for Rainbow's agricultural performance success," says Dlamini.

By the mid-90s Cobb replaced Hubbard in the grandparent breeding programme, paving the way for a joint-venture distribution agreement with Cobb Vantress in the US to bring international broiler stock to South

Africa. The result was Cobb SA, which operated a grandparent breeding and hatchery complex, rated among the best in the world, on the large, modern grandparent farm near Carolina. The investment had benefitted the entire local poultry industry by giving producers access to international technical support.

Unfortunately, the breeder performance started to deteriorate around 2017, falling significantly behind some of the competitor broiler genetic lines. By early 2021, Rainbow felt compelled to consider other genetic lines. And it was at that time that the Aviagen Indian River became Rainbow's breed of choice. 🐔

*A breeding pair of Aviagen's Indian River chickens, Rainbow's breed of choice*



*Rainbow farms dot the green hills alongside the N3 highway in KZN*



## WIN A COPY OF THE RAINBOW STORY

We are giving away a copy of *The Rainbow Story*. Answer the question: Who was the founder of Rainbow? Send your answer to [editor@poultrybulletin.co.za](mailto:editor@poultrybulletin.co.za), by 30 August 2024.





# TAKING CARE OF THE TEAM

Elsie Mathibeli is the human resources specialist at Country Bird Holdings' busy Tigane plant in the North West. She talks to **Melinda Shaw**

**W**ITH 19 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE under her belt, Elsie Mathibeli knows how to manage the challenges of the workplace, and at CBH's Tigane plant in Hartbeesfontein, the human resources department has been in her capable hands for almost five years.

"People Matter", which is one of the company's business drivers, is more than just a slogan for the Potchefstroom-born professional. "I love to motivate people, whether it is by way of training programmes, employee engagement activities or through perks and benefits," says Mathibeli. "What I have learnt is that there is no one-size-fits-all tool to keep a team motivated; that you have to have some form of 'echo machine' on to interrogate your plans and to constantly evaluate whether a plan is working. You have to get motivated yourself to be able to motivate others."

No matter the industry, an HR manager's main challenge is to keep teams on their toes and geared to do their best for the organisation's progress, and in the demanding environment of the poultry industry, Mathibeli believes that feedback is a crucial weapon in her arsenal. "It is the best tactic to solve most of the problems we might encounter, whether it is underperformance, discipline or employee retention," she explains.

**'Our approach is to create a nurturing company culture and to recruit and retain top talent'**

In Tigane Mathibeli has a team of 10 employees, two HR administrators and a junior HR practitioner, a learner, and six clinic staff whom she manages. She is very aware of her role as a go-between who ensures that there is synergy between the mindset and

leadership style of upper management and the teams of people in their employ. "Where I am placed I can provide management with insight regarding their teams on the ground, to help inform management decisions."

HR within the poultry industry presents unique challenges, from ensuring a steady workforce during peak production to navigating the complexities of workplace safety and compliance. "Our industry demands a strategic and proactive approach," she says. "It is all about creating a nurturing company culture, recruiting and retaining top talent, and addressing the pervasive issue of employee burnout. We are very focused on

assembling an effective team and then providing people with the support and resources they need to achieve long-term success."

She relishes working together as a team in an environment where different opinions are tolerated and



## 'My favourite chicken dish'

### STICKY CHICKEN WINGS

¼ cup tomato sauce  
 ⅓ cup barbeque sauce  
 2 tsp Worcestershire sauce  
 ¼ cup brown sugar  
 2 tsp braai seasoning or smoked paprika  
 1kg chicken wings, cut in half at the joint and tips removed

Mix together the first five ingredients and pour the sauce over the wings in a large shallow dish, turning the wings to coat. Cover and allow to rest in the fridge for at least 2 hours.

Preheat the oven to 200°C, line a baking tray with baking paper and place the wings in a single layer on the tray.

Roast the wings for 30 minutes, turning once to ensure they are well coated.

Wings should be well glazed, golden and sticky when done. They are the best snack ever! 🍗



others' perspectives and points of view are heard. This fosters a climate of openmindedness which in turn makes for a rewarding work experience.

Given the timing of this interview around Women's Day, what is Mathibeli's take on the role of women in this male-dominated industry? "I believe that every day should be Women's Day – not only 9 August – and it does pain me that we don't

have full representation of women in leadership roles – in our industry but also across all of agriculture.

"I strongly believe that women leaders often excel in emotional intelligence, which includes self-awareness, empathy and the ability to understand and manage emotions. And this in turn can lead to better team dynamics, improved conflict resolution and a more inclusive work environment." 🍗

# EMPOWERMENT VIA EGG FARMING IN RWANDA



*Members of Ejoheza Cooperative in Rusizi district started operating with 1 000 laying hens*

In the land of a thousand hills, women and young people are being supported by a Swiss-based organisation to achieve success in poultry farming  
By **Sandra Nadège**

**P**OUULTY FARMING, as supported by the NICE Project, a Swiss-based initiative, is transforming communities in Rwanda. Its innovative social business model benefits women and youth in this land-locked Central African country, allowing them to achieve economic stability and food security.

In Rusizi district in the west of Rwanda, the Ejoheza Bugarama Poultry Cooperative received 1 000 egg-laying hens and feed to start its activities. Made up of 17 members – 12 women and five men – the co-op initially struggled with broiler farming,

as they lacked expertise and faced challenges in meat production. Since they started collaborating with NICE, they moved to the production of table eggs instead, and received training and assistance that helped improve their practices and allowed them to set up sustainable poultry farming. Each co-op member receives a monthly stipend and has access to health care through medical insurance, as well as access to nutritious eggs, which improves the quality of their diet.

The cooperative is now producing 800 eggs per day, which they have been selling, while making eggs



affordable for their neighbours. The members are all actively involved in community-development projects, and they support each other in the spirit of cooperation.

Today, Ejoheza's progress boasts many benefits for the surrounding community, particularly in terms of their children's education. The people living in Bugarama sector, where Ejoheza Cooperative is located, have flourished thanks to an increase in the local consumption of protein-rich eggs and improved livelihoods that include additional sales of the surplus eggs.

The ongoing assistance and advice provided by NICE is an invaluable support, says Zawadi Nyiramihanda, one of the members. "We used to be solely focused on raising broilers, but NICE helped us get past the challenges that we struggled with. Every member contributes, and with teamwork and progress, we intend to keep going further. We sell these eggs to our neighbours and others in the area, and each member receives eggs twice a month.

"Our aim is to acquire more egg-laying hens so that we can do more. It's very important for us to receive eggs every two weeks."

In the Rwimbogo sector of Rusizi egg production has also transformed a second women's cooperative, whose name is a mouthful: Dukatazemwiterambere A. This collective is also supported by the NICE Project, and despite initial difficulties the women have increased their egg production to between 780 and 800 eggs per day. "In our community there used to be families whose children suffered from malnourishment, but they now have a better diet, and we even have enough eggs to sell in the market," says Esperance Nirere, who has been involved with Dukatazemwiterambere A for some time.

Meanwhile, in the Rugero sector of

*Theoneste Nzayisenga collects eggs from the coop in Rubavu district*



*Ejoheza member Zawadi Nyiramihanda with a tray of eggs*



Rubavu district, which lies along the shores of scenic Lake Kivu, poultry farming has also changed the lives of a group of youngsters who belong to the Abahujubumwe Youth Poultry Cooperative.

"We started this initiative when I was unemployed, with nothing to do at home," says Assia Mukaperezida. "At that time, we were mainly farming chickens for meat, but then the NICE Project provided us with egg-laying hens. They supported us from the start and made feed available until our hens started laying eggs. They helped us to market our eggs, and I started making a living!"

## The NICE Project

The Nutrition in City Ecosystems (NICE) project is supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). It is implemented and co-financed by a public-private Swiss consortium comprising the Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute (Swiss TPH), ETH Zürich, Sight and Life, and the Syngenta Foundation for Sustainable Agriculture.



*Egg farming became a way for unemployed Assia Mukaperezida to make a living*

Her enthusiasm is shared by Theoneste Nzayisenga, who explains how the cooperative developed as the youngsters learnt with the support of the folks at NICE. "In almost two years of working together, we have seen remarkable improvements. We have learnt financial management and we also diversified our activities thanks to a new business plan. Because we now have monthly allocations and savings, we are developing our activities, focusing not only on financial assistance, but also on comprehensive training in best farming practices."

The co-op has been transformed into a centre for community progress, he says, and they even opened a shop where value-added agricultural products are sold.

"We are also participating in a number of initiatives to combat malnutrition. This is only the start, and we look forward to further growth and collaboration with NICE."

The impact of poultry farming extends significantly and has increased



*Esperance Nire from Rusizi credits the project with combating malnutrition in her community*

livelihoods and boosted local economies in both Rubavu and Rusizi districts. Through careful management of resources and astute business practices, farmers supported by the NICE project prove the potential for holistic community development. 🌱

*This story was written for the Nutrition in City Ecosystems (NICE) project and is reprinted with permission*



## RWANDA FAST FACTS

This year, Rwanda is commemorating 30 years since the genocide against the Tutsis, during which 1 million people were massacred in 100 days. The memorial activities, named "Kwibuka30" kicked off on 7 April, when President Paul Kagame lit the memorial flame at the Kigali Genocide Memorial Centre in the capital, where the genocide started on that day in 1994. Kwibuka means "to remember".

The country is today seen as a one of Africa's fastest growing economies, and with a population of over 14 million people one of the most densely populated on the continent, with a population whose median age is 19. According to the World Bank Rwanda's economy grew at 7.6% in the first three quarters of 2023. Over 1.4 million tourists visited the country in that year, more than three times the number in 2021.

The streets of Kigali are clean and without potholes. Street lights work and littering is banned. Corruption is considered less of an issue here than in other countries in this part of the continent, partly due to a no-tolerance policy.



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# AND ONE GNU TO RULE US ALL

Words: **Lycett Winter**

Illustrations: **Jason Bronkhorst**

It's also been an election year at Animal Farm, and the chickens have made some strange alliances... We watched the jostling for power with a beady eye

**"**IT'S A PITY MR ORWELL didn't live to see the later history of Animal Farm," twittered ace online influencer Polly Von Tzakraka, a much-married Euro-parrot with a mysterious past and a wicked beak. Her followers hung on to her every snippet of titillating high-society gossip, even when she was just repeating what she'd heard about boring old politics.

"Oh my, the pigs thought they were sitting pretty, didn't they?" she chirped. "All pally with the humans on the other farms, getting sloshed at the same trough, living off the sweat of all the other animals... But they forgot about the chickens, didn't they?"

At this point, Polly's New Zealand narrator took over, it being an unspoken rule of the podcast that Polly never be given anything complicated to explain. In his unflappable tones, the smooth-talking kiwi reminded listeners that chickens are basically dinosaurs, scaled down. There were massive, angry, feathered, chicken-like creatures lurching about back in the Cretaceous, when the ancestors of mammals were still little rat-like nerds hiding out in burrows all day.

And the chickens never forgot.

## MULTIPLY TO DIVIDE

On Animal Farm, they fought back the way the oppressed have always fought back – in sheer numbers. Eventually, they reached the point where there were more chickens than humans. And they certainly outnumbered the pigs...

The second revolution was bloody, but necessary – the pork hate state had to be defeated. Crack chicken hit squads prowled the night, taking on solo pigs, omnivores-to-omnivore. Vicious contests of beak and spur against hoof and fang took their toll, and the pigs were getting the worst of it. They were finally dragged to the negotiating table and the New Animal Farm was born, where all animals really were equal.

Or so they thought. It wasn't long before the chickens started falling out with each other, with everyone determined to rule the roost. Within a few election cycles, the once mighty Avian Natural Conquerors, the party that had led the struggle for freedom, began to splinter.

## THE SCRAMBLE FOR POWER

The latest election had been especially chaotic, with new parties hatching by

the day. Now, with the ballot counting over, Polly and her listeners were waiting to learn the new pecking order. Would the Avian incumbents hang on to their majority, or would long-term rivals the Domesticated Allies force a breakthrough?

They'd need a big swing in the chicken vote, and a lot of chickens just didn't trust the Domesticated Allies. Too many pigs claiming to be contrite about all the earlier unpleasantness had joined the party, along with multiple other barnyard species. They even accepted wildlife that had liberated





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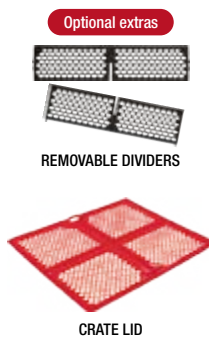
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themselves from hunting lodges and fled to Animal Farm for asylum. Most of the refugees didn't even know how to scratch dirt or cluck, and many a chicken was worried about their culture being swamped.

Still, having the Allies take charge wouldn't have been as disastrous as the Friendly Foxes Plus getting in – the "plus" stood for mongooses, lynxes, caracals and polecats, who'd joined the foxes to start a party that just wanted to live in harmony alongside the chickens, each practising their own values and culture. Fortunately, nobody was going to take them seriously without a single chicken in their ranks. Not that the occasional addled cockerel didn't join them – it was just that they always seemed to disappear after going to their first meeting.

#### POLLY MAKES A POOR PROPHET

As she added her own wildly inaccurate snippets of political analysis to her narrator's summary, Polly had firm ideas of her own. If the Avians were to lose their majority, she trilled, the only party they should partner with would be the Extra Feathery Freebirds. She had hoped to interview one of the Freebirds on her podcast when the results were announced, but the entire party was in court litigating against the Egg-Free Feminists over the acronym.

She was quite relieved about that, when the Freebirds limped home low in the polls. She was also glad to have backed off from her initial support of the Poultry Avengers, when their share of the vote turned out to be, well, paltry. But when it came to the party that she'd dismissed as no-hopers a week earlier? Boy, did she have egg on her face!

The breakaway faction of the Avians, mKhukhu we Sizwe, was the massive surprise of the day. Their final seat tally outstripped even old established parties like the Irate Fluffy Pullets and the Popular Activist Capons, and the

massive shift had Polly squawking like a macaw in a minefield. "Who," she screeched, "will hold the ballast of power?"

### A lot of chickens just didn't trust the pigs of the Domesticated Allies and their motley wildlife members


#### A NEWISH DAWN

It turns out, politics make for strange bedfellows. Had Polly actually been on gossipy terms with any of the politicians she claimed to know intimately, her bird brain would have been blown completely by the horse trading that went on (although that's just a metaphor, obviously – horse trading is illegal

under the Animal Farm constitution).

Instead, like most of the population, she remained in blissful ignorance, while deals were made and favours promised. Not that it stopped her making firm pronouncements every day about what was really going down.

Fact-checking website Snopes had to set up a whole separate page just to debunk the parrot's conspiracy theories.

Perhaps her most bizarre claim was that the Domesticated Allies were prepared to offer the Avian Natural Conquerors full cooperation, provided they installed a wildebeest as president. That's when even Polly's die-hard fans abandoned her. The idea of being governed by a gnu just seemed silly. 



# POULTRY GOODNESS TO CELEBRATE MADIBA DAY



SAPA members dug deep once again to help Chefs with Compassion reach its challenge of 67 000 litres of soup for Mandela's birthday – donating chicken and eggs worth hundreds of thousands of rands. By **Melinda Shaw**



Goldi volunteers with the chicken they prepared



"The chicken has landed! Let's cook!"



Another happy kitchen with their chicken donation





A new record, with almost 40 000 extra litres!



Chef Coo Pillay announces the final results



A hot meal on a cold day to celebrate Madiba Day



Nutritious chicken soup for Mandela Day



TopLay donated 67 dozen eggs in Cape Town and Jozi

**H**AD HE LIVED, NELSON MANDELA would have been 106 years old on 18 July, and on this day Chefs with Compassion once again celebrated the spirit of Madiba with their #67000litre soup challenge. And the poultry industry was right behind this powerful initiative for the fourth year in a row, enabling CwC to hit a new record with 106 895 litres of soup cooked to combat hunger.

The soup challenge started during the dreadful time of Covid in response

to the huge need experienced by feeding schemes supporting vulnerable communities. The timing of Nelson Mandela's birthday, and its call for people to devote 67 minutes to serving others, led to the name of the challenge – #67000litres.

When *Poultry Bulletin* learnt about the challenge in 2020, we reached out to SAPA's members to donate chicken and eggs, giving the chefs the opportunity to add nutritious protein to their vegetable soup. We were overwhelmed by the generosity of SAPA's members, who came to the party with tons of chicken and over a thousand eggs, making the poultry industry one of the biggest contributors to this worthwhile challenge.

And this year, you did it again! Country Bird Holdings, Rainbow and





Astral Foods each donated chicken worth R67 000, and TopLay donated 67 dozen eggs in Cape Town and the same again in Johannesburg.

"We cannot thank the poultry industry enough for the bounty these four companies shared with our chefs," says Chefs with Compassion CEO Coo Pillay. "Having meat and eggs available to add to the food we serve on Mandela Day and beyond is a luxury, adding nutritious protein to the meals that feed thousands of people who rarely get meat or eggs in their diet."

As in previous years, scores of kitchens around South Africa participated in the challenge, with cooking taking place in the days leading up



*Soup was distributed to a variety of organisations that provide meals to vulnerable people*



*Rainbow donated chicken worth R67 000*

**'Having protein-rich meat and eggs to add to the food we serve on Mandela Day is such a luxury, making a difference to the thousands who rarely get meat or eggs in their diet'**



*CBH's donation of chicken added welcome protein to the soup cooked on the day*





to Mandela Day. Pillay confirms that a total of 106 895 litres of soup was prepared, and distributed among feeding schemes and other welfare organisations, to provide a wholesome cup of soup to around 427 580 people from vulnerable and marginalised communities in all nine provinces on Madiba's birthday.

What a proud day for the poultry industry – showing up with compassion and generosity to cut through the cold of winter with a warm meal. That is what our industry is all about! 🐔



*Goldi's volunteers help with soup prep at the International Hotel School in Sandton*

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# ON THE WIRES

New uses for eggshells and food waste, global training for farmers, and more reasons to scrutinise Brazilian chicken imports

Compiled by **Charmain Lines**

## EGGSHELLS CAN BOOST GREEN ENERGY

**G**REEN-ENERGY technologies such as electric cars and wind turbines depend on the sustainable recovery of rare earth elements (REE). Research from Trinity College Dublin's School of Natural Sciences and iCrag, the Science Foundation Ireland Research Center in Applied Geosciences, shows that eggshells can help with this.


According to the research, eggshell waste could help absorb and separate REEs from water due to the calcium carbonate in the shell, offering a new extraction method.

Currently, REEs are mined – operations that carry a high environmental and health risk as they can release toxic or radioactive sludges. Given that the worldwide production of REE must increase to meet the green-energy transition demand, the search for environmentally friendly extraction methods is gaining momentum.

REEs are 17 of the metallic elements

from the periodic table. Examples are praseodymium (Pr), neodymium (Nd), dysprosium (Dy) and terbium (Tb). They are often found in water due to the weathering of rocks and minerals, erosion, heavy rainfall or flooding and wastewater disposal from industrial buildings and hospitals.

In the study, the researchers placed eggshells in solutions containing REEs at temperatures varying between 25°C and 205°C, and for different time frames. At 90°C, the eggshell surface started to dissolve and was replaced by a mineral called polycrystalline kozoite.

At 205°C, this mineral transitioned into bastnasite, the mineral that is used to extract REEs for technology applications. 



Photograph: Shutterstock



## FOOD WASTE CAN BE CHICKEN FEED

**A** STAGGERING 1.3 BILLION TONS of food went to waste in 2023. In agricultural terms, it means that 28% of the world's farmland is used every year to grow food that is never eaten.

Fortunately, scientific studies and practical experience are showing that at least some of this waste can be put to excellent use as feed for chicken, which is the most-consumed animal protein worldwide.

A desktop study led by Professor Christopher Simmons of the Department of Food Science and Technology at the University of California, Davis, combed through a variety of previous research to determine the feasibility of incorporating treated post-consumer food scraps into poultry feed.

Consensus seems to be that the impact of "human" food on bird growth is either neutral or positive (up to 20% better) and that sterilisation through heat treatment is sufficient to control microorganisms that can contaminate food scraps.

More work is still needed, however, to remove other contaminants such as mycotoxins and heavy metals from food waste before it is included in chicken feed.

While studies are ongoing, the first chicken-feed ingredients made from household food scraps has been approved for commercial distribution



in the US. Food recycling system Mill recently received formal approval from Washington State Department of Agriculture to distribute its recycled chicken-feed ingredients in the state. The company dehydrates food scraps and then turns the likes of banana peels and carrot tops into clean, dry grounds that can be added to poultry feed. 🌱



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## VICIOUS COST CYCLE IN INDONESIA

A SHORTAGE OF MAIZE has pushed up feed prices in Indonesia to the point where retail prices are curbing consumer demand for eggs. In response, farmers that breed laying hens are resorting to early culling to keep costs down in the face of an oversupply of day-old chicks that the Indonesian Poultry Breeders Association estimates at close to 576 million heads. The resulting decline in the national flock caused a 30% plunge in poultry-feed sales in the first quarter of 2024.

According to the National Layer Breeders Association, the ongoing feed-industry crisis is a consequence of drought caused by El Niño. Lower maize production resulted in higher prices, forcing feed manufacturers to switch from maize to wheat, which Indonesia primarily imports from the Black Sea region and Australia.

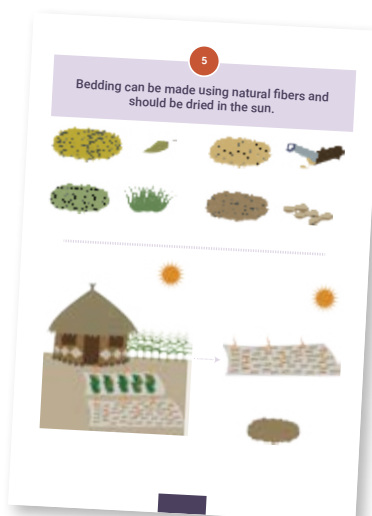
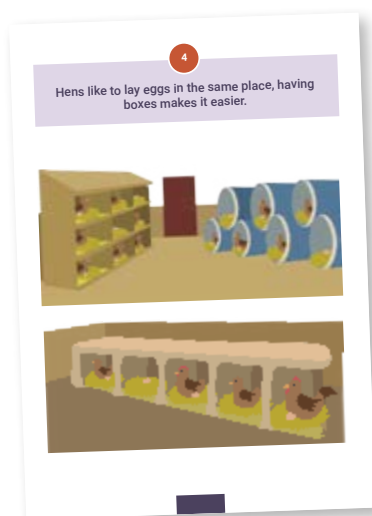
Climate conditions aside, longstanding issues like the lack of high-quality seed and problems with mechanisation make it difficult for the country's farmers to produce the 16 million



tons of maize that is needed every year to meet domestic poultry demand.

On average, Indonesia's 275 million citizens get 65% of their animal protein from poultry. 🐔

## NEW TRAINING FOR SMALL-SCALE CHICKEN FARMERS



Available free of charge, the training material consists of videos and infographics that can be printed out and used in workshops or discussion groups. The content is available in English, and videos in English, Chin-yanja, Mandinka, and Wolof. The plan is to also translate the material into additional languages in future, including Kiswahili, Fula, Serahule, Jola and Lingala.

Randall Ellis, CEO of the World Poultry Foundation, says that small-scale poultry producers play a crucial role in local food systems and rural economies by giving their own households and their communities access to affordable, high-quality protein in the form of chicken meat and eggs. "The WPF invites organisations that support and train entry-level poultry farmers to share and make use of the content," he says. 🐔

THE WORLD POULTRY FOUNDATION (WPF) has released a series of new training materials to help small-scale poultry farmers around the world improve their farming methods and incomes. The modules cover the basic principles of farming and bird rearing, such as poultry housing, health, water and feed and business planning.

The new toolkits are specially designed to help new poultry farmers ensure their

birds get the food, water and care they need to thrive, and support the production of dual-purpose poultry. These are chickens that can be used for meat or eggs, and which are more resistant to disease than many other types of poultry.

For more information and to access the training resources, visit the World Poultry Foundation site:  
<https://worldpoultryfoundation.org/initiative/ssp-training-resources>  
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Creating the Environment for Success

# FEED PRICES EXPLAINED

AFMA's fundis give insight into why chicken feed is so expensive

**'I feel like the feed companies are ripping us off - why does feed cost so much?'** Precious L, via Twitter

**Y**OUR READER IS NOT ALONE – this is a major concern for livestock owners worldwide. The current high feed costs and continuous increases can be attributed to various reasons beyond the control of feed manufacturers. We do have fixed costs such as labour, energy and transport, and they keep increasing annually due to the inflationary environment in South Africa. These costs constitute 25–30% of the total final feed cost. Raw materials make up 70–75% and the prices of raw materials fluctuate a lot.

One important factor is inflation and our currency. The rand has depreciated significantly over the years against the US dollar and the euro, adversely affecting the cost of food production. This has also led to higher costs for raw materials and ingredients used in the manufacturing of animal feeds, both local and imported. At the time of writing, the rand is valued at R18.27 against the US dollar. If we look at the last 12 months, the high was R19.80 in May 2023 and the low was R17.55 in July 2023. For every R1 weakening against the dollar the local maize price will increase by R170 per ton. It makes it therefore a very difficult commodity to price and is also responsible for most of the volatility in feed prices. Just compare it to 10 years ago, when the rand was trading at R10.58 per dollar

Geopolitical uncertainties, particularly around the Red Sea, have had repercussions, diverting shipping flows between the massive global markets of



Asia and Europe, and increasing travel times by an average of 15 days. The diversion of shipping due to the low river levels in the Panama Canal contributes further. We've seen a spike in container prices due to the longer travelling time, which limits the availability of containers. The inefficiencies of SA's harbours have also increased the cost. This all significantly impacts the cost of imported raw materials for animal feeds.

Transportation and energy costs also play a crucial role. Feed ingredients need to be transported between farms, feed mills and livestock producers. As fuel prices rise, transportation costs increase, further driving up feed prices. Fuel prices make up 25–30% of the total transport cost. The main cost incurred on logistics is fixed costs such as salaries, maintenance, replacement of vehicles and insurance, and these costs increase annually at more than the inflation rate. So, aside from fuel price increases, fixed costs rise even more and will keep on

doing so. The same applies to electricity costs which have skyrocketed over the last 10 years and which also influence the final feed price.

Back-up generators and the diesel they consume are another factor, with diesel having increased from R11.19/litre in May 2020 to R25.49 in May 2024, meaning feed manufacturers now pay over 100% more for fuel than they did four years ago. With raw materials being transported by road instead of rail, higher transport costs impact the entire value chain.

So one can see that the reasons for high feed prices are complex and these challenges will continue to drive the profitability of the agricultural industry as a whole. 📌

*Our reader question was answered by Lucius Phaleng, AFMA Trade advisor (trade@afma.co.za) and Heiko Köster of Feed First (Pty) Ltd (heikokoster@gmail.com)*



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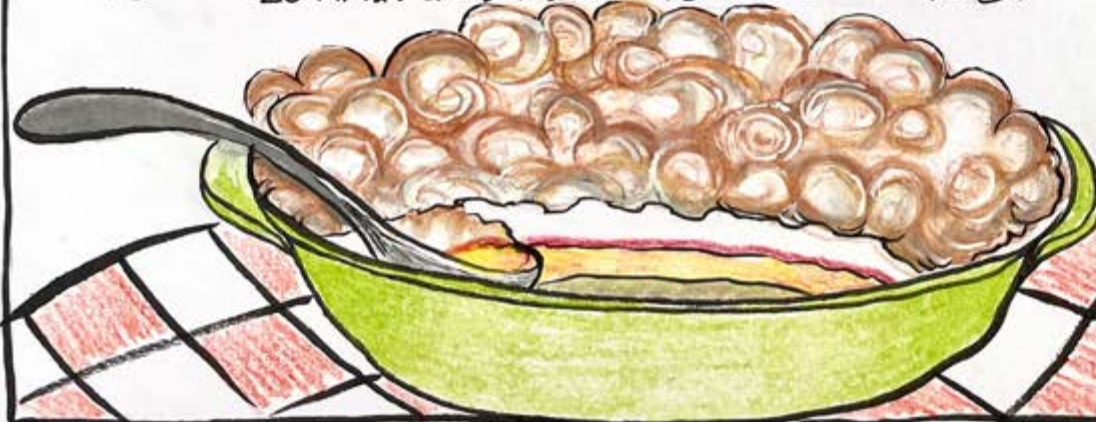
WARM MILK OVER MEDIUM HEAT  
ADD BUTTER, ZEST & 40G. OF SUGAR. MIX TOG,  
& ADD BREADCRUMBS. LEAVE FOR 30 MINS.  
FOR THE CRUMBS TO ABSORB THE LIQUID.

HEAT OVEN TO 180°C & GREASE A MEDIUM PIE DISH.  
ADD EGG YOLKS TO MIXTURE & POUR INTO DISH.

BAKE FOR 30 MINS.

REMOVE FROM OVEN & SPREAD WITH A THIN LAYER OF JAM.  
TURN DOWN OVEN TO 160°C

WHIP EGG WHITES UNTIL FIRM. ADD SUGAR &  
WHISK UNTIL STIFF & GLOSSY  
RETURN TO OVEN & COOK FOR A FURTHER  
20 MINS. UNTIL MERINGUE IS BROWNED.





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