

Poultry Bulletin



ISSUE 24

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R60

THE INNOVATION ISSUE

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN POULTRY ASSOCIATION

WHY BENIN IS BANNING CHICKEN IMPORTS - INSIGHTS FROM WEST AFRICA

NATION FEEDERS



*Protecting our food security
one chicken at a time*

PRECIOUS CARGO

The delicate process
of moving day-old chicks

FARMING BLIND

50 years as a
farmer without sight

WHITE OR BROWN

It's only feathers... or is it?

PROUDLY SOLAR

An industry leader shrinks its carbon footprint



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IS IT RIGHT THAT THE BASKET of VAT-exempted basic foodstuffs in South Africa include imported pilchards but no locally produced meat product? In other, much more affluent countries, VAT reductions or exemptions bring meat products within reach of their poorest citizens. In the UK, for instance, there is no VAT on raw meat and fish; in France half the regular VAT rate – 10% – is charged on raw meat and fish; and in Italy, meat and other basic foods come with 4% VAT compared to their standard VAT rate of 22%.

We don't know the malnutrition stats for these first-world countries, but in South Africa the horrifying reality is that 30% of children under the age of five suffer from childhood stunting due to malnutrition. Stunting is an entirely preventable, but irreversible condition, and closely linked to poverty and a diet lacking the nutrients, including protein, that is essential for normal, healthy physical and intellectual development. These children will have compromised health and never reach their full potential... a truly awful legacy not only for the adults they will become, but for our country as a whole.

SAPA has just completed another submission to the National Treasury to advocate for the removal of VAT on individually quick frozen (IQF) chicken portions and chicken offal, those poultry parts most affordable for the majority of South Africans.

We hope that sanity will prevail this time, and that the decision makers will realise that the question is not whether we can afford to implement this VAT exemption, but whether we can afford not to.

Enjoy this issue.

Melinda
@melshaw001
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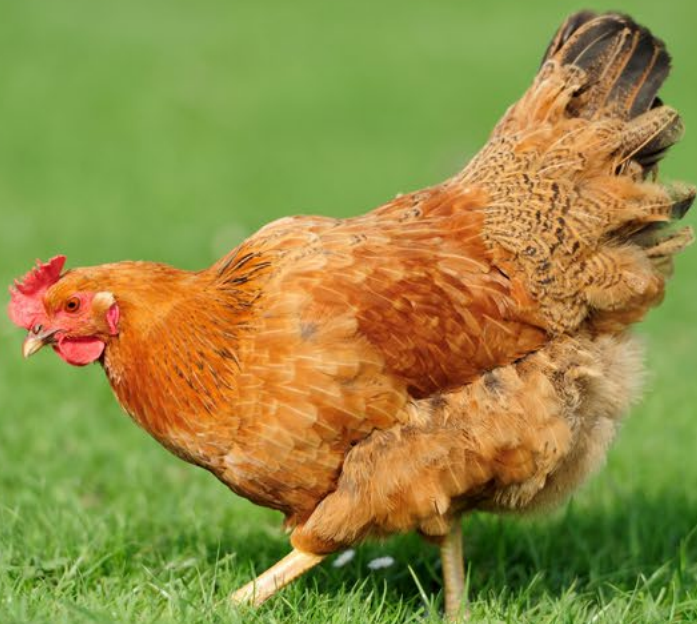
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THE LOGIC OF EGG PRODUCTION



THE EGG INDUSTRY IS USED TO PERIODIC ATTACKS from the cage-free lobby, which will find its way into the media from time to time with sensationalist claims and inflammatory statements. Such bodies invariably present themselves as champions of animal welfare and like to accuse South African egg producers of breaking the law while citing policies from other countries that don't apply here on the one hand, and on the other hand conveniently disregarding international policies that do apply in South Africa as elsewhere.


The intention is always to create public panic to gather support for a move to cage-free systems similar to the few wealthy, developed Western countries that have voluntarily considered going cage free. In the United States 10 of the 50 states have adopted a cage-free system. These lobbies always push their agenda with no regard for the essential role eggs play in providing food security to millions of South Africans. They even portray eggs as unhealthy, claiming that eggs are

related to serious diseases such as cancer.

The reality that these lobbyists never mention is that the eggs produced by South Africa's flock of laying hens represent the most affordable animal protein source available to our citizens, more accessible to the greater population of South Africa than any meat or fish products. It is important to note that more than 60% of the world's eggs are produced in BRICS countries, not wealthy Western countries. And the reality in BRICS countries is that less than 10% of eggs produced there are cage free. Food security simply is a bigger concern in poorer countries, where the population doesn't throw away as much as 60 million tons of uneaten food per year, as happens in the United States. Between 30 and 40 percent of America's food supply ends up on rubbish dumps.

As a member of the BRICS block, we believe that there is a place for all three egg-production systems that currently exist in our approved regulations – barn, free range and caged – and that these should all remain options in South Africa to allow the consumer to purchase eggs based on their affordability. Should the demand for cage-free eggs (which in South Africa we call "free range" or "barn") increase, producers are at liberty to start producing these eggs if it is economically worth their while. Market demand will dictate.

In 2021 it was revealed that a direct investment of R4.95 billion would be required to switch South Africa to a cage-free system. Passed on to the consumer, this cost, spread over five years, would mean the price would increase by around R6 per dozen eggs. It is estimated that the effect of this will be reduced demand due to the expense, which in turn will cause industry decline by more than 20%, leading to a 12% decline in employment. In short, fewer people will be able to afford even the cheapest animal protein.

South Africa's egg producers wish to assure consumers that we will continue to adhere to the laws and regulations of our country, and continue to produce quality eggs at affordable prices based on purchasing power. Regular inspections by a government-appointed assignee take place at farms, at egg-packing stations and at point of sale in the market, ensuring compliance with all the applicable, strict government regulations. 



Dr Abongile Balarane
GM, SAPA Egg Organisation

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LETTERS

We want to hear from you. Send your letters to editor@poultrybulletin.co.za



PROUD OF OUR AWARD-WINNING MAGAZINE*

ON BEHALF OF THE EGG BOARD we want to congratulate the team on their outstanding achievement in winning an International Content Marketing Award for SAPA with *Poultry Bulletin*. The future is bright! Keep up the good work.

Dr Abongile Balarane

Congratulations, Melinda, for putting SAPA on the map and bringing another award home. Well done!

Matsobane Mpyana,
National Agricultural Marketing Council

Well done on winning an award once again. We are very proud of *Poultry Bulletin*, and completely agree that it is one of the best in the world!

Achmat and Tawfeeq Brinkhuis,
Chamomile Farming

Congratulations to Melinda and team! We are proud to be associated.

Dr Alison Lubisi,
Agricultural Research Council

* See page 20 for details of the award



COOKBOOK WINNERS

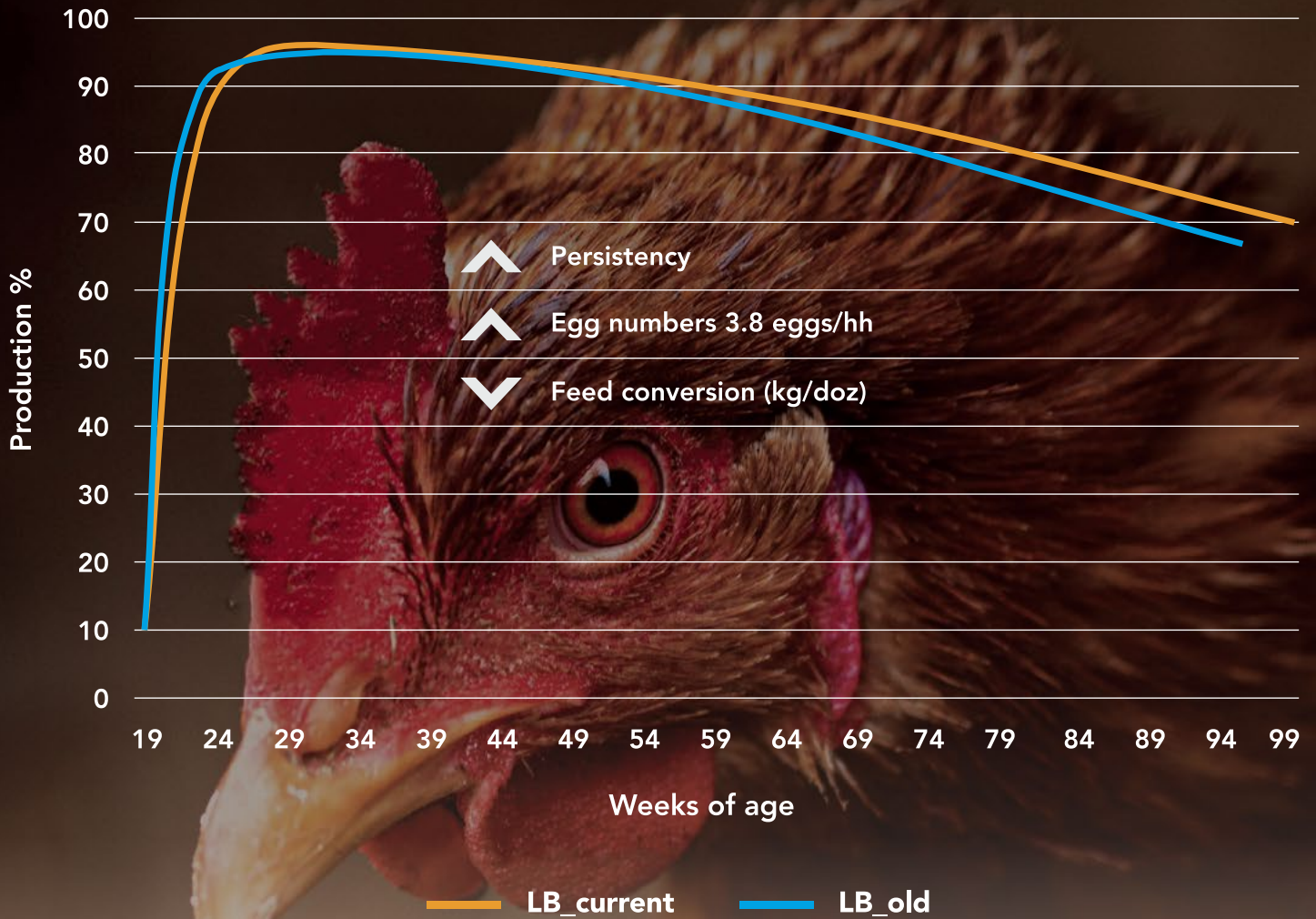
OUR SUPREME RECIPES cookbook competition was popular with readers, who submitted answers to the question, "How old is CBH?". The correct answer was, of course, 21 years, and the following winners will each receive a copy of the book.

Congratulations to Sasha Gajoo from Bluehills, Marius van Staden from Valhalla, Centurion, and Louisa Segonyane from Doornpoort, Pretoria.

Your cookbooks are in the mail; enjoy cooking up a storm!



2025 Lohmann Brown Prospects



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SUPERIOR GENETICS

POSSIBLE POSITIVE SPINOFFS FOR POULTRY

By **Wandile Sihlobo**

SOUTH AFRICAN CONSUMERS are generally under pressure, and the high prices of various food products have added to the challenge. The underpinning problem of South Africa is high unemployment and low economic growth, which has left many in challenging economic conditions. I fear this will likely remain the reality before we see the benefit of the Operation Vulindlela interventions and the Government of National Unity's economic gains.

The current tough economic times also mean consumers must look carefully at the products they add to their shopping baskets; thus, one fears some may reduce the amount of essential protein foods such as poultry and other meats.

For this reason, the poultry industry has had to make

calls for the removal of VAT on some chicken products to stimulate demand and ensure the consumer has access to affordable protein. It is unclear if this will succeed, as fiscal considerations are also involved in such policy matters.

The increase in the demand for poultry products would also benefit the poultry industry that is still recovering from the avian influenza outbreak of 2023 and higher feed costs. Feed costs have been elevated for some time because of the poor grains and oilseed harvest in South Africa in the 2023/24 season. In the seasons before that, we saw higher grains and oilseed prices due to strong demand in China, poor harvests in South America, and the Russia-Ukraine war.

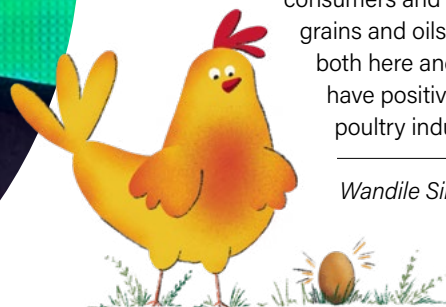
This year started with relatively lower global grains and oilseed prices. South Africa's grains and oilseed production

'February and March are critical periods for grains and oilseed pollination'

also recovered in the 2024/25 season, which leads one to hope the prices will moderate meaningfully here too. Indeed, we are still early in the season, and February and March are critical periods for grains and oilseed pollination. If we can get through this period with sufficient rainfall providing moisture, the country will be in for a decent harvest. This would hugely benefit the poultry industry by potentially easing input costs later in the year.

In essence, the effort to ease the pressure on consumers and the recovery in grains and oilseed production both here and abroad may have positive spinoffs for the poultry industry. 📌

Wandile Sihlobo is an agricultural economist



NEWS IN BRIEF

Small farmer honoured, South African technology for the fight against bird flu, and more local news

Compiled by **Charmain Lines**

EGG FARMER BAGS NATIONAL AWARD

THE AFRIKAANS COMMERCIAL INSTITUTE has named egg farmer Jan-Pierre Schoeman from Schoemanshoek near Oudtshoorn in the Western Cape as its Small Farmer of the Year for 2024.

Schoeman started Klein Karoo Eggs in November 2023 with around 250 layers. These days his flock of 1 500 Highline Brown and Highline Silver chickens produces 12 000 eggs per week that Schoeman himself delivers to restaurants and guesthouses in town.

The original 250 hens have since retired and live a free-range existence on the farm. The eggs they still produce are used by the Schoeman household and are available to the farmworkers to buy. [f](#)



Jan-Pierre Schoeman of Klein Karoo Eggs



HEARD ON THE GRAPEVINE

"We have to build reservoirs to keep emergency water in case the water supply breaks down, and in the long run we'll have to build a pipeline from the Vaal River to our farms at enormous cost just to be able to keep going. With electricity breakdowns you can still generate power with solar, or generators, but you can't make water..."

Chris Schutte
Former CEO, Astral Foods

HOMEGROWN TECH TO SPEED UP BIRD-FLU DETECTION



A POINT-OF-CARE diagnostic device, developed by the CSIR and funded by the Technology Innovation Agency (TIA), is expected to help in the war against bird flu by speeding up detection of the disease.

The South African innovation was launched in December at the Science Forum 2024, which was held at the CSIR International Convention Centre in Pretoria.

According to the TIA, the diagnostic device is expected to help farmers combat the spread of bird flu, as well as foot-and-mouth disease (FMD), by providing swift and accurate diagnoses. The 4IR-enabled point-of-care technology can deliver results within one hour, which enables farmers to make quick, informed decisions about isolating infected animals. This will help reduce the risk of outbreaks spreading across farms and rural areas. As the technology is linked to the government's livestock disease surveillance database, it will also improve surveillance systems at national level.

The technology has been licensed to Gauteng-based startup TokaBio for commercialisation and distribution, and is designed specifically to be used in remote and rural areas where traditional diagnostic services are often inaccessible.

Its effectiveness was established in trials conducted in Rwanda, Lesotho and Zambia, and further large-scale trials in South Africa are expected to enhance the device's integration into everyday farming practices.

The technology is expected to be rolled out in phases, starting with high-risk areas. 📍



SAPA ALSO CALLS FOR VAT-EXEMPT CHICKEN



EVER SINCE President Cyril Ramaphosa stated that the Government of National Unity intended to expand the basket of VAT-exempt essential food items, the inclusion (or not) of certain chicken products has been hotly debated.

In mid-November last year, SAPA submitted its proposal to the National Treasury, making a case for locally produced frozen bone-in portions, as well as fresh and frozen offal, to be exempted from VAT.

The Association built its proposal around five main arguments:

- Poor people will benefit directly.
- The proposed exemption will reduce the cost of a basic basket of food by R82 per month.
- Many people who currently don't have access to animal protein will be able to afford it.
- There will be no opportunity to abuse the definition of frozen bone-in portions or offal.
- While implementing the proposal will come at a cost to the fiscus, it would amount to about 1-2% of monies that SARS collects, and will be offset by the benefits to poorest consumers.

At the time of writing no decision has been reached. 📍

BIRD-FLU WATCH

A roundup of developments around the world in avian influenza management

Compiled by **Charmain Lines**

NIGERIA PULLS AI INTO FIGHTING AI




A NEW APP AND TECHNOLOGY PLATFORM, called Bird Flu Watch (inspired by *Poultry Bulletin*, perhaps...?) and using artificial intelligence, is being developed by Nigerian and Welsh researchers to help keep small-scale poultry farms safe. The technology project is supervised by Dr Edore Akpokodje, a lecturer in computer science at Aberystwyth University in Wales. The platform his team is developing will offer expert advice, gather surveillance data and share best practice.

"We seek to improve disease management and ensure the sustainability of Nigeria's poultry industry, as well as the health of farmers and ecosystems," he says. "With increasing use of mobile phones and better rural connectivity among smallholder farmers, this platform aims to provide accessible,

offline information."

The app and platforms will be designed in consultation with farmers and the private and public sectors. Omeva Consulting, a Namibian company specialising in harnessing data and IT solutions for smallholder farmers, will do the development.

Poultry accounts for 33% of total protein consumption in Nigeria and contributes 25% to the agricultural GDP. However, surveys show that only 60% of farmers in the country are aware of avian influenza, and fewer than one in six understand that it can pass from animals to people.


The fact that many poultry farmers in Nigeria are smallholders with backyard operations and that more than 40% of them do not know enough about biosecurity practices, further puts the country at risk. 

HPAI DRIVES UP EGG PRICES IN CALIFORNIA



BY THE END OF 2024, the US state of California had lost around six million layers to avian influenza, resulting in consumers paying 70% more for eggs in December than they did in November.

At \$8.97 (around R170) per dozen in California, eggs have become a luxury as the impact of bird flu combined with the holiday season's traditional spike in demand for eggs.

Given the US Department of Agriculture's estimate that the US layer flock was at or below the 300 million mark, the lowest point since 2022, it is expected that production will take four to six months to recover, provided that no more layers are lost to HPAI. 

UNDERSTANDING CLIMATE CHANGE COULD RESTRAIN BIRD FLU

AS GLOBAL CLIMATE PATTERNS change, so does the behaviour of migratory birds – and with it the ways in which bird flu spreads across the world.

“The importance of climate change, the importance of the environment and the environmental impact on the biology and spread of the virus are things we haven’t taken a good look at,” says Dr Shayan Sharif, a professor in the Department of Pathobiology at University of Guelph’s Ontario Veterinary College. “You have species that are migrating into new territories and, as a result of that, they are exposed to more and more viruses, like avian influenza. That could also lead to these viruses undergoing mutations because they’re evolving and become more pathogenic or transmissible.”

Sharif’s team is busy developing technology to predict the pathways of wild birds in the interest of improving disease monitoring and surveillance. The objective is to predict HPAI outbreaks and reduce their spread. [f](#)



CATS PROVE VULNERABLE TO BIRD FLU

RECENT REPORTS HAVE SHOWN that domestic and wild cats, including tigers, mountain

lions and lynx, are highly sensitive to HPAI. Several recent investigations have indicated that cats can contract

avian influenza through food, most often unpasteurised milk or raw or undercooked meats. Cats that hunt and consume wild birds are particularly at risk.

In South Korea in 2023, 38 cats died from HPAI from food they were given while being kept in a shelter. Investigators with South Korea’s Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (MAFRA) concluded that the pet-food manufacturer had failed to follow necessary sterilisation steps due to an equipment malfunction.

In July 2024, domestic cats on a US dairy farm contracted and later died from HPAI after being fed unpasteurised milk from cows infected with the virus, and at the end of last year, a house cat in Oregon fell ill with the H5N1 bird flu virus after eating raw frozen pet food that was contaminated. The cat subsequently died and the company that manufactures the food recalled the batch that tested positive for HPAI. [f](#)



FEELING THE BENEFITS OF SOLAR

Running a successful integrated broiler operation while shrinking your carbon footprint is a challenge that Sovereign has embraced **Diane McCarthy** gets the full story



Sovereign's further processing plant in Kariega. Part of the challenge was to integrate the solar panels with the existing roof infrastructure



ALMOST 18 MONTHS after launching a huge solar-energy project in Kariega in the Eastern Cape and Hartbeespoort in North West, broiler producer Sovereign is reaping the benefits of peace of mind, and the knowledge that it now produces the nation's favourite protein in an environmentally friendlier way.

Reviewing and evaluating its green credentials has been a core part of the Sovereign business plan for many years. Not only one of South Africa's largest poultry producers, it is also well on its way to being an industry leader in green technology, committed to following an environmentally friendly approach to doing business. This means reducing its footprint in as many ways as possible.

Most manufacturing plants, whatever their business, are high energy users. A chicken-processing company has massive refrigeration plants, so it's hard to make energy savings. In order to embark on this journey, Sovereign took stock of its energy usage at all its facilities; highlighted where it was consuming the most, and started looking for solutions.

THE JOURNEY

As far back as 2008 the company investigated biogas technology. It has also slowly but surely been implementing more energy-efficient operational systems. Lighting was changed over time from incandescent sources to fluorescent and now LED; and there has been a transition to more efficient cooling, heating and heat-recovery technologies too.

Solar energy as an alternative had been on the table for some time but while it was still only available via an outright purchase option requiring a high capital outlay, and also difficult to integrate within the municipal grid, it was not viable.

However, the wheel turned. Now, with the commercial support from suppliers and the banking sector,

Sovereign sees the solar project first and foremost as a step towards being more environmentally responsible, rather than only to save costs



Pieter van der Smit, production manager of Sovereign's value-added division



together with regulatory acceptance from municipalities, it has become far easier to finance and integrate a solar system into a company's business model, and Sovereign embraced the opportunity.

"It was an easy decision to make; we knew we needed to go solar," says Pieter van der Smit, production manager of Sovereign's value-added division. "The most difficult aspect was to find the right partner. There are a multitude of service providers out there, and so many different options. Once we identified our specific

concerns and found someone who could address those concerns, the rest was fairly simple."

THE PARTNERSHIP

In 2021 Sovereign went to the market for comprehensive proposals and by 2022, after technical due diligence and finalisation of commercial terms, the first phase of its rollout was awarded to a partnership between Repower and Solar Africa, to deliver up to 3 579 kW. In Sovereign's case the most challenging issue to confront has been the suitability of existing roof structures ▶



to accommodate solar panels, especially with older roofs. Another factor was the integration of solar with diesel generators, as it was a priority for the company to reduce its diesel usage during power outages.

The system was designed and installed by Repower, while Solar Africa takes care of day-to-day operations and maintenance. "This kind of collaboration suits us very well," says Van der Smit. "It allows us to focus our attention on what we are good at, our core business. We're excellent at processing chicken. We're not solar engineers. The responsibility for the upkeep and maintenance of the system rests with the supplier."

THE FINANCE

There are many ways of designing a solar solution, and as many ways to finance it. One can take on the capital outlay upfront and realise savings from day one, or one can opt for a smaller

financial risk by renting.

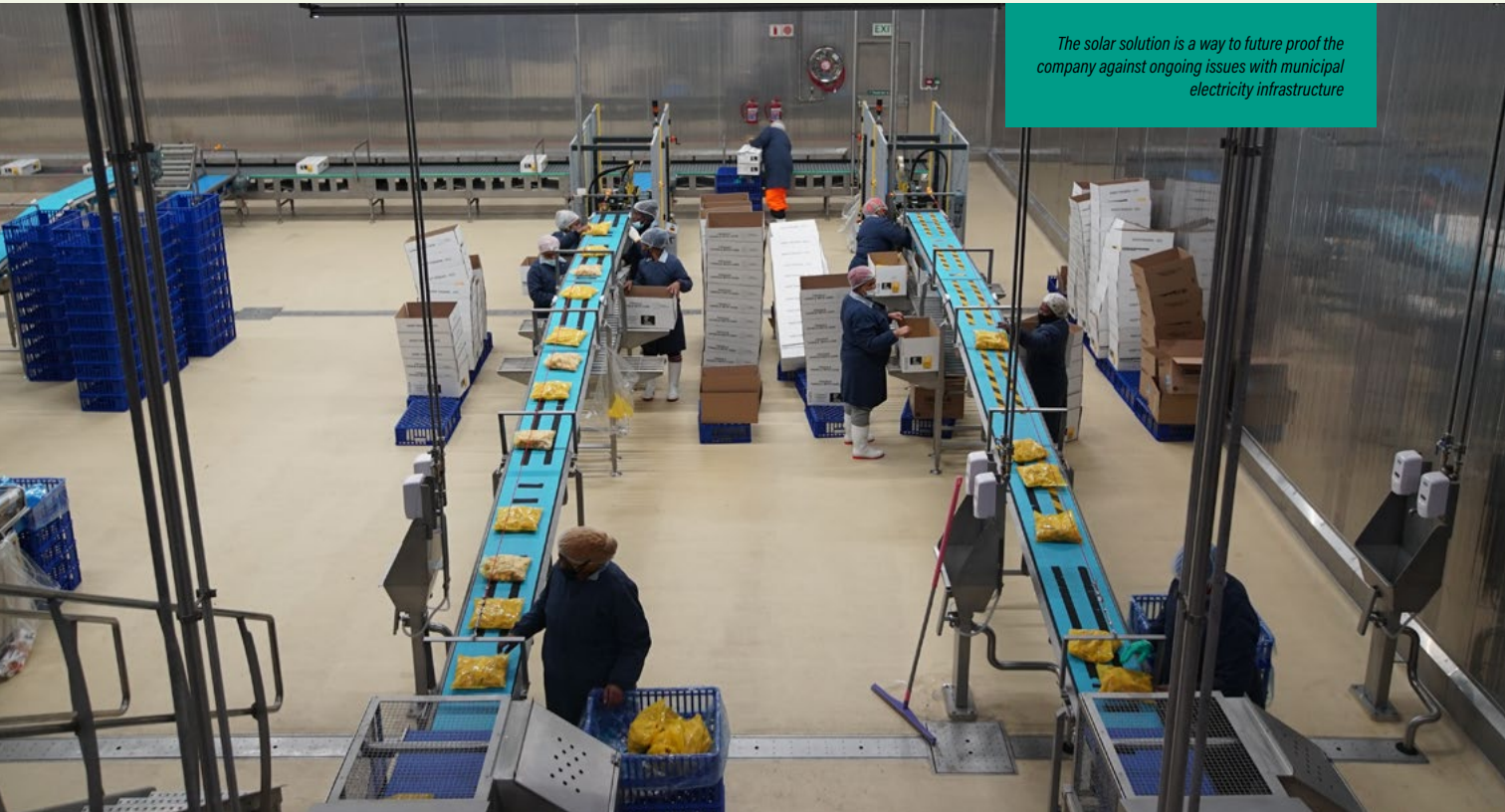
"We ultimately went for a power purchase agreement (PPA), which is a combination of less risk for less savings, and works out as a rent-to-own agreement. That's the balance you have to strike; calculate what appetite you have for risk."

For Sovereign the goal was not first and foremost to save costs, but rather a crucial step towards sustainability and being more environmentally responsible. "It is such an important step for companies like ours to take. When we identify an opportunity to be more sustainable, we need to act."

The fact that loadshedding seems to have disappeared is immaterial, says Van der Smit. "We are a high energy user, and we need to find ways to secure supply into the future too. There are always issues with the electrical infrastructure across the various municipalities that service our sites. In our business, where we deal with



Sovereign currently has two production plants under solar



The solar solution is a way to future proof the company against ongoing issues with municipal electricity infrastructure



The system is grid-tied, and generates solar power when the sun shines, while switching to Eskom power when solar is depleted. In future, battery backup may be added

livestock, one cannot stop production and resume when the power is restored. You lose your livestock."

Sovereign currently has two processing plants under solar, as well as installations at a number of its farms. The company has a total of 6 500 panels which generate 3.63 GWh (gigawatt hours) annually – equivalent to the yearly energy usage of 630 average households.

"There are other benefits to generating 3.63 GWh of solar energy – it's equivalent to planting around 291 trees as it saves 1 423 metric tons of CO₂," explains Van der Smit.

THE DESIGN

The Sovereign system is not totally off grid, but is a grid-tied operation, which generates electricity when the sun is shining. There is no battery backup (a cost-saving choice) so the system switches to Eskom power when the solar is depleted.

Diesel generation is incorporated to ensure no interruption of power should there be a grid outage. It's a smooth and seamless system, so well designed that once it is up and running, it requires no further thought.

Van der Smit emphasises that installing a solar system is part of a process that starts long before the first panel is anywhere near the roof of your building. "First you need to do a audit of your energy usage and reduce your demand as much as possible. As we all know, the most efficient way to save electricity is to not use it."


Sovereign plans to expand its solar footprint in the coming year, and in addition to reducing fossil-fuel use, the company has initiated other sustainability projects. Plans are in place to reduce water usage by investing in a treatment and recovery system at its Kariega processing plant

By cleaning and recycling wastewater from the plant, the recovery

system will reduce strain on the water supply in the area and also provide local communities with much needed fresh water.

THE FUTURE

Going forward, the company will keep an eye on technological improvements that might benefit its environmental profile. "One of the next technologies we're looking out for with much anticipation is battery-energy storage systems (BESS), which will make it more cost effective to store solar-generated energy. That will realise more savings," says Van der Smit.

To be a responsible corporate citizen it is necessary to constantly reassess your situation and keep up with new technologies. For Sovereign this is part of its commitment to keeping green, showing commitment to sustainability, and self-sufficiency. "We hope to see others in the poultry industry follow our lead." 

MEMBERS' NOTICEBOARD

All the key notices delivered to SAPA members, in brief

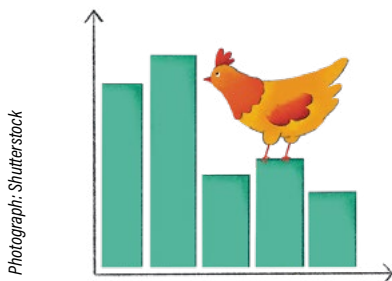
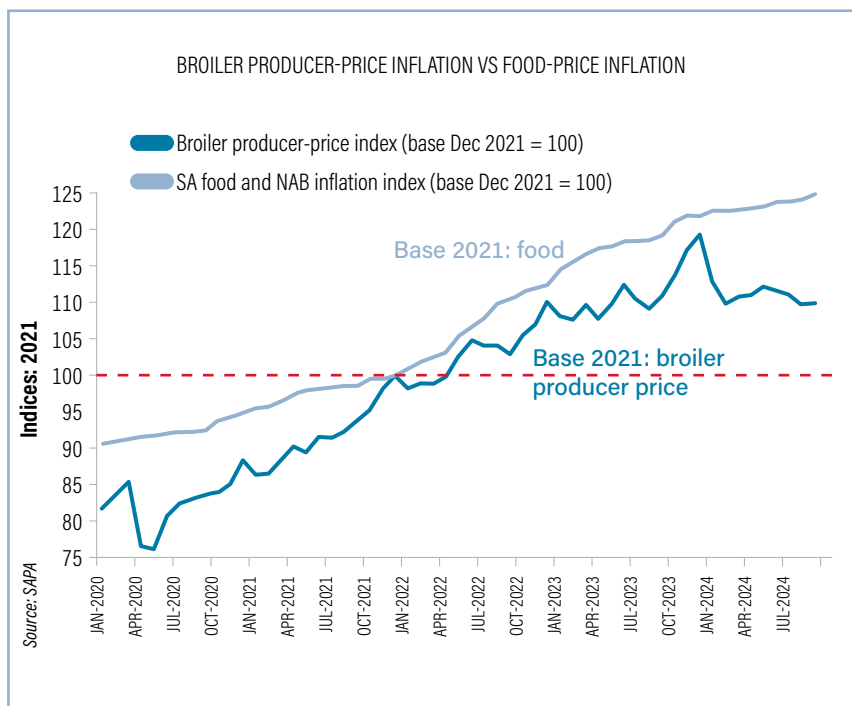
Compiled by **Michael Acott**

2025: A BETTER YEAR AHEAD

SOUTH AFRICAN POULTRY PRODUCERS are heading back into the black after a punishing few years, and there are many reasons to be optimistic about this next year.

SAPA's key market signals report for the third quarter of 2024 looks at the reasons why 2025 should be a better one for the poultry industry.

Food-price inflation continues to cool, maize harvest prospects are improving, interest rates have dropped and CEO confidence indices are above the neutral level for the first time in a long time.





Additionally, poultry imports are likely to contract in 2025, as the US, EU and Canada grapple with renewed bird-flu outbreaks.

Negative factors include the weakening of the rand, the possible return of loadshedding (which so far has not happened) and a substantial increase in the price of electricity.

The key market signals document is a compendium of information and statistics about all aspects of the poultry industry, from chicken hatchings and poultry production to producer and retail prices, as well as details of poultry imports and exports.

Among statistics that will please poultry producers is the fact that chicken has remained cheaper than pork, cementing its role as South

Africa's most affordable meat protein. For the first three quarters of 2024, chicken producer prices averaged R31.62/kg, compared to R31.80/kg for pork.

Chicken price increases have also remained consistently below food-price inflation. A graph shows that, since January 2020, chicken producer-price inflation has been lower than food-price inflation, and the gap is widening.

"In the period since the index was rebased in January 2022, general food-price inflation has been considerably higher than broiler food-price inflation. Dairy products, eggs, cereals, oils, vegetables and fish have contributed much more to food inflation over this period than has chicken meat," the document says. 📊

AWARDS



GLOBAL ACCLAIM FOR POULTRY BULLETIN

THE YEAR GOT OFF TO a good start when we learnt that *Poultry Bulletin* had been selected for a bronze award in the prestigious International Content Marketing Awards, which took place in London in early January.

This is the second consecutive year that SAPA's official mouthpiece won a CMA, which attracted entries from almost 30 countries.

Says Rob John, MD of the Content Marketing Association, "Winning this award is a global triumph that comes with widespread acclaim and international recognition. It's fair to say that you fought off fierce competition to win an award and be considered the very best in content marketing."

Poultry Bulletin was also named as national second runner-up in the SADC Media Awards 2024 in the Print category. 📊

Poultry producers can feel pleased that chicken is still the most affordable meat protein



Poultry price recovery expected in 2025

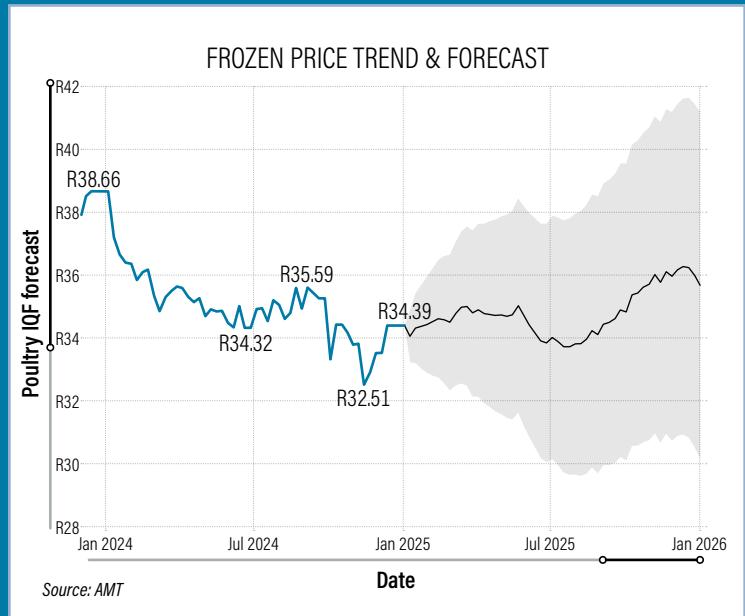
POULTRY PRODUCER PRICES are expected to recover this year after dropping for most of last year.

This is the forecast by agricultural trend-analysis company AMT, as contained in graphs in its livestock report for the fourth quarter of 2024.

Average producer prices in December 2024 – R33.80/kg for frozen poultry, R34.61/kg for fresh poultry and R31.92/kg for IQF chicken – were all lower than the prices achieved in December 2023.

This is set to change this year, with prices improving on 2024 and more or less matching 2023 prices, according to the AMT forecast.

The company expects producer prices for frozen chicken to rise above R36/kg at year end (December 2023: R37.80/kg). Fresh chicken prices are expected to exceed R37/kg (Dec 2023: R37.96/kg), while IQF portions are forecast to rise above R34/kg by year end (Dec 2023: R33.91/kg).



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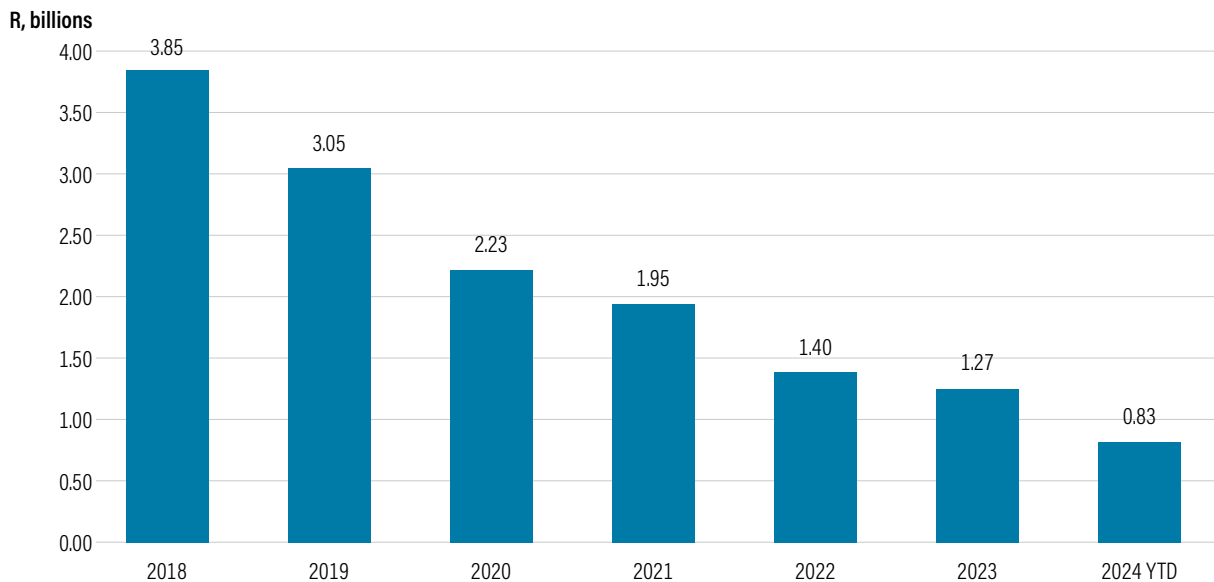


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BONE-IN IMPORTS HEAD FOR NEW LOW



TOTAL ANNUAL FOB VALUE OF FROZEN BONE-IN PORTIONS



Source: SAPA

OFFICIAL IMPORT STATISTICS for the first 11 months of last year show that chicken imports in the sensitive category of frozen bone-in portions such as leg quarters are likely to register a new low in 2024.

The category is sensitive because bone-in chicken imports compete with locally produced frozen packs of IQF (individually quick frozen) portions. It is for this reason that all nine of SAPA's successful antidumping-duty applications have been in relation to bone-in portions.

Imports have been dropping since a peak in 2018, when huge volumes of dumped bone-in chicken precipitated

a crisis in the local poultry industry. Bone-in imports have dropped consistently for the past six years.


SAPA's imports reports for November 2024 illustrate the decline. Bone-in imports peaked at 287 000 tons in 2018, but by 2023 they were down to 71 000 tons. The total for the first 11 months of 2024 is only 38 000 tons, so another sharp decline for the year is likely.

Bone-in imports in November were 1 252 tons, 34% lower than October and 69% below November 2023. The total for the first 11 months was 42% below the same period the previous year.

By contrast, imports of mechanically

deboned meat (MDM) and chicken offal are increasing. Together, these categories make up more than 90% of South Africa's chicken-meat imports.

MDM, a paste used in the manufacture of processed meats such as polony, is the largest category. Offal, which includes chicken heads, feet and livers, is the fastest-growing category and import volumes more than doubled from 43 000 tons in 2017 to 86 000 tons in 2023. It will be even higher in 2024.

Total chicken imports for the 2024 year are likely to be similar to or slightly below the 400 000 tons that were registered in 2023. 

Steady increase in broiler production

THE RECOVERY in South Africa's chicken production last year is illustrated in SAPA's broiler production report for September 2024.

Broiler production had been around 21 million birds per week in the years preceding the 2023 bird-flu outbreaks, which devastated the poultry industry.

Production dropped nearly 5% in 2023, and was down to 18.9 million birds per week in January 2024. It recovered steadily in the following months, rising to 21.7 million birds per week in June 2024, and to 22 million birds per week in September.

The report also provided statistics on imports and production, as well as total chicken consumption.

Chicken imports totalled just under 400 000 tons in 2023, equal to 22.8% of local production and 19% of South Africa's chicken consumption. In the

first nine months of 2024, imports came to 306 000 tons, equal to 22.4% of local production and 18.8% of national chicken consumption. 📊

ANNUAL BROILERS PRODUCED

Year	Production	% change	Consumption*	% change	Imports	% of production	% of consumption
2020	1 768 744		2 179 353		460 708	26.0	21.1
2021	1 800 702	1.8	2 158 531	-1.0	406 826	22.6	18.8
2022	1 836 632	2.0	2 146 797	-0.5	360 252	19.6	16.8
2023	1 752 174	-4.6	2 105 087	-1.9	399 702	22.8	19.0
to Sep 2024	1 370 308		1 635 702		306 775	22.4	18.8

* Consumption = production (incl. culls) + imports - exports

Source: SAPA

Watching out for bird flu

THE GOOD NEWS is that there were no avian influenza (AI or bird flu) outbreaks in South Africa in the fourth quarter of last year.

The bad news is that bird flu continues to spread across the world, particularly in Europe and North America during the northern winter, and the risk of new outbreaks in South Africa remains high.

SAPA's avian influenza report for the last three months of 2024 details how the association goes about monitoring the national chicken flock for incidences of bird flu.

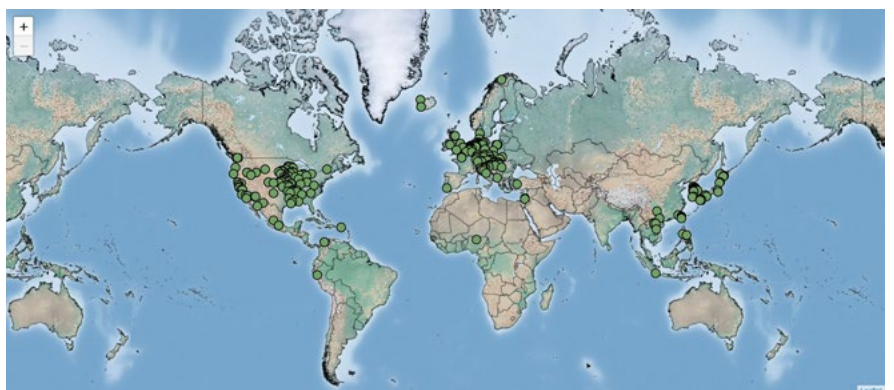
During the fourth quarter of last year, 383 farms participated in SAPA's avian influenza surveillance monitoring programme – 368 broiler farms and 15 egg industry farms. Nearly 41 000

samples were tested during that period.

Farms that are not exporting are only required to submit samples twice a year,

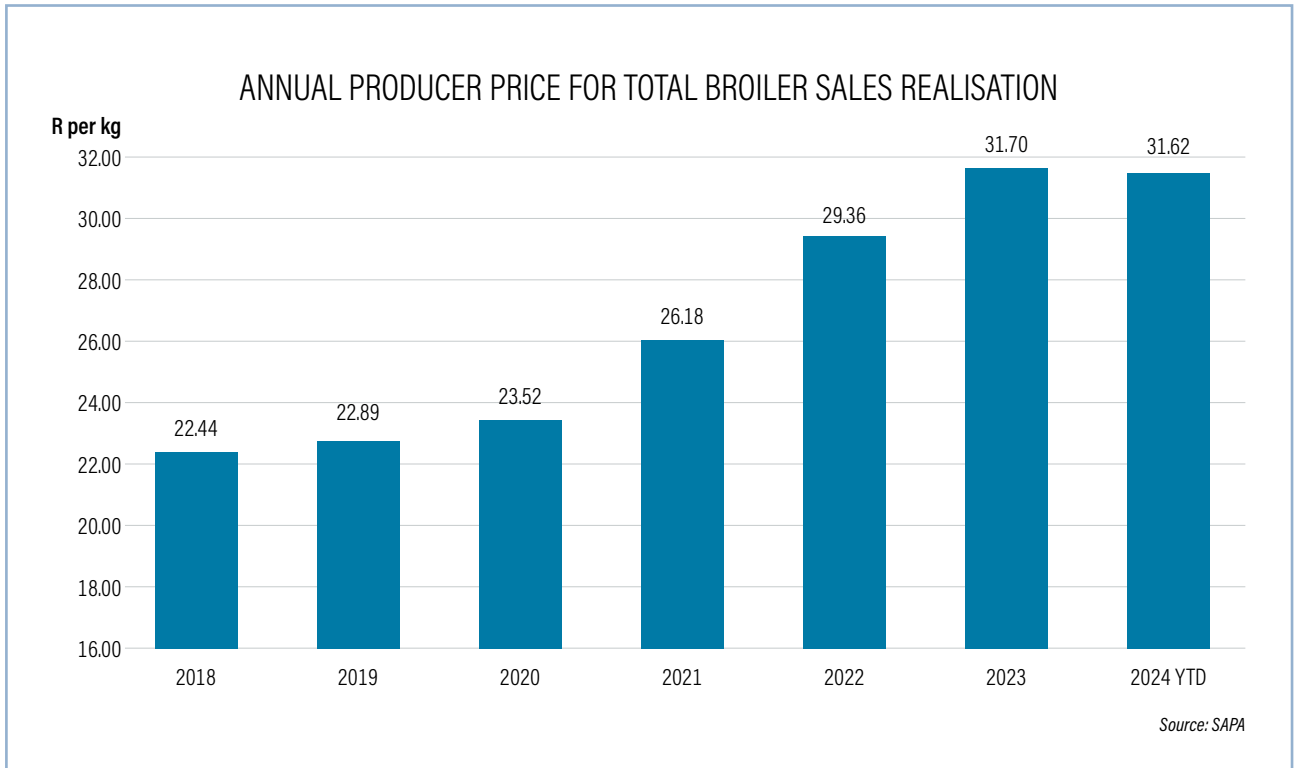
while surveillance is conducted on a monthly basis on farms that do produce for export. 📊

GLOBAL MAP: REPORTED CASES OF AVIAN INFLUENZA Q4 2024



Source: FAO of UN

CHICKEN PRICES STALLED TO SEPTEMBER 2024



AFTER THE USUAL YEAR-END SPIKE in December 2023, producer prices for chicken at the end of September 2024 were virtually unchanged from where they had been a year previously.

The price movement – or lack of it – is shown in SAPA’s broiler producer price report for the third quarter of 2024.

The average producer price, including both fresh and frozen chicken, for the third quarter of 2024 was R31.41/kg – only 4 cents higher than the R31.37/kg achieved in the same period in 2023. Fresh chicken averaged R39.93/kg, 16c/kg higher than a year previously, but frozen chicken, which accounts for the bulk of production, was 1c/kg above the R29.92/kg achieved in the third quarter of 2023.

There was also little movement of prices compared to the 2023 year as a whole. Chicken prices rose 11.3% in 2021, 12.1% in 2022 and 8% in 2023. However, the average price for the first nine months of 2024 was R31.62/kg, a drop of 0.3% from the R31.70/kg for the 2023 full year.

Individually quick frozen (IQF) portions averaged R28.65/kg in September 2024, 37c/kg or 1.3% lower than September 2023.

Frozen chicken made up 85.2% of production in the first nine months of last year, with fresh chicken accounting for the remaining 14.8%.

This is reflected in the product mix for the third quarter of 2024. IQF chicken accounted for 44.5% of production, followed by frozen cuts

(15.1%), frozen sundries and bones (13.6%), frozen value added (5.6%), frozen chunks/soup packs (5.1%) and frozen whole chickens (1.6%).

The largest category of fresh chicken noted was fresh cuts (7.1%), followed by fresh whole chickens (5.4%), fresh value added (1.8%) and fresh sundries/bones (0.5%).

Market share according to volume in the third quarter of 2024 was retail (42.4%), wholesale (38.7%), food service (15.8%) and institutional (1%). Only 0.6% was exported. 📺



Grain imported after poor harvest

FEED-INGREDIENT prices are currently affected by the fact that both maize and soya are being imported because of South Africa's poor 2024 harvest.

The final estimate for the 2024 maize crop was 12.8 million tons, compared to 17 million tons in 2023, according to SAPA's latest feed-ingredient report.

The report, for January with an outlook to May 2025, said yellow maize was trading at R5 449 per ton for March 2025, compared to R3 831/ton in July 2024.

The forecast for May 2025 is for yellow maize to fetch R4 070/ton at Randfontein and R4 220/ton at Pietermaritzburg, which is 2.1% higher than the previous year. Sunflower

oilcake is expected sell at a price of R5 900/ton at both centres, a drop of 3.3% annually.

The forecasted soya-meal price for

May is R7 800/ton in Randfontein and R8 000/ton in Pietermaritzburg, representing annual decreases of 14.3% and 14% respectively.

FEED-INGREDIENT PRICE FORECAST: MAY 2025

Feed ingredient	Randfontein		Pietermaritzburg	
	Price (R/ton)	y/y** % change	Price (R/ton)	y/y** % change
Yellow maize	4 070	2.1	4 220	2.1
Sunflower oilcake	5 900	-3.3	5 900	-3.3
Soya meal	7 800	-14.3	8 000	-14.0

** May 2025 compared to May 2024

Source: SAPA

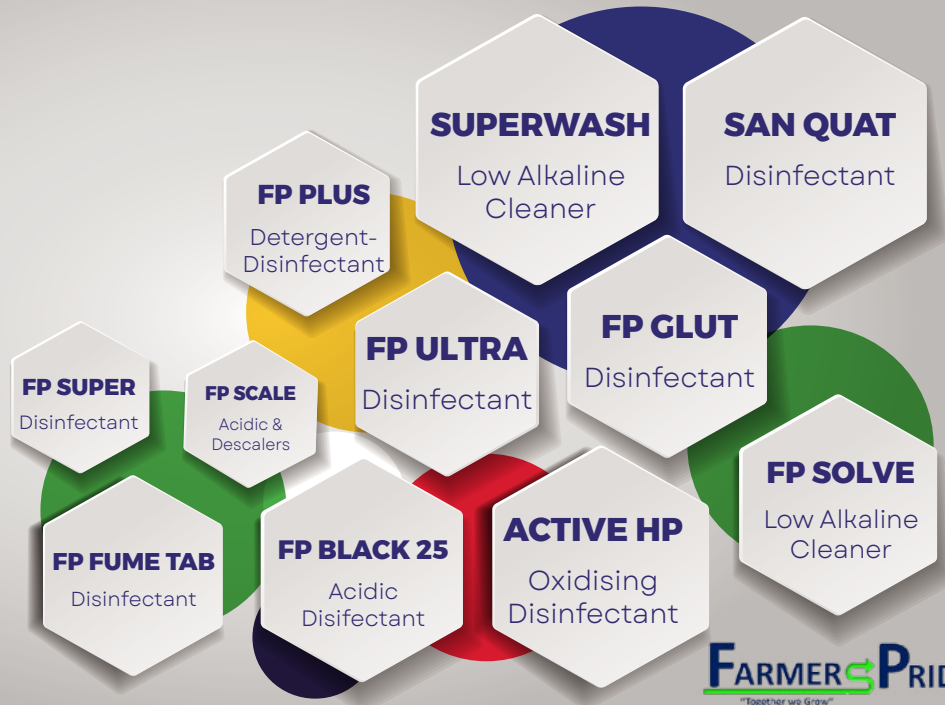
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SOUTH AFRICAN POULTRY ASSOCIATION

OFFICIAL NOTICE -

CONGRESS 2025

To All Members of the South African Poultry Association

Issued by: The Chief Executive Officer, South African Poultry Association,
Wild Fig Business Park, 1494 Cranberry Street, Honeydew, 2194.

SAPA EGG ORGANISATION

Notice is hereby given that the 52nd Annual General Meeting of the SAPA Egg Organisation will be held on Tuesday, **3 June 2025**, venue to be confirmed.

Resolutions: All members of the SAPA Egg Organisation may submit resolutions for the agenda of the Organisation's Annual General Meeting, accompanied by a written motivation for consideration by the Board. A board meeting will be held at the rising of the Egg Organisation Annual General Meeting.

Deadline: 8 April 2025

SAPA BROILER ORGANISATION

Notice is hereby given that the 52nd Annual General Meeting of the SAPA Broiler Organisation will be held on Tuesday, **3 June 2025**, venue to be confirmed.

Resolutions: All members of the SAPA Broiler Organisation may submit resolutions for the agenda of the organisation's Annual General Meeting, accompanied by a written motivation for consideration by the Board. A board meeting will be held at the rising of the Broiler Organisation Annual General Meeting.

Deadline: 8 April 2025

SAPA CONGRESS 2025

Notice is hereby given that the 119th Annual Congress of the SA Poultry Association will be held on Tuesday, **3 June 2025**, venue to be confirmed.

Resolutions: Only members of the SAPA Board, affiliates and honorary life members may submit resolutions for this agenda. A SAPA Board meeting will be held at the rising of the congress.

Deadline: 8 April 2025

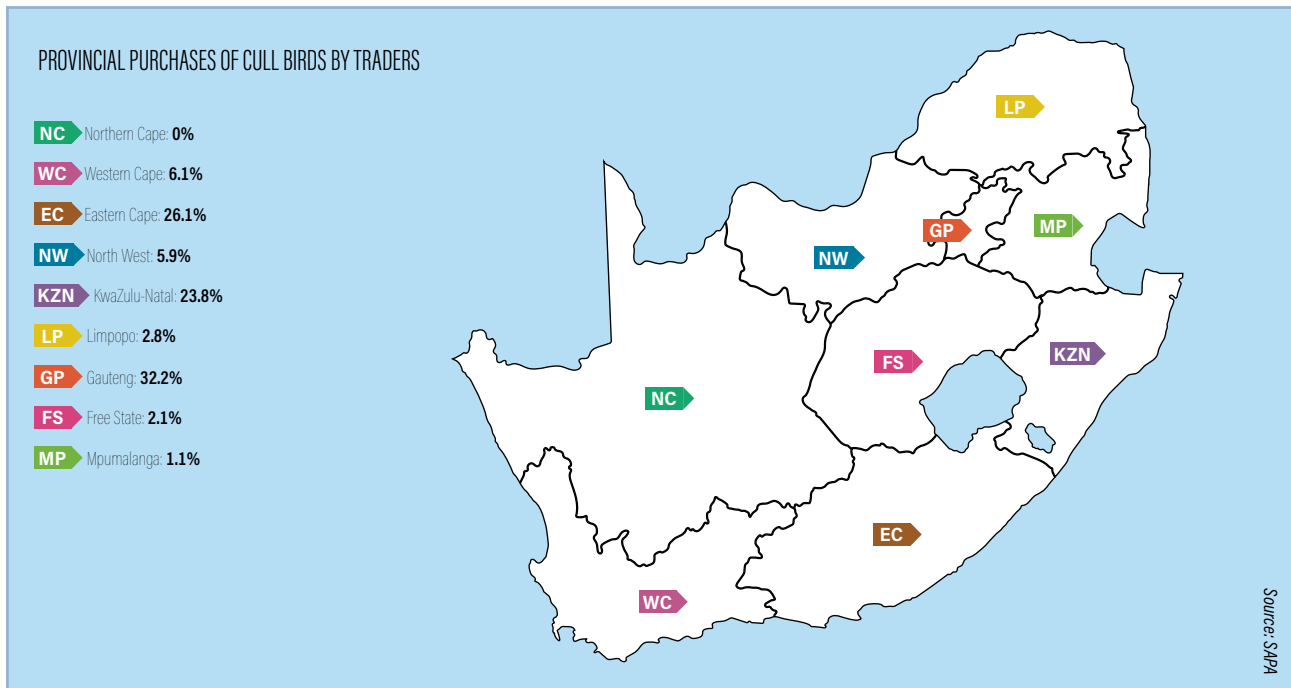
REPRESENTATION - HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS

Honorary life members of SAPA, who are prepared to represent this group's interests at the 119th Annual Congress, are requested to notify the General Manager, Wild Fig Business Park, 1494 Cranberry Street, Honeydew, 2194, before **8 April 2025**.

Honorary life members are entitled to one representative at the congress in terms of the SAPA constitution.

Deadline: 8 April 2025

CULL TRADE RECOVERED IN 2024



SOUTH AFRICA'S CULL TRADE – the sale of live chickens from poultry farms – held steady at more than a million birds per quarter at the end of last year, after collapsing in 2023.

The cull trade is a feature of the South African poultry industry, where there is a secondary market for older birds in the informal sector. Once they are past their peak productivity the birds are sold live off farms to traders who distribute them into townships across the country.

Since the country's first bird-flu outbreak in 2017, the cull trade has been regulated because of the risks when live birds are transported.

The bird-flu outbreaks of 2023 severely reduced the cull trade. Sales

dropped from 1.8 million birds in the last quarter of 2022 to 454 000 at the end of 2023.

Sales recovered last year, from 562 000 birds in the first quarter to 935 000 in the second quarter and then 1.2 million in both the third and fourth quarters of 2024.


South Africa had 44 registered cull depots and 1 957 registered cull traders at the end of last year, according to SAPA's cull trade report for the fourth quarter of 2024. The cull depots are concentrated in Cape Town, Johannesburg, Tshwane, Ekurhuleni and Midvaal.

The sale of cull birds by traders is concentrated in three provinces – Gauteng (32.2% of sales in the fourth

quarter of 2024), the Eastern Cape (26.1%) and KwaZulu-Natal (23.8%).

Lower sales volumes were recorded in the Western Cape (6.1%), North West (5.9%), Limpopo (2.8%), Free State (2.1%), Mpumalanga (1.1%) and the Northern Cape (0%).

SAPA encourages all poultry producers and cull traders to comply with the protocols regulating the movement of live chickens.

On behalf of SAPA, Silverpath Consulting engages with traders and depots in order to expand and improve the cull-trade database. 

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ARBOR ACRES SOUTH AFRICA CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE

The annual Arbor Acres South Africa Awards is a highlight for producers as the best performers in the broiler and breeder categories are honoured for their achievements. Meet the winners of 2024

WINNING AN AWARD in recognition of hard work and exceptional performance is a boon to any producer, and once a year Arbor Acres South Africa extends this honour with the Arbor Acres South Africa Breeder and Broiler Club Awards. The club acknowledges breeder customers who achieve 140 or more chicks per hen housed (hh) at 60 weeks of age, and broiler customers who achieve a European Production Efficiency Factor (EPEF) of 400 or more with their broiler flocks.

Janus Pretorius of Henwil Chickens spoke for all the winners when he expressed his gratitude: "The Arbor Acres breed has delivered excellent positive results for us."

Said Arbor Acres South Africa GM **Arno van der Nat**, "We are proud of the outstanding breeder and broiler statistics delivered by our customers, and will continue to highlight the impressive performance of the Arbor Acres breed with our club. It is my pleasure to congratulate each and every one for their outstanding achievements in 2024 and to extend a warm welcome to the new club members. We wish you continued success!" 📸

SUPREME POULTRY

Supreme's top breeder flock achieved 161.78 chicks per hen housed at 60 weeks, and the top broiler flock attained an EPEF of 443.78.



BREEDERS: Arno van der Nat (right) with winners Warren Vinson (1) Ruan Germishuizen (2) and Pricilla Hlatshwayo (3) – 161.78 chicks/hh; Charl Cronjé (4) and Elisa Kheswa (5) – 155.34 chicks/hh; Ruan le Grange (6) – 155.64 chicks/hh; Etienne Steyn (7) – 147.90 chicks/hh; and Jakobus van den Berg (8) and JJ van Zyl (9) – 158.25 chicks/hh

ADVERTORIAL



An Aviagen Brand

CHUBBY CHICK

Chubby Chick's top-performing breeder flock achieved 161.35 chicks per hen housed at 60 weeks, with the top broiler flock reaching an EPEF of 498.34.



BROILERS: Arno van der Nat congratulates Chubby Chick owner Deon Fourie (1) for his top flock's 498.34 PEF. Deon Fourie then with Berrie Swanepoel (2) – 481.90 PEF; Gerrit Burgers (3) – 464.65 PEF; Ivan vd Westhuizen (4) – 459.20 PEF; Johnny Momberg (5) – 436.99 PEF, Boeta Burgers (6) – 483.26 PEF; and Terrence Taylor (7) – broiler farmers top flock



BREEDERS: Deon Fourie with winners Derick Burgers (8) – breeder top flock, 161.35 chicks/hh; and Cooper Emms (9) – 161.35 chicks/hh

LUFABA HATCHERY

The top breeder flock from this hatchery in Letaba near Tzaneen reached 159.7 chicks/hh.



BREEDERS: James Stewart (1) and Saymon Baloyi (2) – 159.7 chicks/hh

GRAIN FIELD CHICKENS

GFC was welcomed into the Arbor Acres South Africa Broiler Club with its best broiler flock achieving an EPEF of 471.78.



BROILERS: Arno van der Nat with Kyle Saunders (1), Willem Dreyer (2), Melvyn Trollope (3) and Theo van Strijp (4) – Grain Field Chickens top flock, 471.78 PEF



An Aviagen Brand

HENWIL CHICKENS

Henwil achieved excellent slaughter weights, with only three of its 16 sites falling short of the 400 PEF target.



BROILERS: Arno van der Nat congratulates Schalk Botha (1) and Dr Dewald Steyn (2) – Henwil top flock, 469.32 PEF. Dewald Steyn then with winners Hercu Steyn (3) – 424.16 PEF; Steven Brendt (4) – 418.94 PEF; Sagie Pillay (5) – 414.35 PEF; Eben Pheipher (6) – 449.72 PEF; Deon Marx (7) – 441.56 PEF; Jaco du Plessies (8) – 437.62 PEF; Fanie Hartman (9) – 432.65 PEF; Hannes v Biljon (10) – 432.55 PEF; Arno van der Nat and Vic Callaghan (11) – 453.29 PEF; Arno van der Nat and Bernard Arnoldi (12) – 467.13 PEF; and Arno van der Nat and Wynand Rossouw (13) – 469.32 PEF

CC CHICKENS

The company's top flock reached an EPEF of 451.13. "The insights and recognition from Arbor Acres South Africa meant a lot to our farmers, and we're grateful for all your help. You are always willing to go the extra mile."



BROILERS: Arno van der Nat with Albie Esterhuizen (1) – top flock 451.13 PEF; Arno Potgieter (2) with Michelle Nel (3) – 429.56 PEF; Werner Louw (4) with Michelle Nel – 422.05 PEF; André Roux (5) with Michelle Nel – 425.53 PEF; Marius du Plessis (6) with Michelle Nel – 433.15 PEF; Riaan Benson (7) and Darryn Lenferna (8) with Michelle Nel – 433.05 PEF; Arno vd Nat with Jaco Lohman (9) and Albie Esterhuizen (10) – top flock 451.13 PEF

ADVERTORIAL



An Aviagen Brand

NDIZA POULTRY

Located in the village of Dargle in the KZN Midlands, this breeding farm's top flock achieved 160.4 chicks/hh.



BREEDERS: Sponelo Msomi (1), Justin Fly (2) and Ndumiso Khumalo (3) – top flock 160.4 chicks/hh

ELGIN FREE RANGE CHICKENS

A brand trusted across South Africa for its free-range broilers, Elgin Free Range's top flock reached an impressive 170.5 chicks/hh.



BREEDERS: Arno van der Nat with Jaco Viljoen (1), Khulani Rawula (2), Martin Sere (3) and Oscar Ramaphala (4) – top flock 170.5 chicks/hh

JR POULTRY

The Zeerust company's top flock reached a solid EPEF of 466.58.



BROILERS: Arno van der Nat with winners Ruan Minnaar (1) – 419.51 PEF; Nelis Pearce (2) – 413.81 PEF; Christi Swanepoel (3) – 443.73 PEF; Johan vd Merwe (4) – 432.55 PEF; Heinrich Stroebel (5) – 437.88 PEF; Johan Pretorius (6) – 439.97 PEF; Dirk v Niekerk (7) – 428.49 PEF; Jan-Hendrik Horn (8) – 437.32 PEF; Dolf v Niekerk (9) – 466.58 PEF; and Cilliers Harman (10) and Fernando Carvalho (11) – JR Poultry top flock, 466.58 PEF



PRECIOUS CARGO



Photograph: Shutterstock

Transporting the day-old chicks that bring the valuable genetic lines from breeders abroad to producers in SA is a masterclass in care, efficiency and speed

By **Charmain Lines**

“DAY-OLD CHICKS ARE RESILIENT and tough,” says Kobus Barnard, breed executive at Rainbow, “but transporting them is always a delicate operation.”

Chicks can sustain themselves nutritionally for up to a day and half after hatching thanks to their internal yolk sac. Weighing between 4g and 5g, the yolk keeps the chick going until its first feed. What the chicks cannot do, however, is regulate their body temperature. “That makes controlling the transport environment the most important task when moving DOCs,” says Michael Nhlabathi, production manager for breeding at Rainbow and the man whose duties include overseeing the process of bringing grandparent (GP) broiler stock in from Rainbow’s Aviagen supplier in the UK.

Importing GP chicks is an involved process with many moving parts and boxes to be ticked to ensure everything is ready for the precious cargo’s arrival. “We have to prepare the site where the chicks will be placed and the state vet will only sign the import application form if he is satisfied that the farm is ready to receive the chicks,” explains Nhlabathi. “We also complete the SAPA application form that goes to the Department of Agriculture’s Animal Improvement sub-directorate for the import permit to be issued.”


One of the crucial requirements is that the chicks come from a compartmentalised donor flock in the UK and are disease-free, and that they will be placed in a compartmentalised site in South Africa.

With the necessary permits in



An industry effort

Internationally, the poultry sector engages with the airlines that ship chicks and eggs through the Air Cargo Poultry and Hatching Eggs Roundtable meetings. Genetics companies typically have a global export team that works with the International Air Transportation Association (IATA) to establish global standards for bird welfare during transport.

These efforts include training, supported by comprehensive guidelines developed by the sector, of airline and freight-forwarding professionals in the unique needs of day-old chicks and how to properly handle and care for them. 

THE POULTRY VALUE CHAIN



When the imported chicks arrive at the airport, health and quality spot checks are carried out



The drivers of DOC delivery trucks are trained to care for the chicks while in transit

place, flight bookings, orders and invoices, airfreight waybills and health certificates are all processed. Importantly, the state vet based at OR Tambo International Airport must be informed of an incoming consignment 48 hours before the chicks arrive to make sure that an animal-health technician will be available to do the necessary checks as soon as the flight lands. Similarly, the state vet at the receiving site – in Rainbow’s case its rearing farm in Carolina, Mpumalanga – must be notified to be present when the chicks arrive.

With the original import permit in hand, Nhlabathi meets the chicks in a warehouse at the airport within an hour of the flight touching down. Health and quality spot checks are carried out, including the extent to which yolks

have been absorbed and whether the chicks are at risk of dehydration.

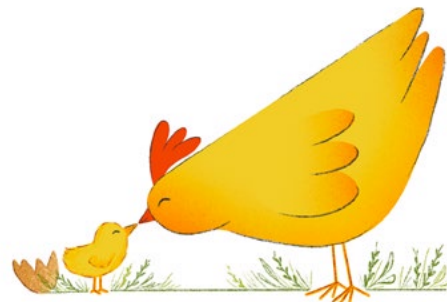
Each consignment of GP chicks consists of four genetic lines and these are mixed strategically when the chicks are loaded into the truck as a risk-management measure. “If something happens, we don’t want to lose an entire line,” says Nhlabathi.

A nutrient-rich energy gel is placed in each crate of chicks to avoid dehydration, and the state vet seals the truck and issues a Red Cross permit. The latter means the truck may not be opened at roadblocks; only the state veterinarian at the destination may break the seal.

On the farm, the state vet carries out the formalities and the chicks are placed in their new home. With placement completed, the state vet



Kobus Barnard, breed executive at Rainbow





seals the gates of the farm, effectively placing it under quarantine. After eight weeks, blood samples are drawn and tested and if the chicks receive a clean bill of health, the state vet returns to check the seals on the gates, complete the quarantine cancellation form and then declare the farm open for normal activity.

This process repeats itself every six and a half weeks or so, as Rainbow receives an average of eight grandparent imports per year. Underpinning it, however, is

a long and careful planning process. "It takes at least two years of advance planning for us to determine the

hours from the time the chicks hatch in the UK to when they are placed in Carolina is quite literally the very tip of the breeding iceberg."

Each consignment of grandparent chicks consists of four genetic lines, which are mixed up when transported to minimise risk

THE VALUE CHAIN CONTINUES

After 21 weeks, the young GP chickens are transferred to a grandparent laying site where they produce hatching eggs for the next 60 weeks. Eggs are collected, stored and sent to

the parent-stock hatchery in Carolina every day. Here hatching is planned and

number of chicks we need to receive from the GP hatcheries and then to place an order," notes Barnard. "The 24



Michael Nhlabathi, production manager for breeding at Rainbow



Sakhile Nsingwane manages Rainbow's parent-stock hatchery in Carolina, Mpumalanga



Did you know?

In nature, 36 to 40 hours can pass between the first and last eggs in a clutch hatching. During this time, the hen does not allow any of the chicks to leave the nest. This is why nature equipped chicks with a built-in pantry, namely the egg yolk. Only once the last chick is out of the egg, will mother and fluffy babies leave the nest together to start foraging. 🐣

The politics of importing genetic material



IN THE EARLY YEARS OF COMMERCIAL broiler production in South Africa, the government controlled breeds and did not allow any stock to be imported.

SAPA supported the import ban at the time, as a significant proportion of its members were breeders of ornamental chickens. At its 1961 conference, a unanimous vote supported the motion that "hatching eggs, or breeding stock, should not be allowed to be imported". Also defeated was the motion that local industry players be allowed to enter into franchises with prominent overseas breeders.

All this opposition to imports, however, did not mean that none was happening. Smuggling of breeding stock was a reality confirmed in dramatic fashion in 1968 when the pilot of a light airplane was arrested at the Komatipoort Airport with 800 turkey hatching

eggs in his possession. This was not a new problem either: SAPA's 1964 conference was called the "smugglers conference" due to its focus on illegal imports.

By 1969, South Africa was regarded as a global leader in broiler production, but the industry's wings were being clipped by the lack of access to internationally recognised breeding material.


When in 1970 the government confirmed its stance that the state would remain the only importer of breeding stock and that imports would be based on the government's evaluation of the country's requirements, the large broiler producers started insisting on import autonomy.

What worked in their favour was the growing realisation in government circles that it would be difficult, if not downright impossible, for the Department of Agriculture to obtain the high-quality material that

was required at what was considered to be a realistic cost.

Following a series of meetings, the Minister of Agriculture at the time, Hendrik Schoeman, announced in 1971 that private imports were to be allowed, as long as two conditions were met:

1. In addition to applying the usual veterinary requirements, importers would have to establish their own quarantine facilities, ownership of which would afterwards revert unconditionally to the state.
2. All importers would give 15% of the material they imported to the Department for it to be multiplied and distributed to smaller breeders. This regulation, which intended to prevent a monopoly situation, was abolished in 1982.

In 1972, the first legal imports of broiler stock were recorded. 



controlled according to orders from Rainbow's parent-stock rearing farms in Bellville or Worcester (for the Western Cape), Manderston or Nottingham Road (for KwaZulu-Natal), and Bronkhorstspuit or Rustenburg (for the northern region).

Once hatched, the chicks undergo vent sexing and quality checks and are vaccinated. The males' beaks and toes are also trimmed. After all that activity, the chicks spend about an hour in a rest room before they are loaded for delivery into preheated trucks, driven by drivers who are trained to care for the chicks while in transit. An alarm in the cab will alert the driver of any issues with the chicks on a trip that could take up to 12 hours.

At the destination site, the farm manager breaks the seal on the truck door to offload, and together with the driver counts the chicks and records mortalities and any quality issues. The driver returns to Carolina with the empty truck and the cycle starts again.

Rainbow's regional operations receive parent-stock chicks from Carolina every eight to 10 weeks and place them at rearing sites where the birds remain until 21 weeks of age. They are then transferred to a laying site for egg laying.

Hatching eggs are collected from the laying sites and sent to the seven broiler hatcheries (two in KZN; three in the Western Cape and two in the northern region).

"Moving day-old chicks safely is a complex process that requires careful attention to their unique needs," concludes Barnard. "It is a never-ending job, but one that cannot be done on autopilot."

The care taken by every person and entity involved in the transport of DOCs helps ensure a steady supply of robust chicks, which in turn supports poultry producers to provide their customers with nutritious, affordable and sustainable chicken meat. 🌱



The transport of grandparent day-old chicks is step one in a long and complex chain of events that ensures a steady supply of chicken on the shelf for consumers

'I'M A PROUD NATION FEEDER'



Shipalana based her product offering on research that showed what her customers wanted

Entrepreneurship is in her blood, and from modest beginnings Ntsako Shipalana is sharing her knowledge and empowering others

By **Melinda Shaw**

WHILE SHE WAS GROWING UP in Ofcolaco, Tzaneen, Ntsako Shipalana watched her father manage his small flock of layer hens. She did not know any women farmers producing chickens in the area, and from a young age she wanted to fill that gap.

She was fascinated by chickens and their behaviour, she says. "I can't get enough of watching the dynamics of their behaviour and seeing their sensitivity to their surroundings and their response to their environment."

Producing broilers appealed more than table eggs, and after doing research and attending several seminars hosted by experienced chicken farmers, she founded Olori Chickens in 2018. She had surveyed the demand in the area and realised that people wanted the whole chicken, with the giblets, but without having to clean it themselves, and so convenience was what she would offer. "It is crucial to do market research to make sure you bring something for which there is a demand, and have a



"We now hatch our own chicks, and in times of high demand we increase the numbers so we can supply our regulars as well as those extra customers"



Olori Chickens produces 300 to 500 chickens every three weeks and markets them using social media

strategy before you dive in," she says.

Today, she produces 300 to 500 broilers per cycle every three weeks, and employs two people part-time to help her manage the process. "We now hatch our own chicks. During periods of high demand, such as the festive season, we increase the number of chicks we hatch so that we can supply our regular customers and also the extra people who want chicken over that time. Our customers are primarily households and middlemen who buy and sell live chickens."

She markets her products on Instagram and Facebook, and has also started offering training, in seminars

and one-on-one sessions, after getting numerous requests from aspirant farmers. "I'm at my happiest when I see my small effort producing other nation feeders such as Pheladi Madugandaba, the owner of Suthani Farm Foods, and Orapeleng Malotsane, the owner of FarmHouse Product in North West."

Farming with live animals is not without its frustrations, and she cites the unpredictable weather as one element that keeps her on her toes. "When it is hot, it's too hot. When you then get fans the unstable electricity becomes a problem, so we have opted to invest in a generator which is always on standby."

Getting hold of parent stock is another hurdle that she wishes she could overcome. "That seems to be an impossible task for a small farmer! Yet we soldier on."

Her top tips for prospective farmers is to do their market research before launching a business, to identify the right feed brand and, most importantly, to take hygiene extremely seriously.

"Producing broilers is just so satisfying, because, who doesn't eat chicken? That is my favourite line! And I love that it takes only six weeks to grow them from start to ready for market." Being able to offer employment and thereby allowing others to provide for their families' basic needs is also very rewarding, she says.

Her long-term goal is to expand Olori Chickens and secure supply agreements with hospitals and military bases for chicken meat as well as table eggs.

"Our own abattoir and cold room would make such a difference!" Applying for funding to enable expansion is high on her list of priorities. In the meanwhile she focuses on raising the best broilers she can, and sharing her knowledge to help other farmers find their groove. "I believe that there's enough sunshine for everyone, and I gladly share the little that I know to empower others." 📸



Contact @OloriChickens: 066 076 1012, also on Instagram and Facebook

BROWN OR WHITE: BEHIND THE FEATHERS

Why are most broilers white
and most layers brown?

Charmain Lines investigates

STEP INTO A COMMERCIAL broiler house in South Africa and you will find yourself surrounded by white-feathered birds. Layer farms, in contrast, tend to have more brown than white birds. Why this apparent preference for white-feathered broilers and how come our table eggs mostly come via brown hens?

There is no great genetic secret or design behind the dominance of white-feathered breeds in broiler production and brown breeds in egg production. Instead, decades of genetic refinement have largely inadvertently resulted in the situation we now have. Broadly speaking, however, growth genes are more dominant in the white breeds, which means they tend to grow faster, while laying genes are dominant in the brown-feathered breeds.

Interestingly, white-feathered



Photograph: Shutterstock

broiler breeders have so-called brown genetics because the great-grandparent and grandparent birds have to lay large volumes of eggs. Even in the high-precision world of genetics there are “grey” areas!

Dual-purpose brown-feathered chickens used to be the norm, providing eggs for the household, and ending up in the pot at the end of their productive life

WHERE DID IT START?

Long before the specialisation of chickens into breeds that produce either meat or eggs, farmers favoured dual-purpose, brown-feathered breeds like Rhode Island Reds and Plymouth Rocks. The birds kept the household in eggs and, at the end of their productive lives, ended up on the dinner table. Their hardiness further contributed to their popularity.

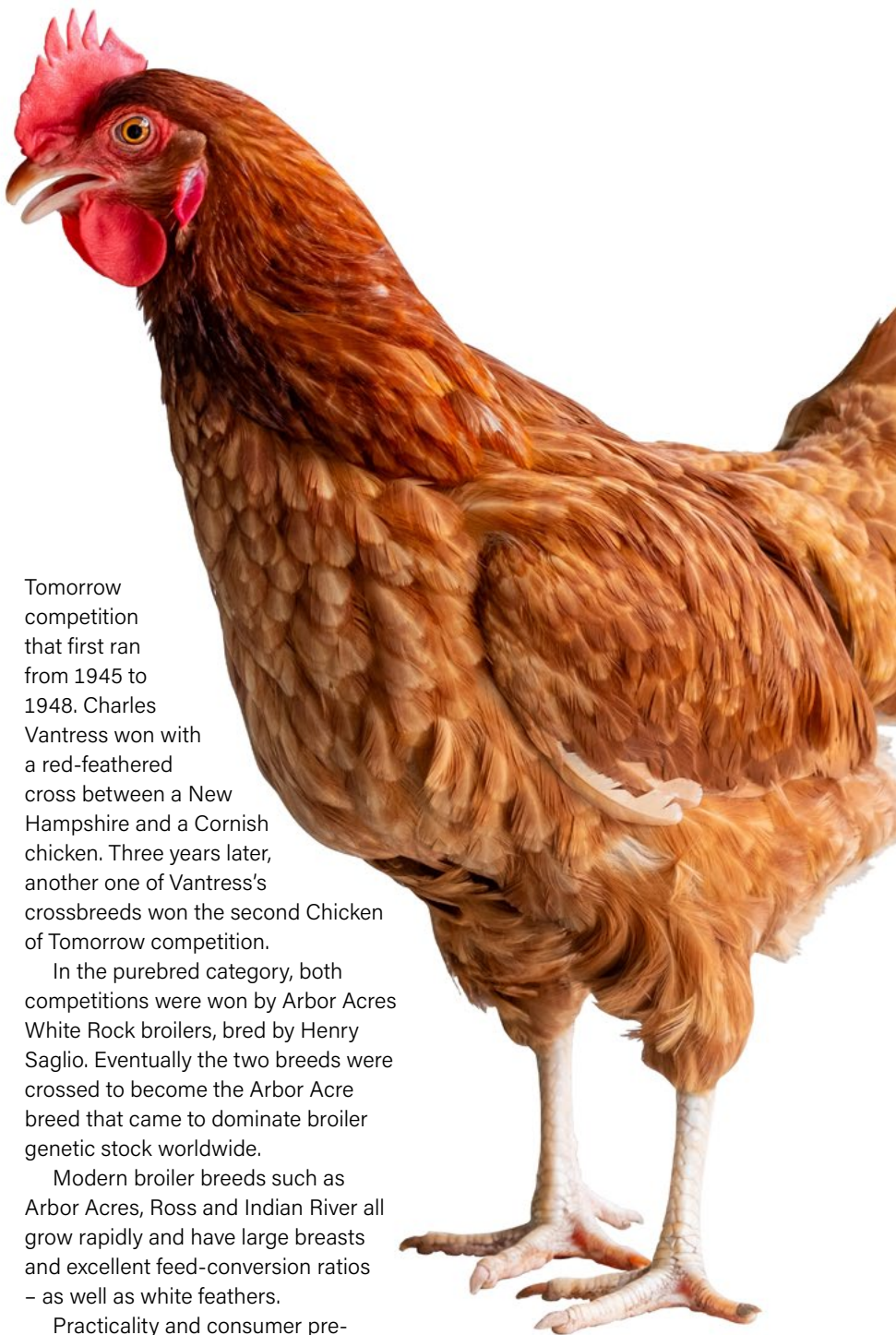
These abovementioned breeds lay eggs with brown shells, which established a preference for brown eggs based on little more than familiarity – we like what we know. As egg production grew in scale and became commercialised, marketers continued to trade on historical preference. Breeders responded by refining the genetics of the breeds that lay eggs with brown shells.

The traditional association between brown eggs and a wholesome farming way of life, is also believed to underlie the popularity of brown eggs with consumers wanting “natural” or “farm-fresh” products. If the eggs on your grandparents’ farm always had brown shells, you are likely to associate that shell colour with other positive aspects of a farming existence – despite there being no inherent difference between eggs with different colour shells.

WHITE-FEATHERED BROILERS

The science of broiler genetics started in 1944 when the poultry research director for the A&P Food Stores chain in the US told a poultry meeting that someone needed to develop a sumptuous chicken with a breast like a turkey, if chicken was ever going to become an American staple.

The result was the Chicken of



Tomorrow competition that first ran from 1945 to 1948. Charles Vantress won with a red-feathered cross between a New Hampshire and a Cornish chicken. Three years later, another one of Vantress’s crossbreeds won the second Chicken of Tomorrow competition.

In the purebred category, both competitions were won by Arbor Acres White Rock broilers, bred by Henry Saglio. Eventually the two breeds were crossed to become the Arbor Acre breed that came to dominate broiler genetic stock worldwide.

Modern broiler breeds such as Arbor Acres, Ross and Indian River all grow rapidly and have large breasts and excellent feed-conversion ratios – as well as white feathers.

Practicality and consumer preference also played a part in the

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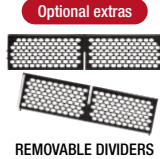
■ VIRGIN RED
■ RECYCLED BLACK

CLASSIC LIVE BIRD CRATE

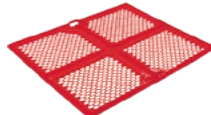
Crates



■ VIRGIN RED
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dominance of white-feathered broilers. Light-coloured feathers are less visible after plucking, as are the pinfeathers, which makes the processed carcass appear cleaner and more appealing to consumers.

REQUIREMENTS ARE CHANGING

If we were to run another Chicken of Tomorrow competition in 2025, there would have to be many more categories than in 1945 when you could only enter crossbreeds or purebreds. Different consumer groups have different preferences and household incomes differ widely across and within societies. Furthermore, animal welfare concerns are resulting in very different regulations in different parts of the world. The chicken of tomorrow is therefore not a single breed.

One example of how this plays out in practice, is European legislation that prohibits broiler maturation in less than 45 days. In the Netherlands, broilers may not be slaughtered before they

reach the age of 52 days.

In markets such as these, growth rates have become less important than farming practices that are seen to be more ethical, and enough consumers are wealthy enough to foot the bill for the higher production costs.

In contrast, South African producers work on a 32-day maturation period, largely driven by consumer preference for smaller birds and smaller portions that are more affordable.

In response to changing European requirements, broiler breeders are developing a range of slower-growing

Interestingly, these brown-feathered breeds are also supplied to certain African countries, simply because those markets prefer slower-growing, brown chickens on the one hand and do not have highly integrated commercial industries on the other.

While feather colour does not make a bird a broiler or a layer, there is little doubt that it influences humans' perception and preferences. It is also one more aspect to the fascinating world of chicken genetics. 📷

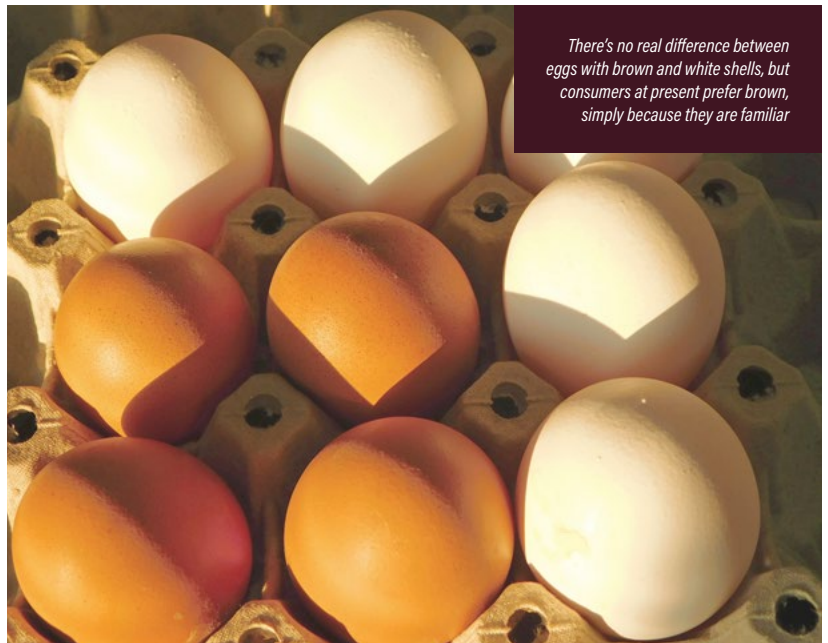
White pinfeathers are less visible after plucking, making the processed bird appear 'cleaner'

broiler breeds to supply markets that demand birds that grow at a more natural pace in the interest of animal welfare. The introduction of genes from breeds that grow slower means that these breeds have brown feathers.



Eggshell colour and... earlobes

While breed and genetics determine eggshell colour, there is a correlation between earlobes and eggshells. Hens with white earlobes, such as White Leghorns, typically lay white eggs, whereas hens with red earlobes, like Rhode Island Reds, tend to lay brown eggs. There are however exceptions, such as Araucanas which have red earlobes and lay blue or green eggs, and Penedesencas and some Americanas, which have white earlobes and lay dark brown and blue eggs. 📷



There's no real difference between eggs with brown and white shells, but consumers at present prefer brown, simply because they are familiar

Photograph: Shutterstock

PROVIDING HEAT THE SUSTAINABLE WAY

When providing heat in chicken houses, farmers have traditionally relied on burning coal. With the rise in demand for more sustainable alternatives, Zebra Renewables has introduced a new, more environmentally friendly solution for keeping houses warm



Heating broiler houses with wood pellets makes environmental sense

THE WORLD IS FACING AN URGENT NEED for clean, renewable energy solutions to replace coal and other fossil fuels. Burning coal, whether to generate heat or power, has a significant negative environmental impact, from greenhouse gas emissions to air pollution, toxic waste and more.

Biomass, particularly in the form of wood pellets, has emerged as a sustainable and scalable solution to this issue. When sourced responsibly, biomass energy can reduce carbon emissions and provide reliable, renewable energy and heat.

Sourcing biomass traditionally can come with its own environmental

concerns, such as deforestation and forest degradation. This is where Zebra Renewables has stepped up to the challenge, developing a flagship product that presents a groundbreaking alternative to coal, while supporting ecological restoration efforts. This product is now available in South Africa.

The company sources sawdust from invasive and alien tree species that threaten local biodiversity. These species, often fast-growing and highly adaptable, displace native flora, disrupt ecosystems, and consume large amounts of resources. By converting this waste product into valuable biomass pellets at its production



ADVERTORIAL

facility in Sabie, Mpumalanga, Zebra Renewables not only addresses these environmental issues but also provides a sustainable energy source.

ADVANCED PELLET MANUFACTURING PROCESS

The manufacturing process utilises cutting-edge technology to convert sawdust into efficient, high-quality pellets. This involves drying, compressing and packaging the sawdust into uniform pellets that are ideally suited for use in broiler-house heating systems, as well as in biomass power plants and in residential and industrial heating systems.

The pellets are engineered to have a high calorific value ensuring that they provide optimal energy output with minimal emissions.

This unique approach of repurposing sawdust from non-indigenous tree species that threaten local ecosystems not only contributes to the global transition to renewable energy, but also helps mitigate the environmental damage caused by the proliferation of invasive plant species. The sawdust, which would otherwise be discarded or burned, serves as a key component in creating clean, green energy and heating solutions.

The current product range includes one-ton unbranded bags of pellets and 15kg Platinum Plus pellet bags, and the company is also able to bag and pack in customer-defined brands and bag sizes.

Zebra Renewables' commitment to sustainability, combined with a robust business model, positions the company as a leader in South Africa's renewable energy sector. 

For more information, or to place an order, contact Alan Williams on 082 808 3946 or alanw@zebrarenewables.com or visit zebrarenewables.co.za

The Zebra Renewables production facility in Sabie, in Mpumalanga



BENEFITS OF WOOD PELLETS

CALORIFIC VALUE

Wood pellets have a calorific value of around 17-18 MJ/kg, which is lower than coal. However, this still provides efficient energy output for heat generation and many industrial and power-generation applications.


ASH CONTENT

The ash content of wood pellets is significantly lower than coal. While coal typically contains around 12% ash, wood pellets have only 1-1.5% ash. This means that the end user is paying for much less unusable material with pellets compared to coal and avoids the costly and environmentally challenging problem of ash disposal.

CARBON TAX AND CREDITS ADVANTAGE

Depending on the sensitivity to carbon taxes or carbon credit programmes, wood pellets offer a significant advantage over coal. With lower carbon emissions, using wood pellets can help the user to reduce its environmental footprint and potentially benefit from carbon credits, making them a financially attractive option in the context of green-energy policies.

GREEN-ENERGY TRANSITION

The pellets serve as a direct substitute for coal, providing a renewable, carbon-neutral alternative that helps reduce the carbon footprint of power and heat generation. Biomass pellets emit far less CO₂ when burned compared to coal, and the carbon released is part of the natural carbon cycle, making biomass energy effectively carbon neutral. By facilitating the transition from coal to biomass, Zebra Renewables supports global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and combat climate change. 

2025: A PIVOTAL YEAR FOR POULTRY IN BENIN

In January, the Beninese government banned the imports of frozen poultry as a part of a larger strategy to boost both domestic chicken-meat production and chicken consumption

By **Espoir Olodo**

Feed accounts for 60-70 percent of the operational costs for chicken farmers



WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION of this trade restriction, which was first announced in April 2023, Benin joins the select league of nations in West Africa that uses import bans to protect their local sectors. This list already includes countries like Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, Nigeria and Togo.

At the time of writing, no details have been given on the implementation schedule. It is also unclear whether the ban will be phased in gradually. But one thing is certain: 2025 will be a test

year for the poultry industry in Benin. As is the case elsewhere in West Africa, poultry meat is an important source of animal protein in the country.

MAJOR CHALLENGES TO OVERCOME

Although many Beninese also rely on fish for their recommended dietary allowance of animal protein, consumption of chicken meat has seen a rapid increase over the last decades of rapid population and income growth. Unfortunately the local poultry industry

has lacked the capacity to cater for the growing consumer demand, allowing frozen imports to gain a foothold.

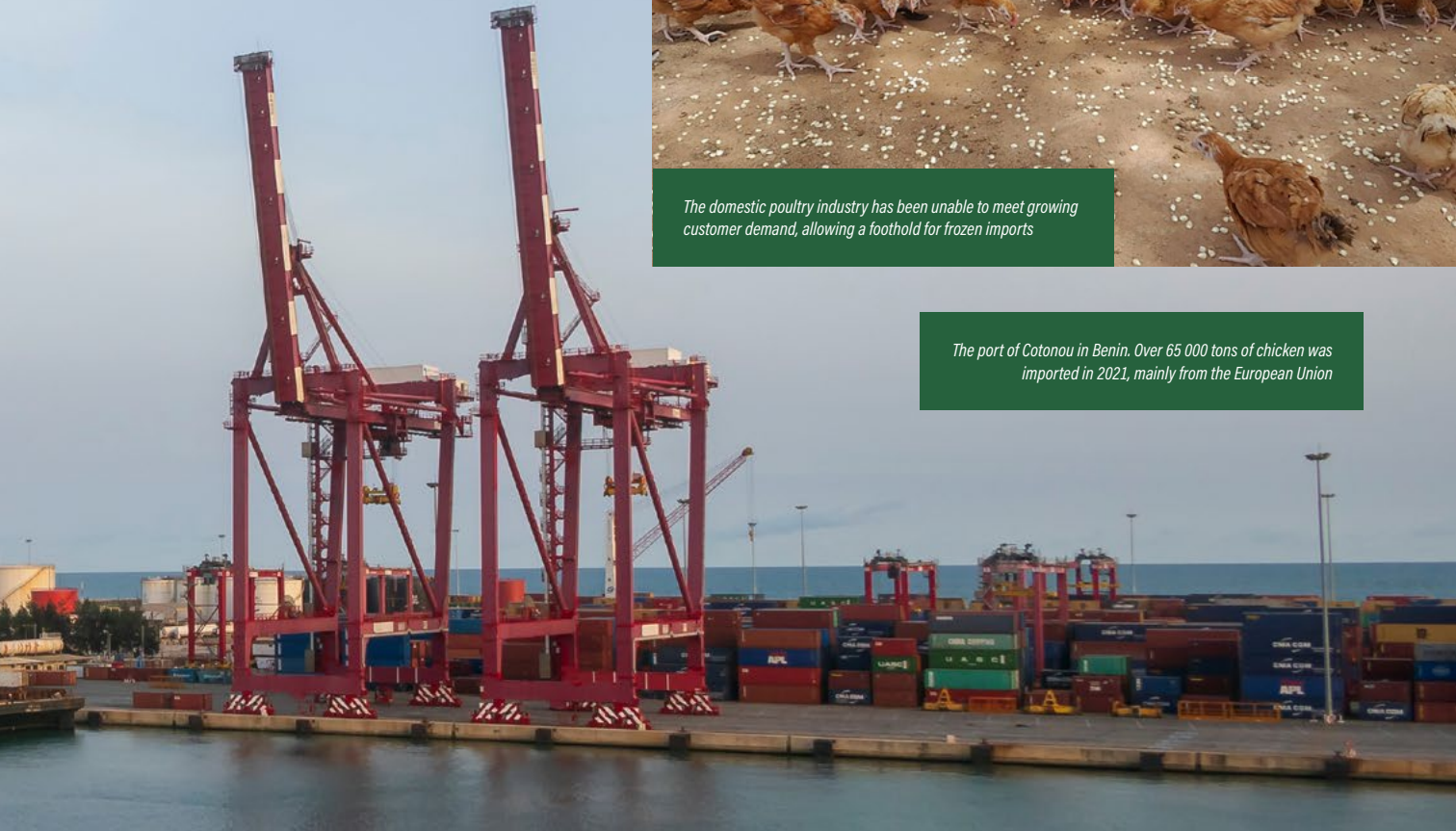
According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), Benin purchased over 65 000 tons of chicken meat on the international market in 2021 at a total cost of \$61 million (around R1.1 billion), mainly from European Union countries such as the Netherlands.

Only Ghana imports more frozen chicken in West Africa, bringing in



The domestic poultry industry has been unable to meet growing customer demand, allowing a foothold for frozen imports

The port of Cotonou in Benin. Over 65 000 tons of chicken was imported in 2021, mainly from the European Union



357 460 tons annually. It's worth noting that the bulk of this import volume is re-exported informally to Nigeria, where purchases on the international market have been banned for almost two decades.

Benin's domestic poultry industry still faces significant production challenges, and delivered only around 16 000 tons of chicken meat in 2021, about a quarter of annual imports. The challenge is not only to produce in sufficient quantity to meet the needs

of the population, but also doing so at a lower cost to make locally produced meat affordable for consumers.

According to a study called "The impact of chicken imports on the Beninese poultry industry", by the German Centre for Rural Development (SLE), the price of imported chicken meat averaged 1 540 Fcfa/kg (R46) in Benin's major cities, around 50% cheaper than the meat that is produced by the domestic industry.

Several factors are to blame for the

high prices of local chicken; top of the list being the same one South African producers face – prohibitively high feed costs. Feed purchases account for 60-70 percent of total operational costs, and Beninese farmers cannot compete with their EU counterparts, who are heavily subsidised by the state. Other factors that local operators have to contend with are the rising cost of phytosanitary products and day-old chicks, the majority of which are currently imported.

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“These challenges have led to the abandonment of many farms and a stagnation in local production,” explains Blaise Sèton, President of Union Nationale des Aviculteurs Professionnels du Bénin (UNAP).

In such a context, the sudden end of imports could lead to a short-term rise in market prices for local poultry products. “We can expect price pressure in the first few months,” said Modeste Dayato, President of the Association Nationale des Aviculteurs du Bénin (ANAB).

OPPORTUNITIES TO SEIZE


While the challenges are many, this trade restriction also offers a number of economic opportunities for attracting investment into the Beninese poultry industry. An import ban will enable local players to gain in competitiveness and take advantage of new growth prospects in the domestic market.

While it’s true that local prices are currently higher than those of imported chicken, homegrown traditional chicken has a definite place in the market. There is a market segment that makes its purchasing decisions based on more than price, and according

to the SLE, consumers report higher confidence in domestic poultry meat as it is considered to be higher quality, fresher and more palatable and tender.

It is clear that local producers would have a great opportunity to capitalise on these positive sentiments to advance the Beninese poultry industry. There is a clear need to increase investments into the local industry in order to enhance the year-round availability and quality of products at various selling points, including shopping malls and supermarkets.

In addition, there are opportunities for stakeholders all along the value chain to invest in further processing to bring chicken portions and other products to market, as well as in proper branded packaging. With growing urbanisation, dietary changes are seen among the population who increasingly prefer more convenient chicken and ready-to-use products.

The benefits of localisation are manifold and include job creation and food security, and it will be up to local farmers to accept the challenge to grow production in line with demand. The time for imports will soon be over... 



Despite costing more, many customers still prefer local chicken, which is considered to be higher quality





PREDICTING THE FUTURE, CHICKEN STYLE

Words: Neil McCarthy

Illustrations: Jason Bronkhorst

We know chickens are divine, but did you know they were once used for divining the future?

AS THE READERS OF THIS MAGAZINE know better than anyone, chickens are the most important birds in the world. Without them humankind would be lost, no-one would know what to have for dinner (or breakfast) and our goose would be cooked

But chickens could have been even more important than that. There have been times in history when chickens were believed to have special powers: powers to see into the future, to foretell great events and to influence the outcomes of sporting fixtures.

I can understand thinking in this way. When I look into the eye of a chicken (and it is only one eye, since the two eyes of your chicken point in such inconveniently opposing directions) I see a great sense of certainty in there. They seem to know things. They glance with great purpose. Their eyes glare and flash in a way that says, "I do not doubt. I know. I have the inside track."

Seeing this, people in earlier times started to find ways of working out what it was that the chicken knew.

Turns out they knew everything. They knew the future, the meaning of life and why you always ran out of toilet paper when the shops were closed.

But they knew it in a chicken way, not in a human way.

People agreed – it's not fair that the chickens keep this important knowledge to themselves. Imagine if we too knew the secrets of life and an endless supply of toilet paper. Life would be sorted!

People tried to teach the chicken their local language, so that the bird could simply tell the community what was coming their way. The chickens seemed to realise that one of the ways they could avoid ending up served on a plate was to make it as hard as possible to understand what they knew about the future. So they point-blank refused to speak in a way people could understand.

Chickens glance with great purpose. Their eyes glare and flash in a way that says, 'I do not doubt'

People grew frustrated. They tried asking it specific questions, then writing out various possible answers, putting those answers on the ground around the chicken and then whacking it on the head. Whichever direction the fowl was pointing in when it hit the

dirt, that was your answer. Crude, but effective, they thought.

But this system was open to abuse. Say a young woman was asking: "Should I accept the marriage proposal from the hunky, poor guy, or the one from the rich, ugly guy? Which one will make me happier?" If she went on to whack the chicken, the bird seemed inevitably to fall towards the hunk option; whereas if her father struck

the chicken it always seemed to fall towards the rich guy. People started noticing problems like this. So they made a new rule.

No longer could people just come and ask the chicken questions about the future, whack the chicken and



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BLIND FARMER QUIETLY RAISES HIS SIGHTS

New Zealand poultry producer Wayne Barker was blinded in an accident half a century ago, but has nonetheless farmed his whole life



Despite a devastating accident over 50 years ago, New Zealand farmer Wayne Barker was determined to carry on farming. Now close to retirement, his chickens and ducks have come to the rescue to allow him to remain productive

By **Gerhard Uys**

WAYNE BARKER RUNS a free-range chicken operation on his farm in Kapuka, Southland, the southern-most region of New Zealand. His operation of 1 000 hens is split between layers for egg production and pullets that he sells to people who want to raise their own chickens.

He also has 24 ducks which are used for egg production. Says Barker, "Duck eggs are particularly good for baking and they make beautiful sponge cake."

He had been scaling down his operation in recent years to make it easier to manage as he gets older, particularly as he has the added challenge of being blind.

Barker was a young man at the time

of the accident on the family farm that cost him his sight, and his left hand, back in 1971.

On that fateful September day over five decades ago, young Wayne saw his father walking out of the workshop on the farm carrying 10 detonators. Curious, he went over to have a closer look, and he recalls that he noticed that one of the detonators had green corrosion on it. As he pushed the detonator back into the pack the whole lot exploded.

The explosion cut the optical nerve in both his eyes and damaged his left hand so badly that it had to be amputated. Both his younger sisters were nearby and also suffered grave injuries. The 16-year-old lost an eye



The layers' coops are set up so that Barker can collect eggs from the outside

and five fingers, while the 14-year-old was hit by a piece of shrapnel in her throat. Years later she told him that she had bled so much that day that it filled up her gumboots.

The horror of that day changed Barker's life: "It's been just over 53 years now. The first year or two were tough."

He initially spent a month in hospital after the accident, and was eventually fitted with prosthetic eyes.

"I didn't go straight back home to the farm, because I thought I'd get into a rut. While in hospital I was introduced to the Foundation for the Blind, who had sent people down from Auckland. I went straight from the hospital bed to a college for the blind in Manurewa in Auckland, where I spent six months, learning to walk and be mobile."

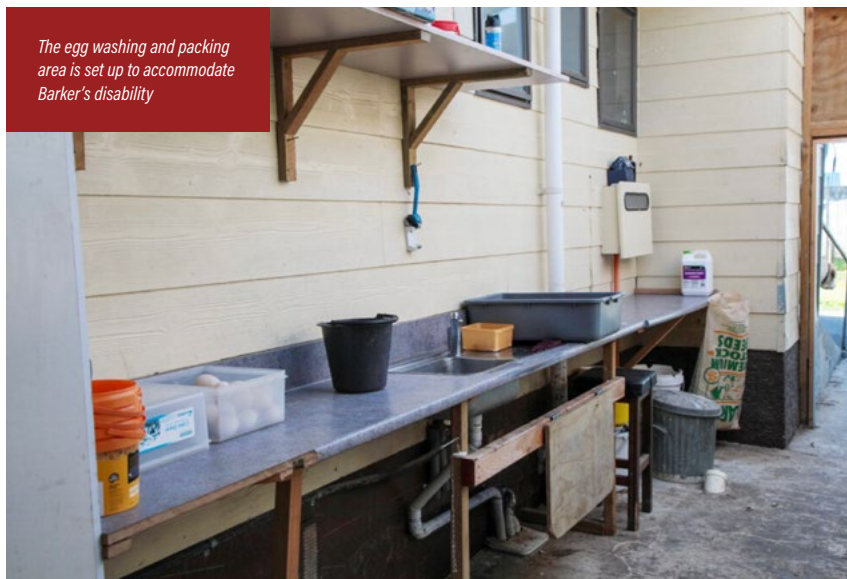
As part of his rehabilitation he was sent to stay with a farmer with 30-odd milk cows who had been born blind,

and so he had expected that he'd return home to Southland and find work on a dairy farm, milking cows.

But while he was in Auckland learning to be independent, a piggery was being built on the family farm, and that is where he stepped in upon his return to Southland.

Pig farming was manageable despite his disability, because the pigs were contained in housing sheds, and it became a 40-year career. In later

After collecting the eggs himself, Barker gives them a first wash and then a staff member handles the final cleaning



The egg washing and packing area is set up to accommodate Barker's disability



A sign on the way to his farm directs people to Wayne Barker's operation

years he and his son, Callum, also operated a contracting business that provided spraying of pastures and drain cleaning. When Callum passed away three years ago, Barker sold the business to a former employee, who still runs it from their farm.

The farm has been the constant in his story – it has been in the family for seven generations and Barker wants to stay on it at all costs. This is where chicken farming came to the rescue.

Barker has organised his operation so that he can continue egg production as he gets older. For instance, he has changed from manual bucket feeding to being able to drop grain out of a loader.

Because the nests are set up so that the eggs roll onto a grating outside the

chicken coop, he can collect the eggs himself.

After collecting eggs he gives them a first wash, with a staff member handling the final cleaning.

The ducks have the run of a paddock and lay their eggs in the open, so he has staff to collect them daily. His duck-egg operation is relatively new, having started only 18 months ago, but, says Barker, ducks are easy-care and there are no arduous licences or regulations he has to comply with to farm with ducks, which is not the case with chickens. "Ducks live about eight years and produce eggs a lot longer than chickens, which mostly stop producing optimally after two years."

Barker relies on technology to help business run smoothly. He uses Siri and Alexa on his iPhone 15 for

everything from writing text messages to checking and replying to emails and paying bills.

One of his favourite uses for Alexa

Barker relies on technology, including using Siri and Alexa on his iPhone 15, to help business run smoothly


is to play the music he likes, setting it up so that he can listen to Johnny Cash in the house or in the sheds. "A phone makes me independent," he says. He also has two robot vacuum cleaners that keep the house dust-free.

In addition, he has had a succession of guide dogs, trained for him by a guide-dog society, that he says made a big difference to his life. He explains

that if, for instance, he wants to get to the mill to mill grain for chicken feed by himself he can find it, but it takes time. With his guide dog he walks to the vicinity of the mill, tells the dog where he wants to go and the dog takes him directly to it. "A dog is plumb accurate," he says.

His clients are in the nearby town, but also farther afield. "I bought a little Lexus hybrid car and we deliver the eggs ourselves,"

Barker explains.

With his staff at the wheel Barker delivers eggs in nearby Invercargill, but also as far as Queenstown and Dunedin, each around two hours away in different directions. 

This story was originally published in Farmer's Weekly New Zealand, and is reprinted with permission.



FARMERS' WISDOM

SUPPLEMENTING FEED WITH BUGS



Adding BSF larvae to a poultry diet reduces feed costs by up to 40%

The poultry industry's economic footprint includes farmers such as Sibusiso Mahlangu, who produces black soldier flies, a nutritious ingredient for chicken feed. By **Diane McCarthy**

BLACK SOLDIER FLIES (BSF) can be used to produce a high-protein, low-cost, sustainable and environmentally friendly chicken feed. "It's a great business," says Joburg BSF farmer Sibusiso Mahlangu. "The product is so versatile: it makes great feed for chickens and other animals, and there is even potential for human consumption and pharmaceutical applications."

Farming with the ubiquitous black fly is good for the planet. These insects are incredibly successful at turning toxic and organic waste into useable



Sibusiso Mahlangu with his winning product

protein, thus reducing landfill waste and greenhouse gases.

"Food markets find disposal of organic garbage difficult and that's where I come in. My larvae can consume a ton of vegetable matter in three days, so it really helps them with waste disposal, and it costs me nothing."

Mahlangu sources fly eggs from a reputable company in the Eastern Cape. It's not the fly itself that is processed, he explains, but its larvae, and there's a quick turnaround. "I harvest larvae at between seven and 10 days, but they can live longer if you want bigger larvae. They deliver the most protein between seven and 15 days."

Born and raised in Soweto, Mahlangu had a long-held passion for farming, although he used to work in the industrial laundry sector. "I had friends who were into farming and whenever I visited them, I always envied what they were doing."



Internet research led him to black soldier flies, and he tried to educate himself using online videos. He started a small operation, but his limited knowledge failed him, and he soon had to pack it in. Not prepared to give up, he carried on searching for practical help and it paid off when he connected with a visiting Kenyan team that was offering local training.

For the last few years, Mahlangu has been farming flies very successfully from his home in Germiston, as well as offering training to others. His customers include a number of chicken farmers, who report excellent results. "Chickens naturally eat bugs, so they love our feed. By including BSF in the mix, farmers also lower their feed costs by 30 to 40 percent. They also report after slaughter that the birds who ate our feed developed stronger bones than those of a commercial chicken."

Being an urban farmer is tricky and it limits his production to about 300kg per month, because of the smell associated with the waste used to feed the flies. "I'm in negotiations with a company in Zandspruit, outside of the urban area where I don't have neighbours close by,

so the plan is to move there and upscale my business."

But before expanding, Mahlangu is doing his homework so he can address the unique challenges of BSF farming. "You have to maintain temperature and humidity rigorously. Larvae are prone to disease, mould and insect infestation. All this affects production, so strict sanitation is critical. The trays that we use are also largely imported and therefore expensive."

To get local plastics manufacturers interested, the BSF industry needs to create the demand. "There is huge potential for this industry in South Africa, but more education needs to be done to create more awareness," he says.

Anyone interested in black soldier fly production should heed Sibusiso Mahlangu's top tip. "Invest in training. I realised that YouTube only offers theory and that proper training needs to be hands-on and in person... exactly as farming is." 📺

Contact Sibusiso Mahlangu via
Twitter: @bfsprotein or email:
bfsproteins@gmail.com

Maintaining the correct temperature and humidity is crucial, as is sanitation



ON THE WIRES

Eggs in pet food, fruit in chicken feed, Finnish and Saudi developments and more global news

Compiled by **Charmain Lines**

EGGS FOR PETS

FRENCH INTERNATIONAL poultry industry expert and consultant Dr Vincent Guyonnet is of the opinion that egg producers need to look to the pet-care industry as a future market.

Worldwide, it is estimated that about 1.2 billion dogs and cats share our homes. Over time, many of them suffer from the same metabolic diseases, including obesity, that affect their owners. "Proper nutrition is, therefore, essential, and the egg, a well-known nutrient-dense food, is the ideal protein source for our four-legged friends," says Guyonnet.

He states that cooked eggs make essential amino acids more bioavailable, but that raw egg is also appropriate for pets as a source of vitamins, minerals and choline. Pets can furthermore get much value from eggshells and eggshell membrane (ESM). A single shell, for instance, contains a pet's recommended daily intake of calcium.


In humans, studies have shown that ESM, which contains elastin, collagen and glycosaminoglycans, can reduce joint pain and improve joint function. At present the use of ESM products in pet care is still limited, offering an opportunity that should not be missed,

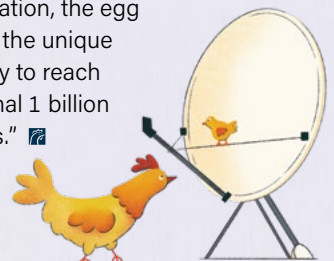
according to Guyonnet.

"The global egg-processing sector generates about 1 million tons of eggshells annually. Identifying sustainable solutions for their disposal and that of ESM is a constant logistical and ecological headache. The use of ESM in the pet market would likely be easier, from a regulatory and practical standpoint, than in the human nutraceutical segment and would assist egg processors to reduce egg production's environmental impact."

The fact that consumers are already convinced of the nutritional value of eggshells for themselves, should make

"upselling" ESM products for pets an easy task. Incorporated as the main ingredient in a cat or dog treat, one of the fastest growing pet-care segments, such products are quite likely to be a great success.

Says Guyonnet, "With the right approach, product mix and communication, the egg sector has the unique opportunity to reach an additional 1 billion consumers." 



SAUDI ARABIA'S POULTRY OUTPUT EXPANDS



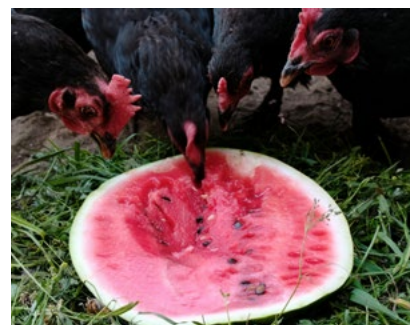
TWO INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS – one recently completed and the other currently being built – are good news for consumers of poultry meat and eggs in Saudi Arabia.

Al Watania Poultry, the second-largest poultry producer in that country and the Middle East, launched its new cooling plant in November last year. With a capacity of 17 700kW, this plant, the biggest in the Middle East, will keep Al Watania's 36 000-birds-per-hour processing plant and its associated cold-storage facilities and

three box freezers running. The modern plant will also reduce the company's environmental impact.

The second project relates to water infrastructure and is expected to increase Saudi Arabia's egg production by as much as 450% to 165 million eggs per year. The project is scheduled to be completed in September 2025 and to start commercial production two months later. The \$3.28 million investment is being made by the Naqi Water Company, in partnership with Belad Al Sham Contracting. 


LET THEM EAT FRUIT



FRUIT, IT TURNS OUT, is not only good for people. Studies being done at the University of Guelph in Ontario, Canada, indicate that including fruit pomace in their feed could enhance the health of layer hens and extend the shelf life of eggs.

Pomace is the skin, pulp, seeds and stems of apples, grapes, cranberries, blueberries and other fruit that are left behind when juice or wine is made. In Canada, 80% of pomace is thrown away, despite it being rich in health-boosting compounds.

"In layer hens, the polyphenols in pomace can reduce metabolic disorders like hemorrhagic syndrome," says Dr Elijah Kiarie, who leads the research team. "Additional benefits of using fruit pomace in poultry feed include a reduction in feed costs, reduced waste and improved sustainability. And of course, egg shelf life is an important consideration for everyone. The longer eggs can stay in the store, the more we can sell."

Kiarie's team is working to develop technology that can break down the fibres in fruit pomace to increase the bioavailability of the polyphenols present. Once this is accomplished, the feed ingredient will be tested with laying hens to report how it impacts production. 

Photographs: Shutterstock; Yoeseop Adji; Kartinkin77


CHICKS CAN 'TALK' ABOUT THEIR STRESS

WELFARE CONSIDERATIONS are hugely important in the chicken industry and work is continuously being done to find better ways to determine the stress levels of birds.

In a recent study, researchers from the universities of Plymouth and Newcastle and Hartbury College, all in the UK, as well as the University of Mississippi in the US, recorded and analysed the sounds chicks make under different circumstances. Chicks were placed either in a box alone or in a box with a mirror, creating the impression that they were with another

bird. The chicks that were alone made higher-pitched sounds, likely due to anxiety.

Understanding how chicks' noises change with their stress levels could give the commercial poultry industry an objective – and noninvasive – way to monitor and evaluate welfare on farms. Drawing blood to measure a bird's corticosterone levels, for instance, can increase its anxiety.

Interestingly, the researchers believe that finding a noninvasive approach to measuring stress levels in chickens could also help humans with anxiety and depression. 




WILL FINNS EAT LESS CHICKEN?



THE FINNISH FOOD AUTHORITY has caused controversy with its latest guidelines on healthy eating that advise people to cut down on all meat, including chicken. Urging the nation to consume less coffee and alcohol, and more vegetables was to be expected, but including chicken under the “less meat” heading came as a surprise.

Explaining its thinking, the organisation noted that it had taken into consideration the impact that different foods had on the environment, in addition to human health.

“When it comes to unprocessed meat, poultry is better health-wise than red meat,” said Jelena Meinilä, professor of nutrition sciences at the University of Helsinki. However, she added, the production of poultry meat is being linked to biodiversity loss, mainly because substantial volumes of the soya-bean meal in chicken feed is “cultivated on land cleared of South American rainforests”.

It remains to be seen if Finns will cut down on their consumption of chicken, or any meat for that matter. 

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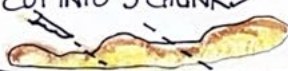




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PEANUT CHICKEN, WEST-AFRICAN STYLE

LOOK NORTH FOR THIS DELICIOUS, NUTRITIOUS CHICKEN DISH. FEEL FREE TO VARY THE VEGETABLES, BUT DON'T STINT ON THE PEANUT BUTTER. IT ADDS A UNIQUE CREAMINESS.

4 BONELESS CHICKEN THIGHS CUT INTO 3 CHUNKS 	1/2 CUP PEANUT BUTTER	2 CUPS CHICKEN STOCK	2 T TOMATO PASTE	1 T FISH SAUCE	2 T VEGETABLE OIL	1/2 LEMON SQUEEZED
1 ONION DICED 	2 CARROTS CHOPPED 	1 SWEET POTATO CHOPPED 	1 GREEN PEPPER 	1/2 CHOPPED CHILLI PEPPER 2 CLOVES GARLIC 1 T GINGER 1 T CAYENNE PEPPER		

① **MARINATE CHICKEN** - FOR 4 HRS. MINIMUM

↪ 1 CLOVE GARLIC + 1 T GINGER, CHOPPED / 1 T. CAYENNE PEPPER / 1 T OIL / SALT & PEPPER - REFRIGERATE UNTIL READY TO COOK.

- ② FRY CHICKEN IN 1 T. OIL - TURN AFTER 3 MINS - UNTIL BROWN; 6 MINS.
- ③ REMOVE CHICKEN & FRY ONION ON MED. HEAT UNTIL SOFTENED.
- ④ ADD 1 OR 2 CLOVES CHOPPED GARLIC, CHOPPED CHILLI, TOMATO PASTE & FISH SAUCE. STIR TO COMBINE FOR A FEW MINUTES, UNTIL FRAGRANT.
- ⑤ ADD PEANUT BUTTER, STOCK & VEGETABLES & MIX WELL.
- ⑥ STIR IN CHICKEN, TURN HEAT DOWN & COVER WITH A LID.
- ⑦ SIMMER FOR 30 MINS., STIRRING FREQUENTLY, TO PREVENT STICKING. ADD WATER TO LOOSEN IF NECESSARY. ADD LEMON JUICE.
- ⑧ SERVE OVER YOUR STARCH OF CHOICE. FINGER-LICKING GOOD!

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