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Poultry Bulletin

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THE INNOVATION ISSUE

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN POULTRY ASSOCIATION

BUMPER ISSUE: 68 PAGES JAM-PACKED WITH USEFUL INFO

THE FUTURE IS FESTIVE

HOW A MEGA INVESTMENT GREW SA'S POULTRY CAPACITY

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

COVID, BIRD FLU, LOAD SHEDDING... BRING ON 2022



Eggs that go 'crunch!'

The Philippine delicacy that is only for the brave

BREAKING THE MOULD

Legacy building in a time of transformation

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Our first festive-season issue of *Poultry Bulletin*

is also the biggest yet. We couldn't think of a better way to wrap up this taxing year than with a bumper issue, jam-packed with stories of achievement and innovation, and our mascot hen Thandi wrapped up in twinkling Christmas lights.

Staying ahead of the curve is essential in today's competitive world, and it is those who are constantly looking for ways to innovate who have the edge and who transform the industry. In this issue we meet some of the poultry industry's inspirational innovators (page 30), go behind the scenes at one of South Africa's most forward-focused processing plants (page 12) and hear takes on transformation and innovation from a variety of voices.

We were thrilled to receive the news that *Poultry Bulletin* had won a silver, a bronze and a couple of merit awards for excellence at the South African Publication Forum Awards 2021. I salute the team who makes it happen every issue, and the poultry producers who inspire us and provide so much great material.

We know a farmer's work is never done, but may each of you enjoy moments of peace, joy and good company over the festive season, and a brilliant start to 2022.

Melinda

editor@poultrybulletin.co.za

🐦 @melshaw001



Thandi
says, 'Happy
holidays!'



8

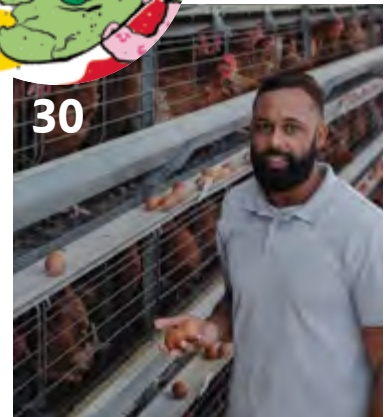


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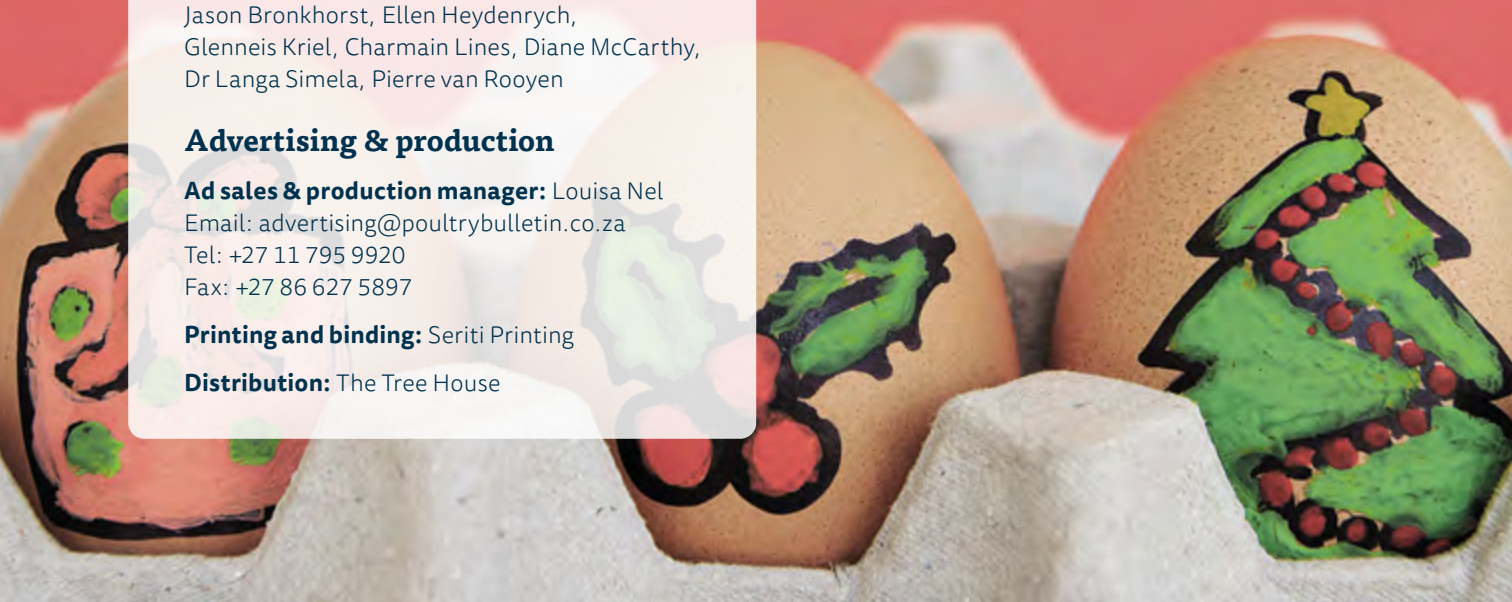
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FROM THE BOARDROOM

A year in review

SAPA's board members look at the year that was, and outline their wishes for 2022



Aziz Sulliman, chairman

"It is a bittersweet moment indeed to say farewell to 2021 and look ahead to 2022. The global pandemic ensured that this was a year like no other in our lifetime, and it feels great to close this uncertain chapter with all the misfortunes it brought, and step forward with hope.

I look forward to life returning to normal as more and more of us get vaccinated and Covid-19 loses its power. I hope we'll soon see the avian-flu outbreak subside. I am heartened by the tenacity, passion and innovative spirit of poultry farmers, and I look forward to watch the ongoing process as our producers' investments build a stronger, transformed industry, creating jobs, bolstering the economy and ensuring food safety for all in South Africa."



Willie Bosoga

In 2021 it was a pleasant surprise to see the way my fellow farmers adjusted to communicating and holding meeting using Teams or Zoom platforms. Although we thought it was expensive in the beginning it worked out cheaper in terms of fuel and vehicle costs.



Marthinus Stander

Wishing each poultry producer, farmer, worker and supplier a blessed festive season. It has been a challenging and eventful year (is it ever not in our beloved industry?)!

May you have a good break and share some time and joy with your loved ones. Braai often!

Gary Arnold

The local poultry industry over the past two years has worked extremely hard towards its obligations under the poultry industry master plan. Large investments have been made, jobs created and opportunities for new entrants into broiler farming have been opened up. However the industry has faced many headwinds the past year, battling costs as a result of national load shedding, municipal service-delivery interruptions, high feed costs impacted by global markets, the unrest (violence) and looting and the bird flu outbreak. Looking to 2022 we trust that we will see some relief from a number of these challenges, so that the industry can prosper and thereby support the national fiscus, job creation, economic growth and food security. May I take this opportunity to wish everyone a blessed festive season, keep safe!



Jake Mkwene

My wish for 2022 is that we'll see the end of Covid-19, an end to rampant corruption, and a transformed Eskom. I would like to see the government take the economy back to where it used to be, and to help those industries that can provide employment opportunities to the multitude of unemployed South Africans.





Adel van der Merwe

My wish for 2022 is that we shall see our economy growing at higher than expected levels to lead to a reduction in the unemployment rate. This will be good for all industries and all South Africans.

Vincent Sharp

In 2021 I was surprised by the resilience and determination of not only the poultry farmers, but the farming community as a whole, to overcome the challenges and obstacles that we were dealt, in order to make sure that food security is not compromised. In a country with many challenges, this gives me hope for the future.



Izaak Breitenbach

Looking back over 2021, it was a telling year. We saw total imports down by 14% since 2018 and bone-in imports by 44%. The dispensation for up to 11 countries on a bag of chicken was removed, and a total review of all poultry-meat trade measures was completed – an announcement by Minister Ebrahim Patel is pending. We also saw the renewal of antidumping duties against the EU, Germany, and the Netherlands; and the fight against illegal trade took a leap ahead when fines of more than R100 million were imposed by SARS on three importers.

I would like to thank members for their trust, and their financial support to achieve all of this.

With 2022, we are heading into another significant year. Our application for the antidumping duty against Brazil, Ireland, Poland, Spain and Denmark will be completed; and we'll apply for the renewal of antidumping duties against the United States which are lapsing. SAPA will work closely with SARS to increase inspections and focus even more on rogue traders, and we will set up a public-private partnership with the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development to better manage HPAI in the future and facilitate exports. We aim to stop the practice of thawing imported meat, and work with the Food Safety Agency to introduce a stamp of approval on all packaging to compel inspections of rogue importers and further processors of imported meat.

We will work relentlessly to position the poultry industry as a competitive, transformed industry to be proud of. We hope to see all our members pledge their support to SAPA for another year.

Happy 2022!



Colin Steenhuisen

The past year saw HPAI cause devastating losses for many poultry farmers for the second time since 2017. Over 2 million layer hens have been culled to date. This, compounded by record-high feed prices, rising fuel costs, unreliable electricity, the disruption caused by the unrest in KZN and Gauteng, and low farm-gate egg prices despite a lower egg supply, is seeing many egg farmers entering 2022 in dire financial straits.

My wish for all egg farmers is for disease-free flocks, lower input costs and fair farm-gate egg prices, so that they may enjoy fair financial returns in a stable political environment in 2022 and beyond. Very best wishes for 2022, and may God bless and strengthen you all.





LETTERS

Questions from importers, a favourite chicken, and a clutch of compliments



In defence of importers

I want to congratulate you on a magnificent magazine. Each edition is of great quality.

I am critical of many of the statements the local poultry industry makes about imports and importers. Although I served as CEO of the Association of Meat Importers and Exporters (AMIE) for 10 years I no longer have any contact with AMIE management and my views are my own and not representative of importers. However, I do support them in a number of areas and would like to comment on local poultry's stance on various issues:

Firstly, import volumes. At a recent master plan progress meeting imports were presented as 13% of consumption excluding mechanically deboned meat (MDM) and 19% inclusive, yet the local poultry industry continuously refers to far higher figures. MDM's inclusion or exclusion in import statistics has always been controversial. If MDM is seen as a competitive product, we should also include chicken soup, sauces, pasta, bread, eggs and even

certain meat cuts. Some SAPA members also import MDM so surely their numbers should then be excluded?

Secondly, the big issue: dumping. I really don't know if dumping is currently taking place but I doubt the numbers quoted in the recent tariff applications. However, I think the application will succeed as higher tariffs are "official policy" together with localisation.

At the same master plan meeting, it was minuted that the local poultry industry would cede "at least 40% of retail sales to black-owned entities". Very noble but I cannot see how this can be afforded and how it will not create huge job losses. Can someone explain this?

As regards the government's stated stance on localisation, I think it can be very good policy but only if local products and prices are comparable and it's not reliant on huge import tariffs. If not, prices will increase and quality will be negatively affected as has happened elsewhere in the world.

Referring to quality, there is much criticism of imports. It's easy to verify

this – have both imported and local chicken independently tested and publish the results.

I hope that this letter may lead to some debate.

David Wolpert

In response: the industry view, unpacked

Mr Wolpert refers to a confidential master plan meeting in great detail, without the benefit of context as he was not an attendee. It is disappointing that AMIE leaks privileged information to be used as soundbytes in running public commentary. The lack of context is evident in some of Mr Wolpert's points.

The figures Mr Wolpert quotes as "errors" actually refer to different time periods. MDM is included in import totals as it does replace local poultry consumption on a price-beneficial level.

It is not useful to bicker about whether or not dumping is taking place. Rather look at how it is judged by the International Trade Administration Commission of South Africa (ITAC) and the Department of Trade, Industry

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

and Competition (DTIC). The fact that four antidumping duties are in place and an extension was granted on another plainly show that dumping was indeed found to exist and to cause harm to the industry. International trade law is applied when an industry asks for a trade remedy such as a tariff, and such remedies are not granted without sufficient evidence.

Let me reiterate that this is a globally competitive industry that needs no protection from legal trade – the issue addressed by the master plan is the eradication of illegal and unfair trade, which AMIE supported.

As for localisation, Mr Wolpert surely knows that the EU and others have extensive localisation initiatives too. Again, the increase in local production which the minister is seeking is no threat to legal imports. It is only illegal and unfair trade that we

seek to replace with local production, so why the resistance from importers?

Finally, when it comes to quality, the issue is that different state departments govern local production and imports, and the potentially risky practice of thawing and reworking imported meat is poorly policed.

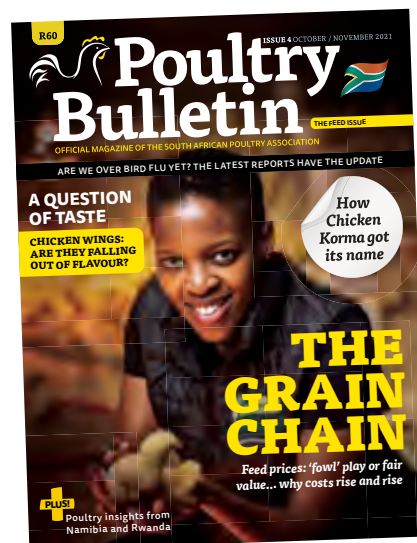
The Food Safety Agency has reported that only a third of importer reworking facilities are regularly inspected, and has also questioned how a seven-day shelf life is determined on a thawed-out product. Until such time as local and imported chicken are held to the same high food-safety standards, consumers are potentially at risk, hence the ongoing discussions about standardising the protocols employed by DALRRD and DOH. Food safety is not up for debate.

Aziz Sulliman
Chairman, SAPA



‘My favourite chicken’

Calling all chicken lovers – send us a photo of the favourite chicken in your flock. Amanda Mmodana of M&H Agri in Middelburg, Mpumalanga sent in this photo and said: “See my new babies!”



Bouquets for the Bulletin

Compliments on the latest issue of the *Poultry Bulletin* mag. The online version is visually superb, great quality throughout, with a range of relevant and informative articles, all extremely well written.

What a vast improvement on the magazine of previous years!

Shelley Johnston
Leading Edge Poultry Software CC

I read your magazine every month; you do fantastic work for the industry.

Pieter van Niekerk
Namib Poultry

Congratulations on *Poultry Bulletin's* SA Publication Forum silver and bronze awards! Well deserved!

Deryn Graham,
Proudly South African

Many congratulations on the awards! Really very well done. Lovely comments from the judges.

Mark Clements
Editor, *Poultry International*,
WATTGlobal Media

Photographs: Shutterstock



NEWS IN BRIEF

Where we keep an ear to the ground for the latest industry news

Compiled by **Charmain Lines**

Galliova Awards for 2021



South Africa's most outstanding food and health writers for 2021 were announced recently at the 32nd annual Galliova Awards, which is sponsored by SAPA.

The awards (*Galli* and *ova* are Latin for chicken and egg, respectively) recognise South Africa's best food and health journalists, whether their work is published in print magazines, newspapers or online platforms.

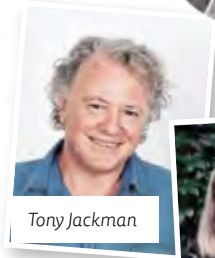
This year's winners are:

- Galliova Food Champion of the Year: Tony Jackman of *Daily Maverick*.
- Galliova Egg Champion: Jandri Barnard, freelance writer and dietitian.
- Galliova Broiler Champion: Arina du Plessis of *Landbouweekblad* and *Landbou Boerekos*.
- Galliova Health Writer of the Year: Glynis Horning, freelance writer.
- Digital Food Influencer: Sam Linsell of *Drizzle & Dip*.

The Food Champion award recognises excellence in the overall promotion of food culture, food writing, visual appeal, food styling and the evident support of locally produced poultry products. The Health Writer award in turn recognises excellence in balanced and evidence-based reporting on health, including nutrition-related issues with reference to local eggs and chicken.

In his speech during the online awards event, SAPA chairperson Aziz Sulliman emphasised SAPA broiler and egg producers' commitment to supporting local media. "SAPA is aware of the many challenges facing South Africa's poultry and media industries. However, South African journalists are tenacious, and despite all the difficulties of the past, have persevered. SAPA recognises this and is proud to sponsor the 2021 Galliova Awards to acknowledge food and health influencers," he said.

Congratulations to all the winners! 🎉



Tony Jackman



Jandri Barnard



Arina du Plessis



Glynis Horning



Sam Linsell

CHICK OF THE MONTH



Who's a leg man?

A rare Vietnamese chicken breed called the Dong Tao has delicious meat – but also legs that are surely among the most unusual in the animal kingdom.

An adult rooster's legs can be as thick as a human's wrist.

Once bred exclusively to serve the royal family and their mandarins (bureaucrats), Dong Tao chickens are prized by chicken breeders. Their meat, and legs in particular, is a delicacy served in expensive restaurants.

Dong Tao hens are generally white, while the roosters, like old thunder thighs pictured here, have colourful feathers. 🎉



Service delivery a growing issue

The ongoing problems with poor service delivery across rural South Africa has come to a head with yet another major poultry producer.

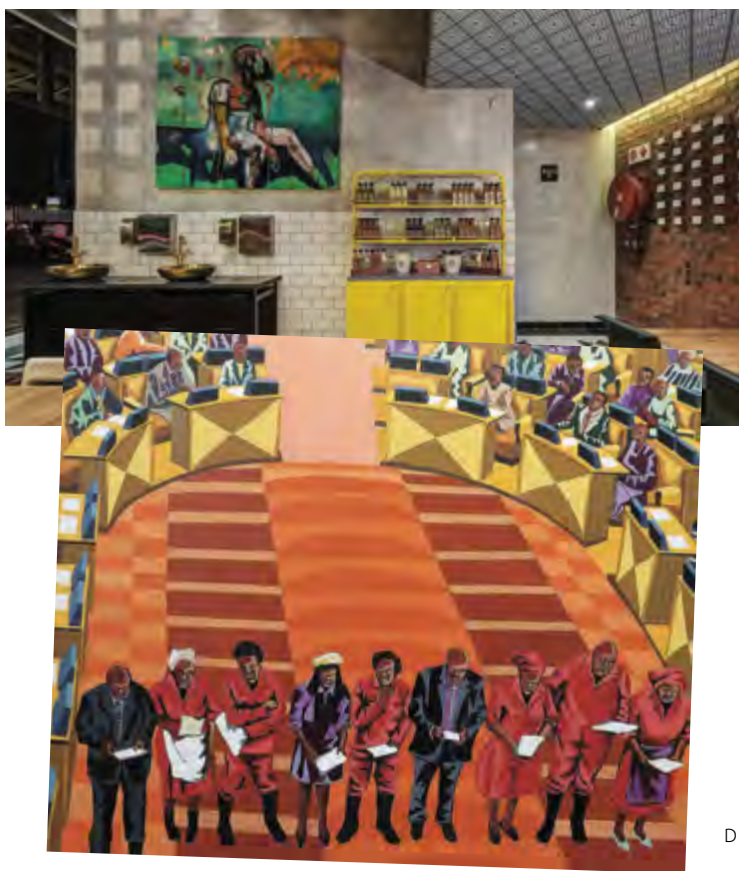
Country Bird Holdings (CBH) is in talks with provincial government in North West to address the impact of water and electricity interruptions on its Supreme Poultry plant in Mahikeng.

This follows after Astral was awarded an order from the Pretoria High Court in April 2021 that compels national government to intervene in Lekwa Municipality and, together with Treasury, prepare a financial recovery plan (FRP) for that local authority.

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

in Mpumalanga. The latest feedback Astral has received indicates that national government appointed a new administrator for the municipality. An FRP has been drawn up and published on the municipality's website although it's not clear if the plan has been approved and if implementation has started. "We are understandably anxious to see progress," says Frans van Heerden, Astral's managing director: commercial. "The court order does give us the option to return to court if the FRP is not being implemented. We are hopeful that this will not be necessary."

CBH CEO Brendon de Boer has said that he looks forward to the development of an accelerated service delivery plan for North West. 📷



Nando's heart for art

Nando's is a valued client of the poultry industry but its impact on South African society extends beyond flame-grilled peri-peri chicken: did you know that the fast-food giant is also a champion of local creativity?

Since 2001, Nando's has been showcasing original Southern African art in its restaurants globally, and with more than 21 000 pieces in its collection, it's the largest collector of Southern African contemporary art in the world.

The Nando's Art Initiative supports more than 350 artists through five different artist-development programmes, in partnership with Spier Arts Trust. The art is showcased in over 1 200 Nando's restaurants in 24 countries, telling stories of Southern African history and culture.

The artists who take part in the Nando's career-development programmes earn a regular income through the artworks the company buys from them, while they grow their careers as professional artists. 📷

How we can reach those transformation targets

By **Dr Langa Simela** and Dr Marlene Louw

For the first time in many years South African agriculture seems set to collaboratively drive growth and inclusivity. The poultry industry was one of the first to complete its master plan and is a good example of how partnerships in agricultural development can be impactful.

It has been heartening to see the good progress reported so far by the industry in investment mobilisation and spend on new facilities and supporting emerging producers. It has increased the number of birds produced per week, cooking capacity for export meat and the number of people employed in the sector.

This is a result of good collaboration between the industry, the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (DTIC) and other key stakeholders to unblock the bottlenecks to enable investment and growth. The fact that the industry can keep track of and quantify the investment and impact and stay on track towards its targets for 2030 is commendable and encouraging for other role-players, such as financial institutions, to support the industry through lending. Government has also played its part by creating a conducive environment through the restriction of poultry dumping from other countries.

The latest reports indicate that at least 13 new-era commercial producers have been assisted to set up their enterprises and are fully operational, against a target of 50 new-era producers by 2023. As experience shows, a number of hurdles have to be overcome to enable new-era producers to access finance and enter the poultry value chains.


These include ensuring that the producers have adequate expertise to manage commercial production units, where often input costs are high and the margins lower than in the informal sector where most of them start off. They have limited or no collateral or other forms of security against which to borrow. They are unable to raise adequate



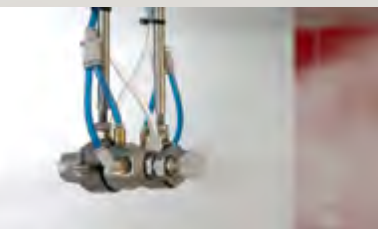
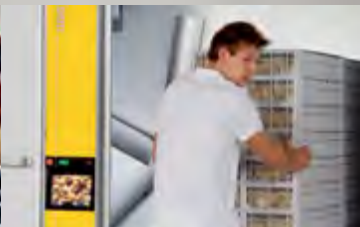
‘To enable the extra 37 new-era producers, more collaboration for risk management and risk sharing is required among the role-players, including financiers’

owner-contribution that is required for commercial loans. Fortunately, the poultry industry can provide dependable input supplies, offtake agreements and technical training and mentorship to assist the new-era producers to enter the commercial poultry value chains.

However, to enable the establishment of the additional 37 new-era producers, at a total cost of close to R1.5 billion, more collaboration for risk management and risk sharing is required among the role-players, including financiers. The Blended Finance Scheme would go a long way in addressing the equity shortfalls and covering some of the costs of technical assistance.

It is encouraging that currently there is more enthusiasm for collaborating for change in the agri sector than has been the case historically; and hence there is hope that the master plan's transformation objectives will be realised. 

Dr Langa Simela is the business development manager responsible for transformation initiatives, and Dr Marlene Louw a senior agricultural economist, at Absa Agribusiness



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A poultry plant steps into the future

Having started life as a red-meat abattoir in 1964, Astral's Festive processing plant in Olifantsfontein, Gauteng, was not purpose-built for poultry. The R631 million upgrade and expansion project completed in 2020 not only removed some historic quirks, but also added processing capacity of 800 000 chickens per week and lifted the entire local industry's technology and skills profile.



The Festive plant before (top) and after (above and right) the expansion project. The fact that the plant had sustainable water and electricity supplies, as well as the floor space and product mix to accommodate a volume increase, were the main reasons it was chosen for the investment ahead of the other three Astral processing facilities.



The live-bird handling section where 40 trucks, each carrying 11 250 chickens, arrive every day. Despite the more than 50% increase in numbers, live-bird handling has improved greatly to keep the chickens as calm as possible. Measures include softer lighting and upgraded ventilation, and forklifts driving much slower than before, given that they now carry two modules at a time.

INVESTMENT IN INNOVATION



Every carcass passes in front of this camera that records its weight and, according to the algorithm settings, allocates it to the relevant plant section for processing.

South African poultry producers have to look at efficiency improvements as much as market-share growth to improve their bottom line. "All of Astral's processing facilities were operating at production capacity. In addition, weak consumer spending, imports and dumping make it difficult to pass increases in input costs on to consumers, leaving the producers to find alternative solutions," notes Frans van Heerden, managing director: commercial at Astral.

The Festive plant expansion was Astral's answer to the problem of how to improve product mix and margins when unfair trade practices stifle the market.

Innovative thinking was at the heart of the mammoth undertaking. Production had to carry on – 1.48 million chickens a week still had to be processed – while a



Previously, a production line of 58 people manually deboned breast fillets. This machine has taken over the job, with automation resulting in improved throughput, yield and product-quality consistency. To the surprise of the European supplier of the machine, Astral specified that some meat must be left on the bone so that it can be included in soup packs. In Europe, every last shred of meat is removed as there is no further use for the bones.

third of the premises was a construction site. The transition between manual and automated processes had to be negotiated and staff prepared for a new way of working in an environment changed beyond recognition.

The project team, led by Wickus Kleynhans, COO of Astral's central region, managed all this and more. "More" included commissioning new equipment with remote instead of on-site support in the face of worldwide Covid-induced travel bans, and dealing with hundreds of thousands of new-capacity chickens just as hard lockdown disrupted the normal market forces by closing down the QSR and hospitality industries.

Despite all these curve balls, only 12 months elapsed from the first breaking



▲ Frans van Heerden,
managing director:
commercial at Astral



▲ Wickus Kleynhans, COO
of Astral's central region

of ground to the first packaged product rolling off the line.

But project management is not the story of the Festive expansion. "For us the story is a 54% throughput increase achieved with a 5% staff increase," says Van Heerden. "We interrogated every step in our process to extract maximum efficiencies, and the results really do speak for themselves."

Another of the project's noteworthy stories is the upstream and downstream impact of automation and technology. For instance, the quality monitoring done in the plant is translated into reports for the broiler farms, both Astral's own farms and its contract growers', which pinpoint quality concerns so that corrections are easily done. The impact of consumer behaviour on product quality can now

INVESTMENT IN INNOVATION



With the same number of people occupying double the floorspace, social distancing was built into the plant design even before anyone knew about Covid-19. A more spacious environment greatly enhances working conditions.



Particular attention was paid to ergonomics to ensure the comfort of employees. Levels are at the optimal height and workers positioned at the optimal distance from surfaces.

CRUNCHING THE NUMBERS

WHAT IT TOOK TO DELIVER 800 000 EXTRA CHICKENS

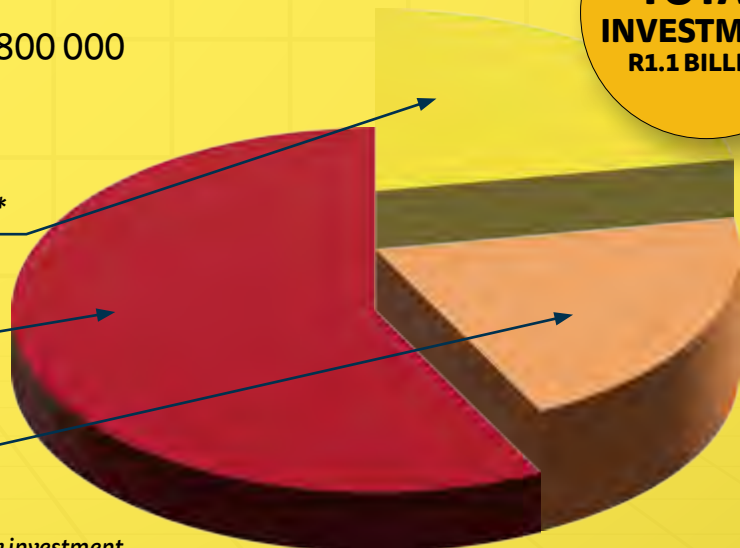
R245 MILLION
Breeding and hatching facilities*

R631 MILLION
Processing plant*

R224 MILLION
Contract growers**

* Astral investment

** Poultry-industry investment



TOTAL INVESTMENT
R1.1 BILLION

also be better controlled, thanks to a system that allows the weight and price fluctuations for portion packs to be set within a narrow margin.

Several of the systems and technologies in the Festive plant are unique in South Africa, which is both a competitive edge and a risk. However, the unintended benefit of the remote commissioning (which involved Zoom and Teams meetings and WhatsApp videos) is that the Astral team knows the new technology inside out. Issues that would likely have required a

'We are now seeing the benefits in the level of new technical skills and competence that our team has acquired'

technician to board a plane in Europe and come out here, can in most cases be resolved with a phone call.

"It created havoc at the time, but now we are seeing the benefits in the level of new technical skills and competence that our team has acquired," says Kleyhans.

Looking back at a memorable year, he feels proudest of three aspects. "Such a substantial capacity-increase project is probably a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, so I am proud to have been part of this



Previously, staff had to manually weigh IQF portions to make up a 5kg bag. The new system (left and below) does it automatically and accurately.



In the new facility Festive can process 24 000 chickens per hour, volumes that require constant live monitoring of every process in the plant.



INVESTMENT IN INNOVATION

success story. I am also proud that processing was never interrupted while construction was completed, and that we managed to create 250 additional employment opportunities in the process. The automation of the plant has also enabled our staff members to acquire new skills, which has upgraded our workforce and opened up new career paths," he says.

Innovation in an industry tends to happen incrementally, and it takes one forward-thinking company to make the leap of faith, and forge the way. At the Festive plant, the future of poultry production in South Africa has become a three-dimensional reality. 📺

Unpacking the Festive expansion

ABATTOIR SECTION	% INCREASE
SLAUGHTER CAPACITY (BIRDS/WEEK)	54%
RENDERING (TONS/WEEK)	102%
LIVE-BIRD HANDLING (BIRDS/HOUR)	54%
LIVE-BIRD HANDLING (BIRDS/TRUCK)	25%
TRUCK LOADING BAYS	114%
AIR CHILLING (KG/HOUR)	54%
SPIRAL FREEZING (KG/HOUR)	50%
CARTON FREEZING (KG/HOUR)	50%
FRESH PROCESSING (TONS/WEEK)	100%
FRESH CHILLED STORE (PALLET SPACE)	733%
FROZEN COLD STORE (PALLET SPACE)	233%



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MEMBERS' NOTICEBOARD

We take a closer look at the latest detailed information that the South African Poultry Association (SAPA) has shared with members

Compiled by **Michael Acott**

Making 2022 a year of recovery

GM Izaak Breitenbach shares Broiler Organisation insights at the final board meeting for 2021

SAPA is looking forward to 2022 as a year of achievement on various fronts – a continued reduction in unfairly priced imports, a boost for chicken exports and the further containment of avian influenza (AI).

All of these will assist the recovery

Izaak Breitenbach is awaiting a number of decisions that should have a material impact on imports by the middle of 2022



Photographs: Shutterstock

of the industry from the combined impact of the coronavirus pandemic and avian-influenza outbreaks. This will help us meet the investment, job creation and transformation objectives of the poultry industry master plan.

Poultry imports have been reducing since 2018 due to a combination of economic factors, including the coronavirus's impact on trade and consumption, as well as SAPA's successful applications for safeguard and antidumping duties.

By the end of 2021 we expect total poultry imports will be 22% below the record import levels of 2018, and imports of the bone-in portions, which do most harm to our industry, will have reduced by 51%.

We expect a decision by mid-2022 on our application for antidumping duties on bone-in imports from Brazil and four European Union countries. We are also awaiting the announcement of a restructuring of import tariffs, and particularly the introduction of a reference price which would go a long way to curbing underdeclared and misdeclared imports from entering the market.

If both of those measures are in

place by mid year, they will have a material impact on import volumes.

The third area where we expect success is action by the SA Revenue Service (SARS) against illegal imports. This is already happening, although the details are confidential, and it will be a major deterrent.

A combination of all three could take us to the tipping point in the reduction of chicken imports.

On the export front, we are negotiating with the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) for the appointment of veterinarians to provide the certificates required for exports to the EU and Saudi Arabia. We aim to have the industry export plan ready by the end of 2022.

We are also negotiating revised measures for bird-flu prevention and containment with DALRRD.

All of this points to 2022 being a year of success for South African poultry. 🇿🇦



▲ Strict biosecurity measures remain a key tactic in the fight against HPAI

HPAI keeps spreading

The 2021 outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) was well managed until biosecurity breaches happened during the civil unrest in July. After the riots there was a second peak of outbreaks, and the spread has gained added momentum by the failure of some companies and farmers to comply fully with biosecurity measures.

This lack of compliance is of great concern to the HPAI working group. Most SAPA members are managing the disease with the utmost responsibility, but the actions – or inactions – of a few are putting themselves and others at risk.

Slaughter numbers have reduced from a high of 22 million birds per week down to 19 million birds per week. 📉



Poultry price rise to continue into 2022

Poultry producer prices, for both fresh and frozen chicken, have risen sharply over the past year, according to the AMT quarterly livestock report for October 2021. Prices are between 15% and 16% above those a year ago.

AMT, which specialises in agricultural market-trend analysis, also said that, based on historic patterns, these prices could move upwards over the first quarter of 2022.

It compared producer prices in the third quarter of 2021 with prices in the previous quarter and in the same period last year. According to the report the producer price of frozen chicken was R28.02/kg, which is 1.25% higher than the second quarter and 16.31% above the third quarter of 2020.

The producer price of fresh chicken in the third quarter was R28.77/kg, 1.35% above the previous quarter and 16.71% higher than the same quarter last year.

The producer price of IQF chicken

was R26.26/kg, 0.14% higher than the previous quarter and 15.09% higher than a year ago.

The price of leg quarters in the United States has risen even faster, while US broiler prices and European Union chicken prices have dropped.

In the United States, the import parity price (local price converted into SA rand) of leg quarters was R19.96/kg, 0.12% above the previous quarter but 24.73% higher than the third quarter of 2020.

The price of US broilers was the equivalent of R54.53/kg, up 3.2% on the second quarter but down 12.29% on a year ago.

EU chicken legs were priced at R21.30/kg in the third quarter, which is a drop of 4.2% from the previous quarter and 18.53% below the third quarter of last year.

EU grillers (broilers weighing 1.1kg) were priced at R24.85/kg, 3.15% above the previous quarter but 3.12% below the price a year ago. 📉



Bird flu: vigilance is still needed

Although the spread of the H5N1

virus appears to have slowed down after peaking in May, the 2021 outbreak is not over and new incidents are reported every month.

By September, the latest date for which statistics are available, there had been 95 outbreaks across the country since the first reports in April. Of these, 57 have been in poultry, including five at small-scale farms and seven in ostriches. A wide variety of wild bird species have been affected.

More than 3 million birds have been culled, according to SAPA's AI surveillance monitoring report for September 2021. This represents 2.2% of the national flock, with the egg industry suffering most.

Of the total of 3 022 356 birds culled, 2 226 474 were in the egg industry, and the other 795 882 in the broiler industry.


The egg industry in the Western Cape has suffered the greatest losses, with an estimated 20.2% of its layers having been affected by the H5N1 outbreak. Other significant losses were in Gauteng (7.7% of the provincial layer flock culled), KwaZulu-Natal (6.6%) and North West (5.2%).

The report says the rate of spread of the current H5N1 outbreak is similar to the 2017 H5N8 outbreak, although the provincial spread is slightly different. The Western Cape has 50% of reported outbreaks in 2021, compared to 72.5% in 2017.

The share in Gauteng has increased from 11.7% in 2017 to 21.1% this time, while KwaZulu-Natal is up from 0.8% in 2017 to 11% in 2021.

All producers are urged to remain vigilant and to adhere to biosecurity measures in order to reduce the risk of infection. This is particularly

important because the spread of the virus between farms by fomites (people, vehicles and equipment) was found to be a big contributing factor in the European outbreaks.

The submission of test results to SAPA is an important part of the surveillance programme. 

Province	Birds culled		% of provincial flock	
	Broiler	Egg	Broiler	Egg
E. Cape	3 000	0	0.04	0.0
Free State	240 000	125 000	1.6	2.4
Gauteng	36 000	839 374	0.3	7.7
KwaZulu-Natal	111 382	226 000	1.7	6.6
Limpopo	0	0	0.0	0.0
Mpumalanga	34 000	0	0.1	0.0
North West	42 000	175 600	0.2	5.2
N. Cape	0	0	0.0	0.0
W. Cape	329 500	860 500	2.1	20.2
Total cases	795 882	2 226 474	0.7	6.8

▲ Birds culled per province
Source: SAPA



High feed prices may have peaked

Feed prices will remain high, but they may have peaked and farmers can expect a slight reduction in feed prices in 2022.

That's the combination of good and bad news contained in SAPA's feed ingredient report for the third quarter of 2021.

The international price of maize has been rising, although it is very volatile, since March 2021. Local prices have also been rising – in June yellow maize was trading at R3 375 per ton, and has risen to R3 451 per ton for December 2021.


The current drivers of the maize price are supply and demand, prices on the Chicago Board of Trade, and the rand/dollar exchange rate.

There has been a big move towards white maize usage in the animal-feed industry because of its lower price. At the time of the report, white maize was trading R230 a ton cheaper than yellow maize.

Soya prices have decreased significantly in the past six months even though demand is high and exports to China are at record levels. South Africa has just harvested a record soya

crop of more than 1.8 million tons. Local soya-meal prices are trading at under R7 800/t, sharply down from R9 000/t in March 2021.

The rand has weakened, and may weaken further. It dropped from R14.26 to the US dollar in June to R15.11 when the report was compiled. The forward prospect for the rand is a trading range of between R14.85 and R15.75 to the US dollar.

The good news for 2022 is that estimated feed-ingredient prices for February 2022 show Randfontein prices for yellow maize down 4.2% year on year to R3 472 per ton, sunflower oil cake down 6.7% to R6 300/t and soya meal down 16.5% to R7 576/t. Fish meal is projected to get more expensive, rising 5.9% year on year to R17 800/t. 

The South African Poultry Association would like to thank all our members, partners and suppliers for their support during 2021.

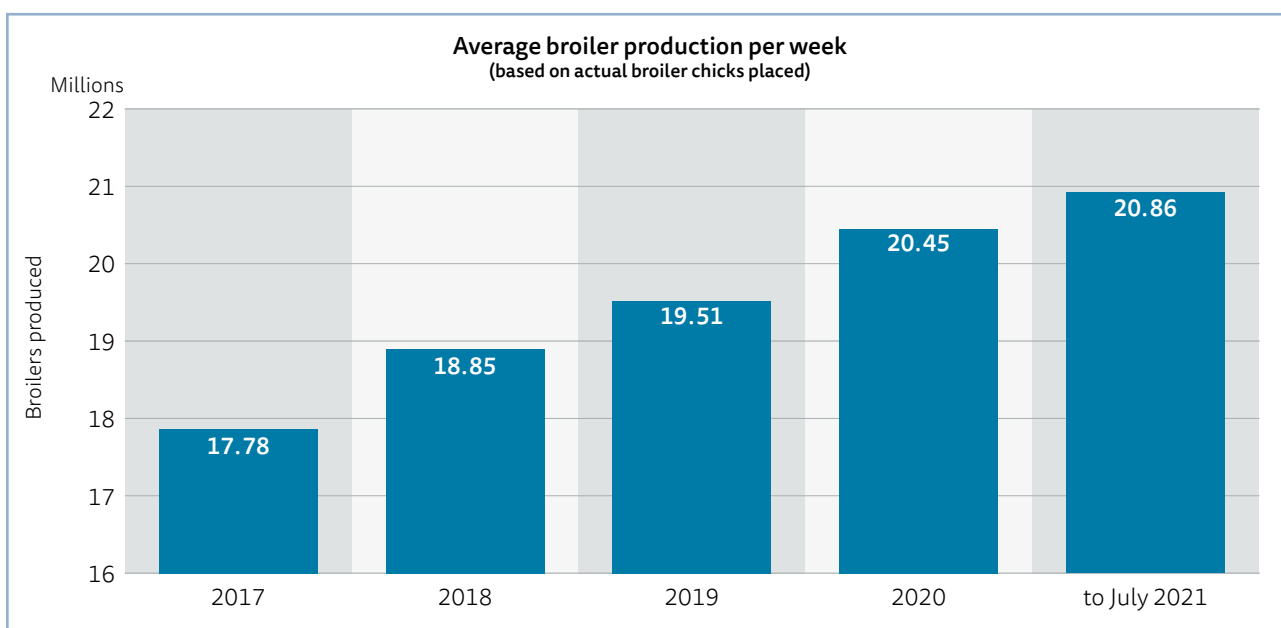
We wish you all a blessed festive season.

Happy Holidays!





Broilers recover after Covid-19 slump



▲ Average weekly production per annum
Source: SAPA

Producer prices for chicken have recovered in 2021 after sharp drops in 2020 due to the impact of Covid-related lockdowns. Average producer prices for the first seven months of 2021 are 10% up on 2020 levels.

According to SAPA's broiler producer price report for July 2021, the monthly broiler producer price, including both fresh and frozen product, dropped very slightly in July to R26.04/kg. This was nevertheless 11% above the Covid-affected price in July 2020.

The average total realisation price

for the second quarter of 2021 was R25.74/kg, up 3.9% on the first quarter and 16.2% higher than the R22.15 average in Q2 2020.

In July 2021, the monthly producer price for fresh broilers increased by 2.1% to R33.99/kg, up 7.3% on July 2020. Frozen broiler prices dropped slightly from June, but were 11.2% above producer prices in July 2020. Frozen meat comprises about 88% of sales, and fresh meat 12%.

The industry's production report for July 2021 said production recovered in late 2020 after dropping sharply in the first quarter. Average production for 2020 was 4.9% above 2019. This growth continued in the first six

months of 2021, with production up by an average of 5.8%. A drop in July brought the average production increase for the year so far to 4.2%.

Prices also recovered in 2021. Year-on-year prices remained positive for the seventh consecutive month in July 2021, averaging a 10.3% increase over 2020.

Individually quick frozen (IQF) mixed portions make up nearly half of producer sales. The weighted average producer price for IQF portions in July 2021 was R25.61/kg, an increase of 13.7% over July 2020. IQF producer prices for the first seven months of 2021 averaged R24.78/kg, 8.6% above prices in the same period last year.



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¹. Reference - Data on file. ELA1800037 trial at University of Parana - Dr. E. Santin et al., 2017. The use of antibiotics as growth promoters in performance and intestinal health in broilers challenged with Eimeria and Clostridium perfringens.

². WHO. Critically important antimicrobials for human medicine. 2018. <https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/312266/9789241515528-eng.pdf?ua=1>.

³. WHO 2017 Guidelines on use of Medically Important Antimicrobials in food producing animals. <https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/258970/9789241550130-eng.pdf;jsessionid=B982A811C8A4F2F79F5C306E2B647D62?sequence=1>.

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Rabobank notes master plan success



The poultry industry master plan has increased poultry production as well as demand in South Africa, according to 2021's final Poultry Quarterly from the international food and agri bank Rabobank.

"The South African industry keeps expanding production in line with

the South African poultry master plan," it said. In the first half of 2021, production grew by 6% year on year, and was 14% higher than the first half of 2019.

The master plan had also led to a 2% increase in consumption in the first half of 2021, as well as a 4%

increase on 2019.

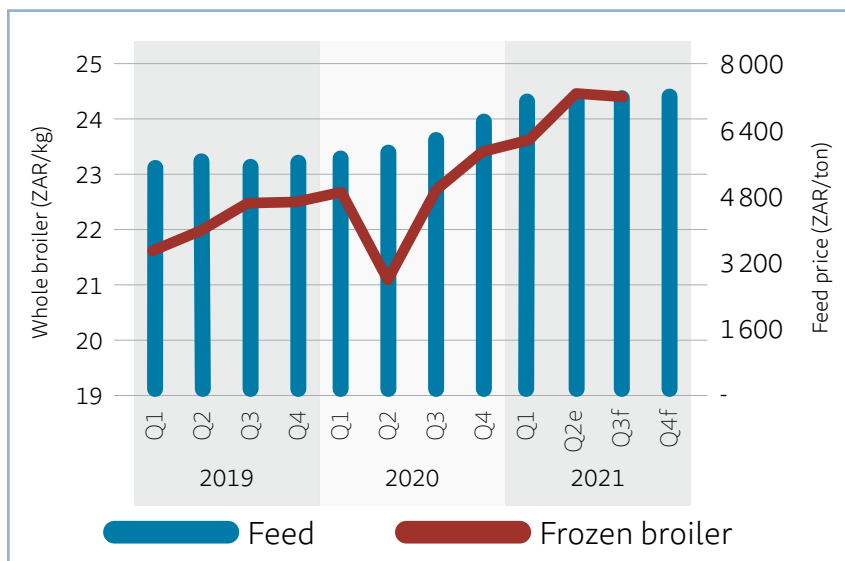
Imports had dropped by 10% in the first half of the year, with imports from Europe markedly down because of avian-influenza (AI) outbreaks. South African exports, particularly to the rest of Southern Africa, had also been affected by AI restrictions.

The bank said global poultry markets were improving as economies reopened in most regions, with higher prices because of restricted supply. The outlook for South Africa was moderately optimistic, with feed prices now stable to declining, according to SAFEX prices. Volatility of the rand was creating some short-term price volatility.

"Chicken prices in South Africa have stabilised in Q3 2021 after a year of gradual price increases," it said.

"Poultry prices should stay at or near current levels, especially as beef and pork are expected to remain expensive."

The South African poultry industry would benefit from recently extended duties on European poultry imports, Rabobank concluded. 



▲ South African broiler and feed price trends, Q1 2019-Q4 2021f
Source: SAPA, News24, SAFEX Rabobank 2021

Free-range layers can be kept indoors for 30 weeks



Because of the threat of AI, egg farmers have been granted an additional period of six weeks indoor confinement for hens laying free-range eggs.

The extension, which was applied for by SAPA, increases the allowed confinement period from 24 to 30 weeks. It was announced in a notice from DALRRD's Directorate of Food Safety and

Quality Assurance.

The notice says that "All traders shall display a conspicuous sign/sticker in the immediate vicinity of their free-range eggs indicating that their free-range laying hens are temporarily kept indoors for a period of more than the prescribed 24 weeks maximum period to protect them from avian influenza."

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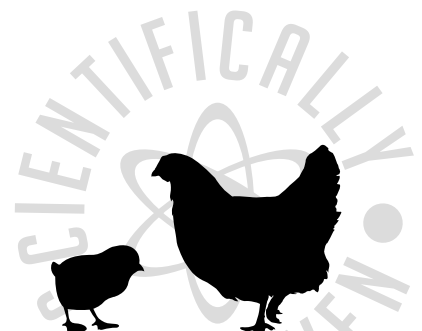
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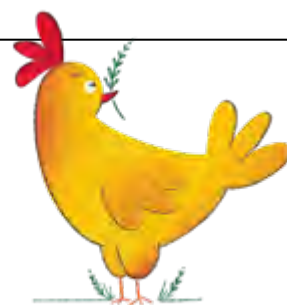


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Underreporting an issue in cull trade



The number of live chickens that are bought and sold by cull traders is dropping, but part of the reason may be that some producers and traders are not registering or reporting as required. This has emerged from the cull-traders report for the third quarter of 2021. These chickens are distributed in the informal economy in townships and rural areas and form a significant part of the poultry value chain.

Because of outbreaks of avian flu the movement of live birds has been regulated since 2017 to manage the risks posed by their transportation. Cull buyers have to be registered, and both producers who sell into the cull trade and the cull buyers must report transactions, which are consolidated.

Permits are required to remove flocks from farms, and to move live birds across provincial and national boundaries.

In the first quarter of 2021, more than a million chickens were reported sold in the cull trade. By the third quarter, this had dropped to 887 000. In its latest cull-trade report, SAPA noted that the submission of data on live sales to the Poultry Disease Management Agency (PDMA) had "lost momentum in recent years".

Reported sales from farms were far below the totals expected, "suggesting either that cull birds are being moved

without the required permits, or that the permits are not being submitted timeously to Silverpath Consulting". Silverpath has been contracted by the PDMA to manage the system.

SAPA continues to appeal to all poultry producers and traders to comply with the Protocol for the Sale of Live Poultry issued by the Directorate of Animal Health, including the requirement to obtain removal permits for live birds. 📄

Register now

Any cull trader not yet registered on the PDMA's database needs to register as a matter of urgency (www.poultrydiseases.co.za) and producers are encouraged to assist cull buyers with filling in the required forms and online registrations.

Anyone needing assistance or more info can contact Cynthia Ncube at cynthia@silverpath.co.za or Louisa Nel at reception@sapoultry.co.za.



No better time to join SAPA

It has been a particularly tough year for farmers, with high feed prices, fuel price hikes, loadshedding and avian influenza adding to the normal challenges of farming. This is when you need someone in your corner, and for poultry producers in South Africa, membership of the South African Poultry Association (SAPA) offers just that support.

SAPA works on behalf of its members towards the growth and wellbeing of poultry producers across the country. It is particularly during times of crisis such as the current avian-flu outbreak where SAPA is an invaluable ally to farmers big and small, sharing knowledge and expertise, coordinating efforts and negotiating with the authorities on members' behalf.

All egg and broiler producers in SA are eligible to apply for membership, so don't delay – get your application in now. Membership fees are R405 per year, excluding VAT, plus an extra fee based on slaughter volumes for broilers or a statutory levy for eggs.

As a member you also receive a free subscription to *Poultry Bulletin*, which comes out six times a year. Nonmembers can also subscribe for R420 per year, excluding VAT.

For more information, visit www.sapoultry.co.za, or email reception@sapoultry.co.za. 📧

How it works:

1. Request the official application form by calling 011 795 9920 or emailing reception@sapoultry.co.za. Return the completed form as stipulated.
2. The Egg or Broiler Board will evaluate your application, which will then be ratified by the SAPA Board. The Board reserves the right to accept or reject any application at its discretion.
3. Once your application has been approved, your annual membership fee will be payable.



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When it comes to the very latest in poultry-production systems, you need go no further than R&R Poultry on the farm Goedgedacht, near Ottosdal in the North West Province, where Plasson South Africa has implemented the cutting edge of technology for broiler farmer Wynand Rossouw.

Rossouw, a contract grower for Henwil Chickens in Lichtenburg, required four modern new broiler houses with a capacity of 57 500 birds each, custom-made for his business. He wanted a turnkey solution, and a supplier who would approach this extensive project as a partnership, from assessing his needs and tailoring the exact requirements for his farm, to construction, installation and fitment of the technologies that would deliver the best possible environment for productivity.

"As producers we all chase the elusive Performance Efficiency Factor (PEF) of 400 [calculated with the formula: liveability (%) x live body weight in kg x 100/age in days x feed-conversion ratio] and I wanted the infrastructure that would allow me to prove to the market it can be done at this scale," says Rossouw.

He was familiar with Plasson's world-class feeding and drinking systems and its industry-wide reputation for good service, and that clinched the deal for Rossouw, a decision he hasn't regretted for an instant, he says. "I was impressed from the start at the level of excellence. Dealing with one big, professional team means the work was done fast and efficiently, and the service was great without breaking the bank."

The Plasson team constructed the four block houses according to Rossouw's brief, with complete electrical installation and a full ventilation, feeding and drinking

solution. In addition, an office and ablution facilities were built for staff, with water reticulation for the entire site using only the company's world-renowned Plasson water fittings.

The project provided Plasson with an opportunity to launch its newest technology, the iPlass ventilation system, and to showcase how it can improve poultry production when used in combination with its world-renowned nipple drinking and automatic pan-feeding systems.

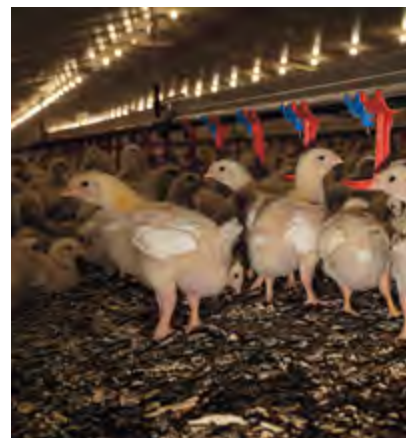
The end result is definitive proof of what can be achieved with the correct solution and a knowledgeable partnership. According to Rossouw, he is thrilled at the production outcomes, which are even better than initially anticipated.

"On average we have increased our average PEF by about 30 points, and we've had a couple of cycles where we even surpassed the 400 PEF mark. Slaughter weight increased with around 150g per chick and we have decreased our food-conversion ratio (FCR) by 10 points.

"On the new houses, running costs have decreased significantly. The iPlass system has given me the ability to manage the increased stocking density, and this helps me to have a significant saving on costs like coal, electricity and labour," explains Rossouw.

R&R Poultry will serve as a test site for Plasson, and a key partner in new developments of the ventilation system going forward. The new iPlass Ventilation Solution has subsequently been installed at several other sites around South Africa. 🇿🇦

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Building a layer legacy from scratch



Photographs: Pierre van Rooyen

Chamomile Farming has just won an award as Best New Entrant to Commercial Farming – an accolade Tawfeeq Brinkhuis is very proud of

TRANSFORMATION THROUGH INNOVATION

Chamomile Farming started out with a few garden chickens aimed at supplying a household with eggs, and has since grown into an award-winning commercial layer business that promises to generate intergenerational wealth.

Tawfeeq Brinkhuis talked to **Glenneis Kriel** about their journey to success

Starting a commercially viable layer business from scratch is really hard, especially if you don't have a farming background or a lot of money to back your endeavours. The Brinkhuis family, owners of Chamomile Farming, however, has managed to achieve exactly that with hard work, innovation and good networking.

Their farming endeavours started out small in 2003, when they moved to Philippi in the Western Cape to escape gangsterism in their former neighbourhood in Ottery.

"My parents searched for a place where we could safely play outside. They picked up the Philippi property for a bargain, as it was under liquidation and homed a few illegal squatters," Tawfeeq Brinkhuis recalls.

The first thing the family did when moving to the property was to put up Fibercrete to secure the premises. "There wasn't any money for tractors, so my mother, Wadea Jappie, divided the 1.6 hectares of land into 3m by 4m camps, and allocated one to each of my five siblings and me to remove all the rubble from," Brinkhuis says.

Additional costs were saved by the fact that Achmat, Tawfeeq's dad, had experience in construction learnt at the hand of his own father, who was a builder. Says Brinkhuis junior, "My dad used the stables on the property as the foundation for the home he built us, which has been expanded over the years to accommodate our growing needs."

Having the luxury of so much land, the family planted coriander for household use and kept a few garden chickens, more for fun than anything else.

The chicken hobby intensified around 2005, after the family visited the Bien Donn  agricultural show where they were introduced to Lohmann chickens. "Unlike our

garden chickens, these layers had the genetic potential to lay one good-sized egg per day. With five growing sons and a daughter, my parents reasoned that these layers could make a big difference to our food bill," Brinkhuis says.

They bought five Lohmann Whites at the show and were so impressed with the birds that they bought 20 more a week later. Brinkhuis senior built a house for the chickens

and over time they increased their flock to over 1 000 layers, and started selling eggs to family and friends.

Their first major break came when they managed to access Mugg & Bean coffee shop as a client. "That was thanks to Mum, who inherited my grandad's business savvy. Initially the buyer wasn't really interested, but she convinced them to take just one box of eggs each week and to compare our eggs with those from their other supplier. And then it happened that they were left stranded without eggs from their major supplier, so we took the gap and managed to take over the contract," Brinkhuis says.

The Brinkhuis children had the job to deliver these eggs to the various Mugg & Bean outlets. "If we asked to go to the movies at the Waterfront,

my dad had us deliver eggs there at the same time, doubling up and saving transport costs," Brinkhuis recalls.

'If we asked to go to the movies at the Waterfront, we had to deliver eggs there at the same time, doubling up and saving transport costs'

A path paved by challenges

The new business allowed the family to invest in more layers and increase production, and the path to success seemed smooth, until one day in 2011 when 1 000 of their 3 000 layers died in a heat wave. The Western Cape Department of Agriculture came to their aid and replaced the dead birds, but the family realised that they had to step ►



Achmat and Tawfeeq Brinkhuis in their state-of-the-art new layer house under construction

up their game if they wanted to realise their intention to become a commercial competitor.

This meant a larger flock, which in turn required an environmental impact assessment (EIA). This is an expensive, but mandatory regulatory requirement for farmers keeping more than 5 000 layers, Brinkhuis explains (see “EIA in a nutshell” on page 35).

The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) accommodated the farm by funding the EIA, but it took two years to complete, during which they were not allowed to keep any poultry.

They kept going financially thanks to a 30-year lease agreement with DALRRD for a nearby 20 hectares farm on which they started growing chillies.

The idea was to diversify and expand, and production on the new farm eventually grew to a whole range of vegetables produced for Freshmark, the Shoprite group’s fruit and vegetable arm.

Says Brinkhuis, “My mum won an award as Female Farmer of the Year for Informal Markets in 2006, which opened up a huge new network for us. A chance meeting at an agricultural event led to Freshmark signing us as their first black farmer suppliers and further committing to help us as far as possible to secure our success. We also got support from a commercial vegetable farmer in Philippi

who stepped in as a production mentor.”

When the EIA was approved, the family put up an extra, government-funded chicken house with the capacity to keep 12 000 layers, although they limit the occupation to 10 000 birds, as experience has shown that this significantly reduces mortalities.

“The house tends to overheat when it is at full capacity, and it doesn’t have automatic climate control, so we have to manually manage the temperature with ventilation by opening and closing windows,” Brinkhuis explains.

They also learnt to use curtains on the western side of the house in the afternoons to reduce the glare of bright sunlight into the cages, which affected hens’ food intake negatively.

Over the years the underground water supply that the farm relies on has deteriorated. Brinkhuis surmises that this is because more and more people are flocking to Philippi and the nearby informal settlement. The family, in effect, built a filtration system to improve the quality of their water.

Organised agriculture

The Brinkhuis family’s relationship with SAPA stretches back to 2015, when Achmat joined the now defunct Developing Poultry Farmers Organisation (DPFO). He was instrumental in the incorporation of

‘A chance meeting led to Freshmark signing us as their first black farmer suppliers’

TRANSFORMATION THROUGH INNOVATION

the DPFO, which was devoted to the needs of emerging and smallholder farmers, into the main body of the organisation, and in 2016 also served as the first black chairperson of SAPA.

Says Brinkhuis junior, "My dad convinced the powers that be that having a separate body for emerging farmers held these farmers back, and including them in SAPA directly would help to facilitate growth by exposing them to a bigger world. Small farmers struggle with the same issues as big commercial producers, after all."

The DPFO was dissolved and its members were integrated into SAPA's egg and broiler organisations; and today, Achmat and Tawfeeq Brinkhuis both sit on the egg board.

Entering into a supply agreement with Quantum Foods in 2018 heralded a new era for Chamomile. As contract growers, Chamomile receives Lohmann Brown point-of-lay hens from Quantum, along with a production recipe,

covering everything from the feed to the light requirements of each batch of birds.

Besides supplying premixed feed formulations, feed experts from Quantum Food's Nova Feeds also pay regular visits to the Brinkhuis farm, during which eggs are analysed to determine whether feed rations should be adapted to improve production.

"You are given a recipe for success. All you have to do is follow the instructions, observe the birds to ensure they are not suffering from any stress, and prevent diseases from entering the house through the practice of tight biosecurity measures," says Brinkhuis. "Only my dad and I and one other worker, for instance, are allowed in the chicken house."

Quantum also provided an interest-free loan to fund the construction of an additional layer house with a 25 000 bird capacity, as well as production finance to stock ►

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the house from January 2022.

Another EIA had to be done before the new layer house could be built, but fortunately production could continue in the existing houses as they were already approved.

The new state-of-the-art layer house will bring the Brinkhuis family a little closer to their dream of 300 000 layers, with the capacity to produce 24 000 dozen eggs per day. The house sports fully automatic climate-control systems and hi-tech Big Dutchmen equipment that includes wet pads and variable speed fans to regulate temperatures between 24 and 28 degrees Celsius. Gone will be the days of opening windows for ventilation, at least in this new house.

"Where traditional fans only have two or three settings, these fans automatically adjust their speed to maintain climatic conditions at predetermined levels. So they are not only quieter than traditional fans, but also more energy efficient," explains Brinkhuis.

The new cages are also constructed with steel that is galvanised later in the process to minimise rust and extend longevity.

Even record-keeping is getting overhauled, from manual Excel spreadsheeting to automatic uploading and processing of data to give real-time production insights that can be accessed on their mobile phones, Brinkhuis enthuses.

New entrant award

Chamomile Farming recently won the National Agricultural Writers SA New Entrant to Commercial Farming 2021 award, and the family was thrilled at the recognition.

"An award like this acknowledges the hard work and time my family has invested in turning Chamomile Farming into a commercially viable entity," says Brinkhuis. "The exposure we get through this will hopefully help to strengthen our network further and create new growth opportunities for us, while helping to inspire others who are dreaming of achieving the same."

Where his parents started out with nothing, they have set up the business to be a legacy for future generations. "This is a remarkable privilege that many black farmers are

deprived of, as it means that we, as the next generation, can start from a solid foundation, whereas it took my parents almost 20 years to get where they are today. Growing up on a farm that has gone from smallholder to commercial has also equipped my siblings and me with valuable production and business skills."

Building a family legacy is one thing, but keeping it going past the third generation is usually a challenge.

At 25, the younger Brinkhuis feels certain that his father's lessons will stick, and that Chamomile will keep growing into the future. "We grew up seeing how my mum and dad struggled to get where we are today and had to jump in and work along with them from a very young age. We have a very strong sense of the value of a tractor or the inheritance of a working farm."

Family values

To secure the future of the business for the next generation, Brinkhuis wants to instil in his children the same family values that he has learnt from his parents regarding hard work, living within your means and valuing what you have.

"We may have become used to working with very large budgets now, but as a family we have never been ostentatious. We don't own fancy cars and expensive clothes. Our profits are ploughed back into the business. Everything we do is aimed at setting the family business

up for future generations."

He adds that it is already a prerequisite for any existing and future family members who want to be involved in the business, to have a passion for farming and to ascribe to the family values, including their strong faith.

"It is my plan to also advise my children one day to equip themselves with tertiary education and farming experience, before settling at the family business, so that they can bring new insights and add value to existing operations," says Brinkhuis.

For more information on Chamomile Farming, email Tawfeeq Brinkhuis at Tawfeeqbrinkhuis@gmail.com

'We don't own fancy cars and expensive clothes. Our profits are ploughed back into the business'

TRANSFORMATION THROUGH INNOVATION

EIA IN A NUTSHELL

- Get an EIA done via your local Department of Environmental Affairs before you start farming. "You'll have to expand production beyond 4 999 birds at some point, if you want to remain financially viable, and might not be permitted to keep any birds while the assessment is being done," says Tawfeeq Brinkhuis.
- Secure finance to fund the assessment. The Brinkhuis family paid R180 000 for their latest EIA and R200 000 for their first one. The financial outlay depends on the scope of the work, the cost of the project and the consultant who is contracted to carry out the study.
- Employ an EIA consultant familiar with the poultry industry as well as the constraints and sensitivities surrounding the region where you intend to farm. "The consultant should help you develop a farming plan for the next 15 to 20 years, otherwise you might need another EIA at a later date." They should also help with the development of plans to mitigate and avoid negative impacts on the environment, for instance in terms of biosecurity, storm water, noise and effluent management.
- Water-use rights should be registered before you apply for the EIA to prevent the process being dragged out.
- Familiarise yourself with municipal by laws, and preferably meet with your local municipality to discuss your plans. To avoid surprises, get a pre-audit done during which you discuss your intentions and what the municipality expects and requires from you. "You don't want to waste money on an EIA if the municipality won't allow the building of poultry houses or poultry production in the designated area. Noise levels associated with the building and farming with poultry may also turn into a deterrent," Brinkhuis says.

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Big Dutchman

In pursuit of a big dream

KwaMhlanga Poultry Project is a commercial broiler-production company in Vandykspruit between Cullinan and KwaMhlanga in Mpumalanga. It also represents five small farming companies' first step towards realising their dream of establishing an integrated poultry producer with its own brand. By **Charmain Lines**

*Farm manager Abram Mtshweni and some of the staff members of KhwaMhlanga Poultry Project
Right: Sbusiso Mavuso*



Teaming up with likeminded entrepreneurs is one way to gain entry into a highly competitive industry. This, as well as the certain knowledge that they were destined for bigger things, was exactly the thinking that led Sbusiso Mavuso and four other small farming companies to pool their skills, knowledge and resources to establish KwaMhlanga Poultry Project in 2012. A shareholders' agreement was prepared, giving each entity equal rights and ownership, Mavuso was appointed CEO and KwaMhlanga



TRANSFORMATION THROUGH INNOVATION

Poultry Project was in business.

Actually not, says Mavuso. Really being in business took five years. "We prepared a business plan in 2012 that we used to apply for R25 million in funding from DALRRD. It was only approved in 2017. So we had five years without a solid income."

The approval was also not for what the initial business plan envisioned. "We wanted to put up seven chicken houses and an abattoir," says Mavuso. "But the Department was not convinced that the abattoir would work. Instead, we were advised to build four chicken houses and approach Daybreak to become contract growers."

The partners agreed and soon received an offtake agreement from one of South Africa's big five integrated poultry producers. Today, KwaMhlanga Poultry Project supplies 160 000 broilers per cycle to Daybreak from its four chicken houses, each with a capacity of 40 000.

The 160 000 is a far cry from the 500 day-old chicks Mavuso used to raise for live sales to the local community, but neither is it anywhere near his vision for the business. "We want to get to 20 chicken houses and then strike out on our own," he says. "The plan is to diversify into other areas of the value chain, such as transport and feed production, and eventually into processing, packaging and retailing. For that you need volume and we're far from the levels we need."

Ups and downs of contract growing

Mavuso does not regret the contract-grower path the company had been compelled to take. "We felt strongly that the area we targeted for our operation needed an abattoir because you have many chicken farmers there. But the contract-grower experience has been good for us."

The upside of contract growing includes stable prices and revenue, being provided with the necessary inputs (day-old chicks, feed and medication), and access to veterinary services and expertise. Most of the complex decisions are taken by the integrated producer's technical advisors, which makes life simpler for the growers and eases the burden of responsibility.

"On the whole, contract growing is a dynamic partnership between small farmers and big agri businesses in which neither party has to sacrifice itself," says Mavuso.

There are, however, aspects that could be improved. "More transparency when it comes to production costs,

especially the cost of feed, would be helpful, so that we are in the picture about factors that cause cost fluctuations and hence the price per ton we receive."

Despite a rocky start, KwaMhlanga Poultry Project has been in business for four years, which is a source of great pride for Mavuso. "So many small businesses don't make it past one year, and here we are, running strong. That makes us proud."

He is also proud of the 12 local community members they employ, and the support they can give to other small businesses, such as plumbers and electricians, in their area. "Imagine how many more people will benefit once we realise our vision," says Mavuso.

Getting the message out

Mavuso has great appreciation for the training SAPA has provided over the years, equipping him with the operational and managerial skills to run a commercial broiler business. SAPA is currently helping KwaMhlanga Poultry Project to refine its business case and apply for the water-use licence and environmental approvals it needs to expand its operations. "We're planning to put up four more houses in 2022, and then four houses every year thereafter until we get to 20," explains Mavuso.

As a member of the Broiler Board, Mavuso is well placed to assess SAPA's role and effectiveness. "The Association is one of the best and biggest representing small farmers. The messages that there is assistance available for small farmers and that there's a solid transformation plan for the industry simply have to reach the small farmers. Communication is the only way to get more of them to join. After all, when you fly with the eagles, only the sky is the limit."

As a new board member, Mavuso has adopted a look-and-learn approach for the time being. He appreciates having a seat at the table, but feels that he is not ready yet to make his voice heard. "I am learning so much from the big guys and I still perceive myself as a small farmer. But in a few months I will be at a point where I can fully express my views and contribute positively to the growth and sustainability of the industry."

Given the road Mavuso and his partners have travelled, and their plans for the future, there is no doubt that players at all levels in the industry will benefit from paying attention to what this young innovator has to say. ▶

A passion for poultry



Jake Mokwene's financial skills has stood him in good stead as a farmer and member of SAPA's Transformation Committee

TRANSFORMATION THROUGH INNOVATION

Following one's passion is the secret to success, in farming as it is in life. That is the firm belief of financial advisor and broiler farmer Jake Mokwene, who has helped SAPA to innovate since 2006. By **Melinda Shaw**

Growing up in a village as the son of stock farmers near Rustenburg in the North West, Jake Mokwene had the farming culture in his blood. "My father raised cattle back then, on tribal land, but I always dreamt that I would own my own farm one day," he says.

He was in his early 30s when that finally happened, because life first sent him on a path to equip him for what he calls his day job, as the owner of financial advisory Wealth-Vision. He's a weekend farmer, he quips, dividing his time between the office in Rustenburg where he services his clients with financial planning advice, and his farms in the nearby district, where he raises broilers on contract for Country Bird Holdings (CBH), and also cattle.

But chickens, ah, those are his passion, he says. The chicken-farming bug took a while to bite, because after completing his economics degree at the Rand Afrikaans University, as University of Johannesburg used to be called, he worked in transport economics, which involved a lot of time on the road, following trucks.

"We always had a few hardbody chickens in the back yard, but informally, and when I seriously started looking into farming around 2003, I soon saw the appeal of commercial chicken production," says Mokwene.

Intensive research

"Doctors caution against the health risks of red meat, but white meat always gets the health thumbs up, so I knew that there was a future with poultry. Also, if you want to farm intensively, you don't need a massive parcel of land for chickens, which was another attraction."

Choosing broilers over layers was an easy decision, as he

felt more secure with the shorter cycles of raising broilers.

An intensive period of research followed, while he also scouted around for a suitable piece of land. Knocking on many doors to try and see poultry farming in action and learn from experienced farmers, he came up against resistance from established producers who didn't welcome strangers near their poultry houses. But Mokwene persevered, and finally convinced a farmer near Ventersdorp to take him in to learn the business from the ground up, in return for offering his free labour.

"I spent my weekends on the farm, working shifts, sleeping in the chicken houses to get a feel for the chicks, and that's where I learnt the business and really found my passion. If you spend time with chickens you learn to communicate with them; they are much easier to adopt than cattle! Did you know, for instance, that if you want to check that the temperature is right for a batch of new chicks, nothing is better than sitting down with them... they'll soon climb all over you!"

The volunteer work gave him the hands-on experience he wanted, and eventually, in 2005, he bought a 69 hectare farm in the Zeerust district from the Land Bank. By then he had an offtake agreement with CBH, and with the Land Bank funding he erected two houses with 25 000 birds each. It was a massive challenge to secure the financing, he notes, one

which remains a thorn in his side as he has been unable to expand according to plan due to the Land Bank's dragging liquidity issues.

"In 2016 I wanted to put up additional houses, but at that stage demand wasn't growing due to a flood of dumped frozen chicken in the market from Brazil and the United States," says Mokwene. ▶

'When young people ask me what kind of business they should start I always answer: one that you are passionate about. If you are not passionate about it, forget it'

"By 2019 the situation had improved a bit, so I once more approached the Land Bank for expansion funding. Unfortunately I've not had success, so my expansion remains on hold."

He has calculated that 150 000 birds would be the ideal number to guarantee a profitable business. "Contract growing is a numbers game, and getting the quantities just right makes the difference between a profitable cycle and one that depletes your resources." CBH has supported his proposed growth with a letter of intent which guarantees him a market for the proposed increased output.

"If I could do anything over, I would apply for three times the amount I did right when I started, instead of being wary of asking too much. I'd be in a completely different situation now," he says.

Stricter criteria

Mokwene hopes that the government's commitment to the poultry industry master plan will help to get things moving

so that he can finally secure the funding to expand and reach that sweet spot. "Government has to keep dumping and other unfair trade under control to stop our market being overrun with imports that undercut local producers. It is my hope that this is finally being addressed thanks to the master plan," he says.

The government can also pave the way for a more inclusive, diverse industry by applying stricter criteria for the allocation of state-owned land to ensure that the right candidates are identified.

"We see too many new farmers failing despite receiving state funding or farms and that is too often because the people who would succeed are

not the ones chosen. In this way precious resources are wasted," says Mokwene.

As his own situation illustrates, access to capital is a major obstacle for black farmers, as they have to compete with established farmers who often operate on inherited, debt-free land that can be used as collateral when expansion finance is needed.

'Government has to keep dumping and unfair trade under control to stop our market being overrun'

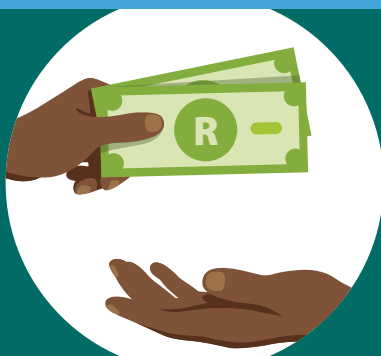
MOKWENE'S TOP 3 BUSINESS TIPS

Manage your budget. Record-keeping is key – know exactly what you are doing and what your money is being used for. Be hands-on!



Don't buy a Mercedes-Benz! Plough your profits back into your enterprise.

First cash in goes towards paying your employees. If there is anything left after that and after paying your overheads, only then do you take a salary.



TRANSFORMATION THROUGH INNOVATION

Live birds and chisanyamas

As a SAPA member and a former chairman of the Association's Transformation Committee, Mokwene has a vision of empowering more young, new-era farmers in this industry which has the potential to create viable businesses for so many.

"You can't be a developing farmer forever; you need to grow into a commercial operator," he says. "And there are many avenues. Contract growing is one, and it is a comfortable one as it removes some of the cash-flow stress, but the trade in live birds is another – it is a huge opportunity in the townships, as are chisanyamas."

DID YOU KNOW?

Loan terms with the Land Bank allow repayment periods of up to 25 years, compared to short-term repayment requirements from commercial banks which are out of reach of many farmers.

"What we at SAPA can do is to work with government to help identify the good candidates to receive state assistance – the hungry young businessmen and -women who are passionate about farming, who show initiative, who invest their own capital, who come to us to ask for direction," he says.

"We can share the huge pool of expertise held within SAPA networks, while the state can provide the manpower in the form of extension officers who can go out and find these young farmers with the right potential."

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A taste for crunchy duck eggs

Balut, the notorious Philippine delicacy made from boiled duck embryo, looks far worse than it tastes, and millions are eaten daily. **Gregg Yan** takes a closer look at the Philippines' duck industry

"My only son was able to study

because of these duck eggs," says *balut* vendor Ronald Isidro, opening a sky-blue styrofoam box to reveal a steaming cluster of eggs.

"I buy 60 to 120 eggs every day at 10 Philippine pesos (PHP) (around R3) each, then I cook and sell each for PHP15 (R4). I earn as much as PHP600 (R170) daily – enough to feed my family and pay for tuition."

Ronald is just one of thousands of people whose lives and livelihoods depend on ducks, a Philippine poultry sub-industry run largely by smallholder farmers which ranks second only to chickens in both importance and volume.

The itik, or native mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) is an excellent free-range candidate, easy to keep and breed. In the Philippines, it is mostly raised for its eggs. A healthy itik can produce up to 200 eggs a year





Balut vendor Ronald Isidro shows his remaining wares, about 30 balut and penoy eggs. Balut eggs retail for PHP15 (R4), while unfertilised hard-boiled penoy eggs go for PHP12 (R3). Millions of balut and penoy eggs are consumed daily, not just in the Philippines, but in Indochina and other parts of Asia too

Ducks have been honoured with a traditional folk dance called *Itik-Itik*, based on the comical movements of native mallards, locally called *itik*. Throughout the quaint barrios and bustling cities of the Philippines, the broad-billed birds are served in three ways.

The first and most popular is as *balut*, fertilised duck eggs artificially incubated for around 18 days, 10 days short of hatching. This results in a partially developed embryo complete with a crunchy but gross-looking beak and feathers, considered by many as a tasty aphrodisiac.

Balut eggs are larger and darker than chicken eggs and are boiled or steamed

Itlog na pula or salted duck eggs add a unique texture and vibrant flavour to meat dishes, salads and even desserts. Far right: A vendor offers a balut egg



Balut eggs are larger and darker than chicken eggs and are boiled or steamed. Infertile eggs are removed and sold by the same vendors as *penoy*, which cost less and taste similar to soft-boiled chicken eggs. Pateros, the famed *balut* capital of the Philippines, now sources its eggs 80km away, from the lakeside town of Victoria in Laguna.

Itlog na pula or salted red eggs are almost as popular as *balut* and are eaten along with meat dishes or salads. Commonly seen in stores and supermarkets, *itlog na pula* are made by fermenting duck eggs in a mixture of clay, salt and water for two to three weeks. The eggs are then boiled and dyed red to increase shelf life to over a month.

Native mallards can lay up to 200 eggs yearly, with production declining after the second year. In 2017, annual egg-based production for the Philippine duck industry was



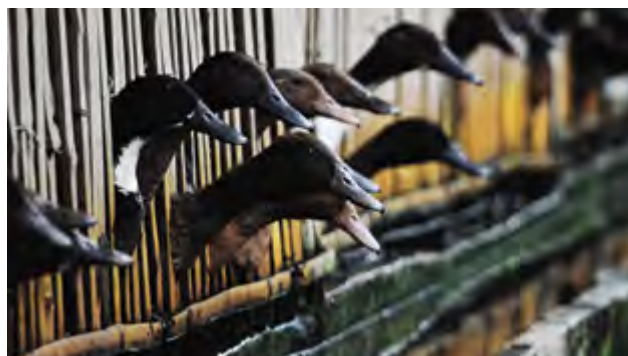
A stew of roasted *itik* or native mallard. Despite being 'bonier' than chicken, duck is very juicy and tasty

estimated at 45 000 tons, roughly 10% of the country's chicken-egg volume of 492 406 tons.

The duck-egg trade employs thousands of people and have become an inexpensive way to provide protein and calcium for many Filipino.

The birds are also slaughtered for meat, with broiler or layer ducks harvested at different times. Native egg-laying *itik* are usually culled and sold for PHP60 to PHP130 (R17 to R37) after 18 to 24 months, when their laying ability begins to wane. Premium broiler or meat-type birds such as Muscovy and Pekin ducks are sold for as much as PHP270 (R77) per kilogram. Larger, tougher and easier to raise than chickens, ducks are prized for their darker, juicier and, some say, tastier meat.

Itik or native mallards in a kamalig or duck house in Laguna



Sacks of molluscs including various species of snails and freshwater clams are harvested from nearby lakes and fed to ducks. A sack costs about PHP300 (R85), providing ducks with vital calcium, necessary for egg-laying



*Above: A native itik
Below: A Muscovy duck*



Free-range ducks vs kamalig farming

Locally called *itik*, *pato* or *bibe*, ducks are a familiar sight in the Philippine countryside, waddling and quacking around ponds, rivers and homesteads.

They make excellent free-range animals as they are adaptable and have superior foraging abilities. Farmers can take advantage of nearby ricefields and waterways as these offer swimming spaces plus an ample supply of supplementary food like rice hull, insects, fish, weeds and various types of freshwater snail – including the non-native and invasive golden-apple snails, which are wreaking havoc in Asian rice fields and considered a pest.

One- to five-month-old ducks can optimally live in free-range settings, kept in corrals that protect them against predators. These corrals are typically hewn from palm leaves,

canvas, bamboo or netting with rice hull used as litter to keep the substrate dry and disease-free.

To ensure optimal health, free-range ducks are fed various types of feeds, rice bran and molluscs to maintain weight and laying productivity.

When ducks are confined for intensive egg farming in *kamalig* (duck houses), various measures are taken to ensure the layers' welfare, including providing a swimming area that is easily cleaned. A four-by-four meter bamboo structure with a flooring of rice hull can house around 80 adults, which lay eggs between the ages of five and 24 months. Typically, clean water is provided via easily accessible outside troughs while wooden boxes are placed inside the structure to provide ideal egg-laying spots.

Despite being a mainstay of the Philippine poultry industry, not all is well on the duck front. ▶

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'Because of climate change, layer productivity dropped to 60%, even 50%. Our ducks aren't laying as many eggs and there are months when I don't turn a profit at all,' says Victoria-based farmer Glenne Salamanca



Effects of climate change

"Climate change has been affecting our ducks' egg-laying production," explains Glenne Salamanca, who has been involved in his family's *itik* farming business for decades. "Ten years ago Victoria was so cold in December that you'd need a jacket to go out and work. Now all I'm wearing is a jersey and it's still warm." Glenne's family has been raising ducks and processing both *balut* and *itlog na pula* for decades, but times have been hard. When we visited, only one of their small factory's 10 large wooden incubators had any eggs in it.

Since 2010, laying productivity has been declining. "A thousand prime-aged ducks used to lay about 850 eggs a day, a productivity level of 85%. Given production costs, you can expect to earn about PHP1 000 (R285) a day from 1 000 ducks. Now, maybe because of the heat, productivity has dipped to 60%, even 50%. There are months when I don't turn a profit at all, despite putting in lots of hard work."

Agustin Buenafe, who owns a mid-sized *itik* farm in Victoria, agrees. "We're now seeing more ducks getting sick, especially in the farms encircling nearby Laguna Lake. As with all businesses, it's still a risk – but my 2 000-head farm is still producing about 1 500 eggs daily. You just need grit and some cash reserves. The industry can still be profitable."

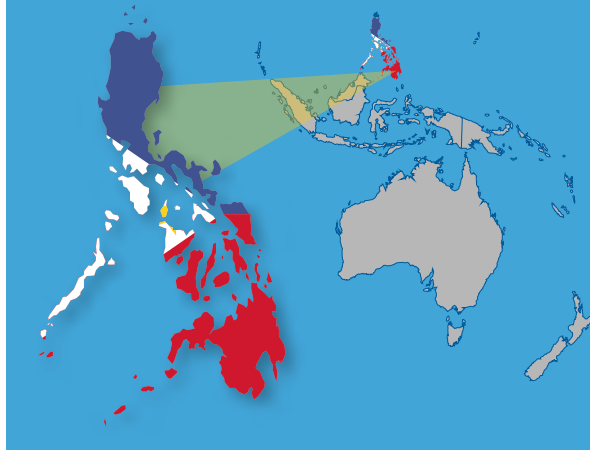
In a world more and more reliant on chicken, it's good to see the variety and distinctive flavour offered by ducks. Despite waddling only to second place, they'll always be first in the hearts of Ronald, Glenne, Agustin and many others. 📷

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'It's still a risk, but my 2 000-head farm is still producing about 1 500 eggs daily. You just need grit. The industry can still be profitable,' says Agustin Buenafe, who owns a mid-sized operation in Laguna



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1. Elanco Study Hemicell HT Cost saving calculator 2021

2. Anderson DM, Hsiao HY, and Dale NM. 2008. Identification of an inflammatory compound for chicks in soybean meal-II. Poultry Science 2008; 87: 159. REF-01075

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Jamesway and Chick Master – two legendary brands make one fantastic partner, providing the poultry industry with worry-free incubators



What came first, the chicken or the egg? This perennial question might never be answered, but if your question is how best to ensure that your eggs turn into chickens, the answer is easy: call on Hatchery Equipment Suppliers (HES)

Hatchery owners in 80s South Africa knew them as the agent for UK incubator brand Buckeye, and HES has indeed been a trusted supplier to the poultry industry since 1982. Forty years since that modest start, the company finds itself at the forefront of incubation, continuing the proud legacy of two iconic global brands as the official agent of **Jamesway Chick Master Incubator (JCMI)** products in Southern Africa.

HES also represents hatchery automation specialists Egg Chick Automated Technologies (ECAT-ID) and counts prominent poultry producers in Southern Africa and across

the continent among its customers. Now combined under one umbrella, **Jamesway** and **Chick Master** are without a doubt the two most historic brands in incubation, with over 230 combined years of serving the poultry industry in 150 countries across the globe.

Eight of the top 10 poultry-producing companies in the world use JCMI products, with incubators that save energy and labour, customised software guaranteed to improve processes, and equipment that is built to last.

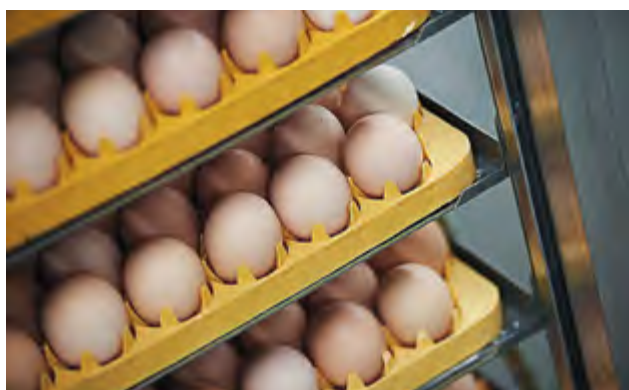
Whether you are just starting out as a poultry farmer and building your first hatchery, or expanding a comprehensive



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For more information,
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or email sales@poultryequipment.co.za

ADVERTORIAL



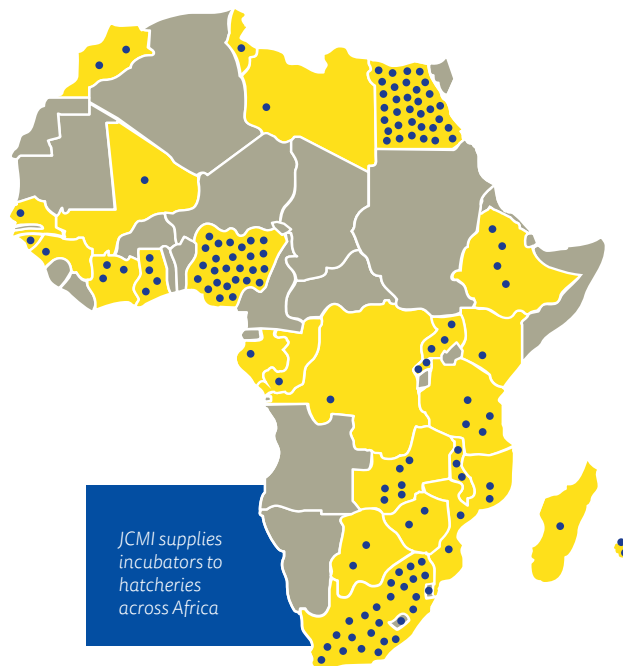
commercial facility, **Jamesway Chick Master Incubator** has the right equipment to improve your bottom line, and **Hatchery Equipment Suppliers** has the expertise to ensure you make the right choices for your business.

HES provides a full-service solution to both small-scale and large commercial hatcheries across Southern Africa, and its team of locally trained engineers can help with every aspect of the process, from hatchery design and layout to installation and maintenance of single- and multi-stage setters and hatcher, hatchery automation, ventilation systems, water chiller units, energy management and more. If your business expands and the hatchery needs reorganising, its expert technical staff can assist with dismantling, relocation, upgrading and reinstallation of equipment, to get you back in business as soon as possible.

The company stocks a large inventory of spare parts for its incubators, and various plastic setter trays, hatcher baskets and chick crates. HES's local manufacturing facility also produces various steel, aluminium and stainless steel trolleys, dollies and buggies popularly used in the industry, as well as ancillary hatchery equipment for egg and chick processing such as egg candling and transfer machines, and macerators for waste disposal.

"We are committed to providing a superior combination of quality equipment, technical expertise, and customer service in a manner that exceeds the needs of our customers both domestic and international. The value of a purchase from Hatchery Equipment Suppliers will continue long after the sale," says HES director John Futter. 📍

AFRICAN INSTALLATIONS





NETCHIX

ANIMATED
CRIME SERIES:

An Egg-streme Ending

Words Alyn Adams

Illustrations Jason Bronkhorst

Wondering what to binge watch next? The woeful tale of a doomed egg called Humpty Dumpty and an investigation that was a dog's breakfast from the start should be high on your list

Did he slip or was his messy ending the result of fowl play? When a dog detective and a dogged newshound sniff out the clues, the scene is set for an egg-citing nail-biter.

Episode 1: "Dark Day for a Dog Detective"

As far as Chief Inspector Blandhound of the Nursery Rhyme Detective Squad (Nurds) is concerned, the grisly shattered body that drags him out of his kennel way too early on the morning of 08 November is an open-and-shut case. At some point the night before, a newly laid Favorelle egg named Humpty Dumpty by his alliterative but unthinkingly cruel parents, had sat on the wall. Some time later, he'd had a great fall. Summoned to help from the local pub, all the King's horses and all the King's men had been unable to save him.

Blandhound is immediately convinced it's a suicide: tragic, but no reason to suspect fowl play. He comes to this conclusion before even interviewing the witnesses, because he has a deep-seated prejudice against chickens, caused by a terrifying encounter with a bolshy bantam when he was a just a puppy. The scar on his big bloodhound nose still aches every winter. He is quite happy to believe a chicken is such a miserable life form, that many will want to "end it all" as early as possible.

Episode 2: "Press Conference Goes Pear-Shaped"

The crime scene attracts all the famous nursery rhyme reporters – including Wee Willie Winkie, Chicken Little, the Fly from "Who Killed Cock Robin?" – the usual crowd. Blandhound calls a press conference, trying to give them a story and get them to leave the scene, but it backfires badly.

He makes a major blunder when he advances his theory. "Clearly a suicide!" he barks. "Chicken kid gets depressed – what's he got to look forward to? Growing up with feathers and barely any sense of smell? What kinda prospect is that? Of course he's gonna feel rotten! So, he rolls himself up onto the wall and then rolls himself off – end of story. Very sad; see you guys in the bar."

The press conference explodes, with cries of "Are you kidding me?", "How does an egg get depressed that young?", "Yeah! He got laid only 14 hours ago!" and "Nobody that green is suicidal!"

Blandhound turns tail and flees to the safety of his interview rooms.

In a flashback to 13 hours before, we see a skinny moon peering through windswept clouds. We see a shadow shuffling up to the wall, we hear the heavy breathing as the shadow ascends the stone stairs; then the view shows the yawning abyss from the top of the wall. A muffled cry rings out...

Episode 3: "Newshound with her Teeth in a Story"

Sam Spayed is a hard-bitten newshound, and she has the fleas to prove it. Journalism's a bitch, but luckily, so is she. Reporting's in her blood, like wolf DNA and the rabies vaccine. Once she gets her teeth into a story, she never lets go, and like the Rottweiler she is, she has dug up the truth in an embarrassing number of cases that have outfoxed Nurds officers.

This remains a bone of contention between Sam and Chief Inspector Blandhound, but it has also cultivated a healthy respect for the feisty Rottweiler among his underlings. Which is why she has no problem getting past them and following the Chief Inspector into his lair. Impressed despite himself by Sam's dogmatic dedication to the scent, he lets her sit in on the interviews.



HUMOUR

Episode 4: "Too Little, Too Late"

One by one, all the King's horses are interviewed, but the detective can't get a word out of any of them. When asked directly if they had anything to do with the fall, the answer is always "Neigh!" Blandhound is forced to turn them loose.

To Sam's frustration, all the King's men prove just as unhelpful. Almost to a man, they insist that they arrived on the scene too late, and "never saw nuffin'". The only exception is a fey young subaltern called Crispin, whose first words as he arrived at the wall were apparently, "Oy, what a mess! Anyone fancy a meringue?"

Convinced that the witnesses are a dead end, newshound Sam decides to interview Humpty's parents.

Episode 5: "A Clue in the Colour"

Mr Dumpty is heartbroken. "I wanted him to forage in my footsteps," he sobs, as his wife cradles him in her wings. "Now all my hopes are crushed!" Sam notices that he's wearing one red sock, and one green sock. He must have dressed in a hurry, she thinks.

But then the newshound notices that Humpty's mom is looking a little odd. Sad, yes, but also strangely guilty...

Like many humble families, the Dumptys are staunch royalists... and when Sam sees Mrs Dumpty steal a furtive glance at the picture of the King hanging above the mantelpiece, the pieces fall into place. Pieces of eggshell, to be exact – Sam has a vivid,

terrible memory of Humpty's green eggshell, shattered at the foot of the wall.

But Mr and Mrs Dumpty are both Faverolles – their eggs should be sort of salmon-coloured, she realises. The only way Mrs Dumpty could lay a green egg, would be if... if the father were another breed, like an Ameraucana!

Sam looks again at the portrait of the King, one of the best-looking Ameraucanas in the kingdom – and known to be very charming as well. And she already knows that Mr Dumpty often works night shift at the bakery. Suddenly, the mismatched socks make sense too – Mr Dumpty is colour blind, and would not recognise a green shell until someone else pointed it out to him.

Quietly she takes Mrs Dumpty aside for a private word.

Episode 6: "Making an Omelette" (spoiler alert)

Chief Inspector Blandhound and the prosecutor agree to handle the trial quietly. It had not taken much prompting for a sobbing Mrs Dumpty to spill the beans in the interview room. The one-night stand with the King, the horror when she got up from the laying nest and the egg's colour was all wrong... the hasty solution she now regrets.

Ovicide might be the worst crime a hen can commit, but Mrs Dumpty's guilt is already punishing her more severely than the law ever could. Her devastated husband has started divorce proceedings, and she's on constant suicide watch.

After a brief trial, in which her full confession counts as mitigation, she's sentenced to life in a minimum-security coop. It's a bittersweet victory for Sam. The case has won her more grudging respect from Blandhound and Nurds, but there is no joy in knowing the heavy price the Dumptys paid. As she nibbles on a bowl of kibble, Sam decides that King has to be held responsible for his awful behaviour. It will not be easy, she realises, but as she snuggles down in her kennel, she vows: tomorrow is another day. 🐾



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ON THE WIRES

A view of the news from the global chicken-verse

Compiled by **Charmain Lines**

Eggs for flu jabs

Chicken eggs are central to human health – and not only because they are good to eat. For the past 80 years much of the world has relied on fertile chicken eggs for the production of human flu vaccines. In the United States, for instance, an estimated 82% of the 174.5 million doses of the flu vaccine distributed in the 2019/2020 flu season were egg-based.


The basis for vaccine manufacturing is a fertilised egg that has been incubated for 10 to 11 days. It is then transferred to the vaccine manufacturer which inoculates the egg with the flu virus. In the three days that follow, the egg is put back in the hatcher and the virus incubates and replicates – just as it would in the human

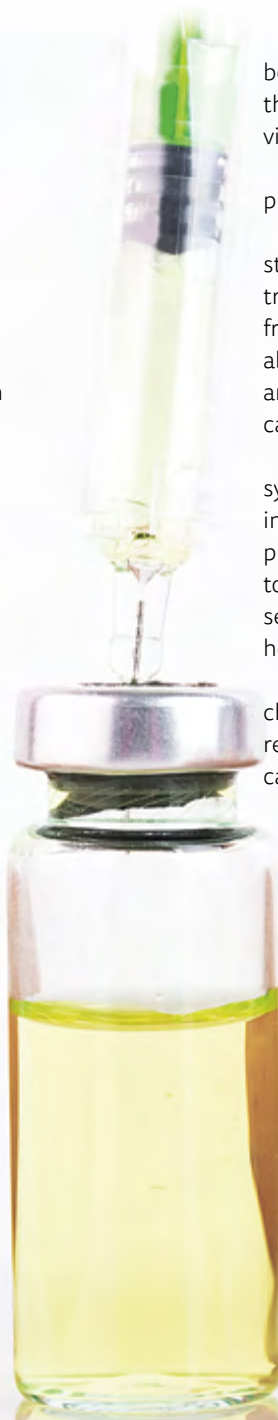
body. Scientists then harvest fluid containing the virus from the egg, deactivate and purify the virus, and are left with the virus antigen.

One egg delivers one vaccine dose, and the process takes at least six months.

Hatcheries that produce vaccine eggs maintain strict biosecurity protocols, heat treat feed, UV treat water and keep the layer birds separated from the manure with slatted floors. The eggs are also disinfected multiple times during handling and transportation, and handled with extreme care to prevent cracks and losses.

Interestingly, vaccine-egg producers synchronise their operations with the human influenza season. In Brazil, for instance, the production season runs from September to April to produce eggs for the southern hemisphere's flu season. Production stops in April, after which the houses are cleaned for a new flock in September.

Due to its unique receptors and other characteristics, the novel coronavirus cannot replicate inside eggs the way other flu viruses can. Your Covid-19 jab is, therefore, egg-free. 



More women needed in egg farming

Globally, women represent only around 30% of the total agricultural workforce. In a number of developing countries, more women than men are employed in agriculture, according to data from the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the World Bank; however, in wealthy nations, the percentage varies between 20% and 40%.

Looking at egg production specifically, the International Egg Commission (IEC) provides valuable insights. As the global egg industry's

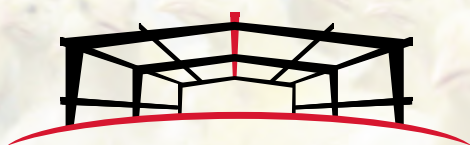
representative body, the IEC's sector experts compile production and consumption data from different countries. Of the 40 IEC rapporteurs, only 11 (27.5%) are women.

At national levels, most egg producers' associations are still led by men, and the absence of women in top farm-management positions is evident on most continents, despite the majority of egg farms being family-owned enterprises.

Countless studies by the World Bank and various non-governmental organisations have found that a lack of access to farm inputs, for example feed and vaccines, and technical support, render women about 30% less productive than men. An alarming alternative reason for women's underperformance emerged

during farmer discussion groups in Kenya and Bangladesh, where women looking after laying hens expressed concerns that men would take over their egg businesses should they become too successful.

While the issue is clearly complex, there can be no doubt that the global egg sector can do more to welcome and empower women. ▶



RT CONSTRUCTION

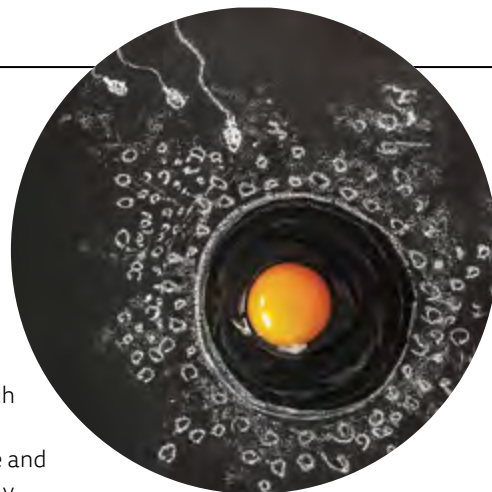
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Awards for poultry production innovations

SPACE is an international livestock trade show that takes place in France every year. The event includes the Innov'Space awards, a celebration and recognition of the best new thinking and practices around products and services for animal agriculture.


This year, 108 innovations competed in the awards. Six of those that were recognised with the awards' star ranking, were exclusively for use in poultry meat or egg production. One of them, Apsicomfort, received the highest recognition of three stars.

Apsicomfort is an automatic poultry semen collector that greatly improves the working conditions of poultry semen collectors, both in terms of comfort and sanitary safety.

One-star awards went to:

- The BH21 internal combustion heating system, which makes the heating of chicken houses cleaner, more precise and more environmentally friendly.
- The Darthos vaccination table, which contributes to animal welfare by making vaccinations and declawing and debeaking operations easier and more comfortable.
- Ecomet, a unique combination of plant extracts, raw materials and carefully selected vitamins that reduces the use of protein raw materials, particular soybean meal, in poultry feed and maintains egg-laying performance.
- Inevo, a brand of highly digestible

oil-seeds that includes a variety of linseeds particularly suitable for poultry. The product can help improve poultry's sustainability and performance.

- The Sam'Occulta poultry house window that provides poultry houses with the 3% natural light requirement for agricultural buildings. The innovative rotating slats system used in the window makes indirect natural lighting management possible. 

Will lab-grown chicken ever be a thing?



No chicken farmer wants to think of a future scenario where drumsticks are grown in a lab, putting farmers out of business. For now this is science fiction, although interest in so-called cultured, cultivated, clean or lab-grown meat is growing, as an alternative to slaughtering animals for meat.

It is still early days for this product, with the world's first lab-grown hamburger unveiled in 2013 but not yet available on the market mainly due to the high cost of manufacturing. However, at least 55 companies across the globe are working on meat alternatives, so the interest is definitely there. In December 2020 cultivated meat was approved for human consumption for the first time when Eat Just Inc. received regulatory approval to sell its lab-grown chicken nuggets commercially in Singapore.


Despite these developments, many questions remain unanswered. Just how healthy and cost-effective will cultured meat be? Will it taste good enough to entice people to buy it?

To answer these and many other questions, researchers from Tufts

University, Virginia Tech, University of California at Davis, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Virginia State University and the University of Massachusetts in Boston, have joined forces to develop approaches to the manufacturing of cultivated meat, and to train the next generation of professionals in the industry.

The team also hopes to create a centre of excellence for cultivated meat within the next five years to fill the existing data and research void.

"Our mission is really to build a strong scientific foundation for the field," says David Kaplan, director of the Tissue Engineering and Research Centre at Tufts University.

While the scientists tinker in the lab, broiler farmers will still make sure the world has all the chicken it needs. 

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Soup-er work at Richmond

Astral Foods runs various CSI programmes, but its Richmond Mill lockdown soup-pack scheme, which has run for 82 weeks, captured our imagination.

David Stock, COO at National Chicks, tells all

How was this initiative born?

The feeding scheme at Richmond Mill in KwaZulu-Natal is one of 26 soup kitchens and a key CSI project that Astral supports through National Chicks and Meadow Feeds. We launched it on 15 May 2020 in response to the desperate need caused by job losses during the lockdown. School closures also suspended the government feeding programme, leaving children without their only daily meal.

We partnered with Inka Henderson who runs a school for orphans at Richmond Mill, formerly a Meadow Feeds mill, and which has been "donated" to the Makhaseh Children's Village NPO. Inka realised some children's development was stunted due to their protein-deficient diet, so we decided to help. Now 150 children are fed twice a week on our chicken soup packs; a nutritious source of protein and probably the only animal protein in their diets.

But you provide even more, not so?

Yes, we also supply eggs and an instant porridge to be sent home with every child. Meadow Feeds covers the



At Inka Henderson's school 150 children receive a twice weekly meal made with the chicken soup packs that are provided by National Chicks





school's utility bills, while National Chicks pays for its security and donates frozen chicken packs, fortified porridge and eggs. Local farmers generously contributed fruit and vegetables, local residents have donated clothing, cash, toiletries and more food, while the Richmond Community Trust's volunteers do the cooking, cleaning and dishing up.

What exactly is in such a soup pack?

It is a 15kg bag with 12kg individually quick frozen (IQF) chicken portions and 3kg frozen vegetables with an added spice mix. We developed it in partnership with McCain and Crown National. It's designed as a soup pack, but it's prepared as a tasty stew, served with rice and vegetables.



What lessons were learnt in this project?

We've seen how important it is for people who have a heart for their community and a bigger vision to join efforts. Also, we've seen the difference good nutrition makes in the development of a child: their vitality has visibly improved, but most importantly, trust has developed.

Are there longer-term plans with the project?

At the school they've introduced music and started reading stories to the kids after their meal, to reach beyond nutrition and also help develop minds. These children come from abject poverty and often receive little stimulation at home.

The five-year plan is to transfer the Richmond Mill property into the ownership of the Makhaseh Children's

Village charity. In the interim, Meadow Feeds pays the rates, water and electricity, and National Chicks covers food costs while Inka raises funds through MakhasehUSA, the registered sister charity in the US.

Which other CSI projects are Astral involved in?

We launched the "Astral Cares" initiative specifically in response to the impact of Covid-19, and it includes Six Pillars of Care, namely Care for the hungry, Care for the ill and fragile, Care for our Astral family, Care for our communities, Care for our producers and Care for animals. Together with the food distributed to employees and charities, we have dedicated R11.8 million to various projects. We've helped with bursary programmes, supplied water to the Lekwa community, provided drought relief for 60 farmers, donated R1.9 million to animal shelters and the NSPCA, and donated to the Childhood Cancer Foundation, among other projects. When it comes to fighting hunger, we supported 30 children's homes, 25 homes for the elderly and 32 feeding schemes of which Richmond Mill is one. In total, we have supplied over 1.5 million meals in the last year. 🌱





HACKS&TIPS

Farmers share innovative tricks that they use to transform their businesses

We asked

What plans have you made on your farm to solve your farming challenges?

Veliswa Matshaya



Ngenani Investment
Putfontein, Benoni,
Gauteng

Feed is the most expensive input in broiler farming, so I make sure to avoid spillages by replacing pan feeders with bell-shaped ones during the first two weeks.

We also switch off the lights at certain stages, to allow birds time to rest, which helps in digestion and thus good performance and healthy birds.

Electricity is the next big input cost, so we buy energy-saver globes, and use a coal heating system, which works very well for us. Thirdly we sell manure to my neighbour for his crop farming, and that covers sawdust expenses for the next cycle.

Beverly Mhlabane



Zapa Farms
Benoni, Gauteng

In addition to our egg business we also plant vegetables at our farm, and we use from the one to help the other. For instance, we compost the chicken manure to use as fertiliser in the garden.

We collect eggshells from some of our customers, which are added to the garden too. When egg trays are damaged they make good seedling holders.



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HACKS & TIPS

Suzen Masingi




Paynter Poultry
Mmakau, North West

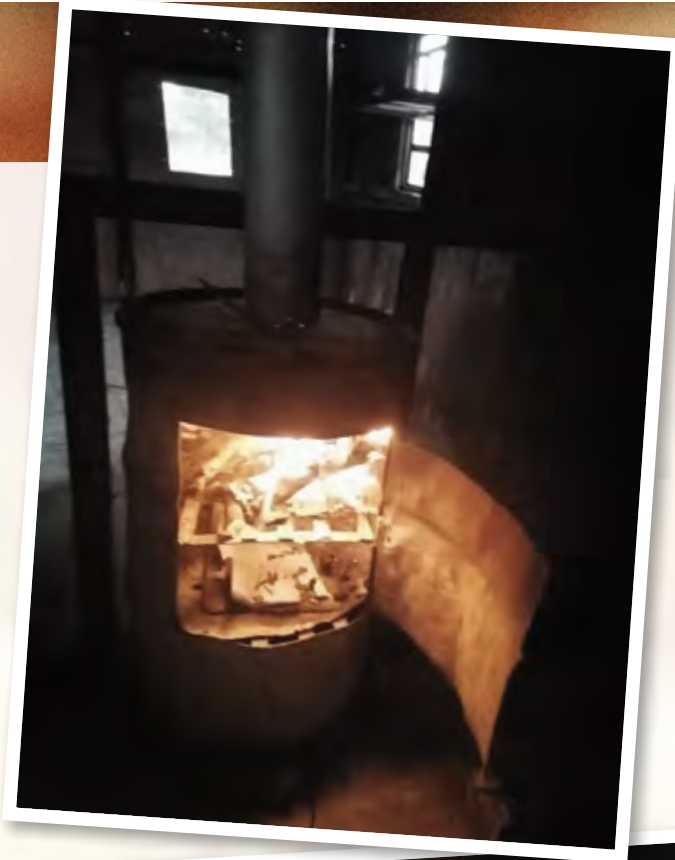
Follow “Mother of Chickens” on Twitter

 @SuzenMasingi

With feed, electricity and gas prices so high, I decided to come up with a way to cut one of my biggest expenses in rearing chicks. I couldn't cut feed costs much, so I worked with a welder to create a heating system so that I could save on energy cost.

Our design is basically a closed combustion coal stove, a *mbhau* – we used a closed drum into which we cut a door, and added a grate to hold the wood and ashes, and an open top where chimney pipes were added to take the smoke outside.

My *mbhau* keeps the coop warm and it's cut my electricity bill so much that I was in the financial position to hire an employee who is helping me on the farm. 



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Better guidance will drive transformation

As a supplier of equipment to poultry businesses, CEO of Reliance Distributors **Peter Kinnear** has seen success and failure in equal measure

When we started in 1986, commercial egg farmers were all buying pyramid cages for houses with 15 000 to 20 000 layers. Today we supply units for houses of 50 000 birds and upwards, and we cater for both large corporates and someone with 100 birds. In the last 15 years we have seen a healthy uptick in emerging farmer numbers.

We've done numerous projects with the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development over the years. Sadly, with state grants we tend to see a high failure rate. I believe this is largely because the grantees receive unqualified advice coupled with little support. There's a vast difference between someone who has been granted a bank loan and someone who has secured a grant. A grant doesn't encourage sustainability.

I used to spend a lot of time with the late entrepreneurial icon Dr Richard Maponya. We would go out and drive past these little units that you see all over the place, units of 500 layers or broilers, and he'd say "Peter, that is unsustainable. It's an injustice."

He was 88 when we first met. He came to see me with his daughter and a business plan. His approach was: "I'd like to consider 5 000 birds; can we do the numbers?"

We worked it out, cages, feed, distribution and construction cost. When I gave him the bottom line he said, "No, that scale doesn't justify the investment."

So, we did another calculation for 10 000 birds, and he started there. Within a few years, this grew to 90 000 layers. He did this by personally driving the project, managing the costs, and making sure his family was always involved.


In our country, there are many success stories. What they have in common is someone at the helm with the knowledge and entrepreneurial skill to be able to evaluate



'Many projects fail because of poor management, lack of skills, and unfeasible economies of scale'

a project and how viable it is likely to be.

You must have the skill, the acumen, and the will to make it work. Many of the projects that cross our desks unfortunately fail because of poor management, lack of skills, and unfeasible economies of scale. You cannot make a living if you buy your feed in bags and end up paying an extra R2 000 per ton.

We are part of a difficult, competitive industry and our emerging farmers need better guidance. We need a hub of industry experts who make themselves available to offer advice and guidance to interested parties. This will help bring about the lasting, sustainable transformation that our industry deserves. 



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How do I keep wild birds away?

Wild birds carrying avian flu can ruin a farmer. Veterinarian **Dr Shahn Bisschop** advises about preventative measures

"Dear Poultry Bulletin, we know that avian flu is spread by wild birds that bring it onto farms. When it's so hot I open the sides and doors of the chicken house for ventilation and the feed attracts pigeons. How do I keep them away from my chickens?" – Tsatsi Mafahla, @KetsoPoultry, via Twitter



This is a very good question. It is not easy to completely avoid contact between wild birds and domestic poultry, but the less chickens come in contact with wild birds, the lower the risk that they will become infected with avian influenza, so don't give up if your system is not perfect.

If your chickens are confined inside a chicken shed, then you have to make sure there are no gaps that allow wild birds to get into the sheds. It takes diligent work to get all the gaps closed – one has to watch where the birds get into the shed and block up the access holes. Unfortunately we have found that some small birds will even wait to fly into sheds when the doors are opened! If you have to keep the shed open for ventilation, consider installing netting over the openings, or reflective bird tape; some people have even found a bird-repellent use for old

CDs by suspending them to reflect light as they dangle.

If poultry is kept outside, avoiding contact with wild birds is even more difficult. The main thing one can do is to try to make the areas near your chickens less attractive to wild birds – so stop the wild birds getting access to feed and water by removing feed and water spillage and possibly by feeding poultry indoors. It is important to constantly remove bird nests from structures – this will also discourage birds from spending time in or near your sheds.

The reader is lucky in that pigeons are not the biggest headache. Water birds are the most important carriers of avian influenza. As we know they can carry the virus over very long distances without becoming sick themselves; as soon as they settle on a dam or a river, they will excrete

the virus through their faeces into the water. This water is then drunk by smaller birds that live on your site and then become infected. So you need to remove all open water bodies near your chickens – some farmers have even resorted to breaking down dams to get rid of open water near their sites. 🦋

Dr Shahn Bisschop is a veterinarian consulting to the poultry industry



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Suppliers and manufacturers of the complete broiler equipment, breeder and layer package, including two-, three- and four-tier laying cages, automatic feeding and drinking equipment, heating, ventilation, nest boxes and floor chain feeding.

Small abattoir equipment, 60-120 birds per hour.

Delivery can be arranged nationally and regionally.

Phone **011 794 4880** or email sales@reliancepoultry.co.za

VACANCIES

SALES REPRESENTATIVES

FOR BROILER/BREEDER/LAYER EQUIPMENT

Spartan Poultry Equipment Midrand, Johannesburg

Responsibilities and requirements of position:

- Sale of poultry equipment and parts
- Sale of feeders, drinkers, ventilation and controls of poultry equipment
- Visiting customers
- Technical knowledge to assist customers
- Preparing costings for projects
- Preparing of quotes/invoices
- Taking orders of projects and parts
- Project management
- Procurement of goods for projects
- Must be willing to travel; including into Africa

Please send your CV to sales1@spartanequipment.co.za



How to book

- Contact ad sales manager Louisa Nel at advertising@poultrybulletin.co.za or on 011 795 9920.
- Format: send us a maximum of 50 words detailing your poultry-related product or service. Classified adverts are text only and we cannot accept logos or product images at this stage.
- Ads may be edited for length and clarity and we reserve the right to reject any advertisement at our discretion.

Subscribe to Poultry Bulletin

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Fill in the form below, and send the completed form along with proof of payment to info@poultrybulletin.co.za.

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POPCORN CHICKEN

BE INNOVATIVE! TRANSFORM YOUR HOME MADE CHICKEN INTO A FAST-FOOD FIX FROM THE COMFORT OF YOUR OWN KITCHEN. FOLLOW THESE 4 EASY STEPS:



1

MARINADE 300G. OF BONELESS CHICKEN, CUBED INTO BITE-SIZED PIECES.

1 TABLESPOON EACH:
MINCED GINGER & CHOPPED GARLIC
1 TEASPOON EACH:
PAPRIKA / OREGANO. S&P TO TASTE

COVER & SET ASIDE FOR AN HOUR OR REFRIGERATE OVERNIGHT.

2

COAT CHICKEN PIECES, USING 3 BOWLS, IN THE FOLLOWING ORDER..

REST FOR 10 MINUTES

1 CUP
FLOUR

1 CUP
BUTTERMILK

1 CUP
PANKO CRUMBS

3

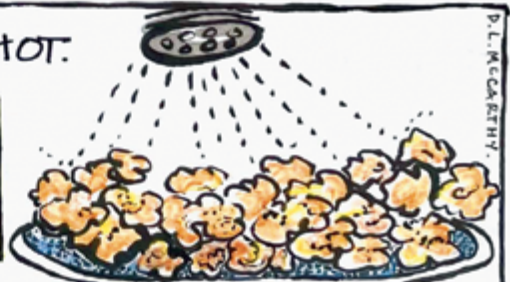
FRY PIECES IN MEDIUM HOT OIL TO COVER, MAKING SURE NOT TO CROWD THE PAN. THE CHICKEN IS DONE WHEN COATING IS BROWN & CRISPY: 7-8 MINS. DRAIN CHICKEN PIECES ON PAPER TOWELS



4

DUST WITH  **WHILST STILL HOT. SEASONING MIX.**

1 TEASPOON EACH:
GARLIC POWDER / ONION POWDER
CHILLI POWDER / OREGANO.
A GOOD PINCH OF SALT / PEPPER / CASTER SUGAR



SERVE WITH YOUR FAVOURITE DIPPING SAUCE **HINT:** MAYO & SRIRACHA MIX



THE VECTORED ND VACCINE YOU WANT FROM THE COMPANY YOU TRUST



NEWXXITEK HVT + ND is a Newcastle Disease vectored vaccine for hatchery injection containing a serotype 3 Marek's Disease virus with the F-gene insert from the velogenic Texas genotype IV ND virus.

Newxxitek HVT + ND (recombinant live vaccine for chickens) vaccine contains Marek's Disease vectored Newcastle recombinant virus, at least, 5,786 PFU. Preservatives: Penicillin G, Streptomycin sulphate and Amphotericin B. Reg. No.: G4259 (Act 36 of 1947). For animal use only.
Registration Holder: Boehringer Ingelheim Animal Health South Africa (Pty) Ltd (Co. Reg. No. 1997/022402/07) Building 4, 2nd Floor, Waterfall Corporate Campus, 74 Waterfall drive, Midrand. Tel: +27 (011) 348-2400. BI Ref.: V67 (November 2021). Customer helpline: **0860 637 425**

PREVENTION WORKS

Shaping the future of poultry health



**Boehringer
Ingelheim**



Meadow Feeds would like to thank all our customers, suppliers and partners for their support during 2021 and wish them a joyful festive season and a prosperous new year.



More than just feed