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ISSUE 11 DECEMBER 2022 / JANUARY 2023

Poultry Bulletin



THE MASTERPLAN ISSUE

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN POULTRY ASSOCIATION

SEASON'S GREETINGS

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Eggnog in a pie!



Thandi says, 'Season's greetings!'



'Tis the season to be jolly, and looking back over a challenging year it's a relief that we can soon put 2022 behind us. Yes, we know prices of fuel and feed are only going one way and that is up, and loadshedding lurks like the inappropriate uncle who spoils any party. But it is summer – time to braai a flatty, spend time with loved ones, take a dip on a hot day, and hopefully sneak a much-deserved breather before it all starts again in 2023. (Even when farming duties call you back to the hen house later.)

In 2022 we saw a number of poultry investments bear fruit as a result of projects initiated with the masterplan in mind. The importance of collaboration between the state and private enterprise, and the heights that can be achieved when we get these partnerships right, were illustrated by some great achievements.

We tell one of these success stories on page 12, and cheer on our cover star Clive Tigere as he aims to reach his target of three million chicks hatched by Christmas at Limpopo's new Northroost Hatchery. Go, Clive!

Another reason to celebrate arrived just before we sent this issue to print: the news that *Poultry Bulletin* was named as South Africa's National Winner in the 2022 SADC Media Awards in the Print Journalism category. Telling the poultry industry's stories is rewarding in itself, and receiving such recognition for it is a great honour indeed.

We wish all our readers a bit of time to rest, relax and regroup.

Happy holidays!

Melinda

editor@poultrybulletin.co.za

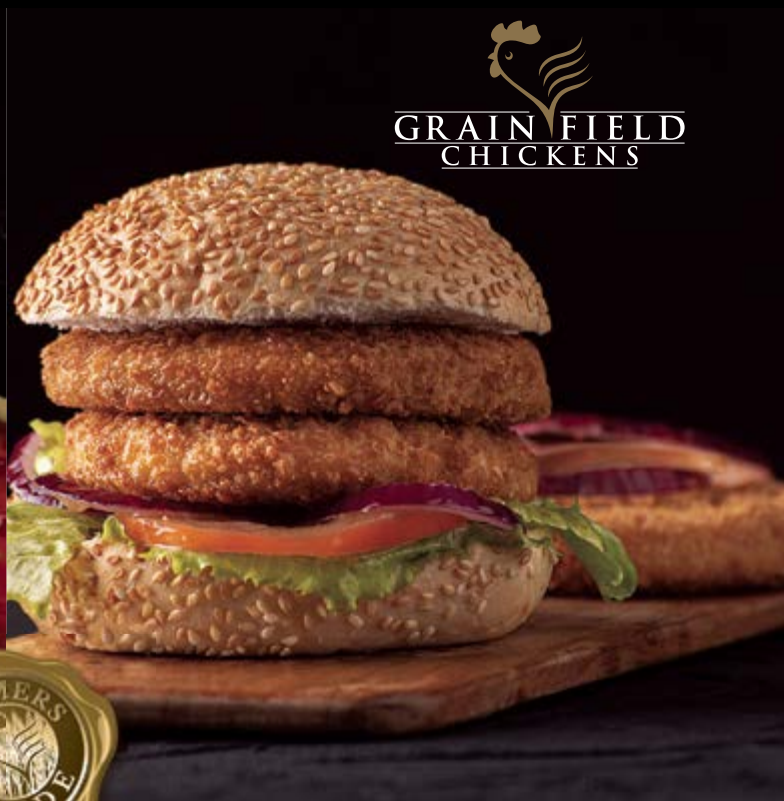
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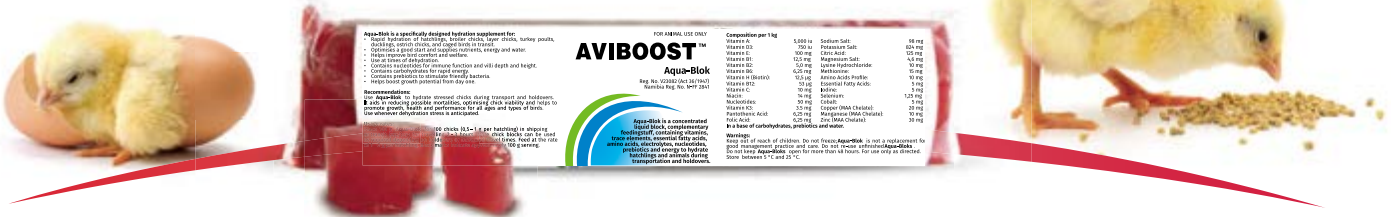
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References:

1. Jennifer R. Hess, MS; and Norman A. Greenberg. 2012 The Role of Nucleotides in the Immune and Gastrointestinal Systems: Potential Clinical Applications. *Nutrition in Clinical Practice* Volume 27 Number 2 April 2012 281-294
2. A. Gil 2002 Modulation of the immune response mediated by dietary nucleotides. *European Journal of Clinical Nutrition* (2002) 56, Suppl 3, S1-S4

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Time to recommit to the masterplan

The poultry industry masterplan came into effect in November 2019 when it was officially signed by a broad spectrum of stakeholders. It was a moment of real hope and inspiration. It held the promise of people setting their differences aside to protect an industry of national importance.

The creation of the masterplan had facilitated positive engagements among the industry's many role players with mutual benefit as the stated objective. Unfortunately, over the past three years, some of that goodwill has decreased. In particular, in as far as the antidumping tariffs discussion is concerned, some stakeholders who should be on the same side are retreating to their pre-masterplan positions.

It is therefore necessary to remind ourselves that the masterplan is about more than tariffs, and that its vision for the future needs to come to fruition for the benefit of our entire country and region. The future of our industry depends on its complete and successful implementation.

Ours is an industry at the heart of society's wellbeing. Firstly, local food production enhances local food security – a fact that was highlighted when Covid disrupted global trade. Secondly, poultry operations are by their very nature located in rural areas. This makes them invaluable sources of rural economic development and they help to stem the urbanisation tide.

Thirdly, with more than 100 000 people on its collective payroll, it is a major employer of people across all skills levels. Fourthly, it is an enabler of transformation. There's no arguing with the fact that 79 poultry houses, valued at R355 million, have been constructed by black farmers since 2019. Which other industry can boast such tangible empowerment successes?

Finally, it is an industry that is willing and able to translate commitments into action. Over the past three years, the R1.5 billion in new production capacity investments pledged by the industry have been realised. While most of



'Some stakeholders who should be on the same side are retreating to their pre-masterplan positions'

it came from the five large integrated producers – which is appropriate and to be expected – a significant amount has also been invested by medium and small producers (also read "Supply and demand" on page 32).

The masterplan is not only about tariffs. Its other four pillars cannot be neglected. We need a renewed commitment from all the signatories to implement the plan to its full extent so that it can have the intended, and much needed, positive impact on the economy in the years to come. 📌

Matshela Seshibe
CEO Daybreak Farms





LETTERS

Readers weigh in about VAT on poultry feed, solutions to crime on farms, and more



Calling for VAT-free poultry feed

I am sure that most other small and medium-scale farmers would support a call for the zero rating of poultry feed. Ever-increasing feed costs are a perpetual lament among these farmers, and government has never offered any remedies. Removing VAT from feed would be a step in the right direction, even if this were just instituted for a limited period.

Value-added tax of 15% applies to most goods and services, with a very limited list of basic foodstuffs that are exempt. It's an oversight that chicken – the most consumed and easily accessible meat-based protein – is

not on that list.

Feed accounts for as much as 70% of total poultry production costs. Sourcing cheaper feed, no matter how tempting, is not an option, as suboptimum feed can negatively impact chickens' growth and performance. Zero rating feed would allow the industry to thrive and offer produce that is competitively priced when compared to imports.

Elsewhere in the world governments offer subsidies to stimulate production, especially in the case of so-called "favoured commodities". Poultry in South Africa should be classified as such because it is the most accessible and affordable of

animal proteins. In a country where huge numbers of children experience stunted growth and malnutrition, access to more affordable protein is essential, and the removal of VAT from poultry feed would help close the gap.

The savings on VAT could allow a farmer to create new jobs, upgrade their infrastructure and equipment, expand their business and produce better poultry. As an indirect subsidy, this would offer state support in the simplest way while preventing any corrupt practices. The benefits of having VAT removed from feed are innumerable.

Ade Camngca

Ruffled Feathers Meat, Heidelberg

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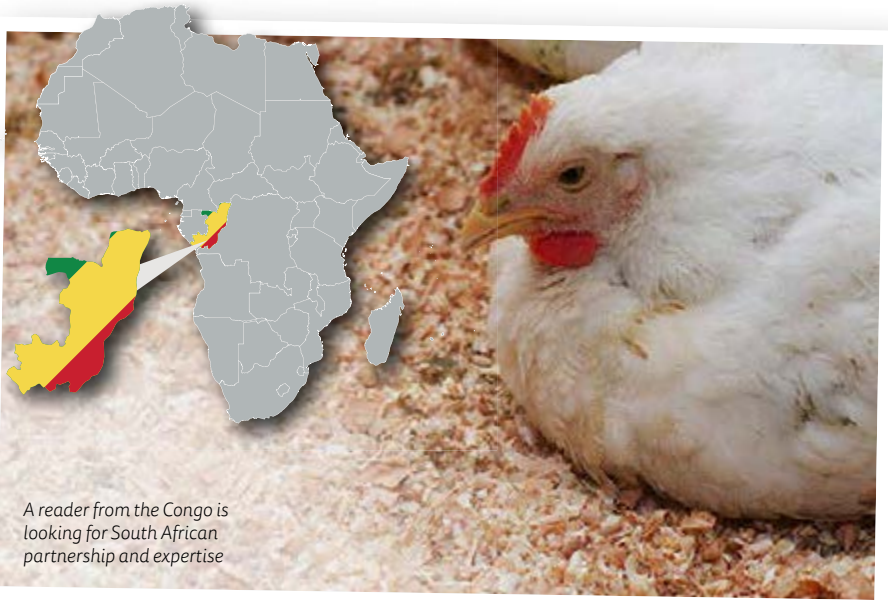
It's a matter of trust and lawlessness

As a private investigator who has investigated hundreds of cases of crime all over South Africa, Africa and abroad over my 42-year career, I noted with concern Bongani Khumalo's story about stock theft and how it impacted his output ("Farmers' wisdom", Issue 10). Truth is that it is not just farmers who have fallen victim to the rampant lawlessness in our country. Farmers, however, are particularly vulnerable because they have to police big portions of land in a country full of opportunistic criminals. The smaller an asset, the easier it is to keep it safe, and the closer to urban areas the bigger the threat.

Farmers and their equipment may not see each other for days, giving opportunists plenty of time to make off with stock and/or farming implements. So many farmers have also fallen victim to those they trusted. My advice to farmers is as follows: 1) Trust only your instincts. 2) Have a plan. 3) Step up your electronic security. 4) Put up light. 5) Make use of drones, they're versatile and user friendly. And most importantly, stay connected to your neighbours. We can't fight this alone. *Ubuntu* – united together.

Brad Nathanson

www.bradnathanson.co.za,
email: brad@bradnathanson.co.za



A reader from the Congo is looking for South African partnership and expertise

Opportunity offered in Congo Republic

We have a privately owned chicken farm on 17 hectares based in Brazzaville in the Congo, and we are looking to develop a partnership with South African chicken farmers.

At present Congolese agriculture is simply idling since the disappearance of farm and state agriculture enterprise. Family-run subsistence farms are the norm, using rudimentary equipment, and production tends to concentrate on food crops such as cassava, maize, groundnut, potatoes, beans, yams, plantains. Only 2% of arable land is used.

After reaching substantial levels in the 1990s, livestock is declining, as shown by the dwindling number of animals: currently around 2 184 600 chickens, 183 600 head of sheep and goats, 110 600 head of pigs.

Under these circumstances, the country is obliged, in the same way as for agriculture, to import what is needed to meet demand.

At Andréa Services Farm we hope to play a small role in starting to change that, with the help of experienced

partners from South Africa. More details about our farm as well as the full business plan is available for the consideration of anyone who might be interested.

Georges Moumbelo

Brazzaville, Congo Republic,
email: moumbelogeorges@gmail.com

Who can host a student?

I am a third-year student at Tshwane University of Technology studying Animal Science, and I hope one of your readers in the Pretoria area could possibly host me to do my practicals in 2023.

Experiential learning or work-integrated learning is a key requirement for my studies and it means that I have to find a position for one year at an approved workplace under a qualified mentor.

My interest is egg production, and I would love to work on a layer farm.

Ramukhotheli Mmboneni

Pretoria

Ed – Any layer farmers out there who can help? Contact Ramukhotheli directly on 066 555 3592.



NEWS IN BRIEF

Good news about funding, and the bleak truth about loadshedding

Compiled by **Charmain Lines**

Land Bank is open for business again



Good news for emerging farmers:

the Land Bank has resumed the extension of loans or funding after an interruption of the service.

Farmers who want to apply for financial support must submit the following documents to the bank for the prescreening assessment that is necessary before the full due-diligence phase can start:

- Fully completed and signed Land Bank funding request form.
- Certified copies of the applicant's registration certificate, as well as of the ID/s and marriage certificate/s of the director/s and shareholder/s.
- Production inputs plan and estimated costs.
- A business plan and 12-month cash flow.
- A copy of the applicant's water

right certificate/s.

- Copy of the title deed that confirms ownership of the farm.


In addition, the Land Bank recently launched its Blended Finance Scheme (BFS), which was established in partnership with the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD).

The scheme, which combines a DALRRD grant and a Land Bank loan, was developed to assist black producers and majority black-owned enterprises to achieve commercial sustainability and success, and to own and control agricultural value chains.

The BFS specifically targets small- and medium-scale producers whose operations are in line with

the agriculture and agroprocessing masterplan. And, important for *Poultry Bulletin* readers to know, this plan expressly mentions poultry businesses in its livestock category.

BFS funding can be used to acquire agricultural land and/or commercially viable agri businesses, or to purchase equipment and pay for infrastructure. Producers can also apply for working capital or a production loan in terms of the scheme. Up to 6% of the grant facility can be used to subsidise insurance cover.

For more information on the BFS or to apply for a Land Bank loan only, it is recommended that you contact the Land Bank office in your province. Visit the Contact Us section of the Land Bank website www.landbank.co.za for contact details. 

The animal-welfare toll of loadshedding



The real costs and implications of loadshedding are often hidden.

Take a chicken-processing plant, for instance. It is obvious that no slaughtering and

processing can take place during loadshedding, but there are other, even more serious, impacts.

Using its Worcester plant as example, Wouter de Wet, COO of Rainbow, notes the animal-welfare implication. "We slaughter 1.4 million chickens a week – 280 000 per day. When we can't slaughter, the birds are kept waiting in the holding area which is equipped to ensure short-term comfort, not long-term wellbeing." For example, birds can't be fed or watered here, or kept cool and

ventilated when there's no electricity. When loadshedding reaches level 4 and up, with no power for eight hours per day, it causes a backlog that makes it necessary to keep birds on the farms for longer.

"Feeding 280 000 chickens even one day longer than planned sends the feed-conversion rate through the roof," says De Wet. Feed costs add up without extra meat volume to offset it, and the extra feed is more than Rainbow's own mill can produce, so it has to buy in more from other suppliers to keep its chickens alive. Farms now also have generators to keep the houses ventilated and temperature controlled, which sends diesel costs into hundreds of thousands of rands every week.

Back at the processing plant,

food safety is at stake as the cooling systems need power. In addition, the only way to catch up is with extra shifts when there is power, mostly over weekends. A weekend can easily cost R2 million in overtime, and employees suffer the wellbeing consequences of working seven days a week.

"Also, weekend slaughtering makes weekend maintenance impossible, resulting in more breakages and lower production even when there is electricity," says De Wet.

There is, fortunately, a possibility of relief. Rainbow is in talks with Eskom about possible coordination of the Worcester plant's production with loadshedding schedules. The Western Cape government is also proving to be an ally in the struggle to cope with loadshedding, says De Wet. 📌

US antidumping duties – what happens now?

At its meeting held on 8 November, ITAC initiated a sunset review of the antidumping duties currently in force against the US.

The existing duties were due to expire on 23 November this year, unless an application was made to ITAC to initiate an investigation into their renewal. Such an investigation had to start on or before 23 November

SAPA requested the investigation and after verifying the information supplied by the producers, ITAC decided that the sunset review was in order. This means that the antidumping duties remain in force for a further 18 months, giving ITAC time to conduct its own investigation and make a recommendation to the minister of trade and industry to renew, amend or terminate the duties. The minister can only accept or reject ITAC's recommendation or refer the matter back for further investigation. 📌

CHICK OF THE MONTH



What's up, Buttercup?

The Sicilian Buttercup is one of the world's handsomest chickens, with the hens' golden plumage and the roosters' reddish-orange finery. Add to that their striking cup-shaped combs and unusual willow-green legs, and this breed will add glamour to any farmyard. They are also known for the huge, white eggs they produce.

It is assumed that the breed was developed in North Africa by Arabs who travelled in the Mediterranean. The birds possibly arrived in Europe via Sicily, where they got their name.

About those willow-green legs: in chickens, leg colour is the result of two layers of skin. While broilers have been bred to have white skin which shows up less on a dressed carcass, layers' naturally yellow skin provides the pigment to colour the yolks of their eggs. The Buttercup chicken's under-layer is blue which, overlaid by the yellow outer skin, gives them their greenish legs. 📌



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Why the masterplan is so important

By **Wandile Sihlobo**

South Africa has a vibrant agricultural sector. The country is a significant exporter of food, fibre and beverage products (worth US\$12.4 billion in 2021) and the most food-secure nation in Africa. These gains have been made possible by improving the productivity of all agricultural subsectors – poultry and livestock, field crops and horticulture – and the government and private sector's collaborative efforts to expand the export markets.

With all this success, South Africa's agriculture is not yet operating at full capacity. There are still over 2 million hectares of underutilised arable land, which could bring further gains. The poultry and livestock subsector also has the potential for expansion and boosting the inclusion of new entrant black farmers.


But significant constraints confront the sector and continue to keep farmers and agribusinesses up at night. The first challenge is inefficiencies in the state administration, which includes poor biosecurity measures that lead to the spread of animal and crop disease. It is also here that the slow process of updating the Fertilisers, Farm Feeds, Seeds and Remedies Act 36 of 1947 proves to be a hindrance. This is a crucial act, regulating the importation of key medicines and agrochemicals essential for productivity improvements.

Secondly, the deteriorating infrastructure across the country remains a headache. South Africa requires a good road and railway network and adequate ports as an export-oriented agricultural sector. The failures in these systems continue to strain the sector. Additionally, the service

delivery issues with water, electricity and malfunctioning municipalities are challenges the poultry industry has experienced first-hand as a major threat.

Thirdly, security needs to be improved across the country. Regular reports of stock theft, seed theft and vandalism of infrastructure and farm attacks remain a major threat to our farming sector.

Finally, expanding export markets should remain an ongoing focus for the South African government. The increase in production needs to be supported by market access. Japan, India, China, Saudi Arabia, South Korea and Bangladesh remain vital markets.

Fortunately, the agriculture and agroprocessing masterplan and the poultry masterplan reflect deeply on these challenges and outline a practical path to addressing them for the sector's long-term growth. The agricultural stakeholders should support the implementation of these plans; they deal with the most pressing issues of our agricultural economy. 

Wandile Sihlobo is the author of Finding Common Ground: Land, Equity and Agriculture

'Expanding export markets should remain an ongoing focus for the South African government'





NORTHROOST **A BLUEPRINT FOR** **TRANSFORMATION**

The story of how a young Limpopo entrepreneur's poultry dream became a reality with the collaboration of commercial producers and government, inspires hope for the entire sector

By **Melinda Shaw**

Photographs: **Peter Ndele**

MASTERPLAN MANOEUVRES



The new Northroost Hatchery is the jewel in Makhado's crown



Clive Tigere started small and today he is a force to be reckoned with

Once upon a time there was a small hatchery in Limpopo where 1 000 chicks saw the light of day every fortnight. The young owner, Clive Tigere, had been living in Johannesburg and working as an actuary when he ambitiously decided to start a broiler business back home in Makhado/Louis Trichardt with his mother as his business partner. He could not find enough day-old chicks and after doing some research into the market, he decided to start hatching his own, for himself and the many farmers in the area who faced the same challenge. At first he juggled his corporate life in the city with the business in Limpopo, but soon the opportunity back home demanded a choice, and he chose Makhado, and KC Hatchery.

Fast forward to 2022 and not far from where KC Hatchery ran its operations, Tigere, 28, now runs a business on a whole other level. Northroost Hatchery only came online in August 2022, but by the time it hosted its official opening on 20 October, over a million chicks had been hatched here. A brand-new, modern hatchery with a capacity of 244 800 chicks per week, Northroost set its first batch of eggs on 24 August and has been maintaining hatch ratios of 90% and above, providing healthy, prime-quality Arbor Acres chicks to pump new life into the Limpopo broiler industry.

What had taken place in between is the stuff of dreams and a testament to the power of networking and poultry industry goodwill. Tigere had joined SAPA as a member early on, and when he emailed the team asking for advice, it led to a meeting at the Johannesburg offices of Country Bird Holdings. Poultry people like to help each other, and the CBH CEO reached out to his colleagues at Limpopo-based Bushvalley Chickens, to introduce them to the young entrepreneur who was running a business in their hood.

Finding enough fertilised eggs of reliable quality was a constant battle for Tigere, and when CBH offered to supply as many as he needed, he jumped at the chance. "The only catch was, their facility was in Lichtenburg in the North West, a 16-hour round trip from Makhado. I made that



Northroost Hatchery provides employment for 26 people... and over 400 job applications were received

Twice a week more than 100 000 chicks are hatched, boxed and distributed

trip every week from then to go collect my eggs," he says.

"The steady supply of high-quality eggs completely changed our business. Having better eggs meant a more predictable, higher hatch rate, which allowed KC Hatchery to build a strong name in the area. Now we could commit to clients and have a steady supply of chicks for our farmers, so that they, in turn, could have a business all year round."

'The steady supply of high-quality eggs completely changed our business'



A JOINT VENTURE

The relationship with CBH flourished as the business grew, and by 2021 KC Hatchery was selling an average of 28 000 chicks a week into the informal live-bird industry. By then CBH had a new CEO, Brendon de Boer, who was keeping an eye out for ways that the company might collaborate and broaden its networks, and further its transformation commitments to the masterplan.

"It has always been an immense pleasure working with Clive – he is driven to succeed, he does his homework, and as we knew since the

early days when he did not blink at the distance to collect his eggs, he is not afraid to work really hard," says De Boer. "He also did the work to establish that there is great market potential in Limpopo, which led us to start talking about a more formalised joint venture."

The result is Northroost Hatchery, a JV between Tigere's KC Hatchery, Country Bird Holdings and Bushvalley Chickens, with each of the shareholders contributing their expertise: fertilised Arbor Acres eggs from CBH, which Tigere stewards through the hatching process, and an off-take agreement with Bushvalley where they take a substantial percentage of the day-old chicks and also provide hands-on support.

Creating the new hatchery, a future-minded facility that was constructed to be able to double

MASTERPLAN MANOEUVRES

its capacity at a later stage, took an investment of R56 million. “The most notable aspect about the equipment and the facility is the sheer quality of it all,” says Tigere. “The new building’s design accommodates an easy flow and the attention to detail and biosecurity standards are world class. Hatchery experts Pas Reform supplied the imported equipment, and it’s been such a pleasure working with a company that has been selling incubators for over 100 years and have invested loads into understanding chick development.”

In addition, he has built reservoirs and installed top-of-the-range generators to make sure the operation still runs when power outages occur. “Having experienced partners to draw on for construction and technical expertise also helped me to avoid plenty of expensive lessons.”

It was a great relief when the IDC grant which Tigere qualified for finally came through in October, a month after Northroost started operating. Without the bridging finance supplied by CBH and Bushvalley, the project would have taken at least an extra year to get off the ground, underlining the importance of having partners who have faith in your business, says Tigere.

De Boer explains, “Government funding does take time, even when a project ticks all the boxes, so we decided not to wait and delay the process, but to make a financing plan so that construction could start. At CBH we believe that industry transformation will only happen if there are consistent efforts at upskilling people in outlying areas and providing support every step of the way. The first results at Northroost, with consistent hatch rates of over 90%, proves that was the right decision.”

Johann Lombard, CFO of Tzaneen-based Bushvalley Chickens, echoes the sentiment, and says he believes that Limpopo is an ideal location for more hatcheries and poultry industry growth. “In the northern parts there are no wetlands to attract migrating wild birds and hence less of a

threat of avian flu,” he says.

“We are fortunate that Limpopo hasn’t had any incidences for several years, as the disease has become an increasing problem everywhere. Bringing in chicks from elsewhere increases the risk, which is another reason why Northroost is such a boon for all broiler farmers in the area,

both commercial producers such as Bushvalley and subsistence farmers.”

For Tigere, building his relationship with these experienced partners has been invaluable. “It’s simple – no eggs, no hatchery. It is no small task to provide a stable supply of fertilised eggs, and CBH has done this for us. And the offtake agreement with Bushvalley is a strong driving force for the growth of the project; they also provide a buffer in case we have extra chicks, which they are able to absorb. All of this is helping us to act like an integrated business because our suppliers and clients have a vested interest, which greatly reduces our business risk.”

‘Having experienced partners with technical expertise has helped me to avoid expensive lessons’



Tigere has the full support of his parents, Dr Patrick and Caroline Tigere

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE COLLABORATION



From left: Cliff Rashoeshoe (DTIC), Norman Biko (Bushvalley), Joel Mamabolo (DALRRD), Ian Preece (Bushvalley CEO), Clive Tigere, Seatla Nkosi (IDC); seated Imameleng Mothebe (DTIC) and Brendon de Boer (CBH CEO)

It takes a village to raise a child, and Northroost Hatchery owes a debt of gratitude to the government officials who facilitated its birth. Along with the joint-venture partners, the IDC, DALRRD and the DTIC were key to making this dream come true for Tigere. According to Seatla Nkosi, agroprocessing and agriculture business development manager at the IDC, the financing to realise the hatchery came from blended funding that included a grant and a loan.

For Nkosi, as well as his colleagues in the DTIC and DALRRD, the opening of Northroost underlines the power of the masterplan. Says Imameleng Mothebe, director of the DTIC's agroprocessing unit, "This is one of the few large-scale black-owned hatcheries, and a key supplier to Limpopo and surrounds. It is led by a young South African, setting an example for the youth, and showing it can be done. It also demonstrates what can be achieved through partnerships between the private sector, entrepreneurs and government. One of the key aspects of the poultry masterplan is meaningful transformation along the value chain, and Northroost is an excellent example of what can be achieved, if all stakeholders work together." More projects will come online soon, she confirms.

EXHILARATING BEGINNINGS

The first hatch day was nerve-wracking and exhilarating in equal parts, says Tigere, who worked round the clock to ensure everything ran smoothly. And when the first little chick slid down the chute into the packing area, he was right there, and named her Lucy. "The name just came to me," he says, "she looked like a Lucy!"

She might not make global headlines like her namesake, the famous 3-million-year-old "first human" ancestor whose fossilised bones were discovered in Ethiopia in the Seventies, but this Lucy did signal a day of big significance for Limpopo's poultry industry.

Says Tigere, "It is a massive step forward for Louis Trichardt and Limpopo as a whole. Northroost enables farmers from here to raise high-quality chicks as efficiently as those closer to urban centres, so they can compete fairly. Gone are the high transport costs that are incurred when bringing chicks in from hundreds of kilometers away." He has been growing his client base, and

Tigere worked around the clock to ensure the first hatch went smoothly



MASTERPLAN MANOEUVRES



Meet Lucy, Northroost's very first newly hatched chick to arrive on 14 September 2022

currently have around 25 who are regular weekly customers, a steadily growing figure.

As these businesses grow, more jobs will be generated, a prospect that Tigere feels very strongly about. "Unemployment is an ongoing issue here as everywhere in South Africa. We received over 400 applications for jobs in the last few months. Our opportunities are limited, unfortunately, but a single job supports a family of four and is one more contributor to the economy." Northroost provides employment to 26 people at present, he confirms.

Lombard and De Boer are in agreement that collaborative projects such as Northroost could make a big difference in South Africa's poultry industry, boosting employment and food security in the process.

"When government and integrated producers pool resources to enable emerging businesses



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in remote areas to reach their potential and serve their surrounding markets with good-quality poultry products, everyone wins," says De Boer. "From our perspective, the contract-grower model is one that works well, but we are enthusiastic about finding additional ways to grow the industry with the help of the IDC, DALRRD and the DTIC."

"We will certainly be on the lookout to identify more solid projects such as the Northroost opportunity, along the various areas of the poultry value chain from hatcheries to processing. There is a measure of luck and fortuity in finding that business in an area that has the growth potential that KC Hatchery had when we met Clive Tigere, but they are out there. Working with our partners in government to find these businesses is a way to open new markets and to grow the industry, which is what we committed to with the masterplan." 

To find out more or to order day-old chicks from Northroost Hatchery, contact clive@northroost.co.za

Having the latest technology in place makes all the difference, says Tigere





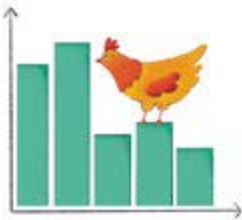
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Compiled by **Michael Acott**

The world's poultry producers met in France

SAPA's **Izaak Breitenbach** attended the annual meeting of the International Poultry Council (IPC) in Bordeaux, France, at the end of September. Here are his highlights of the conference

Izaak Breitenbach represented South Africa at the IPC conference in France

Photographs: Visioncollective; Shutterstock



The three-day meeting of the International Poultry Council included representatives of poultry associations from around the world. The discussions focused mainly on issues affecting the industry worldwide, from HPAI, production costs and food safety to the important role of chicken in global food security.

The IPC has a number of working groups that work on topics during the IPC conference and also throughout the year.

I am an active member of the new trade working group. In the past the IPC only focused on resolving nontrade matters, but it now actively discusses trade matters as well.

The working group had long discussions about trade but in summary the group was not satisfied with what members saw as the "overuse" of antidumping duties. South Africa was specifically mentioned and most of the countries represented in the

working group felt that dumping is not taking place, and certainly not from their countries.

There was a lot of disagreement in the meeting and this working group did not reach any material decisions.

The IPC is developing a global data platform to provide international statistics on poultry production and trade. An automated statistical platform has been created, which is accessible to IPC members. This is a comprehensive database and it





'The conference highlighted the difference between the developed and the developing world: in the developing world sustainability is about increased food production, while in the first world it is about becoming a more responsible producer'

includes statistics from Africa and South Africa.

In terms of sustainability the conference highlighted the difference between the developed and the developing world. In the developing world sustainability is about increased food production while in the first world being sustainable is about becoming a more responsible producer.

The take-home message from the conference is that poultry production is growing but that the industry is facing challenges in terms of global raw material costs, highly pathogenic avian flu (HPAI) and fuel costs in Europe. 📌

▲ Poultry production is growing worldwide, but the industry is facing a number of serious challenges

Chicken imports down again

Chicken imports have dropped for the first nine months of 2022, and by year-end imports may well be at their lowest levels since 2019.

SAPA's imports reports for September 2022 show that broiler imports have been declining since their peak in 2018. The nine months to end September saw a further 7% fall.

In the important category of bone-in imports, which compete with local IQF portions, imports for the first nine months are 25% down on the previous

year. This follows drops of 27% in 2020 and 17% in 2021.

Contrary to these declines, imports of offal (heads, feet, livers and so on) are rising steadily. After gains of nearly 19% in 2020 and 2021, they had risen a further 22% by September 2022.

Avian influenza has cut off all imports from Europe, and from much of the United States. Imports from Brazil are level with last year, with Brazil now accounting for nearly 82% of all imports. 📌



▲ Although overall import figures are down, imports from Brazil have not declined year on year



Producer prices well above 2021

The average producer price, including fresh and frozen chicken, dropped slightly in July this year, but was 13.8% above the price in July 2021. Most sales (86.3%) are frozen product.

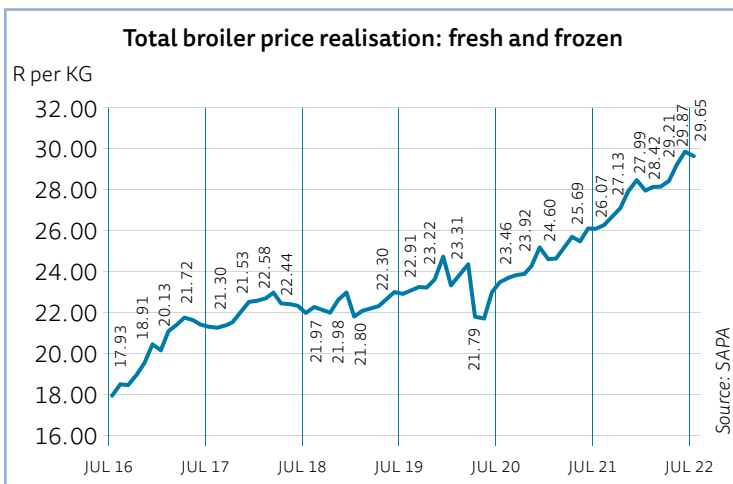
According to SAPA's producer price report for July, the average price producers received was R29.65/kg. This was 21c/kg below the price in June, but R3.59/kg higher than it was in July a year ago.

The average price for the first seven months of 2022 was R28.78/kg, 9.9% higher than the same period in 2021.

Frozen chicken averaged R28.54/kg which was 28c/kg below the June price and R3.54/kg higher than in July last year.

Fresh chicken averaged R36.70/kg in July, a monthly increase of 65c and an annual increase of R2.78/kg (8.2%).

Individually quick frozen (IQF) portions averaged R28.55/kg, an increase of 11.3% over July 2021.



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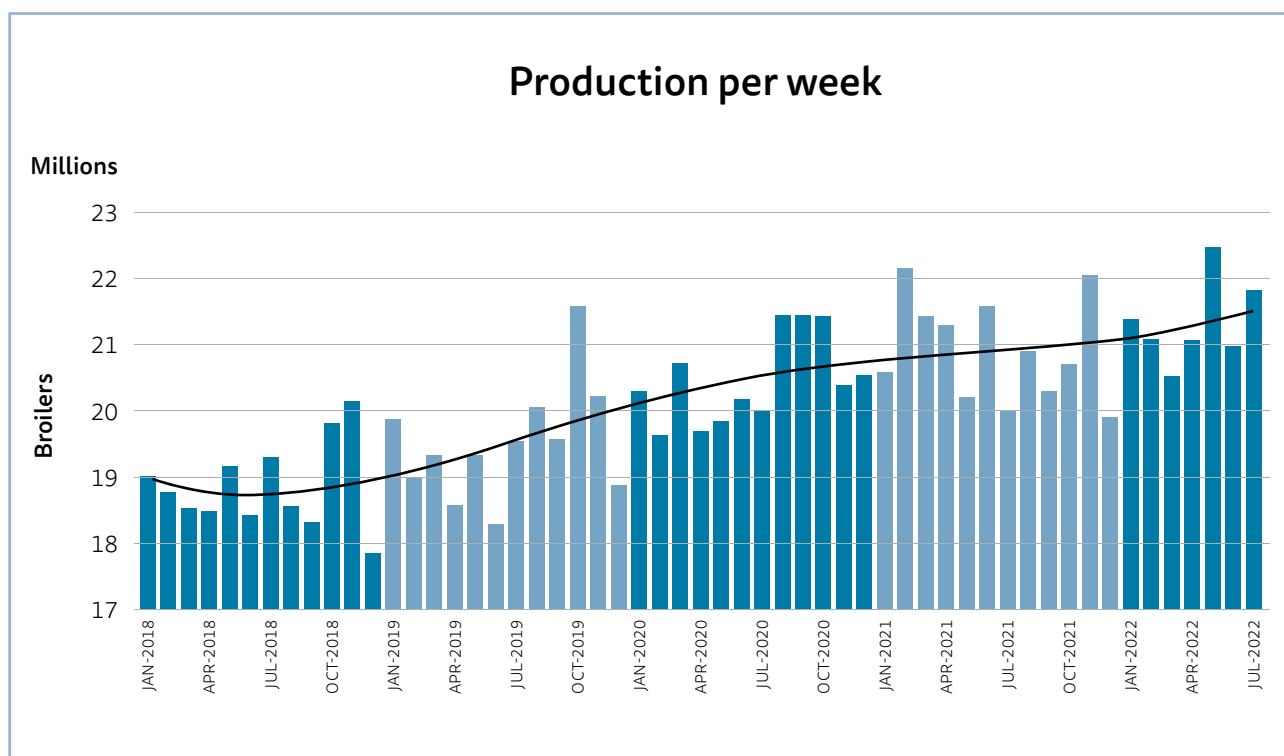
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Broiler production increases in 2022



▲ Average broiler production per week
Source: SAPA

South African broiler farmers produced 646.5 million chickens in the first six months of 2022, at an average of 21.3 million birds per week. This is an increase of 2% above the 2021 average of 20.9 million birds per week.

In July of this year alone the average production was 21.8 million birds per week.

These statistics are drawn from SAPA's broiler production report for July 2022.

After the national consumption of chicken meat touched a record figure of 200 000 tons in May this year, it dropped back to 178 400 tons in July. This was comprised of 156 100 tons of local production (net of exports) and 22 300 tons of chicken imports that month.

In the first six months of the year, chicken imports were 23.1% of local production and 19.2% of South African consumption. 📊

In the first six months of 2022 local broiler farmers produced an average of 21.3 million birds a week



Poultry producer prices are on the up and up

Agricultural trend analysis company AMT expects South African poultry producer prices to continue rising for the remainder of this year, and then to flatten out in 2023.

AMT's quarterly livestock report for October 2022 shows that producer prices of fresh and frozen chicken had risen by about 10.5% over the past year, while IQF chicken portions were up by nearly 14%. It said that, based on historic trends, the price for all three categories could trend upwards over the fourth quarter.

Its graphs of price trends showed

that prices will remain more or less unchanged for 2023, but rise as usual in the fourth quarter.

AMT listed the producer price of frozen chicken at R30.96/kg in the third quarter, 10.47% up on the same period a year ago. Fresh chicken was R31.80/kg (10.55% up on 2021) and IQF portions R29.91/kg (13.89% up on 2021).

Beef and pork prices are expected to follow a similar trend, while mutton prices are predicted to drop towards year-end, recovering in the second quarter of 2023. 📊



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Cull trade compliance is essential, says SAPA

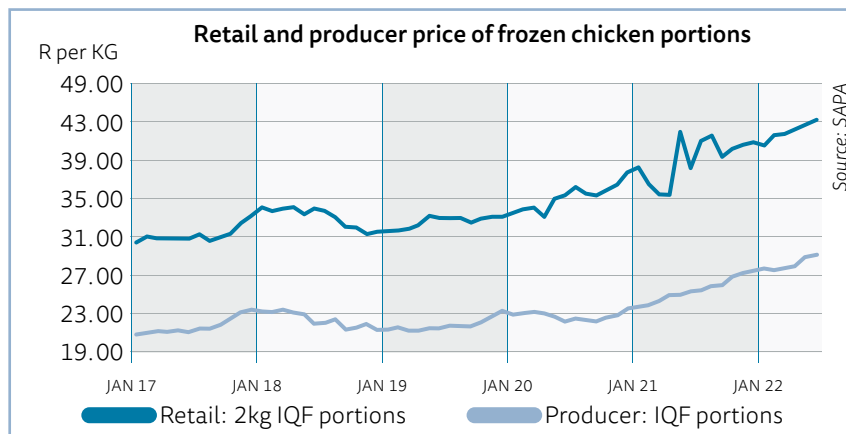


Even though the avian influenza threat is not currently foremost, SAPA is encouraging poultry producers and cull traders to continue to comply with the strict protocols introduced to prevent the transmission of avian influenza through the trade in live birds.

Over a million live chickens are traded every quarter, with cull traders buying older birds from producers and selling them in townships and rural areas. The trade has been regulated since 2017 and permits are required to remove live birds from any farm. Producers and cull buyers are registered, and must report transactions.

SAPA is concerned about declining reporting levels from cull traders, and it has warned that the HPAI threat has not gone away (also read "HPAI: the burning questions" on page 60). It has appealed to all in the cull trade to comply with the regulations. Limiting the spread of disease is in the interests of the poultry industry as well as the broader agricultural sector and the public. 📄

Market signals note imports and price increases



Although poultry imports have declined in the second half of 2022, this follows increased import tonnages during the first six months of the year.

In its latest quarterly Key Market Signals, SAPA noted that poultry imports reached 230 666 tons in the first half of the year, a 4.9% increase on the same period in 2021. The value of these imports rose by 20.2% to R2.9 billion.

Between January and June, imports from Brazil and the United States were both up by just over 10% over the previous year, while Argentina increased volumes by 8.1%.

Poultry import volumes have declined every year since peaking in 2018.

SAPA also reported South African broiler production of 279.73 million birds in the second quarter of 2022. Average production for the period was 21.51 million birds per week, 2.3% higher than the previous quarter and 2.4% above the same period last year.

The average producer price in the second quarter was R29.17/kg, which was 3.8% higher than the first quarter and 13.3% above the second quarter of 2021.

This coincided with global food price increases – the global food price index (FAO) was 25.5% above the second quarter a year ago.

Real producer prices after discounting for inflation were considerably lower than the nominal prices farmers received. In June 2022, the broiler price was R23.72/kg in real terms, compared to R22.72/kg in June 2021; a year-on-year increase of 4.4%. This compares to a 14.6% increase in actual broiler producer prices.

SAPA also measured the mark-up from producer to retailer, based on official statistics.

In the second quarter of 2022, average retail mark-ups were 93.8% for fresh chicken portions, 74.5% for whole fresh chickens, 50% for 2kg IQF frozen chicken portions and 83.9% for frozen portions (not IQF). 📄

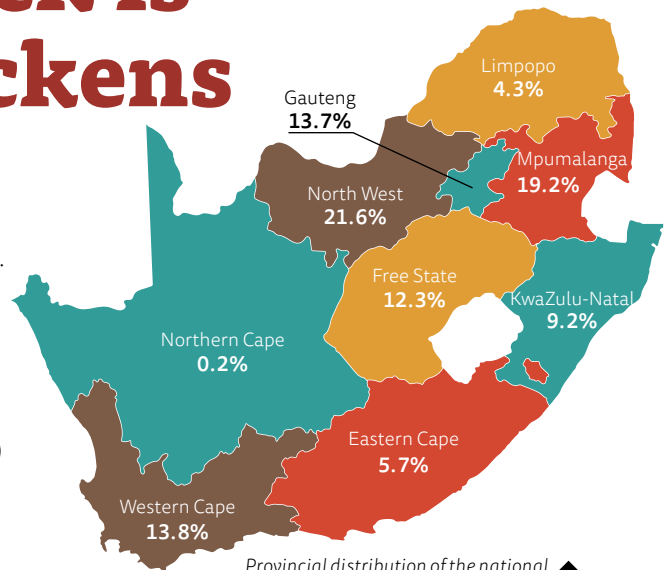
SA national flock is 152 million chickens

South African poultry farmers house nearly 152 million chickens on just under a thousand farms. This is calculated from information provided in SAPA's regular avian influenza (AI) surveys.

The national total of 151.7 million chickens is made up of 124.5 million in the broiler industry and 27.2 million in the egg industry. Most birds are housed in the North West province (32.7 million), followed by Mpumalanga (29.1 million), Western Cape (21 million) and Gauteng (20.8 million).

Mpumalanga has the largest portion of the broiler birds (23.8%) while Gauteng has the most egg layers (28.5%).

Of South Africa's 995 poultry farms, 351 house between 100 000 and 300 000 chickens. There are 14 farms (13 broiler and one egg producer) with more than 700 000 birds, and 152 (93 broiler and 59 egg producers) with fewer than 100 chickens. 🇿🇦



Provincial distribution of the national chicken flock (September 2022) ▲
Source: SAPA



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NOTICES

Have you booked your AVI Africa spot?



Early in June the poultry community of South Africa will once again get together to network, learn and share information, at the 2023 AVI Africa poultry congress. After an absence of three years due to Covid, SAPA is excited to welcome you back, with a packed schedule of talks, panel discussions and more.

Taking place at Emperor's Palace from 6 to 8 June, the congress will bring together all major players in the poultry industry, to showcase the latest in products, technology and services aimed at enhancing business and maximising the profits

of commercial poultry enterprises.

Don't miss out on the chance to experience the AVI Africa exhibition space, where exhibitors pull out all the stops to display the latest equipment and technology and are on hand to answer any questions. A variety of practical talks will be presented every day.

Whether you produce chicks, eggs or broilers, and are from the commercial or the emerging market sector, this conference is for you. We recommend that you invite your company buyers, farm managers and supervisors to join too. 📄

Register now!

The cost is R700 per day and there is an early-bird discounted rate if you register before 30 April 2023. Aim your smartphone camera at the QR code and you'll be taken to the site where you can register.



Meet our people: Klarien Bothma

Poultry Bulletin would like to welcome SAPA's newest team member on board: senior accountant Klarien Bothma joins the team from the National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC), where she developed her expertise over 14 years.

"I got to know the Public Finance Management Act, 1999 (PFMA) and the Marketing of Agricultural Products Act, 1996 (MAP) backwards, completed a postgraduate diploma in business management, and did a stint as acting CFO at NAMC," says Bothma. These valuable skills are sure to make her a true asset to SAPA.

Bothma grew up around backyard chickens in Ladysmith, KZN, and she relays a story of when the family's housekeeper chopped the head off one of their pet chickens. "After running around in circles, headless, the chicken finally fell down and my little sister piped up and asked Alvina to please put Gertie's head back on... Nonetheless we did not become vegetarian and we eat chicken to this day..." Bothma says that her favourite poultry meal is a whole roasted chicken for Sunday lunch. 📄



Galliova Awards is back!

After a two-year break due to Covid, the 33rd annual Galliova Food and Health Writers' Awards were held in Stellenbosch in October to celebrate South Africa's most outstanding food and health writers and digital content creators. SAPA is the proud sponsor of the awards.

SAPA board member and long-standing egg-industry champion Colin Steenhuisen welcomed the guests, while SAPA's honorary president and Rainbow MD Marthinus Stander was the guest speaker. Stander acknowledged the importance of the country's food and health media and commended them for their tenacity during these tough times.

The total value of the cash prizes awarded was increased to R189 000, and Stander noted that judges had commented on the excellent standard of the work submitted.

The winners of the 2022 Galliova Awards are as follows:

Galliova Digital Content Creator

- Winner: Dianne Bibby, Bibby's Kitchen
- Runner-up: Georgia East, East After Noon
- Special mention: Sam Linsell, Drizzle & Dip

Galliova Health Writer

- Winner: Lydia van der Merwe, *Sarie, Sarie Kos & Sarie Gesond*
- Runner-up: Glynis Horning, freelance writer
- Special mention: Jandri Barnard, freelance writer

Galliova Food Stylist

- Winner: Herman Lensing, *Sarie Kos*
- Runner-up: Vickie de Beer, *Lose It! & Keto* magazine
- Special mention: Gail Damon, *Fresh Living* magazine

Galliova Food Writer

- Joint winners: Lydia van der Merwe & Herman Lensing, *Sarie Kos*
- Runner-up: Anna Trapido, freelance
- Special mention: Anél Potgieter, *Rapport*

The Egg Champion

- Winner: Gail Damon, *Fresh Living* magazine
- Runner-up: Vickie de Beer, *Lose It! & Keto* magazine
- Special mention: Pierrette Mulumba, *Longevity Live*

The Broiler Champion

- Winner: Vickie de Beer, *Lose It! & Keto* magazine
- Runner-up: Johané Neilson, *Tuis | Home & Weg | Go!*

Galliova Champion

- Overall awards winner: Herman Lensing, *Sarie Kos*

The Galliova Champion, a new addition to the awards, celebrates a winner from among the other categories. This award will only be awarded if all the judges agree one category winner exceeded all expectation, as Lensing did.

The winners were judged according to their role in promoting locally produced poultry products, both eggs and chicken, as well as excellence in promoting food culture, food writing, visual appeal and food styling.

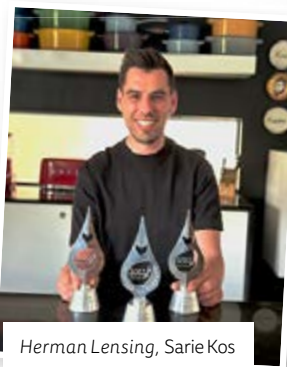
On behalf of *Poultry Bulletin*, congratulations to all the winners! 🎉



Winners! From left Dianne Bibby, Johané Neilson, Georgia East, Glynis Horning, Anna Trapido, Wilmer Müller (for Herman Lensing & Lydia van der Merwe), Suzy Brokensha (for Vickie de Beer) and Gail Damon



The 2022 Galliova judging panel: Zola Nene, Barbara Joubert, Marco Torsius, Monique Piderit, Prof Marthinette Slabber-Stretch and Jake Mokene (absent: Anna Montali)



Herman Lensing, Sarie Kos



The 2022 Galliova Awards winners' trophies



Bird flu still has to be taken seriously



Two recent cases of avian influenza confirm the warnings that the disease is still circulating in South Africa and outbreaks could occur at any time. The virulence of the disease is shown by how quickly it has spread through Europe and North America and it is now threatening South America.

Poultry farmers should stay alert, maintain the biosecurity protocols required for HPAI, and continue to submit test results to SAPA. This is the message from SAPA's latest AI report which covers the third quarter of this year (July to September 2022).

The two confirmed outbreaks of the strain H5N1 occurred in Cato Ridge, outside Durban, in September (Also read "HPAI: the burning questions" on page 60). There have been no further outbreaks in commercial flocks since then, but cases have been reported in wild birds in various part of South Africa this year.

"The virus is still clearly circulating in wild bird populations, which poses an ongoing risk to commercial poultry," the report says.

While SAPA says there is still hope that HPAI in South Africa may be rarer in summer months, it notes that this has not been the case in Europe. Bird flu there has become a year-round disease, with an "unprecedented" number of cases this summer.

It is now spreading through the Americas. It arrived in Eastern Canada at the beginning of 2022, and spread across the US. By October more than 47 million birds had died or been culled in the US.

Now there are fears that bird flu may spread in South America, after an outbreak in a small flock of chickens in far northern Colombia. That's on the west coast of South America, but it borders on Brazil, which is the world's largest poultry producer and exporter and has so far been free of bird flu. 📄

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Giving back by sharing knowledge

The first-ever Plasson Broiler Production Conference was a day of networking, knowledge sharing and arming the industry with invaluable expertise for a successful tomorrow

The brand-new biennial poultry conference took place in Kempton Park in September, where Plasson hosted over 120 delegates from all over South Africa, Africa and Europe.

Conceived by Plasson's national sales manager, Stephan Jacobs, as a way of thanking stakeholders, integrators, clients and suppliers, the conference featured presentations by some of the most respected experts in the industry, including the South African Poultry Association's Izaak Breitenbach, who shared his insights on the state of the poultry industry in South Africa.

Breitenbach addressed concerns about job creation in the broiler industry, illegal and unfair trade practices and the antidumping tariffs that curtail these, and the implementation of the poultry masterplan's transformation and expansion objectives.



The conference was characterised by lively discussions on matters of interest to all broiler farmers, and opportunities to network. Speakers included Erwin Stienen of Stienen BE (far left) and Izaak Breitenbach (left) of the SA Poultry Association



ADVERTORIAL



Plasson provides unrivalled expertise in broiler production, and the inaugural conference was the perfect vehicle to arm producers with useful information and advice from experts, such as Plasson SA GM Jacques Bouwer (above left). Singer Jackie Louw (above right) provided the entertainment at the evening's social

Erwin Stienen, managing director at agri-automation company Stienen BE, spoke about the design of climate-control systems to provide optimal results within poultry farming and the effects of optimal climate in environmentally controlled broiler houses, while Dr Francois Crots from Nutrifeds addressed optimum water intake for ideal feed and broiler performance. Crots, a leader in the field of nutrition and animal health in the poultry industry, highlighted the importance of water temperature inside broiler production houses and the value of correct pH levels in drinking water for chickens.

Other speakers included Bruce Green, agri director at Anca Poultry and a world-renowned stockman and production expert in the broiler industry, who explained the financial benefit of converting naturally ventilated broiler houses into fully environmentally controlled houses. Louis Kleynhans, general manager at Namib Poultry Industries (NPI), and Dr Henry Aitchison from Avimune presented a case study on the importance of chick quality and biosecurity in the broiler industry.

Throughout the day, Plasson Livestock SA general manager, Jacques Bouwer, hosted several lively interactive Q&A sessions.


"This conference was a way for Plasson SA to give back to the poultry industry," said Bouwer. "Like many other sectors,

the poultry industry was affected by the global pandemic, not only as a result of lockdowns and subdued economic growth, but also by staff shortages, disrupted production and transportation, and high input costs."

Providing world-class agricultural equipment, technological innovation and unrivalled expertise, Plasson SA has been at the forefront of broiler production for years, not only in South Africa but throughout the African continent.

Bouwer said that the company recognises that its success is due to an agricultural industry which has weathered many storms to continue to grow and meet the ever-growing demand for poultry products.

"Plasson SA takes pride in arming producers and everyone along the poultry value chain with useful information, insights and advice from leading agricultural experts to set them on a path of success for the future," he said.

"Without our clients, partners and key stakeholders, we would not have been where we are today." 

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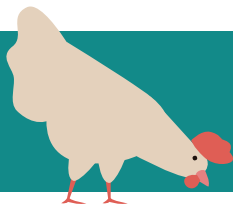


Illustration: Shutterstock

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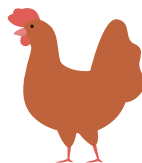
Signed in November 2019, the poultry industry masterplan contains lofty ideals and coherent strategies to achieve them. How much progress has been made in three years? **Charmain Lines** goes in search of stories that paint a picture.

The industry masterplan stands on five pillars, each with several workstreams. In essence, though, the plan seeks to grow domestic and international demand for South African chicken while ensuring the local industry produces more and achieves specific social imperatives.

Like any good strategy, the masterplan contains specific targets. Numbers, however, can never tell the full story. It's the efforts of real people across the poultry industry that are bringing the plan to life.

Local gets even lekkerder

The masterplan envisages a R1.5 billion investment in production capacity by local



producers by the end of 2023. The large integrated producers have already done more than just come to the party, making investments totalling R2.4 billion over the past three years. These include Astral's Festive plant and supply-chain upgrade, CBH's new further-processing facility in Germiston and Rainbow's reinstatement of a second shift at its Hammarsdale plant.

The large producers, however, are not the only supply-side story. Three vastly smaller, but locally significant, producers have also made considerable investments in capacity increases in recent times.

In the village of Dargle in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands, Justin Fly recently invested R6.5 million in expanding his broiler breeder



His small-scale broiler breeder operation has proved to be the perfect business for partially sighted farmer Justin Fly

operation. Having started with 12 000 hens in 2005 when **Ndiza Poultry** was founded, Fly now has 46 000 hens that supply high-quality fertile eggs to Lufafa Hatchery in Limpopo.

The expansion that took place in 2020/2021, included one closed-environment, fully automated rearing shed and two open-environment laying sheds, each housing 6 500 breeders. It also increased Ndiza's workforce from 17 to 38.

Fly was born with an extremely rare eye

condition that left him with no more than 5% eyesight and restricted career opportunities. Having grown up on a farm, he had an affinity for and understanding of agriculture and when a family friend offered to introduce him to chicken farming, he jumped at the opportunity.

Small-scale broiler breeding proved to be a perfect match for his farming background, his need to be challenged and stimulated, and his physical constraints. However, chicken farming is a numbers game with a never-ending flow of statistics and figures which is a challenge for someone with limited eyesight.

"Fortunately, there are many tools available these days, and there's always a plan you can make," says Fly. "The best way for me to read a production schedule is to really zoom in on my phone's camera!" He confides that doing presentations is particularly tough; instead of being able to refer to notes, he has to have the answers to all possible questions in his head.

"The first few years were very long and difficult, but from about 2012 things settled down with suppliers and customers," says Fly. He recounts how Ndiza almost went bust when a non-paying customer skipped the country after losing the arbitration case with Ndiza. A family



Ndiza Poultry's investment of R6.5 million added 20 000 broiler breeders and doubled its workforce

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friend offered a lifeline and Fly got to work to find new customers. Someone at Cobb referred him to Lufafa Hatchery and two phone calls later a deal had been struck.

In 2013 Ndiza secured a five-year contract with Daybreak Farms. When it expired in 2017, Fly decided to not renew it but rather return to Lufafa. "They were very keen to have us back and since then our relationship has flourished," says Fly. Asked about the distance – 850km and 10 hours one way – Fly says that when the relationship started, production costs in KZN were significantly lower than up north. These days it's no longer the case but the advantages of reliable, high-quality eggs continue to outstrip the additional transport costs.

"Lufafa values our high hygiene and biosecurity standards, and us being in two different provinces adds an element of risk mitigation for Lufafa," says Fly. "The way we work together makes it possible for us to convert a more expensive egg into a profitable chick for Lufafa and a profitable broiler for the farmer." Evidence of this is that Ndiza's expansion was made possible by Lufafa's commitment to take more eggs, which resulted in an expansion of its own operation.

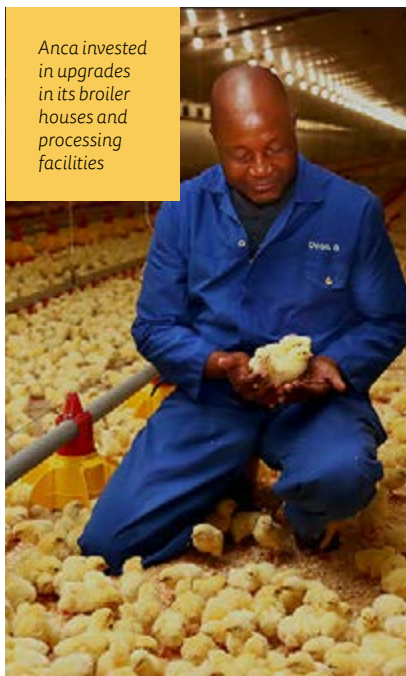
"Our focus is on quality rather than quantity



Broiler producer Anca is based in the Eastern Cape and has invested R85 million over the last 18 months, increasing its production capacity by 22%



Anca invested in upgrades in its broiler houses and processing facilities



and we pride ourselves on being known as a reliable supplier. It is an approach that gives us a secure market," concludes Fly.

Near Stutterheim in the Eastern Cape, **Anca Foods** under leadership of CEO Devin Isemonger increased its capacity by 22% over the past 18 months with an investment of R85 million. "About 80% of the money went towards new, state-of-the-art, environmentally controlled housing for 210 000 broilers and the upgrade of our old broiler sites into environmentally controlled facilities," says Isemonger. "As a result, we now slaughter around 35 000 more birds per week."

The remaining 20% of the investment went into processing and software upgrades. The processing upgrades included the automation of the cut-up and packing processes, which replaced risky, low-skilled jobs such as manual portion cutting, overwrapping and bulk scaling with better paying and safer jobs. "Our investment

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created 41 new jobs within the business, many of them requiring skilled workers and paying well above the minimum wage," says Isemonger.

Anca's significant investment in software to improve yield tracking and customer service was a smart move, says Isemonger. "Improvements in yield and reduction in credit claims paid for the software within the first year. That said, the teething problems associated with installing new software are not for the fainthearted!"

A family-owned business, Anca was started in 1992, producing 2 000 broilers per week for the live-bird market in what was then known as the Transkei. Four employees tended to the four growing houses that housed 500 birds each. In time, the company bought a discontinued yoghurt factory that had been turned into a tyre fitment centre and started slaughtering 250 to 400 birds per day, supplying the retail market in East London with fresh chicken products under its own brand.

Thirty years later, Anca Foods slaughters around 190 000 birds per week – all grown by its own agricultural team – and supplies fresh



SAPA's consumption figures show that South Africans are eating more chicken than ever before

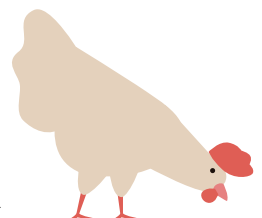
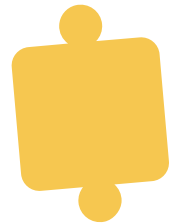
From four employees and an output of 2 000 broilers a week back in the beginning, Anca has grown to producing 190 000 broilers per week, creating 41 new jobs over the past 18 months

product to retailers across the Eastern Cape. It is exactly this growth that prompted the decision to expand. "We have become too big to limit ourselves to niche markets where margins are higher," explains Isemonger. "To compete in the open market, we had to reach economies of scale. With this expansion we have diluted our overhead costs on the processing side while improving performance on the agricultural side. The result is more consistent profits and reduced vulnerability to market forces."

But is there a market?

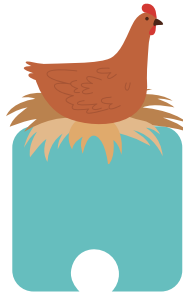
The masterplan envisages a 10% increase in poultry production within three years, and according to Izaak Breitenbach, GM of SAPA's Broiler Organisation, that target has been met. Happily, SAPA's consumption figures also show that South Africans are indeed eating more chicken. In May this year, consumption topped 200 000 tons per month for the first time ever.

The crunch, however, lies in who gets to supply the growing demand. The local industry's



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When consumers are urged to buy local, producers must make it easy for them to identify local products, says Proudly SA



ongoing battle with predatory trade practices, notably dumping, is well documented. Noteworthy gains were made over the past two years with imports' share of the South African market falling from 25.2% in 2018 to 18.8% in 2021.

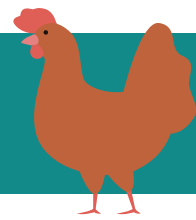
However, in the first five months of 2022, imports have been averaging about 21% of local production – an upward trend that is likely to gather momentum as the minister of trade and industry's decision to suspend antidumping tariffs takes effect. It is a development that threatens to reverse the wins and take the industry backwards, leaving new assets stranded and development initiatives on ice.

While it is impossible to estimate how much the local industry stands to lose in the next year, it is almost certain that this will not translate to the same figure in gains for cash-strapped local consumers. "There is no evidence to date to prove that the implementation of tariffs causes retail prices to increase or that the lack of tariffs causes them to come down," says Breitenbach.

Adding a consumer perspective to the local market discussion is Proudly SA CEO Eustace Mashimbye, who points out that when consumers are urged to buy local, producers must make it easy for them to identify local products. "In that regard it is a chicken-and-egg situation," he says. Proudly SA's research shows that 80% of South African consumers know what the Proudly SA logo stands for, namely that the product is locally produced and of high quality. "Poultry producers can and should piggyback off that."

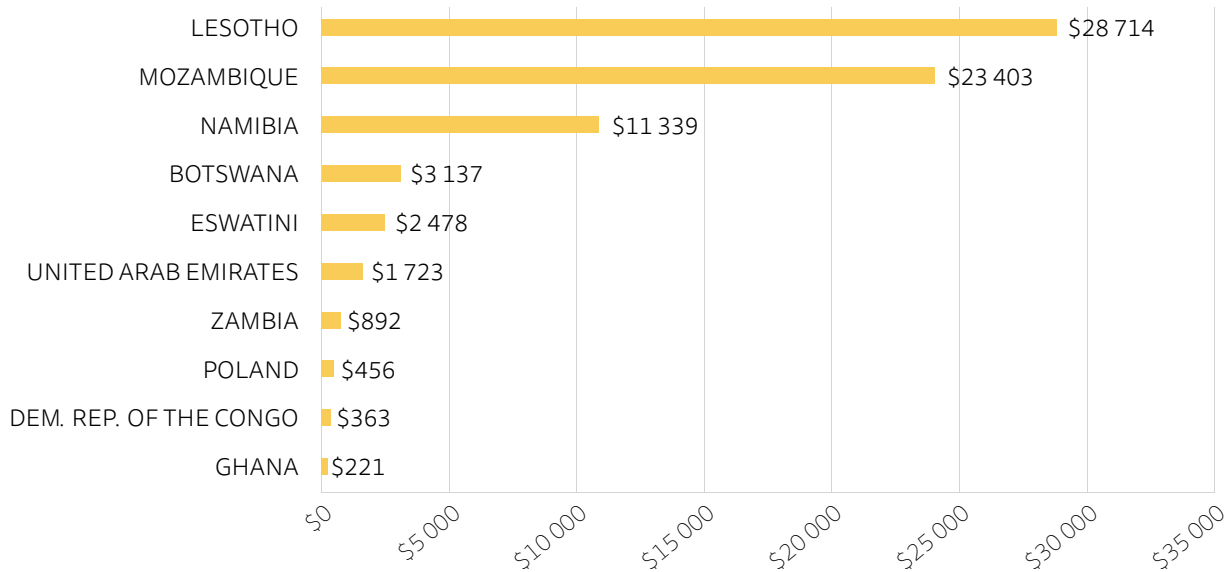


Sovereign's further processing plant in Kariega is geared to produce export products and will allow the company to ramp up export volumes



SA's exports to its top 10 markets exceeded \$75.6m in 2020. Source: Decision Innovation Solutions

South Africa top 10 poultry exports trade value (US\$1 000)



Currently, CBH, Sovereign Foods, Grain Field and the OBC Chicken group of butcheries all carry the Proudly SA logo on their packaging. "We hope that more poultry producers will join the Proudly SA Buy Local campaign," says Mashimbye. "When locally produced chicken and further-processed poultry products are clearly marked as local, Proudly SA can ramp up its efforts as it will be easy for consumers to support the call."



On the export front

The export pillar of the masterplan sets the objective that 3% to 5% of South African production should be exported by 2023, and between 7% and 10% by 2028.

In 2020, poultry exports to South Africa's top 10 markets topped US\$75.6 million. Our neighbours in SADC are the biggest importers of South African chicken and in 2020 Lesotho led with almost US\$29 million in imports.

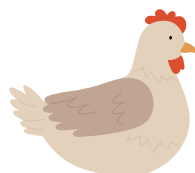
Sovereign has been supplying South Africa's largest non-African export market, the Middle East, since 2016, according to Chris Batchelder and Blaine Nell, the company's export manage-

ment team. "We export a range of raw and fully cooked products to the UAE, Qatar and Hong Kong," they say. The approximately 400 tons of value-added product and 3 000 tons of raw meat Sovereign exports per year supply wholesalers, formal retail chains and the home-meal replacement (HMR) and food-service/hospitality sectors in the Middle East and certain countries in Africa.

Sovereign plans to grow its export volumes dramatically over the next 12 months, with a large investment in a dedicated export production line in its new further-processing facility in Kariega, Eastern Cape. The line, which became operational on 1 November this year, will produce 3 000 tons of value-added product per annum, allowing Sovereign to expand beyond the Middle East.

"As input costs keep rising in the UAE, we can compete with Middle Eastern producers as well as other markets that have historically supplied into this region," says Batchelder.

Sovereign's Middle East market entry was enabled by business-to-business (B2B) agreements with strategic export partners, established with the active support of the Department of



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Trade, Industry and Competition (DTIC). In addition to connecting Sovereign to potential customers, the DTIC has also gone to significant lengths to introduce the company to the South African embassies in potential export markets.

Into the EU/UK

Despite the economic partnership agreement between Africa and the EU, breaking into that market requires an industry approach facilitated by government – a far cry from the B2B route Sovereign could follow into the Middle East.

Spearheading a collaborative effort to help the local industry gain access to the vast and lucrative UK and EU markets, are Country Bird Holdings' export manager Candice da Silva and poultry production veterinarian Amelia Badenhorst. The UK, which is the biggest consumer and importer of breast fillets in the European region, imported 408 000 metric tons of chicken meat in 2021 – and supply struggles to keep up with demand.

"It is a real industry effort," says Da Silva. "This is not a CBH project; we're opening trade lanes for all producers committed to the project."

While Da Silva and Badenhorst drew up the project plan, they continuously call on other industry players' expertise and networks. SAPA and also DALRRD are crucial players in the process.

Da Silva explains that the EU only communicates with the origin country's competent authority, which is DALRRD in this case. "There has been no lack of support and cooperation thus far, but we need everyone to remain focused and working together until we have ticked the last box."

At the time of writing, the industry was racing against time to get the necessary plans in place to submit the EU/UK export application. The EU requires a full calendar year of sample testing before approving the next step. Unless local producers can start testing on 1 January 2023, they will have to wait another whole year for exports to become a reality.

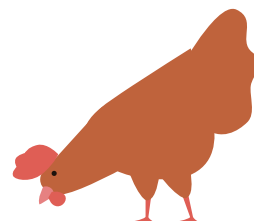
Da Silva explains that the testing is all about the minimum residue levels (MRLs) of listed pharmaceuticals, pesticides and contaminants that could be present in chicken meat. Local producers already adhere to most of the EU requirements; the big difference is that they have




to submit proof. The upside of this is that EU approval will also open other doors, given that many markets see the EU requirements as the gold standard and therefore apply those instead of developing their own.

Currently, local producers carry out their own sampling and tests are done in their own laboratories. The EU, however, requires that third parties do the sampling and an independent, industry-appointed, EU-accredited lab carry out the tests. Reports must go to DALRRD for verification, sign off and submission to the EU.

This is the process that needs to kick off in January. In March 2024, the industry's compliance plan and full year of test results will be submitted to the EU. Once approved, the EU will do an audit in South Africa. On positive outcome of the audit, application will be brought to the 27 EU countries for approval. "In effect, the EU needs us to show that the plan we have put in place to meet their requirements, is working," says Da Silva. "Fortunately, most of what is required, fits in with our existing quality-control processes."



Opening up international trade lanes is a mammoth task, and one that requires diligence, attention to detail and the patience to play the long game. For now the local industry has its sights set on exporting only fully cooked chicken meat to the EU/UK, and producers will set aside only a part of their supply chains to do so. "We have to build an understanding of the requirements of all our potential export markets and then ensure that compliance is built into our supply chain," says Da Silva. "In the process, we have to work out how to dilute the additional costs of compliance, while paying attention to the logistics, such as making sure the packaging we use will remain intact during a voyage that can take several weeks, and finding the right freight forwarders to partner with."

The masterplan has already unlocked creativity and collaboration across the industry, not to mention financial investments that have created jobs and positive ripple effects along the entire value chain. Imagine how much more can be achieved with full implementation in the years to come. 



IT'S NOT ONLY ABOUT CHICKEN

By increasing poultry production by 10% in three years, the masterplan foresees a 300 000 ton per year growth in demand for poultry feed. Given that the poultry industry consumes 50% of the yellow maize and almost all the soya cake produced by South African farmers, such a significant rise in demand will then have a multiplier effect across the economy.

"Every kilogram of chicken that is produced in South Africa requires between 1.5kg and 2kg maize and soya," says Corné Louw, head of applied economics and member services at Grain SA. "Local maize and soya are produced at export parity prices, making it the cheapest feed option for the chicken industry. Import replacement is therefore critical for our entire economy because then our maize surpluses can be consumed at home instead of being exported."

Important as exporting is, it is not the preferred offset for locally produced maize. A study done by the Bureau for Food and Agricultural Policy (BFAP) in 2015 concluded that "exports are economically the least efficient way to employ maize surpluses".

During 2019, Grain SA commissioned BFAP to do scenario planning for the 2019/2020 summer crop-production season. One of the scenarios in the study dealt with the impact that chicken import replacement could have on maize production. BFAP explored what the knock-on effect might be if local production replaced 66% of bone-in portion imports between 2020 and 2025.

The numbers were significant. Maize feed use would increase by 6% (or one million tons per year) and maize exports would decrease by around 11%, resulting in huge domestic value creation due to local processing.



Country Bird Holdings export manager Candice da Silva is spearheading the export project for the industry

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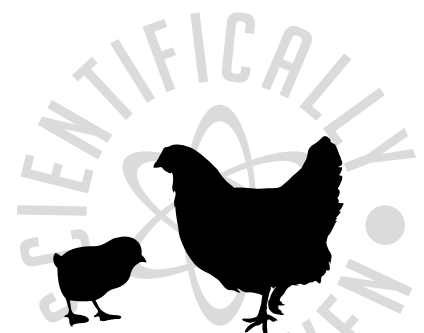
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CANNIBALISM IN POULTRY

Cannibalism amongst poultry is abnormal behaviour generally caused by hormonal shifts and involves one bird pecking at another. If observed early and managed, it can be curbed, if not it can be very costly and difficult to rein in. Torn and damaged flesh and poor feathering lower the bird's value, and it can result in high mortality losses. It usually occurs when birds are stressed and once an open wound or blood is visible, can spread rapidly through the flock. There are many causes, so it is key that it is covered in your management programme.

1. Overcrowding

Allow ample space to avoid unnecessary stress. Below is a guide for large breeds.

- 2-week-old birds: 230 cm²/bird
 - Birds between 3 to 8 weeks: 460 cm²/bird
 - Birds between 8 to 16 weeks: 930 cm²/bird
 - Birds 16 weeks and older: 1 400 cm²/bird
- Bantam chickens require half the space above, gamebirds require double.

2. Excessive heat

When birds become uncomfortably hot, they can become extremely cannibalistic. Be sure to adjust the brooding temperature as the flock age. Brood at 32°C for the first week then slowly reduce the temperature to 21°C or the outside temperature at 3 weeks. Take temperature readings at the height of the bird's back directly under the heat source. Don't heat the entire space to these temperatures.

3. Excessive light

Extremely bright light or excessively long periods of light will cause birds to become hostile so don't use white light bulbs >40 watts. Use red or infra-red bulbs for heat. For birds 12 weeks of age or older use 15- or 25-watt bulbs above feeding and watering areas and never light the house more than 16 hours per day.

4. Absence of feed or water or a shortage of feeder and waterer space

The pecking order determines which birds get to eat and when. Inadequate feeder space means birds at the lower end may never be allowed to eat and if birds must fight for feed and water, or if they are always hungry, they will increase pecking.

5. Unbalanced diets

Extremely high energy, low fibre diets cause birds to be extra active & aggressive. Feed lacking protein and other nutrients, particularly methionine, will cause birds to pick feathers so make sure your feed is appropriately balanced for the age and type of fowl you are raising.

6. Diversity

Mixing different types, ages, sizes & colours of fowl, or birds with different traits promotes pecking by disrupting the flock's normal

pecking order. Toe pecking in the first few weeks is often started due to curiosity around different colours or traits.

7. Abrupt changes in environment

If you move young birds to a new location, move some of their feeders and waterers with them and when you change to larger feeders and waterers leave the smaller ones in the pen for a few days to help birds adapt.

8. Brightly lit or shortage of nesting boxes

Don't place bright lights near nesting areas and allow 1 nest to 5 hens.

9. Allowing cripples, injured or dead birds to remain in a flock

Social order and curiosity drive fowl to pick on crippled or dead birds and this can quickly develop into a vicious habit. So be sure to remove and or cull these birds.

10. Slow-feathering birds are most prone

Most cannibalism occurs during feather growth. Slow feathering birds have immature tender feathers exposed for longer periods leaving them vulnerable to damage from pecking, so take extra care with these birds and don't raise them with other fowl.

11. Introducing/removing birds

Additions and removals disrupt the pecking order so introduce new birds by splitting the pen with a wire wall for at least a week to allow birds to get to know each other. Adding the birds to the perch at night can also help. Supervise new introductions and intervene if pecking gets out of control and birds are getting hurt. It may take a week or more for the flock to re-establish the new pecking order.

12. Prolapse pecking

Prolapse is when the hen's uterus stretches and tears taking longer to properly return into the body cavity after lay. It is most common in young flocks that start laying too soon (prior to 20 weeks of age) or in fat layers. When the uterus is exposed, other birds may pick at it out of curiosity causing bleeding and the picking quickly progresses to cannibalism. If you start seeing blood streaks on the shell surface your flock may be prone to prolapse. Properly managing how you bring your birds into production and proper feeding practices can prevent this problem. Fat birds will need to be put on a low energy diet.

13. Birds with parasites

External and internal parasites can result in pecking and damaged skin leading to a frenzy of cannibalism. Familiarise yourself with the most effective chicken deworming products on the market to avoid this.

14. Additional preventive measures

- Allow the birds to expend energy in an enclosed outside run. This will keep them

busy and allow them to peck greens, ground, and insects instead of other birds.

- Give the birds a large handful of fresh greens like lucerne or grass each day. This increases the fibre in the birds' diet which keeps the birds' gizzard full and the birds more content. Small parts of baled green leafy hay will also give the birds something to pick at.
- It is advisable to use plastic peepers or blinders in aggressive birds (gamebirds).
- Coloured or shiny items can occupy time and draw attention away from other birds. For example, hanging shiny cans just above eye level can serve as a toy.
- Blood contains salt and sulphur, so a deficiency of these nutrients in feed could trigger pecking. Offer salt water for half a day as the only drink available by combining one tablespoon to one litre of water and replacing with regular drinking water thereafter. If this does not curb the cannibalism within a day or two, repeat after a period of three days. If the trouble is due to a lack of salt, it will correct the situation.
- Finally, and only executed by experienced individuals, beak trimming can be used in problem flocks. One-third of the tip of the beak is removed leaving a square tip making it difficult for the birds to harm each other.

Treatment for a cannibalism outbreak

Since cannibalism has many sources, you may not be able to determine the exact cause of the problem but stress, no matter how slight, is usually the main factor.

- Try to correct any practices which may have led to cannibalism.
- Dull lighting using red bulbs.
- Remove any badly injured birds.
- Apply an "anti-peck" ointment to damaged birds.
- Lower the pen temperature if possible.

Be proactive and make cannibalism control part of your management programme saving you a great deal of time and money.

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Brett Roosendaal

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A COMMUNAL APPROACH

In the West African country of Benin, one small-scale farmer has found a way to thrive despite an environment where there is very little official assistance available. By **Espoir Olodo**

In Benin, tucked between Togo

to the west and Nigeria to the east, poultry is a much-preferred protein source for many. As the sector booms, many farmers are choosing to move into production of Goliaths, a chicken breed indigenous to this West African country. Victorien Bankole, one such farmer, started his journey in chicken farming not long ago but has already achieved some success.

When we visit the farm, on the outskirts of Abomey-Calavi, near Benin's biggest city, Cotonou, we are met by 50-year-old Bankole. He immediately explains the sanitation protocols and walks us through the necessary steps. "Biosecurity is

Victorien Bankole was a civil-engineering technician before he made the move into poultry farming



essential. Anyone who enters the farm has to disinfect hands and feet to avoid diseases – it's an obligatory ritual," he explains.

It is about 9:45 when we get into a courtyard where the henhouse sits on some 200 square meters. It holds multi-age flocks of the Goliath chickens. This large, productive breed was developed in Benin, by crossing other indigenous breeds.

Starting from scratch

For Bankole, there were personal reasons for going into poultry farming. He had always had a fondness for avian species, and after leaving a career as a civil-engineering technician, he wanted to remain active. He had no farming background, but he decided to learn by doing and, faced by the choices between layers and broilers, and indigenous versus commercial breeds, his final decision was to pick the Goliath.

"They grow faster than our traditional 'bicycle chicken' – they can be raised as broiler chicks to 90 days to reach a slaughter weight of 2.5 kg," he explains. "The female can start laying eggs at 4.5 months. They are also very resistant to diseases, which reduces prophylactic costs."

Having made his choice, he started small with just 20 day-old chicks. That was 2019, and three years later the decision appears to bear fruit. During this time, he grew the business slowly and carefully, reinvesting his profits, and focusing on hatching fertilised eggs to provide the market with strong day-old chicks.

Today, he is one of the major producers in the region, and on his farm has multi-age parent stock of more than 800 birds, as well as three incubators with a total loading capacity of more than 5 000 eggs. He can

produce an average of 8 000 day-old chicks each month, which he sells as is or gets into starter phase to sell for a higher price after four weeks.

Beyond the domestic market in Benin, he exports to various countries in the sub-region, including Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger, Togo and Senegal. "There is a strong demand for our chicks, and we export a batch almost every week," says Bankole.

Starting small the way he did has paid off, as he has never had to draw on his savings to keep things going. The whole enterprise has generated income from the start, and, he says, his family can count on it to live.

Besides the Goliaths, Bankole also raises turkeys, guinea fowl and occasionally quail, as a way to diversify. In total, his flock numbers around 1 000 birds.



Biosecurity is foremost, and Bankole makes sure all farm visitors are disinfected



AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE

Collaboration is key

Echoing the sentiment of many farmers, Bankole stresses that you need to be passionate about farming to make a success of it, but he says that collaboration and community are also essential requirements.

"In the beginning I made mistakes. But I could rely on a community of experienced farmers for mentorship, which allowed me to learn and grow. Today I also provide training to new students who come from all over Benin and even neighbouring countries," he says.

This collective support is particularly important as the poultry industry is largely unregulated and farmers

Bankole has multi-age parent stock numbering over 800 birds



Every month an average of 8 000 day-old chicks are produced



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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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AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE



Bankole has around 1 000 birds on his farm including quail, guinea fowl and these turkeys

cannot rely on government help. It is very often every man for himself.

Says Bankole, "You require a strong financial position for any investments, and the cash flow to keep your business afloat and cover operational costs. Neither the government nor the banks are ready to give us a hand. You have to make it on your own..."

As his breeding experience grew, he also learnt various strategies to address the many challenges. Feed costs are the bane of every poultry farmer's life, and as feed makes up close to 70% of input costs, saving on feed is one key area where he focuses his energy.

Mixing his own feed is one option, so he sometimes buys maize and soya or other raw materials in bulk, rather than the bagged feed available from Groupe Veto Services (GVS), the only licensed company in the feed market. But this method is not always cost-effective, he explains, as maize and soya prices are volatile.

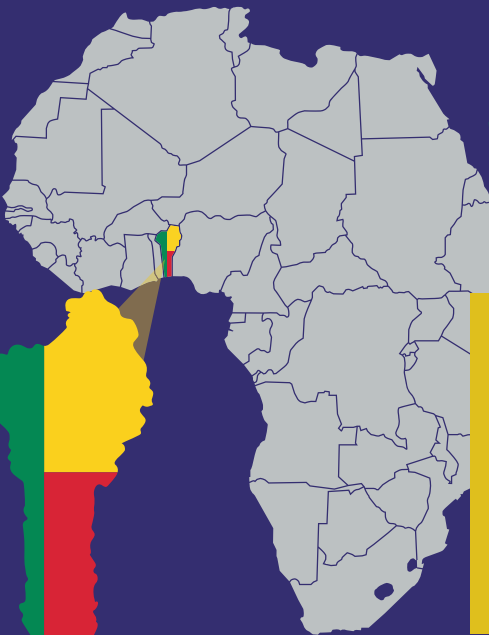
"I require up to 90kg of feed per week for my whole flock, and the margins are small. Maize and soya are critical ingredients in the composition of the feed, and when prices go up, I have no choice but to buy from GVS," explains Bankole.

Despite the challenges, he remains positive about the future, and believes that producing Goliaths as a long-term business has a lot of promise, as long as the farmer is determined and focused.

"I would like to see the younger generation get involved in poultry farming on a much bigger scale than is the case currently," he says.

"Goliath chicken is something Benin can bring to the world. Our business requires a lot of effort and patience. But it pays off in the end with hard work and networking." 📷

The Republic of Benin



Benin is predominantly a rural society, and agriculture supports more than 70% of the population. As elsewhere in Africa, domestic chicken production battles to compete with imports.



Does this chicken taste punny?

Words: **Chris Forrest**

Illustration: **Jason Bronkhorst**

If you've ever wondered how many chicken puns can cross the road before they are smothered in 11 herbs and spices, read on...

Chickens fascinate me. As someone who buys into Darwinism, it amazes me that a chicken's main evolutionary quality is its ability to be delicious. It's a skill they appear to have developed over millennia, and I think they've done a really good job. You have to wonder though, how they came to that decision. I think it was at a huge gathering, a white meeting if you will.

I can picture it now, the Council of Hens and Roosters, or CHAR, are getting grilled by the masses. A particularly fearful bantam yells out, "Come on guys, we're seeing flames here, I know it seems like we're just flapping, but we have genuine concerns, we're in a pot of trouble. Our only defense is doing some sort of a run, this leaves us way down the pecking order. If we don't sort something out, we'll all be as dead as dodos."

Attila The Hen, the most vicious member of the Council, looks at them all in disgust, and retorts, "You lot need to toughen up! The dodos' problem was that they weren't spicy enough – we need to sauce some hot techniques in defence!"

One young broiler, eager to learn but still sceptical, squawks, "I like what you're saying, Attila, but my current wings may as well be on a buffalo, I can't even fly over de fence. We need someone to teach us the ways of the Ancient Grand Roosters."

Out of nowhere, as if by magic, appears the legendary Cluck Norris. The flock goes silent in expectation as he fluffs up his tail feathers and declaims, "Your fears are very real, I've been incubating them for some time myself. I wish I could teach you a few moves more deadly than Newcastle disease... the truth is, there is only one – the 'flatty'. It's very effective against small yapper dogs from the East Rand, but otherwise we're pretty cooked. I'm afraid it's good braai cruel world for all of us..."

The chickens are not happy to hear this; in fact at this point, they're clucking mad. Disappointed in their former hero, tempers flare and the coop turns into a brooder as they begin roasting the Council. "You're a bunch of egg-heads!" "Getting a decent response from you lot is as

rare as our teeth!" "You belong in a turkey!" "You guys are so useless, you'll never get laid!"

One particularly Angry Bird flings herself at them to try and do some damage, but she is no Amelia Egghart, and falls sadly short.

The Council looks terrified and none of them can pluck up the courage to confront the crowd. One hen whispers to another, "We can't risk saying something to incite the mob further and end up with egg on our face."

Eventually, an elder hen named



HUMOUR

Dixie Chick steps forward, and tries to calm the mood. "Fellow feathered friends," she clucks, "I'm with you. I've seen that this, our ever weaker existence, is becoming a trend. I say we buck it – I think the way to make ourselves indispensable is to sing, sing our hearts out."

With that she flings her head back and begins to squawk. At first some think she is clearing her throat but soon it dawns on them that this is in fact her singing voice.

The roosters, unable to stop themselves staring at her bountiful breasts, begin to crow along in an effort to impress her, but none of them knows how it goes, they're all just winging it. A cacophony of noise follows and gets louder and louder, until Cluck Norris completely loses it, lambasting all of them, "Be quiet! You'll wake up all of our enemies and we'll be well done!" But it's no use, the entire mob is henpecked.



There is only One who can regain their attention now, and that is the regal Princess Layer, but in a cruel twist of fate, she isn't there. The Council looks high and low, but can't seem to find her. Finally she is spotted, across the road. Attila the Hen yells at her, "Your Highness, you need to cross the road!" Confused, Princess Layer shakes her wattle and calls back, "Why?"

"It's obvious, just do it and shut the flock up!" an impatient Attila yells.

The Princess, now irritated, considers telling Attila to get stuffed, but then she realises there are more important issues, and struts across the road, after looking left, right and left again.

As the Princess daintily steps in among the flock, the cacophony subsides into silence as her presence is felt. Her silky voice rings out, "My Flock, let us not choose fowl play at a time

like this: we need to seek advice from one who has a free range on wisdom." She points to a bedraggled rooster in the crowd and asks him, "Albert Eggstein – I'm sure you have a solution marinating in your mind?"

Eggstein is startled. Normally he is too shy to speak in public, but now is not the time to be chicken. He takes a deep breath. "I do have an idea... to some it might be soup for the soul, others may go to pieces, but if you want to make an omelette you have break some, err..."

Drawing himself up to his full height, Eggstein ruffles his feathers, and crows, "We have to be streetwise and think out the box! We have to be versatile and be able to mix with a blend of eleven herbs and spices. But we have to do so much more! We have a whole rotisserie of choices – some may be extra hot, some mild, some may involve lemon – this is not a stock standard solution. But the bottom line is simple: whatever we do, we must be... delicious!" 🍗



Jozi-based Chris Forrest: long-time comedian, short-time chef. www.chrisforrest.co.za



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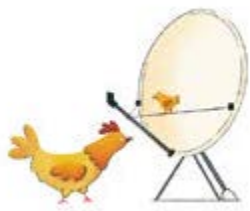
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ON THE WIRES

US eggs could finally get the 'healthy' stamp... and more from global headlines

Compiled by **Charmain Lines**

Newcastle disease in Colombia



A Colombian chicken farmer feeds her chickens near the town of Villa de Leyva in the Colombian Andes

Photographs: Shutterstock; Blue Sky imagery / Shutterstock; Sundry Photography / Shutterstock; Abah Baratawira / Shutterstock

Colombia's poultry industry has just emerged from a Newcastle disease quarantine that was declared in May last year after outbreaks were reported in backyard flocks and fighting cocks. The South American country is now back on track to eradicate Newcastle disease in pursuit of export ambitions.

In 2021, shortly before the outbreak, Colombia declared itself Newcastle disease-free, a declaration that was later recognised by the World Organisation of Animal Health (OIE). Things were going so well, in fact, that officials from the Colombian Federation of Poultry Producers (Fenavi) travelled to Peru to present

the Colombian strategy.

Thanks to the efforts of the Colombian Agricultural Institute (ICA) and Fenavi to control bird movement and trade between certain regions and carry out epidemiological surveillance, the industry is hoping to regain its disease-free status – and export prospects – soon. 📌

USDA tackles salmonella

More than a million people fall ill due to salmonella poisoning every year in the US, and in almost 25% of cases, the source is chicken or turkey meat. In an effort to get a handle on the issue, the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) has proposed far-reaching changes in the way the meat is processed. Currently, the responsibility to avoid illness from raw poultry largely rests with consumers and relates to safe food-preparation practices. The USDA now wants prevention to start with farmers and processing plants.

The proposed regulations call for birds to be tested for salmonella before they enter abattoirs, sampling

and testing at multiple stages in the processing plant, and establishing a maximum level of bacterial contamination allowed. Limiting the three types of salmonella that can make people sick is a further possibility. Meat that exceeds the limits or that contain the prohibited types of salmonella could be withheld from the market. The USDA is currently getting inputs from the poultry industry, hoping to start the rule-making process in mid-2023 for completion by the end of 2025. 📌



The chicken church of Java



The Chicken Church near Borobudur

About 550km from Jakarta, Indonesia, deep in the forest of Java, is a gigantic hen-shaped structure called Gereja Ayam, or “the Chicken Church”.

Conceived as a place of worship that would welcome pilgrims of all religions, Gereja Ayam was the dream of one Daniel Alamsjahche who, inspired by a divine message, began building the temple in 1990. Meant to represent a dove, the universal symbol of peace and harmony, the church was immediately renamed for the less-exalted chicken.

The ambitious project included a drug-rehabilitation centre and a centre for children with disabilities and people with mental-health issues. Sadly, in 2000, high costs forced construction to a halt. Gereja Ayam remains unfinished but has, bizarrely, become one of the most visited tourist destinations in Indonesia. 📷

Cage-free headache for Walmart

The debate around cage-free production of eggs is sure to intensify following the announcement by Walmart that it won't be able to supply 100% cage-free eggs by 2025. The mega-grocer made the commitment in 2016.

In its revised animal-welfare statement Walmart cited supply issues, cost of production and the strain that cage-free pledges have put on the US egg industry. Cage-free eggs accounted for 20% of total egg sales in Walmart's US stores in 2022.

In view of slower-than-expected sales, the company hasn't committed to a new deadline. Its latest sustainability report, however, mentions plans to lower the shelf price of cage-free eggs and continued efforts to promote sales through proper shelf-space allocation. Walmart is not the only US grocer that will miss the 2025 deadline. The complexity of cage-free production, even in an affluent society



like the US, is underlined by a new study commissioned to unpack the challenges producers face in transitioning to cage-free housing.

Commenting on these developments, GM of SAPA's Egg Organisation Dr Abongile Balarane says that consumer demand will determine how fast retailers can transition to 100% cage-free eggs. “In a lower-income country like ours, the market for cage-free eggs is vastly smaller than the 20% in the US indicated by Walmart's sales figures. We simply cannot contemplate forcing change that will make eggs unaffordable for consumers who depend on them for protein.” 📷

Getting the ‘healthy’ stamp

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) could be handing the egg industry a welcome post-Christmas gift if it gets approval for its revised definition of what constitutes a “healthy food”. Public comments close on 28 December 2022.

The proposed definition revises the “healthy” claim to better account for how nutrients in different food groups work together to create healthy dietary patterns. The limit on dietary cholesterol, which is no longer deemed a public-health concern, has also been lifted. This allows for more foods recommended by the 2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans to claim healthy status on labelling. These include nuts and seeds and higher-fat fish.

According to the FDA, a product must contain a “certain meaningful amount of food from at least one of the food groups or subgroups (such as fruit, vegetable, dairy) recommended by the Dietary Guidelines” to meet the criteria. Additionally, a product must adhere to specific limits that are based on a percentage of the daily value for nutrients such as saturated fat, sodium and added sugars. The FDA's efforts follow the United Nations Food Systems Summit formally recognising eggs as one of two “star ingredients” that promote good nutrition and health goals. The other star is beans. 📷





POULTRY CARES

A time of giving

Poultry people care, not only at Christmas time, but year round. A handful of SAPA members tell **Diane McCarthy** how their community projects are rolled out



“Tis the season to be jolly.” We all know what that means: good food, family fun, a break from the grind of work. It is also a time of gratitude, for surviving another tumultuous year, and for being part of an industry that contributes so many delicious and nutritious meals year round to millions of South Africans.

Aside from putting food on the table, the poultry industry also keeps a caring eye on the communities where it operates, not only during the festive season, but all year round.

“At Christmas time we treat our workers and give our people in the factory special dinners. But we have year-round activities to support the people of Reitz,” says Maryke van der Schyff from Grain Field Chickens in the Free State. “Loyalty goes both ways, and we look out for the community around us, and the people who work here with us. We want people to

This page: Astral donates chicken to initiatives such as the Chefs with Compassion Mandela Day cooking challenge which provided meals to thousands of vulnerable people. It also donates to CHOC through its Astral Cares programme





Above: Workers organise food donations at the Food Forward warehouse. Quantum donates eggs to this food bank

Below: Maryke van der Schyff and Hein Dorfling of Grain Field present the new kitchen upgrade to Sister Garlinde of the House of St Paul home for the elderly in Reitz



think, 'Wow, that's the company I work for.' We rely on them, and this is our way of giving back."

According to Van der Schyff, Grain Field runs two ongoing community projects, one of which is supporting the local home for the elderly. The House of St Paul is run by nuns from Sisters of St Paul Catholic order, and it receives no funding from government, so the need is great and ongoing. Grain Field funded the refurbishment of the home and covers the maintenance costs.

Grain Field's second ongoing project is called Kuikenfonds, a resource that directly benefits the children at the local school. It funds eye tests and glasses for those who can't see the blackboard clearly, school supplies and meals for those in need, and even counselling services for troubled youngsters... all to help the children focus on their learning experience and make the most of their education.

At Astral Foods, a commitment to the community is part of the company's DNA. "Our ongoing focus is on providing food for the homeless,

because we know that a regular meal makes a real difference," says CSI manager Sheila Ross. "We currently distribute over a ton of chicken every week within the communities that surround our plants. While we can't employ everyone, we can try to make their lives a little easier."

Under the initiative Astral Cares, the company also provides chicken on a monthly basis to 11 houses run by the childhood cancer organisation CHOC, as well as seven Girls and Boys Town campuses around South Africa.

Education and food sustainability are core to the community outreach at table egg company Quantum Foods. Says Quantum's CSI executive Heather Pether, "We donate to the food bank Food Forward SA because they have a wide reach, and in Wellington near our head office we support a local organisation that runs an upliftment programme, teaching skills like basic sewing and basic aftercare." This festive season Quantum has also contributed presents for children to a gift drive organised by the charitable organisation Outside the Bowl.

Over at Rainbow, the focus is on early childhood development, through regular contributions to the nonprofit Do More Foundation, which was set up by RCL Foods to handle CSI campaigns for third parties. "Do More is as adept at welfare work as we at Rainbow are at producing chicken, and we know we can trust them to turn our contributions into real value where it is needed the most," says Rainbow CEO Marthinus Stander.

Do More runs projects throughout the year in early childhood development (ECD) centres countrywide, where they distribute Do More porridge, a nutritionally balanced meal that was created by RCL Foods. It also provides parenting support, and maternal health and nutrition programmes, among others. Do



POULTRY CARES

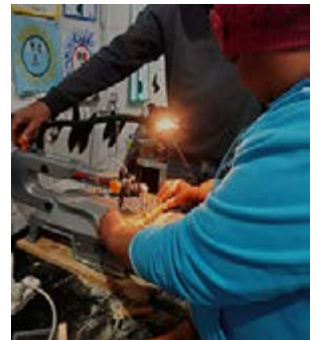
More's Cara Goschen explains how combining resources from various corporate funders such as Rainbow powers all Do Good's initiatives. "You really can do more, and make more of a difference by collaborating. We work together with other NPOs and we are connected to suppliers and government contractors so we have a greater impact."

Do More always has special plans for the festive season, and this year is no different, thanks to generous donations from Rainbow and other funders. "We've launched the Do More Play campaign, in which the ECD centres we support receive wooden playboxes that were created through one of our enterprise-development programmes," explains Goschen. "Since Covid, we've seen such generosity from donors. We

have proved that Do More makes a difference, and people like to be part of a success story." 📺



This page: As part of a training programme for disabled youth that the Do More Foundation offers near Rainbow's Worcester plant, wooden toys are made from pallet offcuts



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FARMERS' WISDOM



'Make farmer friends – how will you survive in this game on your own?' Broiler farmer **Noma Sibanda** advocates the power of teamwork

Seasonal thinking and other strategies

Before the pandemic hit and brought retrenchment to her door, Noma Sibanda was on a different career path. Raised in agriculture – her dad is a farmer – Sibanda never planned on becoming a farmer herself. Instead, she chose to study marketing and forged a successful career as a sales executive. "But Covid led me here and I found my true passion. It was such an easy decision. I often wonder why I didn't think of this before."

Although happy with her choice, Sibanda acknowledges that it's not an easy path. "In this business you need to ground yourself. So many factors are not in your control. If you don't have passion for farming, don't farm."

One way Sibanda manages to keep afloat is by thinking seasonally. Every winter she closes her broiler operation. "In winter it costs more to keep chickens alive because they eat more, and the feed costs have skyrocketed, let alone heating costs. The brooder must be kept at 32°C throughout winter; if the temperature drops you will have high mortality rates. To raise broilers year round, you need fully automated systems in your coops, central heating and central cooling, because in summer, again, it can get

too hot." In a typical year, she places 48 cycles; 500 birds in four separate coops at any one time. In 2022 she produced a total of 13 500 birds.

Until Sibanda can afford to upgrade her systems, she is embracing a multitiered approach to farming, to keep her employees on the payroll. She has elected to forfeit the festive season cycle this year, and will instead buy in live birds and have them slaughtered and packaged to service her customers who want processed birds over the holiday period.

"To close my broiler operation has financial implications, but that is why as a poultry farmer it doesn't make sense to only raise chickens. Make sure you can plant crops that do well in winter, for example cabbage. So, whoever usually takes care of the chickens now moves into the field. This festive season we are raising crops, not chickens."

Sibanda is keen to encourage others to enter the business but is quick to advise a nimble approach to farming. "Reinvent ways of doing business. Don't keep beating the same drum. If you see that it's not working, change. Poultry is broad, you



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can do indigenous chicken, you can do broilers, you can do eggs. Try and diversify. And make farmer friends – how will you survive in this game on your own?" She belongs to a growing group of small farmers who seek each other's support on Twitter, and says she has come to rely on this tight and supportive group via the hashtag #FarmingTwitter.

"Above all, always remember: if you are a farmer, you are hopeful. Keep being hopeful." 📷

HPAI: the burning questions

The threat of highly pathogenic avian flu has raised its head again, on a broiler-breeder farm in KZN. Drs Shahn Bisschop and Obed Lukhele answer nine burning questions. By **Melinda Shaw**

1

SA had not had cases of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) since February – what happened here?

HPAI has become a huge concern globally, and is no longer only a worry during autumn and winter months. Wild birds are the majority spreaders, and the disease has decimated flocks in many poultry-producing countries. We always knew that the risk remains high in South Africa, but the recent incidence in Cato Ridge served as a reminder that we cannot do enough to educate farmers about the risk and the essential prevention and management protocols that have to be followed.

On the affected table-egg layer farm, which has two houses, the birds in one house got sick, and their veterinarian initially diagnosed a chronic respiratory disease. The farmer then sold off some of the birds, and it was only a week later, when birds in the second house got sick, that HPAI was confirmed. By then a neighbouring commercial broiler-breeder farm had increased mortalities, which necessitated the culling of 23 000 birds at that facility.

Although wild birds may have been the origin of this outbreak, we cannot know this with certainty. The area around Cato Ridge supports large populations of commercial and noncommercial poultry where the disease may have occurred unrecorded for a time. State veterinary services in KZN are presently poorly resourced and also preoccupied with foot-and-mouth disease outbreaks, and may well have missed earlier, probably unreported, outbreaks.

2

What should farmers know about HPAI now?

The key to containing this extremely contagious disease is a quick diagnosis, quick action with respect to culling, and responsible disposal of the carcasses and all infectious material (feed, manure and eggs inside an affected house, plus the PPE worn by workers who dealt with the matter). Wild birds are the carriers, but it is usually the movement of people, equipment or poultry products that spreads the disease from one farm to the next. This is why commercial producers have such strict biosecurity protocols, where, for instance, on one farm there will be separate sites, each fenced off under lock and key, with its own biosecurity facilities such as showers and disinfection facilities, and dedicated staff. This way any suspected infection can be contained.

3

Can you safeguard your farm if your neighbours are less strict?

Your farm is only as safe as your neighbours' biosecurity measures and practices, which is the ongoing challenge, particularly in areas where there are numerous smaller operations and backyard farmers. These operators may allow infected material such as carcasses or eggs to leave the premises through the actions of people, animals or wild birds – either deliberately or through carelessness.

You might employ strict access and vermin control but if your neighbour is not as strict, your operation is at risk because people, rats and scavenging animals as well as wild birds from a neighbouring property can carry infection from an unsafe carcass/egg disposal site into your secure sites.

For this reason commercial producers often find themselves having to help smaller farmers in surrounding areas in setting up the correct systems – all producers in an area are to some extent interlinked.

4**What must I do if I suspect HPAI is present?**

Infected birds may be missed due to the short incubation period. By the time clinical signs or increased mortality is noticed, the virus may already have spread through the entire site. That said, as soon as you see that birds are sick and mortality is abnormally high, you must notify the state veterinarian. The confirmatory diagnosis is based on samples that must be quickly analysed by an accredited laboratory. Infected flocks can be depopulated as quickly as possible based on typical post-mortem lesions before the laboratory results are even known. The decision to cull a flock based on post-mortem lesions rests with the responsible and experienced veterinarian.

Of course, the loss of a whole flock is devastating and impacts people's livelihoods while also potentially threatening food security. In an attempt to minimise the losses, an uninformed farmer might quickly sell off birds or eggs from a sick flock, which then spreads this deadly disease. In countries such as the US and in the EU farmers receive compensation for their losses, but South African producers are not financially compensated for culling birds due to HPAI. Such compensation could be an incentive for owners of medium to small-scale and backyard operations to report state-controlled diseases like HPAI.

5**How should mortalities be disposed of – is there a national protocol?**

There are management guidelines for infected material, prescribed by organisations such as the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). South Africa's commercial producers have developed practical protocols based on international best practices. Composting of carcasses, feed, eggs and other infected organic material inside the house has proven to be the best method for breeder operations, mainly to contain and deactivate the HPAI virus.

In the case of commercial laying hens in cages composting is more difficult due to the shortage of

organic material and space inside the chicken sheds. In these cases carcasses must be bagged and disposed of under the guidance of the relevant state veterinarian. Best practice is to bury carcasses on site, however this can only be done if approval for the emergency burial site has been obtained in advance from the provincial department of environmental affairs. This is best done as an extension to the EIA of the farm as Environmental Affairs will not consider emergency applications. There is a very small number of national dump sites to handle the carcass waste, as well as a few rendering plants able to assist on a large scale. Farmers should familiarise themselves with all these options before any outbreak.

6**How does composting work practically?**

The principle is to contain all the infected material inside the house. The carcasses, the manure, eggs and feed are piled into layers on top of a layer of fresh organic material such as shavings, that allow for air to enter at the bottom of the heap. Water is added at the top to create a crust. The temperature in the heap is

measured daily at different points until it exceeds over 50°C and is maintained at that temperature and higher until the carcasses completely break down. The heat ensures that the virus is killed and also speeds up the decomposition. Enzymes might be added to accelerate the process. The decomposition takes at least three weeks, during which time the site is under quarantine.



ASK THE EXPERTS

7

What is done with the compost afterwards? Is it safe to use?

It can be used in the fields as a fertiliser but only after the state veterinarian has lifted the quarantine.

8

Aside from the disposal issue, is there a difference between how HPAI is dealt with in layers and broilers or broiler breeders?

Not really. The other issue that arises with laying hens is that farms may not be divided into clearly demarcated sites and that sites/farms are often multi-age which may complicate the disease management and the quarantine protocols. These all need to be adjudicated by the responsible state veterinarian but it may also be useful to obtain the opinion of an experienced poultry vet (preferably prior to an outbreak). This will help the state vet in handling any outbreak to minimise the impact of the quarantine and culling measures taken.

9

Vaccination is a hot topic, as debated this past October by the International Alliance for Biological Standardization (IABS) in France. Will South Africa start vaccinating poultry flocks against HPAI?

At the conference the majority of the veterinarians present agreed that vaccination against HPAI has become unavoidable and that this will now be pursued. Ongoing and expanding AI outbreaks across the globe has had a negative financial impact on governments that financially compensate their farmers and this has become unsustainable. In

addition, there has been concerns around bird welfare, food security and people's livelihoods as well as the effects on the environment if dead and culled birds have to be buried.


Vaccination will provide an extra layer of protection against HPAI as biosecurity on its own is not enough.

But there are several issues that have to be settled first and vaccination is certainly not imminent for South Africa.

Vaccination registrations typically take a number of years to complete and the various trade negotiations that need to take place to enable

countries to vaccinate without endangering their export status will also require a great deal of work.

We have also not had any indication that DALRRD has altered its stance on vaccination, so we will need to engage with them to find out how they see this development.

Any decision about vaccination will require collaboration between DALRRD and the poultry industry, laboratories, researchers and regulatory authorities of vaccines. Appropriate vaccines would have to be selected and robust surveillance systems must also be put in place. It will be a long road. 



Dr Obed Lukhele is MD for Agriculture at Astral Operations Ltd, and Dr Shahn Bisschop is a veterinarian consulting for the poultry industry. For more info, contact your state veterinarian or Dr Bisschop on shahn@avimune.co.za

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- Contact ad sales manager Louisa Nel on 011 795 9920 or at advertising@poultrybulletin.co.za.
- Ads may be edited for length and clarity and we reserve the right to reject any advertisement at our discretion.
- 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.



RECIPE OF THE MONTH












EASY-PEASY CRUSTLESS EGGNOG PIE



SERVE THIS SIMPLE CRUSTLESS CUSTARD PIE ON YOUR FESTIVE TABLE. AMARULA ADDS A LOCAL TWIST.

OVEN TEMP 165°

 <p>4 EGGS</p>	 <p>3/4 CUP SUGAR</p>	 <p>1/2 CUP MELTED BUTTER</p>	 <p>1/2 CUP ALL-PURPOSE FLOUR</p>	 <p>2 CUPS WARM MILK</p>	 <p>1/4 CUP AMARULA 1 t. VANILLA ESS. PINCH OF SALT. CINNAMON & NUTMEG FOR DUSTING</p>
 <p>BEAT TOGETHER EGGS, SUGAR & VANILLA UNTIL PALE YELLOW</p>	 <p>ADD BUTTER & FLOUR, & WHISK UNTIL LIGHT & FLUFFY</p>	<p>ADD WARM MILK & WHISK TO COMBINE MIX IN AMARULA & PINCH OF SALT. REST BATTER FOR 5 MINUTES.</p>			 <p>POUR INTO PIE DISH BAKE FOR 40 MINS UNTIL TOP IS BROWNED</p>

DUST PIE WITH CINNAMON & NUTMEG, COOL & TOP WITH FRESH BERRIES & AMARULA INFUSED (1T) WHIPPED CREAM.

THIS PIE FORMS A CRUST-LIKE SKIN DURING BAKING.



D.L. HEARBY

Elanco

RIGHT MOLECULE



RIGHT DECISION

RIGHT DOSE

The synergistic action and optimal dose combination of *narasin* and *nicarbazin* ensures Maxiban™ protects birds against coccidiosis delivering high Intestinal Integrity (I²) and sustainability¹.

Maxiban.™ Right Decision.

1. Callender ME and Jeffers TK (1980). Anticoccidial Combinations Comprising Nicarbazin and the Polyether Antibiotics. US Patent 4,218,438, pp1-12.

Maxiban contains Narasin and Nicarbazin. Legal category [SPA](#). Further information is available from the Datasheet.

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Registration number: G0976 (Act 36/1947).

Registration: Elanco Animal Health, Co.Reg.No.: 1957/000371/07 Private Bag X119, Bryanston, 2021, RSA. Tel.: (012) 657 6200 Fax.: (012) 657 6216

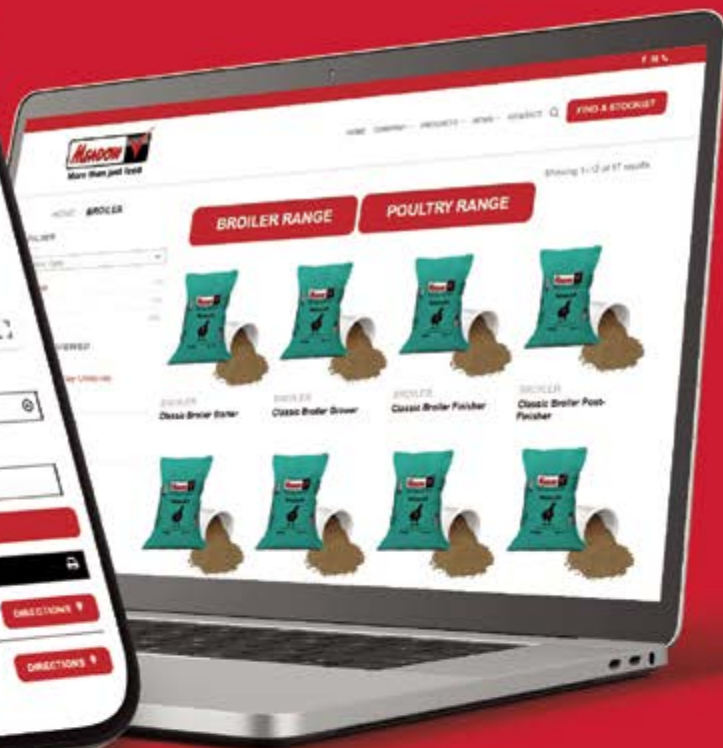
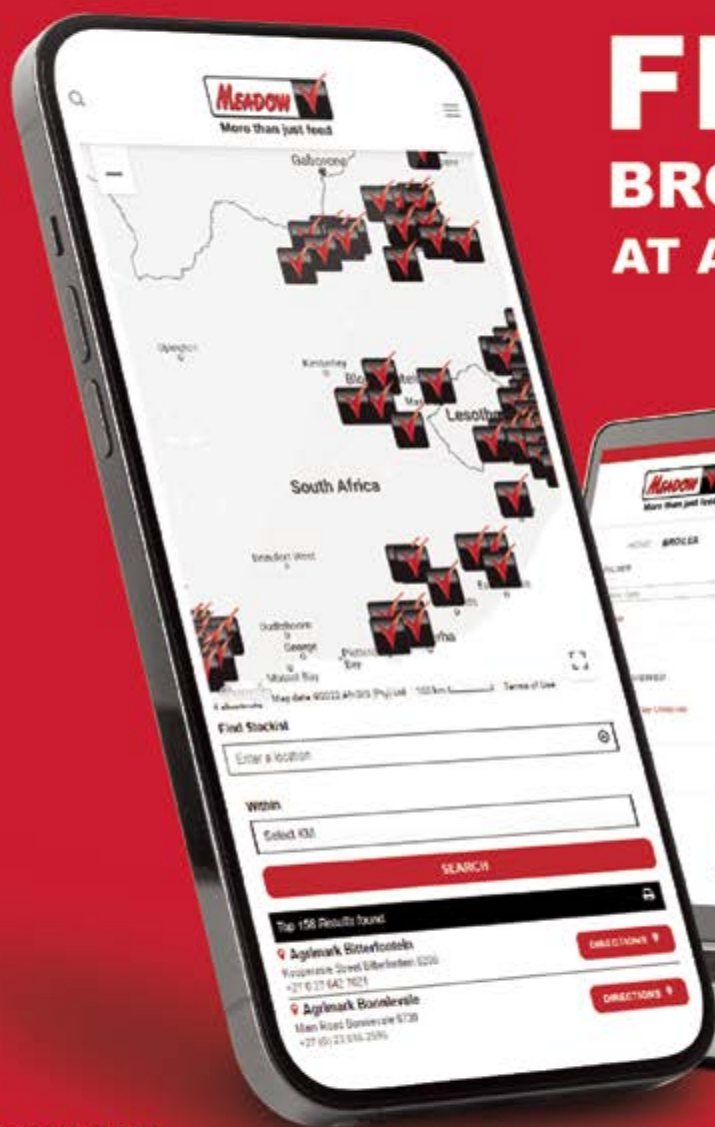
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