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ISSUE 18 FEBRUARY / MARCH 2024

Poultry Bulletin



THE COLLABORATION ISSUE

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN POULTRY ASSOCIATION

AVIAN INFLUENZA CRISIS UPDATE: WHERE TO NOW IN 2024?

TEAMWORK FOR THE WIN

A time for all parties to pull together

THE EGGS THAT ARE NOT SUNNY-SIDE UP

FINDING SHELF SPACE

WHY COMPLIANCE IS EVERYTHING

BACK TO SCHOOL

TEACHING LIFE SKILLS WITH CHICKEN

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IF I'VE LEARNT ONE THING about poultry farmers it is that you will have to look far to find a more resourceful and resilient bunch of people. This industry always makes a plan to hold up its end, come hell or high water, loadshedding or bird flu. And as the custodians of the planet's most plentiful birds, and at the same time the providers of the most affordable animal protein source in South Africa, chicken farmers deserve all the support they can get, and government and industry collaboration has never been more important. This is why we thought it apt to theme this issue around collaboration.

Readers send us many interesting tales of chickens, and one that we enjoyed a lot this month is an American short documentary called "Chicken Stories" by a start-up farmer which the *New Yorker* had highlighted as Short of the Week. Thanks for the tip, James!

Scan the QR code with your smartphone to watch this entertaining 18-minute doccie of a group of young Californian farmers coming to grips with chicken farming, millennial style, complete with a Go Pro fitted to a chicken! Now here is one farm that could benefit from the collective expertise of SAPA members!

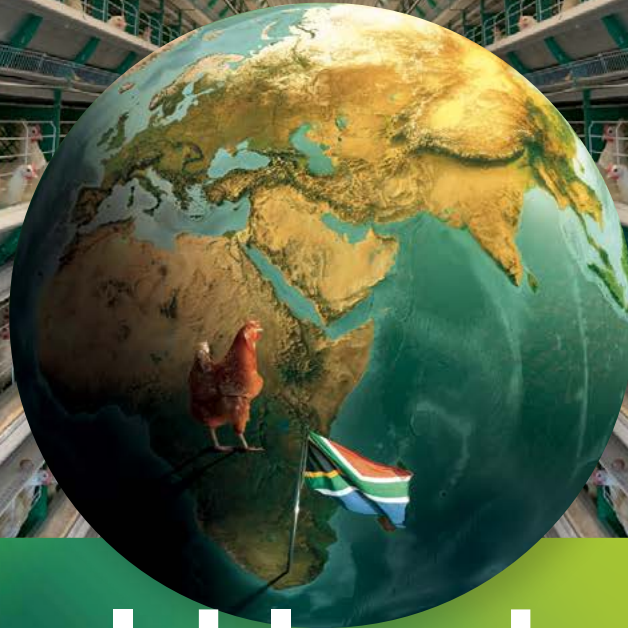


And after this little detour, let's get back to the job at hand, and navigate the challenging task of producing the millions of chickens and eggs that South Africa's people rely on this industry for every month.

Enjoy the issue!

Melinda
 @melshaw001
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What we need is collaboration

OUR INDUSTRY IS SLOWLY EMERGING from the storm of extreme challenges faced in the last year, and the first months of 2024 have focused on recovery.

No poultry business has been able to escape the enormous impacts of high raw-material prices coupled with loadshedding and the devastation of HPAI.

Right now, raw-material prices are still high, although lower than in 2023, and the new season's production still needs to be determined. Expensive mitigating strategies for loadshedding remain a necessity, but at least, for now, there is a significant reduction in the incidences of HPAI. There has not been any new outbreaks since early December.

These urgent challenges have pushed the ideals of 2019's masterplan to the back burner, but it is time to get back on track and revisit the commitments made by industry, government, importers and other signatories. What has not changed is that the poultry industry remains SA's invaluable resource for affordable nutrition, food security and job creation, and it's essential that all stakeholders collaborate to protect and nurture it.

With this in mind, we'll need to work with government to ensure that the proposed rebate on imports of chicken meat, put forward as a way to mitigate the impact of HPAI, is not implemented. Despite the disease, production levels up to November 2023 remained totally normal at 21.5 million birds per week and despite scaremongering by importers, the price of chicken was not impacted at all, as SAPA presented to ITAC.

The industry will need all existing trade measures to stay in place to ensure that our producers don't have to compete with dumped product at a time when they can ill afford it.

Another bout of HPAI would be devastating for

'It is important that we get regulations in place as soon as possible to facilitate widespread vaccination against HPAI'



the industry and therefore it is important that we get regulations in place as soon as possible to facilitate widespread vaccination.

Farmers are still not compensated for the loss of healthy chickens culled on farms where HPAI was confirmed, which has completely wiped out some businesses.

The industry has applied to the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) for a disaster fund to be set up as promised by deputy president Paul Mashatile last October. Despite his announcement that R3.5 billion was set aside to assist farmers, this fund has still not been established.

We call on government to prioritise these urgent steps so that our farmers can get back to focusing on producing food for the nation. 📌

Aziz Sulliman
Chairman, SAPA



LETTERS

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

Potchefstroom Koekoek up close

I finally had the time to work through all the back issues of *Poultry Bulletin*, and saw that you chose the Potchefstroom Koekoek as the Chicken of the Month (Feb/March 2023). I was a member of the Fowls for Africa team from 1995 to 2010 and know this breed well.

The article stated that the Potchefstroom Koekoek can be sexed by noting a white spot on the head of the males when they hatch. That is not quite correct – all newly hatched pure-bred Koekoeks, both male and female, have the white dot on the head. When you crossbreed the Potchefstroom Koekoek hen with a rooster of a specific breed, the males will have a white dot on the head, and the females will be black.

We call them Naledis and promote these hens as very good layers. One of our clients placed them in a battery system and complained that they didn't lay very well, but some other farmers were very impressed with the performance in a barn or free-range system.

During my studies on the egg production of four indigenous breeds I found that the egg production in my project was much higher than



that of the breeds reported by other researchers.

I took some of the Naledis and placed them in one house in a free-range system, a barn system and a battery system for 22 weeks. I experienced that the free-range chickens produce many more eggs than the chickens in the barn or battery systems.

Jan Grobbelaar



Thanks for my book!

I was very happy to win the signed copy of *A Country of Two Agricultures* by Wandile Sihlobo. I am really enjoying reading it. Thank you again!

Sam Magalula



Congrats on the silver!

Well done! Keep up the good work.
Proud to be part of the poultry industry together with you!

André Kilian
RCL Foods

Baie geluk, julle, dit is 'n puik tydskrif en iets om op trots te wees!

Heiko Koster
Koster Trading & Consulting

Congratulations to all at SAPA and *Poultry Bulletin* for this achievement. A lot of hard work goes on in the background and we are privileged as an industry to be part of this.

Lana Dyer
Boehringer Ingelheim



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NEWS IN BRIEF

Concern over vet shortage; jobs and training opportunities; new blood at Daybreak and more

Compiled by **Charmain Lines**

Still too few vets




AT THE END OF 2023, some 32% of the approved and budgeted positions for state veterinarians were vacant. This means a shortage of 103 veterinarians.

In response, Minister Thoko Didiza has motivated for veterinarians to be returned to the Department of Home Affairs' scarce-skills list.

Dr Wilhelm Maré, who chairs the poultry group of the SA Veterinary Association (SAVA), says the shortage directly affects disease management, as evidenced by last year's H7N6 outbreak, where swift action during the initial stages might have curtailed the spread of the disease.

While private veterinarians can assist with managing controlled

diseases such as bird flu, they may lack the authority to implement the required actions. The same applies to international trade. Only state vets can provide the facilities inspection and quarantine oversight required to import hatching eggs and achieve and maintain the accreditation needed to export poultry meat.


In 2022, a SAVA survey found that half of vets under 39 had either begun emigration or were considering it. The shortage of state vets may therefore be symptomatic of a larger problem. Addressing it necessitates recruiting more professionals, investing in skills development and providing the resources vets need to carry out their disease-control and global-trade duties. 

New CEO for Daybreak



ON 1 JANUARY 2024, Richard Manzini took over as CEO of Daybreak Farms, the integrated chicken producer owned by the Public Investment Corporation (PIC). An investment specialist, Manzini has extensive experience developing businesses for the PIC, and holds qualifications including a B. Bus. Science from the University of Cape Town, LLB from Unisa, MBA and MMFI from Wits University, and an MSc from the University of Pretoria.


Over the past 18 months, Manzini has served as the director of Daybreak's transitional board, while also gaining operational experience on the company's broiler farms and in its processing plants. He replaced Matshela Seshibe who left Daybreak after an internal probe cleared him of procurement-related allegations that were found to be fabricated.

Daybreak currently slaughters between 1.4 and 1.5 million birds per week and employs 3 400 people in its operations that are concentrated in and around Delmas in Mpumalanga, Bronkhorstpruit in Gauteng and Bela-Bela in Limpopo. 

Plan your 2024 training

THE KWAZULU-NATAL Poultry Institute (KZNPI) in Pietermaritzburg offers training courses that are highly recommended for new-entrant poultry farmers, extension officers, supervisors and trainee farmers and farm managers.

If you or someone in your team want to come to grips with the “why” and “how” of poultry production, consider one or more of the courses scheduled for this year.

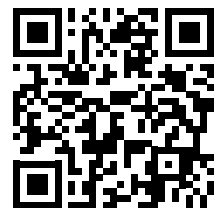
For any enquiries, email (training@kznpi.co.za) or WhatsApp (064 860 0130). 



Course	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Basic broiler workshop (1 day)	22							18	
Poultry production (5 days)		13-17			12-16		07-11		
Commercial layer (5 days)				15-19				04-08	
Managing a poultry abattoir (5 days)					26-30				
Broiler breeder production (5 days)	08-12							25-29	
Hatchery management (5 days)							21-25		
Practical broiler production (5 days)			03-07			02-06			02-06
Poultry supervisory skills (5 days)			24-28						
Basic layer workshop (1 day)				08		16			

REGISTER FOR A COURSE

To register for one of more of KZNPI’s informative courses, complete an online registration form – access the website by pointing your smartphone’s camera at the QR code – and submit it either by email (training@kznpi.co.za) or sent it via WhatsApp (064 860 0130).





Spotlight on the poultry microbiome

A HEALTHY GUT is the foundation for optimal bird performance. This was the theme that guided a conference dedicated to the poultry microbiome, which took place on 18 January 2024 in Pretoria.

Co-hosted by Envarto, a South African provider of scientific solutions to the animal and feed industries, and its business partner Danish-based international bioscience company Chr. Hansen, the conference was attended by veterinarians, animal nutritionists and technical leaders of local feed companies.

The role that gut health and the microbiome play in the profitability of a poultry business is a relatively new concept, according to Dr Hannes Viljoen, managing director of Envarto. "We host two or three days like this one every year to get the word out and improve understanding among local producers."

A common thread that ran through the day's presentations was that by paying attention to broilers' gut health, producers can improve the health and production of their flocks and enhance their economic returns.


The science is well established, said



The conference agenda featured Dr Guilherme Borchardt of Chr. Hansen; Prof Neil Duncan of C4 Africa; Lené van der Walt of Envarto; Albert van Rensburg of Envarto; Anna Karwacinska of Chr. Hansen; Envarto MD Dr Hannes Viljoen and Adam Collantine of Chr. Hansen

Anna Karwacinska, global product marketing manager (monogastric) at Chr. Hansen Animal Health & Nutrition, in the first presentation of the day. She cited a study that showed the extent to which adding good bacteria to broiler feed decreases stress in birds and improves their food-conversion rate (FCR). When nutrients are digested more effectively, animal-welfare indicators improve, along


with production profitability and food safety. The latter is due to the fact that healthier birds require less or no antibiotics to fight diseases.

The other speakers built on this theme with insights on selecting the right probiotic for the issues you want to address in your birds, establishing early microbiome robustness, keeping flocks healthy and the impact of mycotoxins on gut health. 

Jobs abroad for farmers

WOULD YOU LIKE to work overseas? CVPlacements, a company that specialises in agriculture recruitment, is currently looking for farmers with chicken, pig and dairy experience to work in the UK on two-year contracts. To qualify, you need at least three years of current

experience as well as contactable work references.

The link to more info and the application form is available on CVPlacements' Facebook and Instagram pages. For info on opportunities in other countries check out their website (www.cvplacements.co.za/). 



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Improving food & health

Prioritise biosecurity

By **Wandile Sihlobo**

LAST YEAR WAS CHARACTERISED by the weaknesses of South Africa's biosecurity system, which was a dominant challenge. Admittedly, biosecurity breaches are not uniquely South African and have become a significant challenge globally. We frequently hear of foot and mouth disease (FMD) in cattle, African swine fever in pigs and avian influenza in poultry worldwide. However, very few countries have had to deal with the scale of these disease outbreaks almost simultaneously as South Africa had to do last year.

Back in 2022, six of our nine provinces reported FMD outbreaks. By the start of 2023, the conditions hadn't changed much, as we continued to see reported cases throughout the year. Also noteworthy is that at the end of

'Government and organised agriculture and industry bodies should collaborate to address SA's biosecurity challenges'

2022, we learnt of the outbreaks of African swine fever, which put pig producers under additional pressure. This remains an ongoing challenge in the pig industry. Most recently, the focus has been on avian influenza, with more than a hundred commercial poultry facilities having reported cases. There have been significant losses in parent stock for breeders of layers and broilers, thus leading to imports of fertilised eggs to rebuild the parent-stock flock decimated by the disease. The financial impact of this outbreak is evident in the losses announced by the primary producers for 2023.

Regarding the cattle industry, the financial impact is also severe; cattle-product exports to some markets were suspended. South Africa's biosecurity breaches signal serious capacity challenges in farm biosecurity measures and the country's veterinary and related support services.

This is mainly in laboratories, where the movement of livestock and vaccine production is controlled. Therefore, the South African government and organised agriculture and industry bodies should work closely together to address the country's biosecurity challenges as they persist.

These factors also diverted attention from implementing fundamental policies and programmes such as the Agriculture and Agro-Processing Masterplan, and the stakeholders had to be in "crisis" mode instead of thinking about the long-term growth prospects and interventions to support such a vision. In 2024 the industry must refocus on the masterplan and resolve the abovementioned challenges. 



Wandile Sihlobo is chief economist at the Agricultural Business Chamber of SA and author of A Country of Two Agricultures.

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HPAI: WHERE ARE WE NOW?

The nightmare of 2023 is over, but can the same be said for the HPAI outbreak that devastated our industry? We take a look at the state of play



THE RECOVERY

HATCHING EGGS IMPORTED:

BROILERS

- 2023 – 130 930 800
- 2024 – 17 844 960
- Total – 148 775 760

LAYERS

- 2023 – 2 653 600
- 2024 – 0

NON-HATCHING EGG IMPORTS:

- 4.45 tons of liquid egg
- 473.5 tons of egg powder
- 15.8 tons of fresh shell eggs

THE NUMBERS

- **30%** of broiler breeder farms were affected
- About **33%** of the layer industry (9.5 million of the 27 million commercial layer birds) were affected
- Between 3 and **4 million** layers hens were quarantined; some were subsequently culled
- Layer industry losses are estimated at upwards of **R2 billion**, including birds, eggs and packaging material
- **3.5 million** broiler breeder hens culled
- **6 million** commercial layers culled

A CALL FOR BIOSECURITY

BIOSECURITY IS THE ONE MITIGATION measure that is within the control of industry players, large and small. Regardless of whether compensation and/or vaccination become realities, biosecurity challenges must be addressed and all the stakeholders agree that it needs serious attention. 📌

VACCINATION STATUS

DR SHAHN BISSCHOP FROM AVIMUNE ANSWERS OUR QUESTIONS.

Do we have approved and registered vaccines ready to go? And enough doses?

Vaccines against H5 have been approved and registered. Vaccine dossiers against H7 have been submitted and we expect approval soon. I believe product is available internationally for use in South Africa but I don't think anything has been imported yet. Imports could probably occur quickly once there is a local demand for vaccines.

Have the vaccination protocols been finalised?

Government has published an HPAI vaccination protocol but has not yet clarified how one would get permission to vaccinate. The protocol is extremely onerous. Each farm has to apply for permission to vaccinate and, when approved, for vaccine doses. Farms will also have to be approved before they can receive chicks from vaccinated breeder sites. Mortalities from vaccinated flocks will be tested weekly, together with random samples collected monthly from healthy birds for HPAI testing – at an estimated cost of R18 000 per month per site. Vaccinated flocks that become infected will still have to be culled, unless DALRRD grants exemption. Lastly, vaccinated birds cannot be sold as live culls but will have to be slaughtered; the loss of cull sales is a major cost consideration.

How soon could South African producers start vaccinating?

In theory, immediately, although it seems that roll-out protocols are not yet available. DALRRD has indicated that SAPA needs to appoint veterinarians to manage the vaccination process. It is unclear if vets are available and if the industry has sufficient resources to appoint them.

Are we likely to roll out a national vaccination programme, or will it be up to producers and farmers to implement their own programmes?

There is a national standard in place as developed by DALRRD, but each farm will need to make its own application for permission to vaccinate. It is very difficult to say at this stage how widely producers will choose to vaccinate. 📧



Shahn Bisschop

SOUTH AFRICA'S poultry farmers who want to vaccinate against AI will have to decide which one of the two strains to vaccinate against, because we understand that HPAI H5 vaccines give no protection against HPAI H7 infections and vice versa.

The choice is outlined in SAPA's latest AI surveillance monitoring report. The two bird flu strains circulating in South Africa are H5N1 and H7N6. The H5 strain has featured in global outbreaks and is spread by wild and migrating birds. The H7 strain is so far a unique South African variety.

If the two HVT vaccines are applied together at the hatchery, the efficacy of both will be reduced. This decision will require a care-ful risk assessment depending on the location of each company and the best estimate of which type of challenge is more likely. 📧

SAPA'S IZAAK BREITENBACH has expressed the hope that by the end of this year, 30% of the industry's birds would be vaccinated. These would be great-grandparent, grandparent and parent broiler stock and commercial layers. Breitenbach adds that the rest of the industry will struggle to meet the extremely stringent biosecurity requirements and carry the monitoring costs. "SAPA remains in discussions with DALRRD to reach an agreement on more realistic and achievable biosecurity and monitoring measures," he says. 📧

A LOCAL VACCINE



Stefan Swanepoel



At Deltamune a huge team across various divisions worked on developing the vaccine – from researchers, those who produce the virus antigen in eggs and those who tested the vaccine in chickens, to the team that handles the regulatory aspects and compiles the final dossier

STEFAN SWANEPOEL, managing director of the local vaccine company Deltamune, reports that they have completed the development of their H7 vaccine, including the basic laboratory and animal testing. The dossier for registration was submitted to DALRRD in the third week of January this year.

The Deltamune vaccine is an inactivated (killed) virus vaccine with an adjuvant – highly effective in stimulating the production of antibodies against a disease.

“We don’t have all the details about the CEVA and Boehringer Ingelheim vaccines but as far as we know they work differently,” comments Swanepoel. “We do believe that the different vaccines may be complimentary if used together in a vaccination programme, but this has obviously not been tested.”

Swanepoel believes that a local supplier for an HPAI vaccine

is essential. There are currently multiple outbreaks of HPAI in the world and more countries are looking at vaccination to control the disease. Given that the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) recently stated that vaccination against AI should not be a barrier against the safe trade of poultry products, it can be expected that more countries will approve vaccination. This could potentially result in the multinationals proving unable to supply South Africa with the volumes it may need, or charging a premium.

“This scenario played out in South Africa during Covid,” says Swanepoel. “We have the expertise, the experience, and the facilities to develop and manufacture safe and effective AI vaccines for our local market. Doing so also ensures that we retain and foster that expertise for the benefit of our local industry, not only now, but going into the future.”

NEXT STEPS

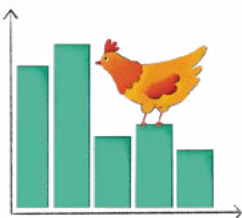
DR ABONGILE BALARANE from SAPA’s Egg Organisation says that the industry remains hopeful that DALRRD will find a way to compensate or otherwise support farmers whose businesses are decimated by HPAI. “The country cannot afford for farmers to go out of business because they can’t get the financial support to restock their flocks,” he says.

“Collaboration between the industry, government and other role players is the only way South Africa can recover from the 2023 HPAI outbreak and prepare for the next one,” adds Izaak Breitenbach from the Broiler Organisation.

Turn to page 12 to see why economist Wandile Sihlobo agrees that collaboration is the answer. [f](#)



Deltamune’s biosecurity level 3 lab. Personnel who work with the AI virus in eggs wear full respirator overalls and have to shower in and out of the facility



MEMBERS' NOTICEBOARD

Every month SAPA shares relevant industry information with all members. Here are the latest reports, summarised for easy access

Compiled by **Michael Acott**

Chicken is cheaper

Chicken prices tend to increase more slowly than overall food prices



CHICKEN IS WINNING the battle to remain South Africa's most affordable meat protein.

The battle is with pork, which every now and then undercuts chicken at producer level. But chicken always wins in the end.

As shown on the right in the graphic from SAPA's quarterly Key Market Signals report for the third quarter of 2023 pork prices fluctuate far more than chicken, which maintains a steady trend. Since 2019, pork was cheaper briefly in 2020 and 2023, and for a few months in 2022.

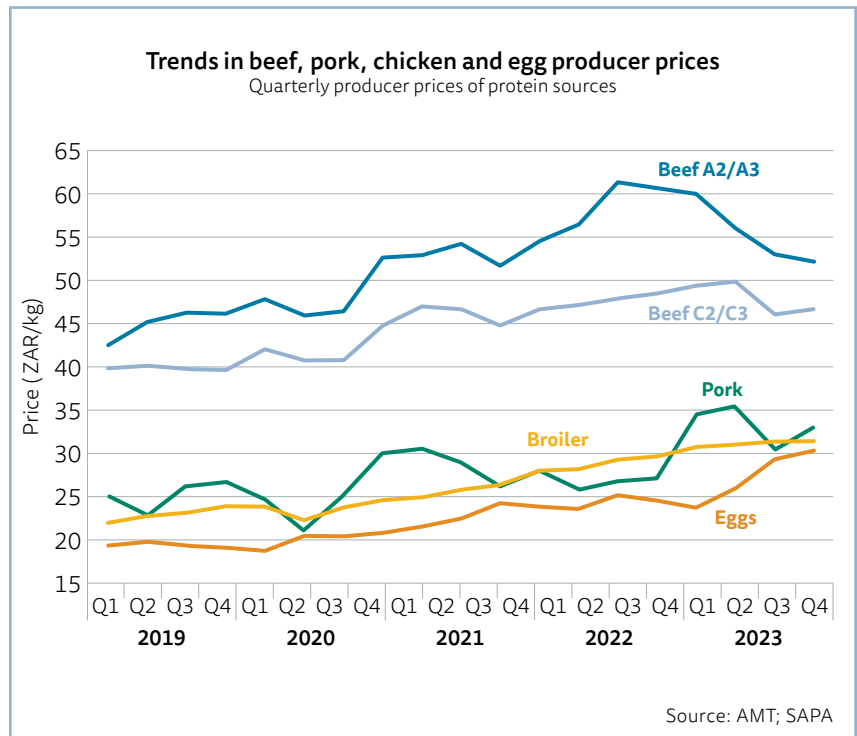
With the exception of 2022, chicken has been cheaper than pork for the past five years.

For the first three quarters of 2023, producer prices for chicken averaged R31.19/kg, while pork averaged R32.86/kg. Beef was far more expensive (R44.70/kg to R53.70/kg) while eggs (R28.43/kg) were the cheapest source of animal protein.

There are other indicators of chicken's affordability, and of its effect on food-price inflation.

The SAPA report shows that, for the past five years, chicken prices have consistently increased more slowly than overall food prices. For every month since January 2019, the broiler producer price index has been below the food inflation index. This means that it is other foods and beverages – not chicken – that are the primary drivers of food-price inflation.

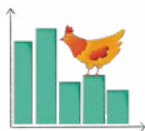
Perhaps surprisingly given the cost pressures on poultry producers last



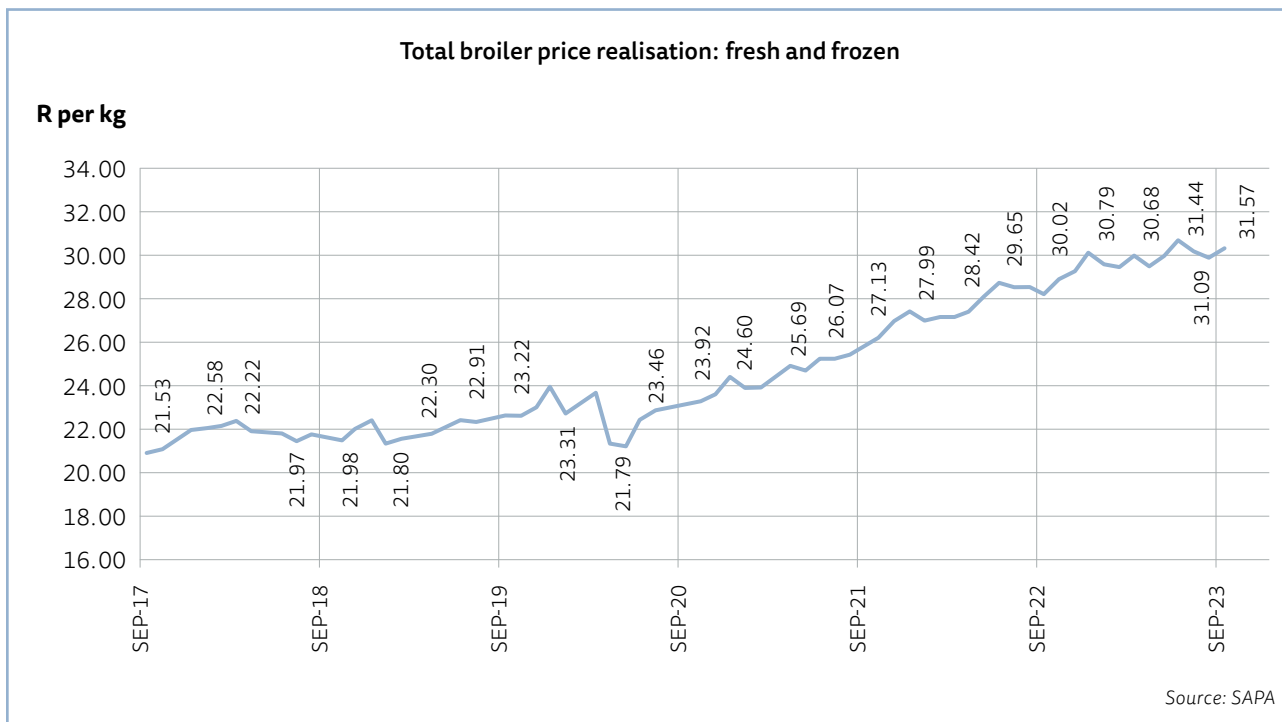
year, chicken producer price increases were below those of previous years. For the first nine months of 2023, producer prices rose by an average of 6.3%, compared to 11.3% in 2021 and 12.1% in 2022.

Yet another indicator is the producer price of individually quick frozen (IQF) chicken portions, by far the largest category of chicken produced locally, and popular among low-income households. The average producer price of IQF chicken rose by 3% in the first nine months of 2023, compared to more than 12% in the previous two years. 📊





Farmers got a little bit more for their chicken



CHICKEN PRODUCERS RECEIVED an average of R31.57/kg in September last year, according to SAPA’s broiler producer price report for September 2023. This was an increase of 1.5% on a monthly basis, and 7.7% higher than September 2022.

The average price includes both fresh and frozen chicken. Frozen products make up 85% of producer sales, with fresh chicken accounting for only 15%.

According to the report, fresh chicken producer prices dropped 1.5% to R39.39/kg in the month to September, but rose 7.8% on an annual basis. Frozen product averaged R30.21/kg, an increase of 2% over the previous month and 7.6% higher than September 2022.

On average, producers received R31.19/kg over the nine months to September last year.

Individually quick frozen (IQF) portions, which are by far the largest component of producer sales, showed the lowest price increases. Producers received R29.02/kg last September, reflecting an increase of 0.2% over the previous month and 1.4% over the previous year.

IQF portions made up 44.2% by volume of the producer product mix in the third quarter of last year. The next highest volumes were frozen cuts (16.5%) and frozen sundries (12.8%). Fresh cuts accounted for 7% of the product mix and fresh whole chickens 5.4%.

Most of producer sales (40.8%)

went to retail, with 38.8% sold into the wholesale market. Food services took 17.3% and institutions 0.9%. Exports accounted for only 0.6% of producer sales in the third quarter of last year.

The reported broiler feed price is seen as an indicator and is used in the report to demonstrate trends in feed prices.

In September 2023, the broiler feed price was R8 684/ton, up 0.6% on August but down 0.4% over a year. The price of breeder feed was R7 336/ton, down 0.8% on both a monthly and an annual basis. 📄

Imports increase market share

SOUTH AFRICA'S chicken production declined in the nine months to September 2023, while imports increased their share of local consumption.

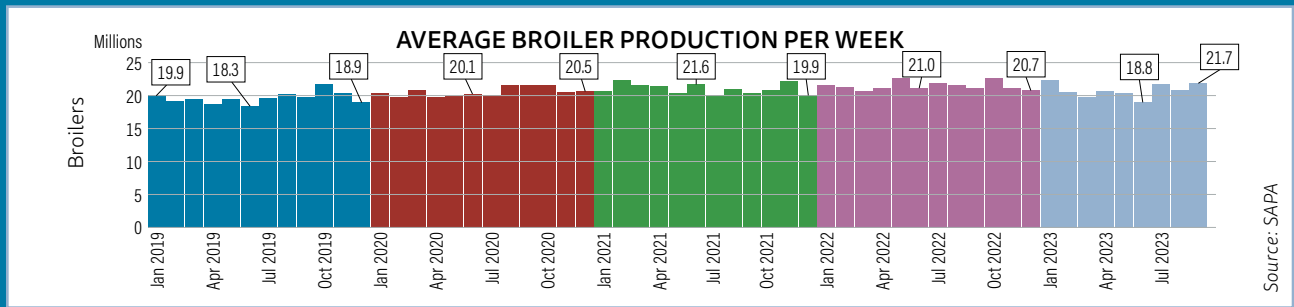
These statistics are contained in SAPA's broiler production report for September, which contains both monthly and year-to-date figures.

Despite the impact of avian

influenza, production in September averaged 21.7 million birds per week, among the highest levels in the first nine months of the year. However, over those nine months production was down to 20.6 million birds per week, 3.1% below the 21.3 million birds per week averaged in 2022.

Chicken meat production to September totalled 1.3 million

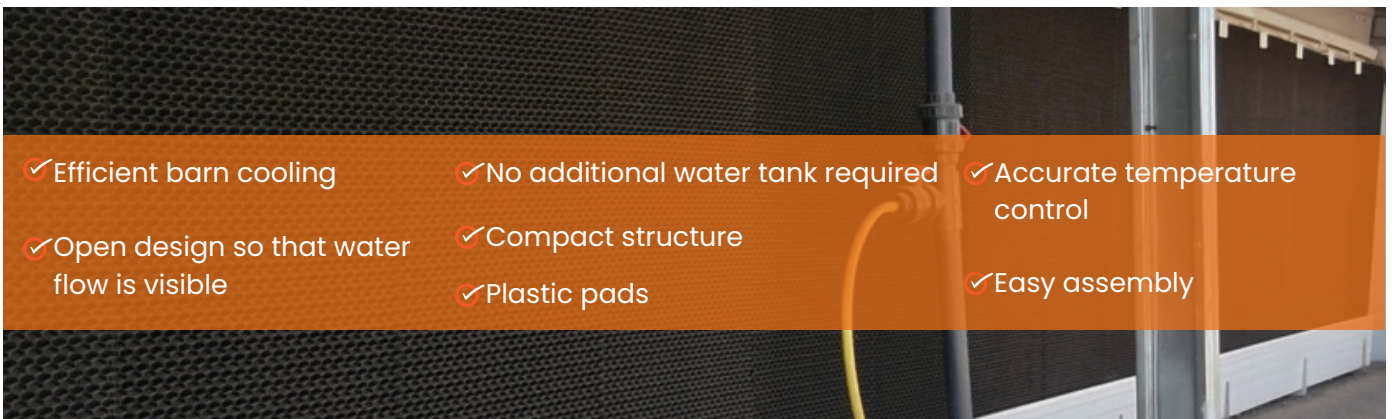
tons, while South Africa's chicken consumption, including imports, came to 1.6 million tons. Chicken imports for the first nine months averaged 23.4% of local production and 19.4% of national consumption. This is a sharp increase over 2022, when imports averaged 19.6% of production and 16.8% of consumption. 📊



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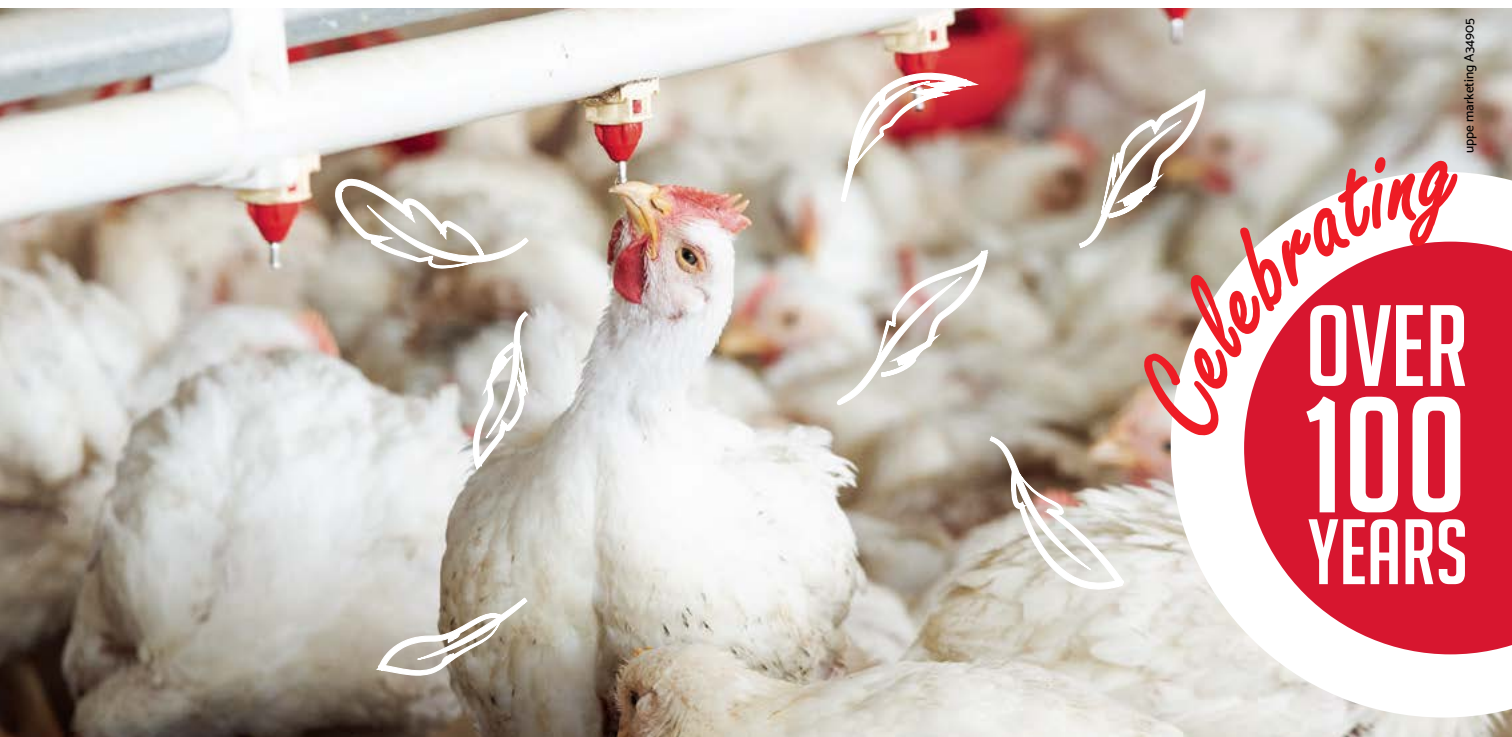
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Poultry imports heading upwards again

A FOUR-YEAR DECLINE in South Africa's poultry imports did not become five. In 2023, import volumes were higher than the previous year for the first time since 2018.

The full extent of the upturn will not be known until the official 2023 year-end import statistics are released, but SAPA's imports reports for November show that totals for the first 11 months were already higher than the 12 months of 2022.

More than 95% of poultry imports are chicken. Chicken imports totalled 360 000 tons in 2022; by November 2023 the total had already exceeded 367 000 tons. Imports up until


November were 11.2% above the same period in 2022.

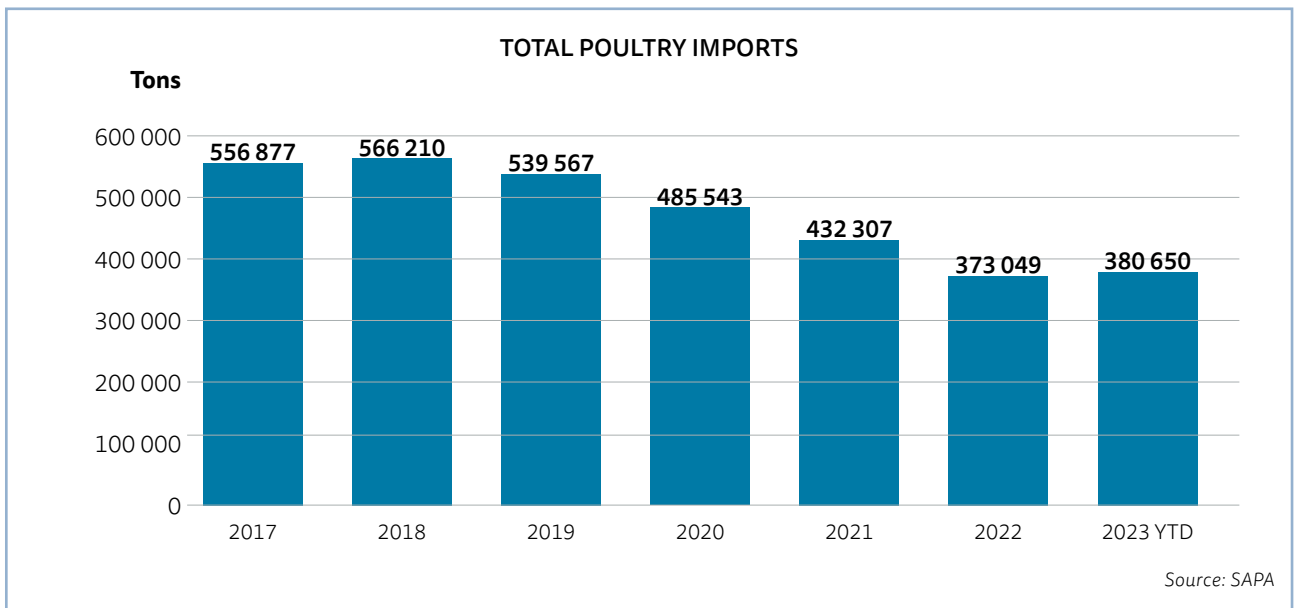
The increase does not apply to all chicken products. Imports of offal and of mechanically deboned meat (MDM), a paste used to manufacture processed meats, are the highest since imports peaked in 2018. On the other hand, import volumes of bone-in portions such as leg quarters are at their lowest levels in four years, and make up less than half of the 2018 total.

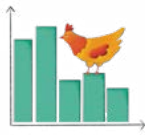
The continued decline of bone-in imports will come as a relief to South Africa's poultry producers. SAPA's fight against dumped and unfairly priced imports has focused on bone-in

portions, which have been the subject of the antidumping duties SAPA has secured against nine countries.

Antidumping duties were only one of the reasons that imports have dropped since 2018. Major factors have been the continued spread of avian influenza (bird flu) in Europe and the United States, disruptions to production and logistics caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, and the fluctuating value of the rand against the US dollar.

The four-year slide in import totals has now ended. Whether this is a blip or a trend will be shown in 2024, particularly in the sensitive category of bone-in portions. 





North West province leads in chicken production

SOUTH AFRICA's broiler production is concentrated in North West province, which has by far the largest number of broiler chickens. Because of this dominance, it is also the province with the overall highest total of birds, including egg industry chickens.

Chicken farms in North West house 36.5 million birds from both the broiler and egg industries. Mpumalanga (29.2 million) is second, the Western Cape (27.8 million) is third and Gauteng makes the top four with 23.3 million.

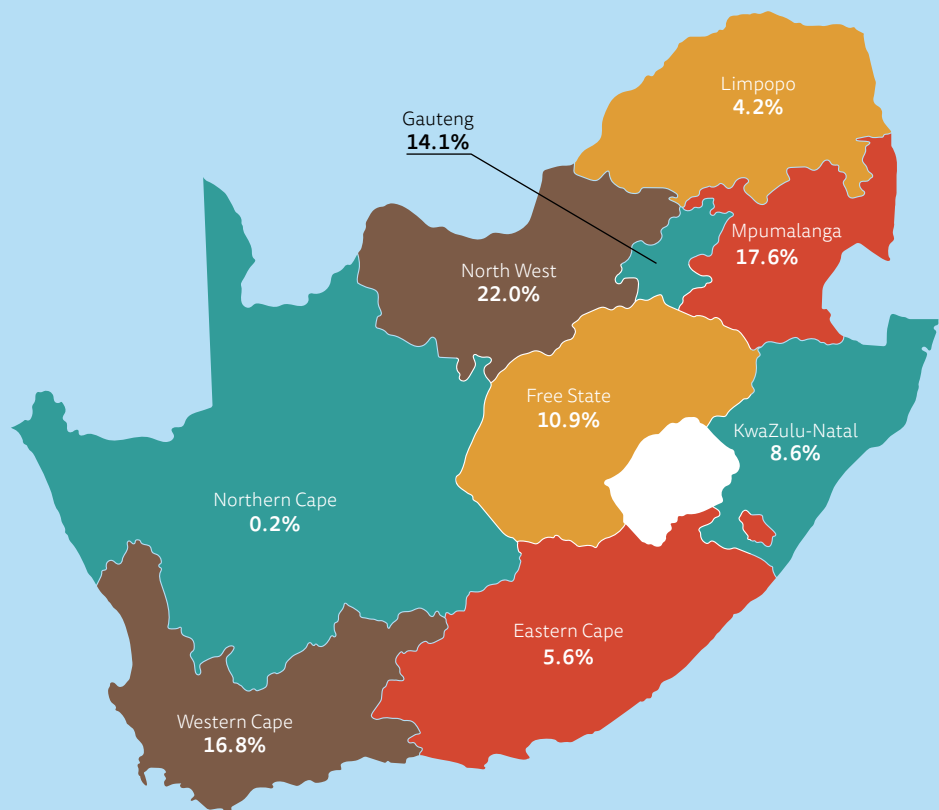
These statistics were obtained during SAPA's latest avian influenza (AI) survey, where producers provide data on actual numbers of chickens. The result is regular SAPA reports on the provincial and municipal distribution of South Africa's chicken farms.

The report for the final quarter of 2023 shows that North West has the largest percentage of South Africa's chickens (22%) including both broiler and layer birds. It is followed by Mpumalanga (17.6%), Western Cape (16.8%) and Gauteng (14.1%).

The distribution of broiler chickens shows the same pattern, but the egg industry is very different. Gauteng leads the egg industry with 25.4% of the chickens, Western Cape (16.8%) is second and Free State (14.5%) and North West (11.9%) are third and fourth.

SAPA has 963 farms on its AI database. Of these 437 farms have a capacity of between 100 000 and


PROVINCIAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE NATIONAL CHICKEN FLOCK



Source: SAPA

400 000 birds. The top range is 18 farms (17 broiler and 1 egg industry) with a capacity of more than 700 000 birds, while 57 farms (44 broiler and 13 egg industry) have a capacity of 100 birds or fewer.

In the broiler industry, there are

530 large commercial farms with a capacity of more than 40 000 birds per cycle. There are 113 small commercial farms (between 1 500 and 40 000 per cycle) and 44 subsistence farmers who produce 1 500 or fewer birds per cycle. 

Mixed prospects for feed prices



FORECASTED FEED-INGREDIENT PRICES: AUGUST 2024

Feed ingredient	Randfontein		Pietermaritzburg	
	Price (R/ton)	y/y ** % change	Price (R/ton)	y/y ** % change
Yellow maize	3 747	4.2	3 897	4.0
Sunflower oilcake	6 700	9.8	6 700	9.8
Soya meal	8 388	-5.8	8 588	-5.6

Source: SAPA
** August 2024 compared to August 2023

FEED PRICES LOOK LIKE they're coming down this year, with the projected prices for August lower than last December for yellow maize, sunflower oilcake and soya meal.

SAPA's latest feed-ingredient report used December 2023 as a base, with an outlook to August 2024. It is compiled by an independent feed consultant.

Despite the drop from December, the price of yellow maize in August is projected to be 4% higher than August last year, with sunflower oilcake up by nearly 10%. Soya meal is expected to be more than 5% cheaper than in August 2023.

The report notes a switch back to yellow maize in the feed industry, due to white maize being more expensive than yellow maize.

The international price of maize has moved downwards and the view is that prices on the Chicago Mercantile Exchange (CME) will continue to decline. World stocks will be at a higher level than 2023. Local maize prices have followed CME prices.

The current local maize crop estimate is at about 16.35 million tons from commercial production and an added 600 000 ton from small-scale producers. Rainfall was well above average in most areas, despite fears of the appearance of the El Niño weather phenomenon, which brings hotter and drier conditions.

However, the report said, "We do see prospects of lower than normal rainfall from February 2024 onwards, together with high temperatures.

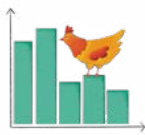
"Time will tell if this phenomenon

will occur, especially in the western parts of the country. We could see a typical midsummer drought."

Energy prices had come down, but the attacks on shipping in the Red Sea had given rise to some uncertainty.

The report said that the present prospect for the rand is a trading range between R18.35 and R19.35/US\$ for the short term. 📈

The report notes a switch back to yellow maize in the feed industry, due to higher white maize prices



Many small farmers have given up



EXTREME WEATHER, AVIAN influenza, loadshedding and high feed costs are among the reasons given for small-scale poultry farmers deciding to close their businesses.

SAPA conducts twice-yearly surveys of subsistence and small-scale commercial poultry farmers. It collates the results into the type and size of the business, provincial distribution and the issues facing small-scale farmers.

The report for the second half of 2023 shows that, of the 564 farmers interviewed, 101 had stopped farming, many temporarily, while 21 had resumed operations after stopping previously.

Most of those who had taken a temporary break were waiting for warmer weather because loadshedding reduced their ability to keep chicks warm. Loadshedding also impacted other operations.

Illustrating the problem of high feed costs, SAPA produced a graph showing how the price of yellow maize had risen since 2020, and particularly since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in early 2022.

Yellow maize (R/ton) market trend from January 2020 to August 2024



Source: SAPA

Photograph: Elaine Banister Photography

Cull-trade sales dive

AS BIRD FLU RAVAGED POULTRY FLOCKS last year, there was a sharp dropoff in the sale of live chickens in the cull trade, which distributes birds into informal markets.

The cull trade has been a thriving business in South Africa, with laying hens and broiler breeders that reach the end of their production cycles sold live off the farms into the informal economy. The trade creates jobs in the townships and boosts food security.

The cull trade has been regulated since the first outbreak of bird flu in 2017 to manage the risks posed by transportation.

It has been a thriving trade, with 1.8 million birds sold in the fourth quarter of 2022. However, numbers dropped sharply last year and were down to 883 000 in the third quarter. They fell even further to 454 000 in the last quarter of 2023, according to SAPA's latest cull-trade report.





SOUTH AFRICAN POULTRY ASSOCIATION

OFFICIAL NOTICE - CONGRESS 2024

To all members of the South African Poultry Association

Issued by: The General Manager, South African Poultry Association,
Wild Fig Business Park, 1494 Cranberry Street, Honeydew, 2194.

SAPA EGG ORGANISATION

Notice is hereby given that the 51th Annual General Meeting of the SAPA Egg Organisation will be held on Friday, **7 June 2024**, venue to be confirmed.

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

Deadline: 12 April 2024

SAPA BROILER ORGANISATION

Notice is hereby given that the 51th Annual General Meeting of the SAPA Broiler Organisation will be held on Tuesday, **7 June 2024**, venue to be confirmed.

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

Deadline: 12 April 2024

SAPA CONGRESS 2024

Notice is hereby given that the 118th Annual Congress of the SA Poultry Association will be held on Tuesday, **7 June 2024**, venue to be confirmed.

Resolutions: Only members of the SAPA Board, the affiliates and Honorary Life Members may submit resolutions for this Agenda. A SAPA Board meeting will be held at the rising of Congress.

Deadline: 12 April 2024

REPRESENTATION - HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS

Honorary Life Members of SAPA, who are prepared to represent this group's interests at the 118th Annual Congress, are requested to notify the General Manager, Wild Fig Business Park, 1494 Cranberry Street, Honeydew, 2194, before **12 April 2024**

Honorary Life Members are entitled to one representative at Congress in terms of the SAPA Constitution.

Deadline: 12 April 2024

BEYOND AND SUNNY-SIDE UP

Table eggs are the most visible output of the egg industry. But powdered and liquid egg products are a sizeable – and growing – part of the market

By **Charmain Lines**

“THERE’S A MARKET FOR EVERY egg, regardless of the form it’s in,” says André du Preez, owner of egg-powder importer A&D Food Ingredients. “Households, hotels and small food manufacturers use table eggs. When you need large volumes, however, hygiene, convenience and food safety come into play in a big way and processed eggs can meet these requirements better than table eggs.”

The choice between pulp (as liquid egg is also known) and powder eggs usually comes down to what is available, says Du Preez, with final application being the deciding factor.

Powder eggs are mostly used by the manufacturers who supply the

Mandla Mpofu is Rossgro’s resident expert pasteuriser. Here the filtered product is collected and passed through a heat exchanger



catering and restaurant industries with premixes in which all the other ingredients are also in powder form. Premixes for retail do not contain egg, mainly because of the cost it would add to the product. Egg powder is particularly expensive to produce due to the capital required to outfit a plant with highly specialised equipment and because of the energy that is needed to heat the air that dries out the pulp. A raw whole egg consists of 74% water and 87% of egg white is water

Powder eggs are mostly used by the manufacturers who supply the catering and restaurant industries with premixes

– all of which needs to be evaporated to make powder. “You need high enough production volumes to recoup the capital expenditure and to run profitably,” says Du Preez.

Linda Murphy, general manager of egg producer Rossgro, confirms that egg products are always more expensive than table eggs. However, she points out that pulp offers the food industry many advantages. These include prevention of pilferage, consistency (no two eggs are the same size, whereas pulp makes exact measurement possible), cost effectiveness at high quantities and, most importantly, food safety.

With eggs, salmonella is an ever-present risk, hence most food manufacturers require pasteurised



A SHORT HISTORY EGG PROCESSING IN SA

THE HISTORY OF PROCESSED EGGS in South Africa dates to the days of the Egg Board, whose purpose was to control the domestic egg market.

The first egg-processing facility was in Kraaifontein in the Western Cape, where frozen product was manufactured for export only. In 1992, in response to the increased concentration of egg production in the northern parts of the country, the Egg Board established Ovipro, a state-of-the-art facility in Bronkhorstspruit, to process egg mainly as a mechanism to balance supply and demand.

When the Egg Board closed down in 1993, a consortium of egg producers – who at that time collectively owned half of the layers in South Africa – bought Ovipro from the Department of Agriculture. In 2001, Ovipro was bought by Highveld Egg Cooperative. Four years later it changed hands again when Nutritional Foods, manufacturers of the Sunspray range of spray-dried food ingredients, purchased it.

During 2022, Sunspray stopped manufacturing egg powders for human consumption. Its spray driers, which have since been moved to its Johannesburg facility, are still used to manufacture a wide range of dry food ingredients, including egg powder for pet food.

André du Preez, who was the general manager of Ovipro until 2005, recalls that South Africa used to be a noteworthy exporter of egg powder. “I always tell people that one year we were Japan’s third largest supplier of whole-egg powder,” he chuckles. While it is a tiny country, Japan is the world’s largest manufacturer of mayonnaise.

As further processing originated in South Africa as an instrument to balance the market, liquid and powder eggs were not appreciated as products in their own right. Remnants of this perception persist today in the lack of dedicated supply for the egg-processing industry. “Overseas chefs who come to work in the local hospitality and food-service industries are often surprised at the relative scarcity of liquid eggs,” says Linda Murphy of Rossgro. “They are used to it being far more readily available.”

Photographs: Shutterstock; John Hanson Pye / Shutterstock.com

THE POULTRY VALUE CHAIN

processed eggs. However, only seven egg producers – two in the Western Cape, one in KZN and four in Gauteng – have pulp-pasteurisation facilities, allowing high volumes of unpasteurised pulp to circulate in the market. South Africa's food-safety regulations set microbiological limits for pasteurised eggs but none for unpasteurised product so as to not exclude small farmers.

"It is too labour intensive to wash every egg to prevent the possibility of the shell transferring pathogens to the contents," explains Murphy. "The risk of bringing an entire custard or nougat factory to a standstill due to salmonella cross contamination, is one that food manufacturers are not willing to take. Pasteurised pulp guarantees

safety." She adds that Rossgro's small on-site laboratory runs tests to ensure that all products leaving the further-processing plant are free of pathogens. "We know that there are no bad bugs in our pulp and that it's safe even when eaten raw."

A CHANGING MARKET

According to SAPA, about 5% of the annual national table-egg production is converted into liquid egg, supplemented by modest imports (1 361kg in 2022; in 2023 imports were much higher due to the impact of HPAI on the national layer flock). Based on import statistics, egg-powder consumption is estimated at around 750 tons per year (2022 data). Overall, demand for egg white is higher than for yolk.

Albumen is mostly supplied in powder form to produce confectionary, such as nougat and meringue, and other sweets. It is used in the sports industry to support low-fat diets and as a binding agent in specialised processed-meat products, notably traditional German sausages. Batter for fish and chicken is another major application.

Yolk is popular for mayonnaise, baby food and artisanal products, such as handmade ice cream, and as a

DALRRD enforces strict regulations in approving countries from where egg products can be imported

carrier in pharmaceuticals.

"The lion's share of our whole-egg pulp goes to bakeries," says Murphy, "but our customers are basically anybody in the food-service and -manufacturing industries that need eggs that are not sunny-side up."

Du Preez says that the avian influenza outbreak of 2017 largely put paid to local manufacturing of egg powder. The company he founded in 2006 has been importing egg powder for the last 18 years but before 2017 around 70% of the product A&D distributed was manufactured in South Africa.

As the local market for powdered egg equivalent is not very big and given the onerous food-safety standards that food manufacturers must adhere to, it makes sense to import powder. "It's all about maintaining the functionality ▶



André du Preez explains the difference between the various egg products – from left albumen liquid and albumen powder; yolk pulp and yolk powder, and whole egg pulp and whole egg powder

THE MAKING OF LIQUID EGG

1

The eggs arrive either in shells or in buckets of unpasteurised egg pulp. They are stored in a cold room until use.



2

As Rossagro does not supply pasteurised egg white, incoming Grade 1 eggs are washed and sanitised before being separated by hand to produce egg white.

3

The egg pulp is poured into a balance tank and sent through to the pasteurising room where in-line filters remove and collect bits of eggshell and membrane prior to pasteurising.



4

The filtered product is collected and passed through a heat exchanger (see photo on page 32).



5

Once pasteurised, the product is sent to a collection tank and packed. At this stage, a small percentage of salt or sugar (depending on what the product will be used for) is added to the egg yolk to prevent lumping when it is defrosted. Due to its very high fat content, egg yolk goes off easily, which is why it is always supplied as a frozen product.



6

Directly after packing, the product is placed in a freezer or cold storage.

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THE POULTRY VALUE CHAIN



The liquid-egg market is growing fast, because using pasteurised eggs open doors for food manufacturers into large retailers

of the egg in dry form," says Du Preez. "If you mess it up, you end up with 'plastic' eggs that are most unpleasant to eat."

European manufacturers in particular have the volumes and technology to produce superior egg powder. They are also stand-alone manufacturers, not a sideline of egg-producing farms, which ensures specialisation and a focus on continuous product development.

A&D is one of three South African importers of egg powder, in addition to some manufacturers, notably Nestlé, that import their own stocks. According to Du Preez, DALRRD enforces strict regulations in approving countries from where egg products can be imported, all in the interest of food safety, the prevention of transfer of animal diseases (AI included) and traceability.

South Africa imports egg powder mainly from the EU and the UK, as well as Argentina and Brazil.

Murphy says that the liquid-egg market is growing "by force", given that

food manufacturers need food-safety certification to supply the large retail outlets – and to get that, they have to use pasteurised eggs. "Also, people are starting to see the benefits," she says. But education is needed to influence decisions that hinge on cost.

Growth, however, depends on supply as much as demand, and that remains a challenge in South Africa. Murphy mentions that in Europe the processed-egg industry uses a special breed of hen that produces eggs with a slightly higher pulp yield and thinner shell. Conveyor belts transport the eggs straight from the layers into the pulp plant.

Locally, dedicated supply is being considered, but we are not there yet. Currently, pulp plants run on eggs that don't make the table grade because they are cracked, dirty or too small. "We do our planning based on a reject rate of between 3% and 5%," explains Murphy.

"We also check with our farm when culling will happen, as younger hens are more prolific egg layers but eggs are smaller with a low yield and the shells are hard to break. Also, if there are issues with the hens' feed, poor shell strength means fewer first-grade eggs and a possible increase in the volume for the pulp plant. We basically work on history and averages, cross our fingers, and hope for the best!"

The recent avian influenza outbreak's severe impact on the egg industry was also felt on the processing side. Murphy says that Rossagro's pulp plant was closed between Christmas and New Year for the first time ever. But exciting opportunities beckon as Rossagro – and the processed-egg market – continues to grow and develop. 📌

WHY PASTEURISE?



Linda Murphy

WHETHER YOU'RE MAKING liquid or powdered egg products, pasteurisation of the pulp is the first step.

Whole-egg pulp is pasteurised at 62°C for 2.5 minutes; the temperature for yolk can be a bit higher. Egg white, however, is particularly difficult to pasteurise without affecting its functionality.

"The ideal is the lowest temperature possible for shortest time possible," says Rossagro's Linda Murphy. "A certain loss of functionality due to heat exposure is inevitable, but the product must be as elastic as possible at the end of the process."

While there are excellent automated pasteurisation systems, Murphy emphasises the need for skilled operators who understand all the input and output factors. "The line between pasteurised and scrambled eggs is thin and when things go wrong it can be really nasty having to clean scrambled egg out of the machine!" 📌

COMPLIANCE IS EVERYTHING

When seeking a market for poultry products in the formal sector, small-scale producers face a complex set of requirements.

Diane McCarthy investigates the options



IT'S TOUGH STARTING OUT in any business, but with so many challenges currently facing the poultry industry, farmers need nerves of steel to survive. Avian flu, climate change, rising feed costs, and loadshedding all compete to make the business more of a gamble than a safe bet. And, once you have dealt with all of that and are managing your flock and meeting your goals, you need to get your birds to market and make some money. Not many can afford to start big, and most supermarkets can't afford to look at the smaller producer. So how do you move your business out of the backyard and into the formal retail market, make some money and hopefully expand your production? How do you grow?

THE PRODUCER

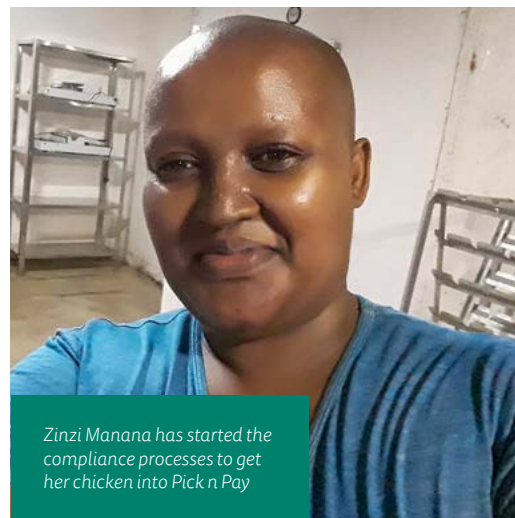
Zinzi Manana is a broiler producer who has been in the business for over 10 years. From her Pongola farm, Sir Rooster, she started out with a grant from the Department of Agriculture and a batch of 100 chicks. She currently sells 2 000 broilers per week to four steady clients and has plans to expand and take advantage of the huge demand for chicken products in her region. Manana has encountered many challenges along the way and manages any possible obstacles by setting reasonable, achievable goals. "When you are a first-generation farmer like me, you only realise what you're getting into once you start your business," says Manana. "What I have learnt, through experience, is that you should have a goal for the year, break it down for a month, break it down further and achieve something for a week. You know where you want to go, so the trick is to make it achievable."

A few years ago, frustrated by the ebb and flow of demand from her initial customers, the neighbourhood shisanyamas, she looked further



afield and noticed a gap in the market. Her local Pick n Pay sold only frozen chicken, so she set up a meeting and offered them her fresh product. "We went in blindfolded. We wanted to supply chickens; they told us that we needed to be compliant. We knew nothing about compliance."

After a retreat and a bit of research, it was decided to reapproach the store manager with samples of the product, together with a pile of paperwork, showing their willingness to achieve compliance. The manager was keen, and suggested they start with food-safety training. They did the training,



Zinzi Manana has started the compliance processes to get her chicken into Pick n Pay

THE NECESSARY PAPERWORK

- R638 COA – Food-safety compliance. To obtain a food-safety certificate you need to undertake a health inspection of your premises and a certification audit.
- HACCP Compliance – Hazard Analysis and Critical Controls. The HACCP system analyses all possible hazards you may encounter, making it easier to maintain a consistent high level of food security.
- GSFI Audit – Global standards certification. This is not compulsory in South Africa, but many retailers and food-service companies request it.

MARKET INTELLIGENCE

were audited and received their certificate. And Pick n Pay became a client. They are currently working towards full compliance, ready to build their own low-throughput abattoir on the farm, which will greatly increase their capability.

"Our drawings have been approved and we have supplied all the clearance certificates needed; now we just have to build it!"

Manana calculates the total cost of compliance is at least R5 million, a lot of money for a small operation to find.

Her dedication paid off last year when she won the National Best Smallholder Farmer award in the Department of Agriculture Land Reform and Rural Development's

Womens Recognition Awards 2023.

The DALRRD district officer encouraged her to enter after visiting her workplace and being impressed by her professionalism, organisational skills and her impressive product range.

For Manana and her team, the gold trophy is tangible proof of their dedication and demonstrates their credibility to both funders and clients.

"Winning this award is an amazing feeling as it recognises our hard work and resilience. I now know I'm on the right track," she says.

"The trophy sits on my desk, a daily reminder of how far we have come and a daily motivation to continue to work hard and build towards our bright future."

THE WHOLESALER

It might seem daunting, carving out a market for yourself when so many retailers have exclusive contracts with the well-known, sizeable poultry suppliers, but there is space for producers of smaller volumes.

"We have quite a few suppliers. We can't rely on just one." So says John Amaral, co-owner of Johannesburg chicken wholesaler Ricky's Chickens. "We fell into that trap previously, and when our supplier pulled out, we found ourselves high and dry, with no forewarning." This left them in crisis, unable to fill their orders. Ricky's Chickens supply their retail customers with both fresh and crumbed chicken products. "We're the middle guy; we don't process. Everything we get is cut and packed by our suppliers. We just move it on."

Amaral understands how hard it is for the smaller chicken growers to enter the formal economy, but he says that anyone producing under 5 000 chickens a month is not a viable proposition for his business. "It's better for the grower to market themselves. We try to help them get off the ground, but all the chain stores want history. If we sell a chicken and there's a problem with it, we have to be able to say, that chicken was born out of that egg 30 or 45 days ago and it was slaughtered at that plant; there must be traceability."

Wholesalers such as Ricky's Chicken buy chicken from smaller producers, provided they are regulation compliant



Spar Sunningdale stocks chicken from Lazena Poultry, a family-owned business based in Gordon's Bay, and Primia Poultry, a wholesaler based in Athlone, Cape Town, among others



Spar store manager Rodney Ackerman



Ricky's Chickens will talk to the smaller supplier, but all their suppliers have to have their paperwork in order. They have to use a SAPA-registered abattoir, and the product must be delivered in a box, sleeved in Foilene and shrink-wrapped.

THE RETAILER

One retail chain prepared to take a chance on a smaller producer is Spar. By approaching one of the independently owned stores directly, you stand a better chance of finding a willing buyer. "Frozen is pretty much locked up and set in our own brand, but from a fresh point of view, there is opportunity. As a vendor you can approach any Spar store and offer your product, because they are owned by the individual retailer," says Spar category manager Sekeetha de Nobrega. "The Spar store has a bit more freedom to take on a smaller supplier."

Unlike most retail chain stores in South Africa, Spar encourages

their store owners to cultivate a little individuality on their shelves. "I can stock products that no-one else has, so I am always keen to see smaller suppliers," says Rodney Ackerman



store manager at Sunningdale Spar, Cape Town. "Obviously I've got to have all the documentation. If you comply with all food-safety requirements and all your audits are done, I might do business with you."

For a bigger slice of the market, there is nothing stopping a supplier approaching one of the six Spar regional distribution centres dotted around South Africa, but you need volume as well as the same list of requirements. If you are looking for some guidance, Spar has a programme for aspiring food producers, the Spar Supplier Development Programme, where they offer a detailed course in how to get your product into their stores. The course is open to anyone who may want to become a listed supplier with the Spar chain, and offers a free evaluation, access to industry experts, as well as extensive information resources. [f](#)

For more about the Spar course, contact supplierdevelopment@spar.co.za

THE ROAD TO COMPLIANCE

ACCORDING TO THE FOOD SAFETY AGENCY (FSA) the steps to take towards compliance look like this:

- You submit abattoir building plans to DALRRD to be audited by a veterinary public-health officer in line with the Poultry Meat Regulation R 153 of 2006 and the Meat Safety Act, Act 40 of 2000, to confirm your facility can produce meat for human consumption. If your plans are approved, you will be able to build your abattoir.
- You submit a request to the Department of Health (DoH) for a health inspection, and after your premises are approved you're issued with a certificate of acceptability (COA). Once you have this, a trial slaughter takes place to see if the premises can handle your projected numbers. You will be issued with a certificate, detailing the slaughter volumes you can accommodate.

- With this paperwork in place, DALRRD needs your standard operating procedures (SOPs) and once that is approved, you can start slaughtering.
- Before going to market, you submit your labels to the DoH to ensure it complies with national labelling legislation and the Agricultural Product Standards Act, Act 119 of 1990, and regulations promulgated under this act.

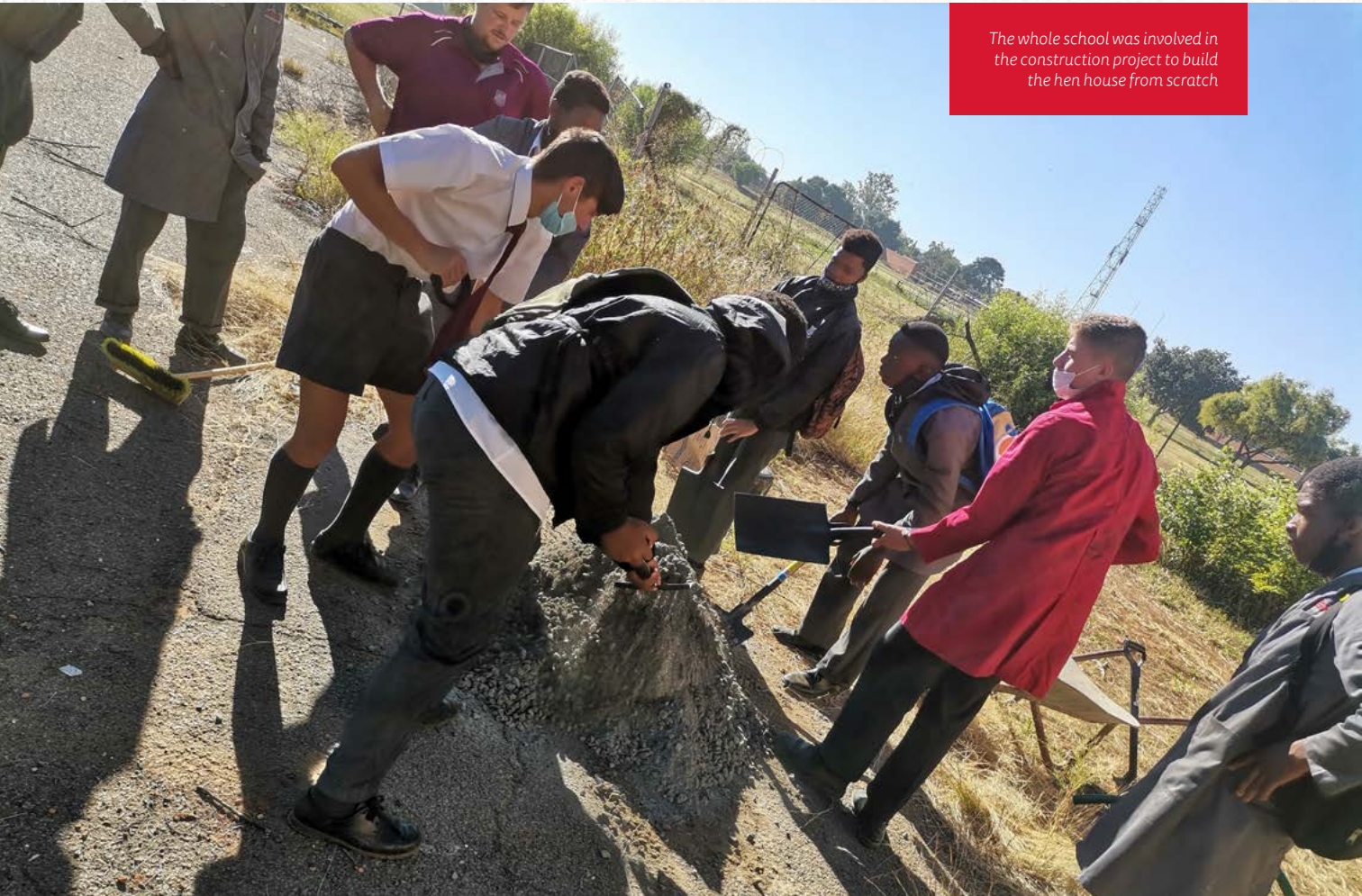
To maintain your compliance, you need to:

- Submit to a monthly audit by DALRRD, to check that you are maintaining your SOPs.
- Employ an independent inspector assigned by DALRRD who is constantly on the floor, checking compliance.
- Submit detailed daily records to DALRRD monthly.

For more info, contact the FSA on info@afsq.co.za or training@afsq.co.za

POULTRY GIVES BACK

The whole school was involved in the construction project to build the hen house from scratch



TEACHING LIFE SKILLS WITH CHICKENS



Learners construct the steel frame of the hen house



Collecting eggs in the hen house: Lebogang Caster and Bogosi Moroka

At a Free State school for youngsters with special educational needs, chickens are being used to teach valuable life skills, with the support of the poultry experts at Nutri Feeds, a subsidiary of Country Bird Holdings
By Melinda Shaw

FARMING WITH CHICKENS can be a rewarding business with quick and efficient returns. Integrated commercial operations are complex businesses, but for an aspirant farmer, compared to other kinds of livestock, it requires minimal effort to obtain a hen or two and get quick rewards in the form of daily fresh eggs. This was the thinking when a special-needs school in Bloemfontein introduced agriculture to its curriculum in 2021, and bought 90 point-of-lay hens. And thanks to the inputs from Nutri Feeds, this project is thriving.

The Dr Böhmer School has 550 learners between the ages of 12 and 19, many of whom come from

disadvantaged rural backgrounds, and with varying degrees of learning disabilities. The school prides itself on providing a safe learning environment where youngsters are equipped with skills to ensure that they can become reasonably independent, and even enter the labour force where possible. Training is offered in practical subjects such as agricultural studies, food production, hairdressing, maintenance, motor mechanics, welding and woodwork... and now egg production.

According to principal Kallie Viljoen, the egg project was conceived as a way to teach lessons in self-sustainability. "We wanted a animal husbandry project, but because we're

POULTRY GIVES BACK

situated in Bloemfontein in an urban area we were limited as regards the livestock we could keep on the school premises. Chickens were cleared for this, and we also believed that our learners would be able to manage the process. We also knew that the daily supply of eggs would be welcome at the hostel, and that this would also provide a learning opportunity in managing a business. One of our staff has a connection at Nutri Feeds, so we reached out for advice."

Nutri Feeds, the animal-feed arm of poultry producer Country Bird Holdings, has a manufacturing plant in Bloemfontein, and national marketing

manager Santa Ferreira agreed to provide feed and poultry expertise to get the ball rolling.

"We're a big believer in the saying that if you teach a man to fish (or raise a chicken), you feed him for life, rather than giving him that fish (or egg) and only feeding him for a day," she says.

Supplying the hostel is the priority, but surplus eggs are sold to help support the school's finances

With feed and advice sorted, an A-frame hen house was constructed on the school premises, and the learners were involved in every step of the building process, from digging the foundations to casting concrete

slabs, welding the metal framework and putting up the roof. Says Viljoen, "It was a major project for the whole school. And now that the hens are in place, the youngsters who take agriculture as a subject are hands on – they clean the house, feed the birds and collect the eggs. At first some of

the boys were sceptical and did not believe that we'd really be getting the hens, and it was so rewarding to see their excitement

when the first chickens were delivered! They have really taken ownership of the project, and are learning valuable lessons in the process."

The house has a capacity of 270 birds in laying cages, and currently



Learning about egg production is a useful future skill for Katleho Makheta, Dominic Radiboke, Olwami Mkrola and Oratilwe Lerumo

'We are all learning about biosecurity and how to maintain it to keep our chickens safe and to protect our egg supply'



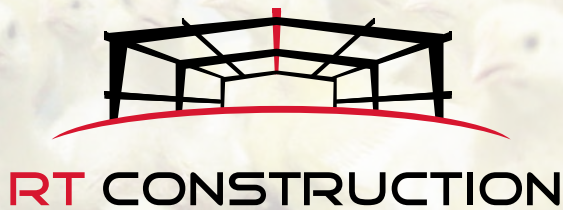
The hen house that the boys constructed has capacity for 270 hens in laying cages



there are around 230 hens producing eggs. Supplying the school's hostel is the priority, but surplus eggs are sold to the public or to staff to help support the school's finances. "Our production rate is about 80% at present, which is not bad, and we are also using the manure as fertiliser for our organic vegetable garden. We have even on occasion been able to donate eggs to a local charity."

The eggs and vegetables improve the school's self-sustainability which is a welcome benefit, given that Dr Böhmer School receives no support for its feeding scheme from the Department of Education, and is dependent on donations.

"We are so grateful to Nutri Feeds for its support and generosity, without which we would not have been able to ▶



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POULTRY GIVES BACK



Jaco Goss and Bogosi Moroka feed the chickens

start this project. The knowledge they share is an invaluable resource for us. Our staff and learners are proud of the fact that we are the only special-needs school in the Free State that produces its own eggs, which not only provides the kids with healthy protein in their diet, but is also a source of income for the school. And the boys get hands-on training that can provide a future for them once they finish school."


Learning about the poultry industry is an ongoing challenge for everyone at the school, says Viljoen, with biosecurity top of the priority list in the light of 2023's avian-flu devastation. "We are all learning about biosecurity and how to keep our chickens safe, and protect our egg supply," he says.

Providing the youngsters in his care with hope for the future, and skills to enable them to make a living one day rather than be dependent on hand-outs, is Viljoen's main objective. The egg project is the immediate tool to help achieve this, and he hopes that they'll be able to scale up and double the output of eggs fairly soon.

"It is about making a difference in kids' lives, and by pooling our efforts with companies such as Nutri Feeds,

'We are so grateful to Nutri Feeds for its support and generosity - we could not have started this project without them'

we can change the prospects for their families, and their communities."

For Nutri Feeds, the contribution is a no-brainer. Says Ferreira, "In the rural areas where we operate unemployment is a great concern, especially among the youth. There are so many who never have the chance to learn skills with which to support themselves, so we're proud to be associated with this project. Besides, we live and breathe chicken, so it is a pleasure to share knowledge and resources with the teachers and boys at Dr Böhmer!" 



Lebogang Caster and Jaco Goss muck out the hen house



Nutri Feeds' Henco Christie and MJ Jonker (on the right), delivered feed and wisdom to Dr Böhmer School teachers Johan Nel and LW Viljoen (left)

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THE DUCK RUN

PEST CONTROL WITH A DIFFERENCE

It's a highly entertaining spectacle to watch this duck brigade in action as they keep a Stellenbosch wine estate free of vineyard pests.

By **Diane McCarthy**





Indian runner ducks have proved to be excellent at pest control in the Vergenoegd Löw vineyards

PROVING THAT WISDOM does indeed come with age, one of the oldest wine estates in the country is leading the charge in regenerative agriculture. By doing everything possible to reduce both its human and mechanical impact, Vergenoegd Löw, on the Western Cape's Stellenbosch wine route, is well on the way to creating a unique, sustainable ecosystem. And one of its more innovative approaches is using an exotic breed of poultry, the Indian runner duck, for pest control in the vineyards.

Managing director of Vergenoegd Löw Corius Visser calls the ducks his soldiers. "The ducks enjoy foraging in the vineyards," he says. "Their long necks enable them to reach quite high for worms, snails and insects, so there is no need to spray the vines with harmful chemicals. The ducks' droppings also nourish the soil and feed the vines as envisaged four decades ago by the farm's former owner, John Faure, who still manages the breeding programme."

According to Faure, the runner

ducks were originally bred in the East to keep the rice fields pest free. He says these ducks do not fly and only rarely form nests and incubate their own eggs, often dropping their eggs wherever they happen to be. The ducks stand erect like penguins but, rather than waddling, they run. The females usually lay more than 300 eggs a year, which, during the six-month egg-laying season from October to March, can be ordered for breakfast in the estate's Geuwels restaurant.

It's a unique experience to see the ducks racing through the estate, making a beeline for the vineyards. The flock is released from its pens at various times during the day and visitors are constantly on the lookout, hoping to catch a duck run.

The farm used to publicise the release times, but realised that people were coming to the estate to view the ducks and leaving directly afterwards, without experiencing everything else the estate has to offer. Now, if you visit the farm, either for a meal at one of its two restaurants, or for a wine tasting, be alert. The ducks are released

at different times each day, adding another layer of magic to your visit.

The estate also breeds Embden geese. Apart from helping with pest control, these hardy geese protect the ducks' eggs from crows and other birds of prey. "The Chinese Embdens, which are characterised by the knob on their head, are heavier and stronger and less susceptible to disease than other geese," explains facilities manager Johann Scholtz.

The farm has lent ducks to other farmers in the area, notably the citrus growers. The ducks are also for sale to farmers keen on having their own troop of slug-eating soldiers, creating another sub-industry for Vergenoegd Löw and helping to increase the footprint of regenerative farming in the region. 🦆

Contact **Vergenoegd Löw**
for info or bookings at
info@vergenoegd.co.za or
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A VIEW FROM WEST AFRICA

POULTRY IN GHANA: A STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL



Ghana is one of the main consumers of poultry meat in West Africa but as opposed to Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire, the industry here is not protected

By **Espoir Olodo**

The growing demand for chicken
sadly doesn't translate into
better opportunities for farmers



A VIEW FROM WEST AFRICA

The high cost of labour presents a challenge to poultry producers



GHANAIS LOVE CHICKEN, so much so that it is the most popular source of animal protein in the country, with a market that is set for more growth over the next few years. Despite so much promise, the poultry industry is not thriving, and in fact is locked in battle with some existential difficulties that keep farmers up at night.

PRODUCTION CHALLENGES

Over the last decade the country has seen significant population growth and the rise of the middle class, and these factors, along with the affordability of chicken meat, has seen a growth in consumption.

Ghana is one of the region's leading markets, with a per capita consumption of 13kg per year. By comparison, per capita consumption in sub-Saharan Africa is 2.3kg.

On paper the increasing demand for locally produced chicken presents a lot



of opportunities for potential investors in the industry. However, the day-to-day reality of running a commercial poultry operation presents many obstacles for operators.

High costs of electricity and labour

are two of the main issues, as is the rising cost of feed, which in Ghana accounts for 80% of total production costs. Primary feed ingredients such as soya and maize have been increasingly in demand for human consumption

as well as industrial use and as a result prices have soared. The price of maize alone rose by almost 70% between 2019 and 2021. Farmers are battling to afford feed and also face an environment where financial institutions have been very reluctant to support the poultry sector.

As a result, domestic poultry production fell to 50 000 tons in 2021 from 58 000 tons a year earlier. Consumption is estimated at 400 000 tons, and the fall in local production was offset by an increase in imports to 350 000 tons, or 80% of consumption, in 2021.

LACK OF PROTECTION

In sharp contrast with the poultry sectors in the neighbouring countries of Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire, which have been protected since 2005, the Ghanaian market is wide open to international poultry products. In recent years, imports have increased dramatically while the local industry lags in terms of competitiveness.

Consumers in urban areas increasingly demand the convenience of chicken portions, with leg quarters and wings being most popular

According to a study by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the market prices of Ghanaian broiler meat tend to be higher than imported meat by a 30-40% margin. The country is also now the biggest importer of chicken meat in West Africa, with the equivalent of R8.3 billion spent in 2021, according



GHANAIAN CHICKEN IN NUMBERS

R8.3 billion
spent on imports in 2021

80%
of imports are frozen portions

400 000 tons
consumed annually

80%
of local consumption
is imported

8 000 tons
drop in local production from
2020 to 2021 (from 58 000 -
50 000 tons)

13kg
per capita consumption
annually

80%
of production costs go to feed

70%
increase in maize prices
between 2019 and 2021

Local chicken is as much as 40% more expensive than imported broiler meat



A VIEW FROM WEST AFRICA

to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).

Besides feed issues, changing consumer habits require additional effort from producers with respect to processing, packaging and marketing. Consumers in urban areas increasingly demand the convenience of chickens sold in portions with leg quarters and wings being most popular. It is estimated that around 80% of chicken imports into Ghana are frozen portions, mainly leg quarters and wings. In fact, it is believed that whole fresh birds only sell because consumers have no choice due to the lack of the infrastructure and equipment to produce chicken cuts.

But despite the challenges Ghana's chicken farmers are hopeful. The industry holds considerable potential for growth, especially when considering the fast expansion in the hospitality industry, fast-food and other restaurants and supermarkets. With private investment in processing capacity, the sector can meet standards such as bigger or smaller leg quarters, and improved performance metrics of safety, quality, reliability and affordability.

SUPPORT PLANS

In West Africa, Ghana's chicken industry is already one of the biggest alongside Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire. In 2022 the Ghanaian government also announced a plan to support the sector by increasing the production of feed ingredients such as soya and maize, setting up processing facilities (slaughtering, packing, refrigeration) and partially subsidising the costs of vaccines and animal feed.

As part of its ambition, a fund equivalent to R1.7 billion was established to be loaned over three years to all players in the sector at an interest rate of less than 10%. The ultimate goal is to achieve broiler meat production of 247 000 tons by 2025. 📌

Feed is so expensive that it now makes up 80% of production costs



Farmers are waiting for the implementation of a state fund to grow the industry



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GRANDMA'S CHICKEN SOUP

Words: **Kate Pinchuck**

Illustrations: **Jason Bronkhorst**

They don't call it Jewish penicillin for nothing – chicken soup is the cure for any ailment. Just ask a Jewish granny

IF I THINK OF CHICKEN SOUP, I think of my paternal grandmother. “Jewish penicillin” is what she called it – the colloquial name among the community. If you show even the slightest sign of illness, a Jewish grandmother will cook up a batch of chicken soup and siphon it down your throat. Trying to refuse is futile. Jewish grandmothers the world over have an iron grip when it comes to force-feeding grandchildren who are positively at death's door with a common cold.

It turns out some actual scientific studies prove that chicken soup does have health benefits and helps you fight off viruses, but for Granny Lilly, it was more than that. The power of chicken soup was almost spiritual.

Has her recipe been passed down to me now that she is no longer with us? Absolutely not. There was no “recipe”. Granny had no need for that. She cooked her chicken soup by instinct alone, because she was born to brew this broth, alliteration intended. I tried many times to copy down some vague form of methodology, but it altered with the tides, with the availability

of ingredients and with her mood. Even my grandmother's cookbooks didn't use proper instructions. I have inherited a baking book from her that contains the line “if mixture is too wet, add less water”. Somehow, her soup always tasted exactly like hers, regardless.

We'd always eat her chicken soup on Pesach, the Jewish holiday of Passover, celebrating my ancestors' lucky escape out of Egypt and across the Red Sea, which parted at just the right time for the story to have a happy ending. In the soup, she'd put her kneidlach,

‘When I was a vegan, granny tried to make me vegan chicken soup. Spoiler alert: it is impossible’

dumplings fashioned from matzah meal (crushed up matzah) which sounds like they could not be a more unappealing snack, but I promise you, they are absolutely delicious.

My favourite memories of my grandmother's chicken soup are just her and I, eating alone in her apartment, when her mouth would run amok and she would give me frankly insane life advice, that I did



my best to go forth and follow. My gran was very disappointed when I started taking an introduction to French course at university. That was no way to learn French, she proclaimed. The only way to learn a foreign language, according to my (at the time) 94-year-old grandmother, is to take a lover who only speaks that language. No English. That's how she learned French in her twenties. I was doing it all wrong. Of course, once she started to understand what her lover was saying, she didn't like him as much. “Don't study a textbook, bang a French guy!” are the kinds of things my grandmother taught me over a bowl of soup. Not how to sew. Although that might've been useful too. ▶

THE LIGHTER SIDE



I have inherited her pathological love for chicken soup. When the weather starts to turn in autumn and the first cold day swoops in, I haul out the biggest pot I can find and start making a chicken broth. And, despite being the mother to only a few barely living cacti, since recently, if a friend or family member sneezes near me, I cannot restrain myself from making them a batch and driving it over to their house, unannounced. If I don't have their address, I simply geolocate them using coding techniques I learnt on TikTok. It's actually very easy, but they are usually quite shocked. Nevertheless, the horror abates when I bring out my freshly brewed chicken soup, sure to cure any ailments. Nothing serious though – if you have laryngitis you must please go to the doctor. The chicken soup will help you feel less sorry for yourself, but it does

not have the power to cure a urinary tract infection. Trust me, I've tried.

In the five-year period that I was a vegan, which my family refers to as "the dark ages," my loving granny was forced to try and make me vegan chicken soup. Spoiler alert: this is impossible. You see, the key ingredient in a chicken soup is (and you may have guessed this) the chicken. It is like making a vegan roast chicken, which you can attempt, but ultimately, this is not, in fact, a roast chicken. This is a completely different meal you have made. I found it very hard to give up Granny's chicken soup, and considered discussing with the Rabbi if there was perhaps a way we could get it certified vegan under special circumstances, but alas. It was one of the first things I ate when I emerged back into the world of meat; iron deficient and plagued every night by dreams of

cheese. (Some people seem to be very happy and able to successfully absorb nutrients as vegans – I was not.) No-one was happier than my grandmother, whom I believe thought I could finally stop going to the pharmacy so much.

I have internalised what my grandmother taught me. Chicken soup is more than just food: it is for the soul – just like those American books from the early 90s said. It will warm up not only your body, but your heart too. It's held sacred by so many people. Trying to find a definitive chicken soup recipe is almost impossible. It seems to be one of those things that varies, not just from culture to culture, or region to region, but from family to family. Despite never learning my grandmother's recipe, my chicken soup looks remarkably like hers. Perhaps I am genetically predisposed to refusing to accept the aesthetic and aromatic qualities of any other chicken soup. Maybe it's just the leeks. 🍷



Kate Pinchuck is an award-winning actor, writer, director, and stand-up comedian who lives in Cape Town. She can be seen on Showmax in her SAFTA-nominated role as Taryn in *Tali's Baby Diary* and *Tali's Joburg Diary*, among others.

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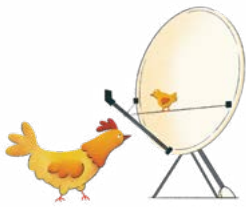
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ON THE WIRES

Musical chickens, halal on the rise and other news from the global circuit

Compiled by **Charmain Lines**

More halal chicken

THE GLOBAL halal-meat market was worth US\$202 billion in 2021; it is expected to almost double by 2030, reaching US\$375 billion, according to New York-based consultancy Straits Research. Chicken will be part of this growth as it is considered an indispensable part of the halal market.

Zafer Gedikli of the World Halal Council, and Mohammad Hussaini of the American Halal Foundation, unpack the two main factors driving the growth.

Firstly, nontraditional halal consumers, or non-Muslims, increasingly prefer halal poultry due to the humane handling practices and overall quality of the product. Secondly, as global migration brings more halal consumers into Western markets, halal products are no longer limited to ethnic stores but are more commonly available.

Miran Ismael of the European Certification Centre for Halal adds that in Europe growth is largely

driven by the booming halal fast-food segment. "All these halal fast-food chains rely on chicken as the main ingredient on the menu," Ismael says. "Halal is no longer a taboo for a non-Muslim European consumer, as it once was."

Interestingly, there is no consensus on what poultry can be considered halal and what not. Currently, "halal" is an umbrella term for poultry produced under several different standards. The original definition of halal

– meaning "lawful" or "permissible" – comes from the Koran. The debate around standards exists because the relevant Koran verses are often vague and short on detail. There is, for example, no agreement on whether mechanical slaughtering is allowed or not. "While some halal certifying bodies allow mechanical slaughtering, it is not an accepted halal method. Each bird must be slaughtered manually by a practising Muslim," says Gedikli. 📖



Brazilian breeder goes BIIIG

A FARM IN THE STATE of Goiás in Brazil is home to around 300 rather scary-looking – and valuable – chickens. Specialist breeders have been known to pay 20 000 real (a whopping R75 800!) for an Índio Gigante (or Giant Indian) rooster. But these are no ordinary birds.

The result of a cross between free-range and combat breeds, Giant Indian roosters can grow up to 1.2m tall; the hens typically reach 1m. Not surprisingly, this homegrown Brazilian breed is one of the biggest and heaviest in the world.

Farmer Rubens Braz started breeding Giant Indians as a hobby, but has since developed a profitable commercial operation. Noting that the breed is still awaiting formal recognition, he says that it is popular

with many Brazilian producers as a means to improve free-range breeding stock. Braz describes the breed as rustic with outstanding meat- and egg-production characteristics.

As for prices, a dozen eggs costs the equivalent of around R1 300, while a six-month-old bird sells for R1 600. 📷



Chopin for chickens



THE IDEA OF PLAYING music for poultry is not a new one, but a symphony orchestra doing a live performance on a farm certainly is. This is what happened at a free-range poultry farm in New Zealand when a keyboard player and a small ensemble of string and woodwind instrument musicians put on a live performance of Chook Symphony No 1, a soothing Baroque number.

The co-owner of the Bostock Brothers farm in Hawke's Bay, Ben Bostock, says that they've been playing classical music for their chickens for some years, given that research has proven that it calms the chickens down. The chickens' taste in music is very specific. "They don't like any big banging," Bostock says. When the birds respond positively to the music, they tend to range further among the trees. 📷

Hatch your match

WE'VE LONG KNOWN that eggs are versatile, but who would have thought their superpowers could extend to online dating. Turns out they do, thanks to some creative thinking by the folks behind a new dating app called Hatched.

Using eggs in the place of profile pictures, the app encourages its users to connect based on personality, not physical appearance. Once you've completed your profile, the app shows potential matches as eggs; the only way to see what the person looks like is by answering four personality-based questions. For every question that gets matching answers, the eggs are "cracked" and 25% of the profile pictures are revealed.

Four matching answers not only

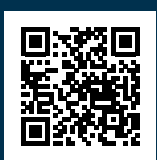


reveal the profile picture, but also info such as the other person's age, hobbies, occupation and "adjeqgtives" that describe them.

If two users answer differently, the egg flashes red. If you want to try again with the same person, you can use the "Egg On" option to answer a new question. However, it only works if the other person also chooses to "Egg On".

The app has also launched currency called "Yolks" that offers premium features such as the ability to "super hatch" or super-like a match. 📷

Scan the QR code with your smart phone for a link to Chook Symphony No 1, and hook up your hen house!





Salmonella – all you need to know

Specialist veterinarian **Obed Lukhele** unpacks a key challenge for poultry farmers

'What is required of me to comply with testing for Salmonella?' – Anonymous, via reader research

THERE ARE OVER 2 400 bacterial variants of *Salmonella* and in poultry we see two categories of infection – non-motile avian-specific and the wide-spread motile or paratyphoid salmonellae. The latter is found in both wild and domestic animals and is principally responsible for food-borne diseases in humans.

In South Africa, the avian-specific *Salmonella Gallinarum* (SG) and *S. Pullorum* (SP) as well as the motile *S. Enteritidis* (SE) are the only three that are listed as controlled under the Animal Diseases Act, Act 35 of 1984. This means that the control measures of these diseases are prescribed by the Department of Agriculture (DALRRD). However, only a draft movement protocol in case of an outbreak of SG, SP and SE exists.

SAPA has in place a *Salmonella* Reduction Plan (SRP) aimed at reducing the prevalence of SG, SP, SE as well as *Salmonella Typhimurium* (ST) in grandparent (GP) and parent flocks through implementing various prevention, detection and control measures from farm to fork.

Regular and structured monitoring of *Salmonella* bacteria is carried out in birds and people (GP operations), as well as on farms inside poultry houses and hatcheries, inside feed mills, in



feed raw material and finished feed. All samples must be tested in a laboratory accredited by the South African National Accreditation System (SANAS) and that is also DALRRD approved.

Biosecurity on farms and in hatcheries is the mainstay of *Salmonella* control and prevention. This includes feed and water treatment as well as vermin and insect control. Feed treatment includes heat (pelleting) and additives such as probiotics and organic acids. Water chlorination and acidification can also inactivate *Salmonella* and vaccination helps too as it reduces shedding of *Salmonella* into the environment and lowers hen-to-chick transmission. Antibiotics are indicated under certain circumstances, but to limit increasing antibiotic resistance, the choice of medication must be based on a laboratory-sensitivity test against the *Salmonella* isolate that is prevalent in a flock.

Like most other meat-borne

bacteria, thorough washing and disinfection of the processing plant and the equipment used, as well as hand hygiene for the meat-processing staff remain essential in preventing meat contamination in the abattoir. This is as per the Meat Safety Act, Act 40 of 2000, which provides for measures to promote meat safety and the safety of animal products.

The European Regulation and the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the United States Department of Agriculture also embrace the detection and control of *Salmonella* at all relevant stages of production, processing and distribution – farm to fork. This is in line with the World Organisation for Animal Health as well as the World Health Organisation's Codex Alimentarius Code of Hygienic Practice for Meat, Eggs and Egg Products. 

Obed Lukhele is technical executive for agriculture at Astral

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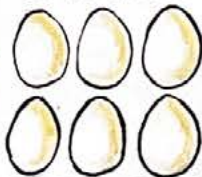
RECIPE OF THE MONTH

MUFFIN BAKED SCOTCH EGGS

NO DEEP FRYING NEEDED FOR THESE TASTY TREATS
TRY THIS NEW TAKE ON SAUSAGE, BACON & EGGS

**You
WILL
NEED**

6 EGGS



+1 EGG



½ KG.
SAUSAGE
MEAT

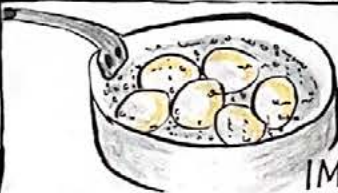


½
CUP
MILK

6 RASHERS
BACON



1 T CHOPPED PARSLEY | SALT & PEPPER | MUFFIN TIN



BOIL EGGS UNTIL HARD; 6 MINUTES
PLUNGE IMMEDIATELY IN ICED WATER TO PREVENT GREY RINGS FORMING AROUND YOLK. PEEL WHEN COLD.

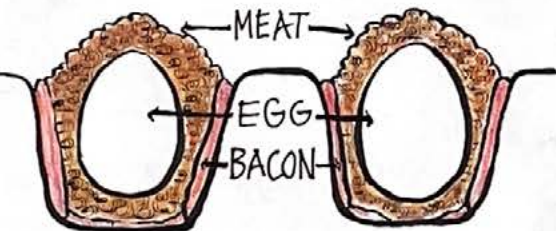
SOAK
BREAD
IN MILK

GREASE
MUFFIN
TIN

CHOP
PARSLEY

SQUEEZE BREAD DRY. BEAT EXTRA EGG & MIX IN BREAD, SAUSAGE MEAT & PARSLEY. SEASON WITH SALT & PEPPER.

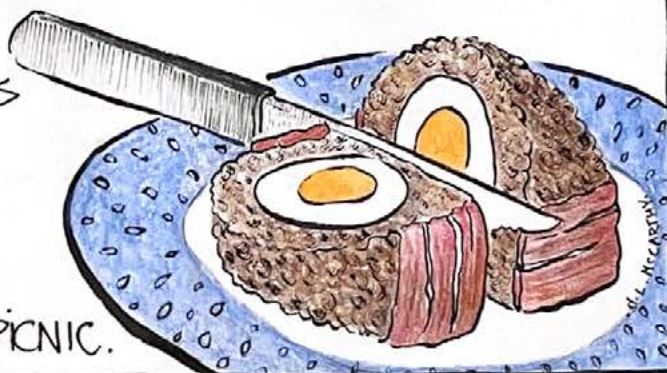
LINE MUFFIN HOLES WITH BACON, TUCKING IN ENDS AT THE BASE OF THE HOLE.



COVER BASE WITH A DOLLOP OF MEAT MIXTURE. STAND AN EGG IN EACH HOLE, POINTY-SIDE UP. COVER EGG COMPLETELY WITH MEAT MIX.

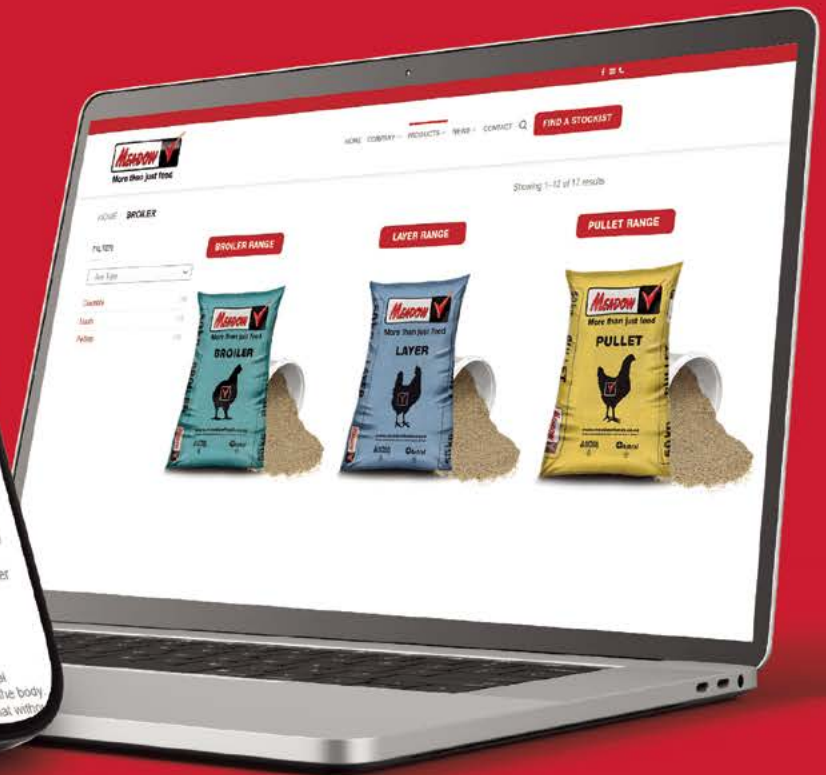
BAKE IN A 180°C OVEN - 20 MINUTES OR UNTIL BROWNED.

RUN A KNIFE AROUND EACH MUFFIN TO LOOSEN. DRAIN AWAY FAT. EAT HOT, OR: COOL, WRAP IN WAX PAPER & TAKE ON A PICNIC.



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