



Photo: Atoms on Unsplash

## Australians more aware about their food origins

RESEARCH from the National Farmers Federation shows that almost one quarter of Australians said that COVID-19 had made them more conscious of where their food comes from.

NFF president and Liverpool Plains farmer Fiona Simson said panic buying and temporary supermarket shortages had caused angst for many Australians.

"It is logical that Australians have taken a greater interest in the origin of their meat, dairy, eggs, bread, fruit, vegetables and more," Ms Simson said.

"Inquiring consumers will have been pleasantly surprised to find that up to 96 percent of the food on their supermarket shelves is home grown.

"All Australians should take comfort in the fact that Australia is one of the most food secure nations in the world.

"Every year we produce up to two thirds more food than we can consume at home."

The increased interest

was greatest in older Australians, with 1 in 3 over 55 reporting to now think more about the origins of their food.

Females were also more likely to be more conscious of the source of their groceries at 31 percent, compared to men at 24 percent.

National Agriculture Day celebrates the plentiful, quality, safe and sustainable food and natural fibres grown in Australia and the farmers behind it.

"Importantly, AgDay is also an opportunity for farmers to have an ongoing conversation with consumers about how and where our food comes from," Ms Simson said.

"Supply chain disruptions and a return to home cooking brought Australians back to basics and in effect, closer to farmers.

"A deeper connection and understanding between farmers and consumers are essential to NFF's goal for agriculture to be Australia's most trusted industry by 2030."

## Big 2021 planned for poultry industry

I TRUST you all had great Christmas and new year celebrations.

It's been a wet one for us here in Armidale, a stark contrast to a year ago.

While it was wonderful to have a break and a well-earned rest, I know many of you had your Christmas plans interrupted by COVID-19, as did I.

Though, I would like to focus on the suite of plans Poultry Hub has planned for 2021.

First, I would like to announce our next funding round, which will open in early March, check our website for further details.

We have also been busy preparing for our undergraduate hackathon, aptly named 'Chook Chat Hack'.

This event will focus on novel ideas and how we can create the next generation chicken.

Centred around engagement and the sharing of ideas, university students will be invited to form teams and submit a short video detailing their ideas.

Videos will be judged by a panel of industry experts and the winners will receive a cash prize.

If you would like to be involved, stay tuned for our official announcement in early February.

We will also be running PoultryGrad mid-year and a suite of scholarships for honours students.

The best way to stay up to date is to check out the programs page at [poultryhub.org](http://poultryhub.org)

PHA looks forward to engaging with you over the coming year.

Don't hesitate to get in touch with your ideas



by **TAMSYN CROWLEY**  
Director



and questions by emailing us at [poultryhub@ue.edu.au](mailto:poultryhub@ue.edu.au)

Looking to the future, below is an extract from an article contributed by Professor Bob Swick and Associate Professor Shubiao Wu on the race to find an alternative to antibiotics in poultry feed, as featured in our December newsletter.

Antibiotics are widely used for the prevention, control and treatment of diseases and bacterial infections in human and animals.

It is also widely used to boost growth in livestock, including chickens.

However, the rise in 'superbugs' or antibiotic-resistant bacteria linked to antibiotic use in animal feed in recent years resulted in pushback from consumers and the medical community, and resulted in a ban on the use of in-feed antibiotics in Europe and other parts of the world.

In Australia, the mandate to remove antibiotics from feed is voluntary but fast food and supermarkets require their chicken meat to be free of antibiotics.

While good news for consumers, the reduced use of antibiotics in animal feed has resulted in more frequent outbreaks of animal-enteric diseases, including necrotic enteritis, a highly conta-

rious and often fatal disease that can decimate poultry farms.

Industry research coordinator for the Poultry Hub at the University of New England Professor Robert Swick said, "We're in a race against time to find a suitable alternative to antibiotics for the poultry industry."

"Not only to combat disease outbreaks in poultry, but also to effectively manage the production costs of meat chickens."

Prof Swick explained that when antibiotics are removed from feed, birds may require up to an additional 10 to 20 percent more grain and protein meals to reach the same market weight as they did with the antibiotics.

To investigate the prob-

lem in a controlled environment the poultry research group at UNE developed a necrotic enteritis disease model that is able to study whether and how antibiotic alternatives can alleviate the impact of the disease on chicken health and poultry production.

Lead researcher Associate Professor Shubiao Wu said, "Our model infects meat chickens with pathogenic bacteria called clostridium perfringens to study how antibiotics work and to search for alternatives.

"The bacteria given at two weeks of age are enough to reduce growth but do not otherwise make the birds very sick."

Alternatives examined so far include short and mediate chain fatty acids, essential oils such as tea tree oil, brewer's yeast extract, plant extracts and reduced protein in the diet.

Potential alternatives have been assessed that can improve gut health, control the immune system and intestinal microbiota, and regulate the expression of enzymes and nutrient

transporters.

"While we have found indications that fundamental improvements in animal health and nutrient use may alleviate the impact of enteric disease such as necrotic enteritis on chicken growth and production, the search for a definitive answer continues," Assoc Prof Wu said.

"UNE is one of the top institutes globally that specialises in the necrotic enteritis research and we collaborate with major feed additive companies across world.

"We're playing an essential role in the study to search for the antibiotic alternatives and the outcome will make food production more sustainable, not only in Australia but also globally."

The UNE poultry research team's work has attracted a high level of industry support over the past 10 years, including funding of around \$2 million and as at late 2020, the team has published 48 peer-reviewed papers, including many related to finding alternatives to in-feed antibiotics.



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## Poultry Industry Calendar of Events

### 2021

**FEB 9-10** – Australian Poultry Science Symposium, VIRTUAL EVENT [www.apss2021.com.au](http://www.apss2021.com.au)

**APR 11-13** – Poultry Information Exchange/Australasian Milling Conference (PIX/AMC), Gold Coast, QLD [www.pixamc.com.au](http://www.pixamc.com.au)

**JUN 21-23** – European Symposium on the Quality of Poultry Meat and XIX European Symposium on the Quality of Eggs and Egg Products, Krakow, Poland [www.eggmeat2021.com](http://www.eggmeat2021.com)

**AUG 8-12** – World Poultry Congress, Paris, France [www.wpcparis2020.com](http://www.wpcparis2020.com)

**AUG 16-18** – World Poultry Science Association (WPSA) – Cambridge UK [www.wpsa2020.org](http://www.wpsa2020.org)

### 2022

**MAY 15-17** – Poultry Information Exchange and Australasian Milling Conference (PIX/AMC) [www.pixamc.com.au](http://www.pixamc.com.au)

**How to supply event details: Send all details to National Poultry Newspaper, PO Box 162, Wynnum Qld 4178, call 07 3286 1833 or email: [design@collins.media](mailto:design@collins.media)**

[poultrynews.com.au](http://poultrynews.com.au)  
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## HAVE YOUR SAY!

All producers are encouraged to send in letters to be published in NPN, outlining any concerns or issues they may have with the industry.

This is an open forum where you can cover any topic, whether for or against an issue.

Please send your letters to: [editorial@collins.media](mailto:editorial@collins.media) or PO Box 162, Wynnum Qld 4178

# Vaccinating for Newcastle disease

WELCOME to 2021 National Poultry News readers.

Even though the end of the year is an increasingly busy time for poultry farmers, I hope you, your staff and family were able to stop and rest, even if only for a short while.

Recently, a farmer asked if he could stop vaccinating for Newcastle disease because it was costing too much.

Being asked this question on more than one occasion and also being involved in discussions about the diseases listed in the Emergency Animal Disease Response Agreement last year prompted the first Egg Farmers of Australia article for the year to focus on Newcastle disease.

Newcastle disease was



by MELINDA HASHIMOTO  
CEO

first identified in 1926 in Java, Indonesia and a year later was identified in Newcastle, England.

In 1930 and 1932, Australia experienced virulent Newcastle disease.

Then in the late 1990s Australia experienced a severe, widespread Newcastle disease outbreak.

At the time, it was the



largest exotic disease incident ever experienced in Australia.

It was fortuitous to have the opportunity to speak with Dr Rod Jenner recently in relation to Newcastle disease.

Rod is a great supporter of our industry and has been involved in discussions and work relating

to Newcastle disease for many years, allowing me to gain further knowledge on the subject.

The purpose for Australia's compulsory Newcastle disease vaccination strategy, which was introduced as a result of the outbreak, is to ensure Australia's commercial poultry industry is protected from another Newcastle disease outbreak.

Hence, it is compulsory for egg producers to vaccinate in all states for Newcastle disease.

The rules for the egg industry and chicken meat industry differ – given broilers no longer need to be vaccinated for Newcastle disease in Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia.

The Newcastle disease vaccination program

standard operating procedures published in the National Newcastle Disease Management Plan 2020 outline the rules for the vaccination of commercial poultry, as per Table 1. Vaccination programs.

This year, Newcastle disease management is under review by the World Organisation for Animal Health, known as the OIE, in order to consider obligations going forward.

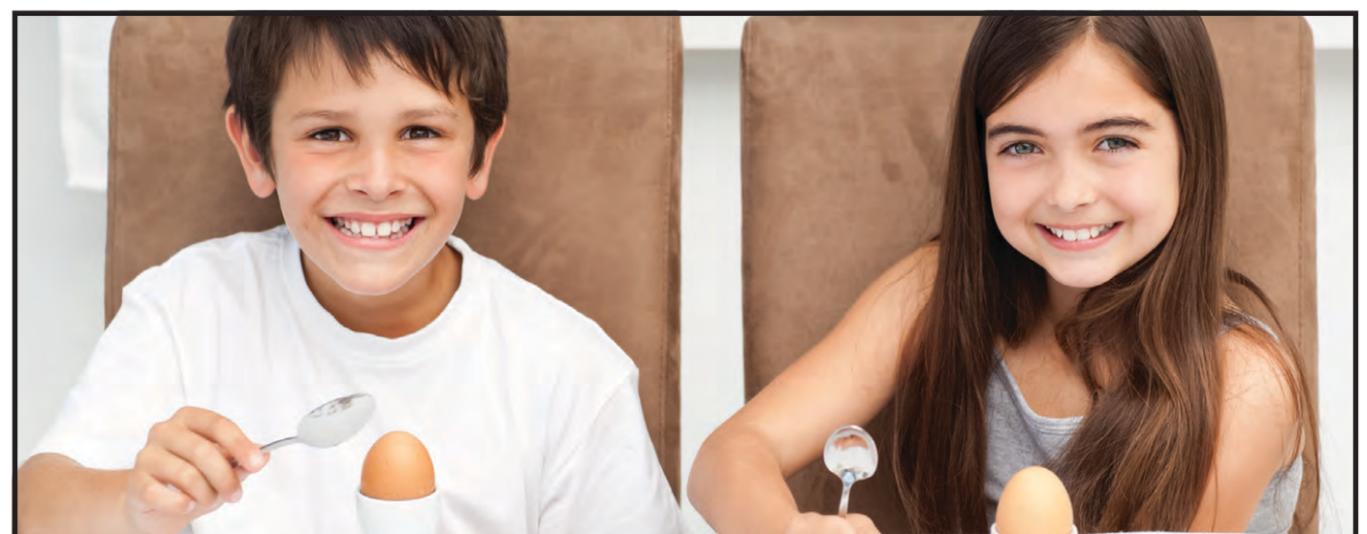
With great interest the industry will be keen to understand the outcomes of the review.

Egg Farmers of Australia will have its ear to the ground and will provide further updates as they become available.

May 2021 be a productive and prosperous poultry year!

Bird category	Age of birds at vaccination <sup>7</sup>	Tasmania, Western Australia	Queensland, South Australia	New South Wales, Victoria
Layer breeders	2-4 weeks, and	Live V4, and		
	12-18 weeks, or	Inactivated ND vaccine, or		
	12-14 weeks and every 6 to 8 weeks thereafter	Live V4		Not permitted <sup>8</sup>
Meat breeders	2-4 weeks, and	Live V4, and		
	12-18 weeks, or	Inactivated ND vaccine, or		
	12-18 weeks and every 6 to 8 weeks thereafter	Live V4		
Laying hens and pullets (grown in cages during the vaccination program)	2-4 weeks, and	Live V4, and		
	6-8 weeks, and	Live V4, and		
	10-14 weeks <sup>9</sup> , or	Inactivated ND vaccine, or		Inactivated ND vaccine
Laying hens and pullets (grown on litter/ground during the vaccination program)	10-14 weeks and every 6 to 8 weeks thereafter	Live V4		
	2-4 weeks <sup>10</sup> , and	Live V4, and		
	10-14 weeks <sup>11</sup> , or	Inactivated ND vaccine, or		Inactivated ND vaccine
Meat chickens	12-14 weeks and every 6 to 8 weeks thereafter	Live V4		
	Day-old, or	Optional: Live V4 as coarse spray <sup>12</sup>		Live V4 as coarse spray, or
	7-14 days	Optional: Live V4 in drinking water		Live V4 in drinking water

Table 1: Vaccination programs – 7 Additional vaccination may be permitted (for example, in day-olds). 8 If there is an inactivated vaccine shortage, a permit for live vaccine use may be issued by the Jurisdiction's CVO and the parameters as for meat breeders followed, including titre levels and testing (different requirements for each state). 9 A gap of 4-6 weeks between the last V4 and inactivated ND vaccine is the optimal interval. For example, to be able to vaccinate with inactivated ND vaccine at 10 weeks of age, V4 should have been given no later than 6 weeks of age. 10 Guidance: In case of multi-age rearing of birds, it is recommended to vaccinate closer to 2 weeks. 11 If there is evidence of HI titres lower than 23 prior to administration of inactivated vaccine, additional live V4 should be introduced between 6-8 weeks of age for subsequent flocks. 12 For two of the three available vaccines, this route is currently not a registered product label claim and therefore requires off-label use permission by a registered veterinarian who is supervising these flocks.



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As Kim 'Big Bird' Hutchinson prepared a barbecue on the first night, little did the nearby Coodardy cock know his early morning crowing might soon put him on the menu.



Three old roosters enjoyed a cold beer at Lake Ballard, home of a unique art installation of 51 sculptures by British sculptor Sir Antony Gormley, spanning 10sq km of white salt plain lake about two hours drive from Kalgoorlie. The author is flanked by Big Bird and Big Kirkalocka.

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# Roosters on a road trip

WHEN three school-friends set off from Perth on a 2200km weeklong road trip in October, little did they know that a few days in they'd be upstaged by a very cocky old rooster.

Such was the case when your's truly, Kim 'Big Bird' Hutchinson and Gavin 'Big Kirkalocka' Lee pulled up at Les Price's Coodardy Station, 32km west of Cue and 650km northeast of Perth.

Before I venture too deep into the story of the 'Coodardy cock', I must explain my friends' nicknames, in case you're a tad curious.

Kim is affectionately known as Big Bird because for many years he



Cant Comment  
by  
BRENDON CANT

was national chair of the accounting firm RSM, known back in the day as RSM Bird Cameron.

Prominent architect Gavin was labelled Big Kirkalocka by me many moons ago after Kirkalocka Station, located

down the road from Mt Magnet, a gold mining town 60km to the north and home to two classic outback pubs, one of which Gavin was raised in and both of which the three of us refreshed at on this trip.

On arrival at Coodardy Station in Gavin's ute, covered with outback dust on the outside and our bulldust on the inside, we were warmly greeted by Les, whose family has been associated with Coodardy since 1908.

Covering 166,000 hectares and 90km at its longest point, back in the day it was regarded as one of the prime sheep and wool producing stations in Western Australia's Murchison region.

As we alighted – our

boots and thongs barely hitting the red dirt – up came a confident, proud, handsome and assertive rooster, supposedly of distinguished Araucana breed descent.

Said rooster joined us for the next two nights and days, boldly strutting his stuff in and around the flash new shearers' quarters Les built as part of a station revamp.

When we had a beer, he was there.

When we had a barbecue, he was there too.

In fact, in the manner of the infamous *Chickenman* radio series, "he's everywhere, he's everywhere."

Surprise, surprise, when we were contentedly tucked up in our swags snoring away and on the

continued P5

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## Queensland farmers encouraged to register now for Farm2Plate Exchange

QUEENSLAND farmers looking to capitalise on the opportunities that agritourism could provide are encouraged to attend the national agri-food networking event Farm2Plate Exchange run by agritourism and agri-innovation experts Regionality from May 18-19, 2021.

Supported by the Queensland Farmers' Federation, Farm2Plate Exchange is being held in the Scenic Rim region and will provide an exciting platform for ideas exchange between people working in food, farming and agritourism throughout Australia.

QFF chief executive officer Dr Georgina Davis who will be speaking at the event said food, fibre and fo-

liage experiences were being increasingly sought after, as consumers desire to better understand where their produce comes from, learn how it is created and experience the environment where it is made.

"Many of Queensland's farmers are embracing new agribusiness ventures and agri-innovations, which are adding value to their produce with a growing network of agri-processing occurring on farm," Dr Davis said.

"In addition, farmers are becoming increasingly tech-savvy, strengthening new direct marketing and sales to consumers through new online platforms, agritourism and agri-experiences."

"The Farm2Plate Ex-

change will give farmers looking to diversify and take a more active role in the producer to consumer value chain an opportunity to exchange ideas and learn from others through a variety of insights and experience."

"This year's event has the theme of renewal and is aligned with ideas of adaptation and resilience – we want people to think differently about how they approach the concept of farm to plate and the connection between agriculture and consumer, particularly in a regional context."

For more information about the Farm2Plate Exchange and to purchase your ticket, visit [regionality.com.au/farm-2-plate-ex-2021](http://regionality.com.au/farm-2-plate-ex-2021)



# Roosters on a road trip

from P4

cup of early morning dreams well before sunrise, he was also there.

Problem was he crowed loudly, wanting to play well before the sun rose.

And we didn't.

So much so that there was talk among the trio of old roosters of him joining us, featherless and headless for our final night's barbecue.

But we knew Les wouldn't have a bar of that.

The Coodardy cock knew he ruled the roost and no humans would begrudge him a good time, no matter the hour.

Turns out this very cocky rooster had been leading the high life with Les at Coodardy after seeing off a few rooster rivals over the years, to dingoes most probably.

Over a beer, Les confessed that his feathered friend frequently enjoyed a ride in the LandCruiser to visit a few hens in Cue, where he stays for a few nights before Les returns to pick him up when next time he's in town – perhaps for one of his regular meetings as a Cue Councillor.

Having done his broody business, the rooster happily returns to the more sedate life on the station, where he's not hen-pecked and he simply preens himself while waiting to greet the next arrivals at the shearers' quarters he calls home –

and call loudly and often he does.

Speaking of other rooster royalty who have enjoyed the Price family's hospitality at Coodardy, none other than His Royal Highness Prince Charles did just that in 1979 – spending three or four days on the station horse riding, aerial mustering and going on a mill run.

Les tells me that what he describes as a royal camp was set up near a large granite outcrop about 7km from the homestead.

Prince Charles also spent time at the main homestead, camping on

the lawn under the stars.

That was a particularly historic moment for the station, but 40 years down the track, employment and business opportunities in the pastoral industry are limited.

However, with the completion of the vermin proof fence in October 2021, opportunities may re-emerge, Les hopes.

Though he acknowledges it will possibly take several years to clear out or at least control the remaining wild dogs within the fence.

Meanwhile, one very mobile rooster continues to rule the roost at Coodardy and in Cue. 🐔



Whenever we had a beer the Coodardy cock was there, spurred on by his desire to rule the roost no matter who was roosting there.



While once there were four Coodardy cocks, now there is one.

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31 acres / 12.60 Ha

**AGENT:**

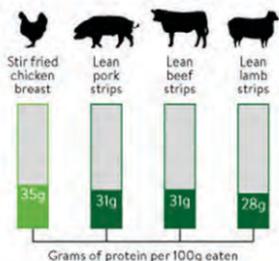
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It delivers more protein in fewer kilojoules than cooked legumes/pulses (beans), nuts and seeds.

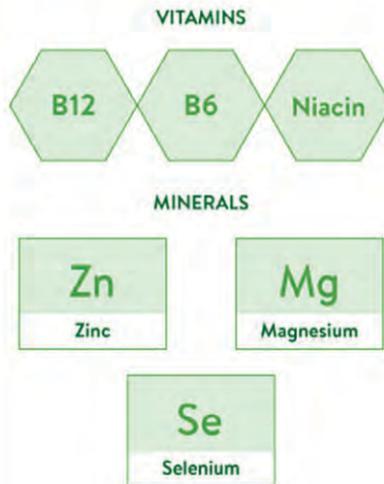
300-400g of cooked legumes/beans



or 80g of cooked chicken deliver the same amount of protein



Cooked chicken is a source of essential vitamins and minerals



ACMF website pages underwent a significant update with the development of new visuals and fact sheets on the nutritional value of chicken meat.

Annabel Selby-Jones is the new communications manager for ACMF.

# The year that was 2020 in the chicken meat industry

THE Australian Chicken Meat Federation is the peak coordinating body for participants in the chicken meat industry in Australia.

It represents all elements of the industry including meat chicken farmers and processors nationally and is recognised as the industry representative body by the Australian Government.

### The year that was

2020 was a challenging year for the chicken industry, as indeed it was for Australia and the global community.

It was particularly so for chicken processors who had to manage the demands and impacts of COVID-19 on chicken meat markets and workplaces.

The industry was further challenged by outbreaks of avian influenza in the Victorian poultry industry.

While no meat chicken

flocks were directly affected by the disease, the chicken industry nationally and in the state of Victoria was nevertheless severely impacted, particularly as a consequence of loss of export markets.

The industry demonstrated its resilience throughout this difficult period, managing to meet consumer demand and avoiding food shortages and adverse animal welfare outcomes under the most trying of circumstances.

In the six-month period from April 1 to September 30, 2020 the industry lifted its production of chicken meat by 3 percent when compared to the same period the previous year.

The pandemic dominated the attention and activities of the ACMF for much of the past year, particularly in the early stages of the pandemic.

Activities focussed heavily on dispelling unfounded community concern regarding the potential role of chickens and chicken meat in spreading the virus and also in assisting industry with its preparedness activities, including developing and promulgating guidelines to assist industry develop plans for mitigating risks associated with COVID-19.

The chicken industry was the first agricultural industry to release guidelines for managing the COVID-19 risk in its most exposed facilities.

These guidelines were subsequently adopted and variously adapted by a range of other animal industries and were used as the risk management model by a number of government agencies, including NSW Food Authority and Food SA.

Despite the demands and challenges placed on

the organisation by both the COVID-19 and avian influenza outbreaks, the ACMF was able to progress a number of initiatives over the past year, including the launch of new online school education resources aligned with the national curriculum.

Over the same period, the ACMF website health and nutrition pages underwent a significant update, with the development of new visuals and fact sheets on the nutritional value of chicken meat.

The long-awaited revision of the industry's biosecurity manual for the industry was completed and released mid-year.

The industry doubled down on its antimicrobial stewardship efforts in 2020.

An AgriFutures Australia funded independent verification of AMS processes at the six major chicken companies revealed that all either had in place mature and effective programs or comprehensive animal health plans that incorporated AMS principles.

The project further confirmed that only antimicrobials of low importance are used, alternatives to antimicrobials are actively investigated and implemented by all companies, and that many of the management strategies adopted over time have eliminated the need for several antimicrobial treatments completely.

In the coming year we expect to progress AMS efforts even further, with several projects initiated to assist industry's efforts in this respect, including assessment of the antimicrobial resistance testing capacities available to the industry and conduct of an AMR survey to identify any changes in profiles since the previous survey conducted in 2016.

The ACMF will continue to participate in and possibly lead cross-sectoral AMS efforts in 2021. **Additional focus areas for 2021**

In addition to concentrating on industry's AMS activities, the ACMF foresees a busy year and one it hopes will not be dominated by COVID-19.

The long awaiting national poultry welfare

standards and guidelines are expected to be released for comment in March 2021 and the final version signed off by agriculture ministers in May.

The ACMF will have significant work to do over the coming year, initially in communicating the industry's position on the draft standards and subsequently the implications of agreed changes in animal welfare legislation to industry.

The ACMF and industry more broadly will need to be increasingly active in demonstrating the industry's commitment on key welfare issues to consumers of chicken meat.

### Boosting communication efforts

The ACMF will be ramping up its communications in 2021 with the engagement of a new communications manager.

Communication is a major function of ACMF and while the organisation has always been effective in its interactions, the team determined that a more proactive and responsive approach was needed going forward, hence bringing the communications role in-house.

ACMF's new communications manager is Annabel Selby-Jones.

Annabel is a seasoned communications professional with 20 years' experience across the consumer health and nutrition industries, including working on a range of horticulture clients.

Issues management is an area Annabel particularly enjoys.

Many positive opportunities have been identified for the chicken industry to strengthen its efforts.

More proactive consumer-focussed activities have also been planned to solidify the demand for chicken and remind Aus-

tralian why chicken is their favourite healthy and affordable protein.

### Conclusion

Over the past year the chicken industry has demonstrated incredible adaptability and resilience, overcoming significant obstacles and challenges to continue to meet the demands of Australian consumers and produce more chicken meat than ever before.

That is the nature of this industry, which deserves to be proud of its produce and significant achievements.

For more information, visit [www.chicken.org.au](http://www.chicken.org.au)



One of ACMF's initiatives, the 2020 launch of new online school education resources aligned with the national curriculum.

## TECHNICAL SYSTEMS AUSTRALIA

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## PIX AMC postponed to 2022

ON behalf of the organising committees for the Poultry Information Exchange and the Australasian Milling Conference, and our conference organiser International Conferences & Events, we would like to announce a major decision we have had to make.

Due to ongoing movement restrictions, we are unable to hold the international conference PIX AMC has grown to be.

The international movement constraints combined with the continued company-based restrictions imposed on staff aided the organising committee in making the tough decision to further postpone PIX AMC until May 2022.

The safety of our partners, exhibitors, attendees and organisers are paramount to us.

As such, this delay will allow for control mechanisms such as vaccines to be rolled out domestically and internationally.

In discussing our options with many stakeholders, exhibitors and attendees, the organising committee feels it has made the correct decision to deliver a conference that will meet the needs and expectations of all involved.

The conference team is extremely appreciative of the support for PIX AMC and looks forward to this continuing as it navigates these extraordinary circumstances.

We are pleased to say the event will be retained at the Gold Coast Convention & Exhibition Centre and all payments made to-date will be carried forward to the 2022 event.

More information will be released in due course as the planning for PIX AMC 2022 gets underway.

For more information, visit [pixamc.com.au](http://pixamc.com.au)

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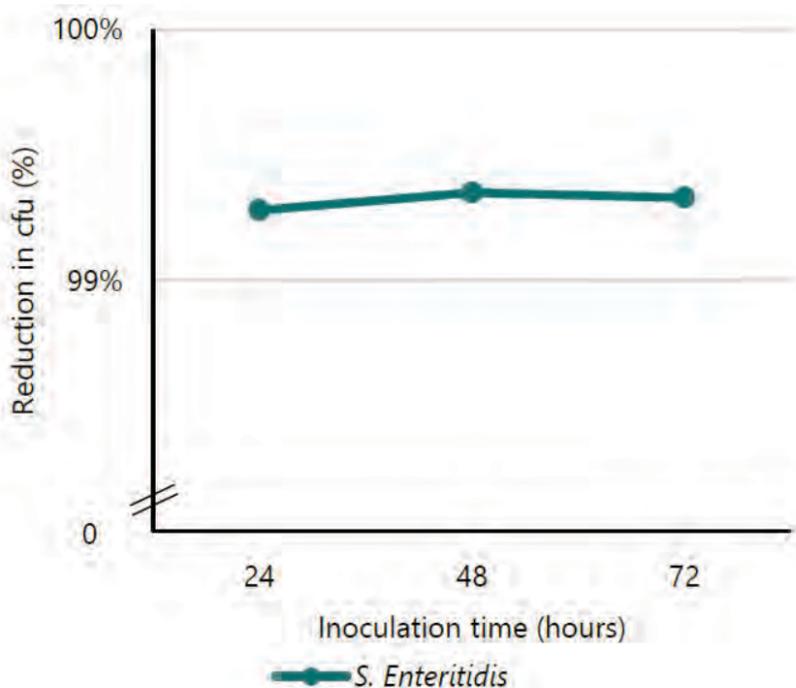
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The most common infections in poultry species can usually be mitigated through the implementation of strict biosecurity programmes and good hygiene practices. However, Salmonella, particularly *S. enteritidis* (SE), remains a serious problem in poultry production. Therefore, finding a feed additive effective against Salmonella is of fundamental importance in supporting flock health and performance to boost producer profitability.

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The Seleggt Circulus system is a significant leap forward compared to its preceding system. Photo: EuroTier

## Poultry products win silver at EuroTier Innovation Awards

THOUGH EuroTier was rescheduled from November to February 2021, the innovation award winners were announced at a virtual pre-view event.

Show organisers DLG presented eight awards, including one gold and

seven silver medals from the 80 innovation entries.

Two of the silver medals were presented to poultry products – Seleggt Acus for its automatic egg sexing system and Nectra SAS for its egg sorting unit.

### Seleggt Acus sampling system

Egg-laying chicken genotypes are considered unsuitable for producing poultry meat, due to lower product quality and cost effectiveness.

For this reason, the male chicks of these breeds are generally not reared.

The culling of day-old male chicks has become a societal and political issue, with a ban on this practice being considered.

In-ovo sex determination is regarded as an alternative, with hormone analysis on the eighth or ninth day of incubation currently being the most extensively developed and commercially useable method.

The Seleggt Acus sampling system, developed by respeggt GmbH for this purpose, is already in practical use.

Sampling the test fluid from the allantois using a needle, this system is only partially automated.

The risk of injuring the allantoic membrane exists, which can lead to a reduction in the hatching rate.

The hourly capacity of a single sampling unit for this system is around 600 eggs.

The innovative Seleggt Circulus system is a significant leap forward compared to the predecessor system.

Operating fully automatically, the allantoic fluid samples are generated in a non-invasive way.

Cleaning the sampling needles is therefore no longer necessary and the sampling time has been reduced to just one second per egg.

In three-shift operation with 20 hours of operation per day, one Seleggt Circulus sampling unit therefore has a weekly capacity of 360,000 hatching eggs, corresponding to 150,000 to 180,000 laying chicks, a significant increase in performance in compari-

son with the predecessor system.

Non-invasive sampling and the vastly increased hourly capacity have established the prerequisites for universally replacing the previous culling of male chicks in hatcheries with in-ovo sex determination.

### Nectra SAS egg refilling system

The hatching eggs from broiler parent livestock farms are delivered to central hatcheries, where they are sorted according to quality and weight before being placed into the incubator.

In addition, eggs that are not positioned with the blunt end pointing upwards in the tray have to be turned.

This leads to a high number of incomplete-filled trays that have to be manually refilled.

Often, the eggs are also transported on conveyors where they can come into direct contact with one another, possibly resulting in damaged shells.

In the new system presented by Nectra SAS, the eggs are transferred from the delivery trays to egg moving cups that move freely on a transport conveyor.

Here, the eggs can be automatically and individually sorted according to quality and weight and can also be turned if they

are positioned incorrectly.

The freely moving egg cups are backed up for transfer to the hatching trays, unoccupied egg cups are automatically removed and the remaining filled egg cups are then transferred automatically to the hatching trays so that no gaps occur.

The system significantly reduces the likelihood of damaging the eggshells and automates the hatching tray filling process.

This considerably lightens the workload and leads to an improvement in hatching rates in the broiler chick hatcheries.

Next year, EuroTier, the world's leading trade fair for animal production and EnergyDecentral, the leading international trade fair for innovative energy production, will be held exclusively as a digital version on February 9-12, 2021.

An extensive digital technical program on current topics of international livestock farming will be inviting animal husbandry professionals to the digital trade fair platform over four days to exchange ideas with experts from all over the world, get to know the latest offers from exhibitors and network with exhibitors and visitors in a targeted manner.

For more information, visit [eurotier.com](http://eurotier.com)



The Nectra SAS system handles eggs with great care. Photo: EuroTier

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## AgriFutures Chicken Meat Program supports Nuffield Scholarship to enhance ongoing animal welfare

KELLY McTavish has worked in the Australian chicken meat industry for more than 20 years and is passionate about animals and enhancing their welfare.

“My love of animals is a lifelong one, that only increases with time,” Ms McTavish said.

“My interests were sparked when I was given the option to study ethology – the science of animal behaviour – at uni as part of my animal production degree.

“It was in these ethology classes conducted by Dr Judith Blackshaw that I saw what was possible and my passions were ignited!

“This was when I was introduced to the workings of Dr Temple Grandin and using the science of animal behaviour to improve management practices, production and productivity via the inevi-

table improvement of the animal’s welfare.

“I often say I fell into the Australian chicken meat industry and made the quick realisation that I was here to stay, as I had fallen in love with the birds, the people who are working in direct contact with the birds and the entire industry.”

Kelly’s passion and drive for the science of enhanced animal welfare outcomes for the animal, and the betterment of the Australian chicken meat industry, has definitely increased over time.

The Nuffield Scholarship program was a unique opportunity for Kelly to increase her knowledge base via access to a network of international agricultural industries to collaborate with and share knowledge for the furtherance of all agriculture.

“Improving animal welfare is my life passion,” she said.

“My 2021 Nuffield Scholarship is a unique opportunity to access a global network to investigate and research existing practices and identify future trends in animal welfare across all agricultural industries in Australia and internationally.

“Animal production cannot exist without the synergy of animal health and welfare.

“Getting this synergy

right is not only the smart thing to do, it will enhance animal welfare outcomes and increase the long-term prosperity of the entire Australian chicken meat industry.

“We are all responsible in animal production industries for the welfare of our animals because their lives support ours.”

Kelly believes the biggest influence on the welfare of animals is people.

Therefore, supporting the people that have direct contact with the animals will have the biggest effect on enhancing animal welfare outcomes.

Talking more about the research she will undertake as part of her 2021 Nuffield Scholarship with her key area of focus being enhanced chicken welfare and improved handling methods, Kelly is looking forward to investigating emerging trends and technologies, training programs, methods of engagement and existing systems in use for supporting animal welfare outcomes, then sourcing ways to put those findings into practice in Australia.

“The aim of my Nuffield research project is to drive enhanced outcomes on the ground that will improve the sustainability and prosperity of the Australian chicken meat industry,” Kelly said.

“I want to sincerely thank Nuffield Australia

and AgriFutures Chicken Meat Program for entrusting me with this opportunity.”

Speaking of the decision to support Kelly McTavish’s Nuffield Scholarship, AgriFutures Australia research manager Georgina Townsend said, “Enhancing chicken welfare and improving handling methods is a key focus area for the AgriFutures Chicken Meat Program strategy and Kelly’s research proposal fits in perfectly with this objective.”

“The program looks to build capacity and develop quality stakeholder relationships both in Australia and internationally and supporting Kelly’s Nuffield Scholarship is a great opportunity to do this.”

Kelly’s research project for her 2021 Nuffield Australia Farming Scholarship will investigate emerging trends and technologies in farming systems around the world to facilitate enhanced animal welfare outcomes for the long-term prosperity of the Australia’s chicken meat industry.

Find out more about Nuffield Australia and read about past scholarship recipients at [nuffield.com.au](http://nuffield.com.au)

Find out more about the AgriFutures Chicken Meat Program at [agrifutures.com.au/rural-industries/chicken-meat/](http://agrifutures.com.au/rural-industries/chicken-meat/)



Farm to Fork hosts Courtney Roulston, Michael Weldon and Sarah Todd.

## Rabobank partners with Network 10 Farm to Fork cooking show

AGRIBUSINESS banking specialist Rabobank has announced it is partnering with Network 10 cooking show *Farm to Fork*.

The bank, a global specialist in food and agribusiness and one of the leading providers of financial services to Australian agriculture, has joined with Network 10 and *Farm to Fork*’s producers Dual Entertainment as a partner in season two of the television program.

The nationally aired show aims to help inform Australians how to eat and live well, inspiring viewers to not only cook at home but also have a better appreciation of where and how their food is grown.

Rabobank head of marketing Kate Holden said the *Farm to Fork* show was an excellent fit with Rabobank’s purpose.

“As an agribusiness bank, we are committed to promoting the importance of the agriculture industry and growing Australians’ understanding of where their food comes from,” Ms Holden said.

“Australians have a strongly growing interest in the source and provenance of their food and *Farm to Fork* is a perfect vehicle to showcase the excellent produce our local farm sector grows.

“We want to be involved in telling farmers’ amazing stories in both rural and urban areas and raising aware-

ness of the farm to fork journey.”

The 90-episode second series is hosted by celebrity chefs Michael Weldon, Courtney Roulston and Sarah Todd and features a number of Australian farmers sharing stories of their produce and how it is grown.

The program will focus on educating Australians about the journey from ‘farm to fork’, while showcasing 270 fresh and healthy recipes.

*Farm to Fork* airs Monday to Friday on Channel 10 at 4pm, with repeat broadcasts on Saturday and Sunday, and is also available on demand via [10play.com.au](http://10play.com.au)



2021 Nuffield Australia Farming Scholarship recipient Kelly McTavish.



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# Gradual drop in sick birds over coming years

OVER the next few years, the field of animal health care in poultry farming will experience many changes.

Scientific research will provide new insights and possibilities for improving animal health.

In addition, societal and political preferences are also changing, which may impact animal healthcare – consider the increasing pressure on the use of antibiotics.

Changes in poultry farming will have consequences for animal healthcare too, such as the trend to hatch broilers in the poultry house.

## Animal welfare

The attention given to animal welfare has increased significantly over the past couple of years.

Chair of the poultry professional group KNMvD A and vet at poultry veterinary practice Noord & Oost of Slagharen in the Netherlands Paul Cornelissen said: “This will remain the case for the coming years and will be reflected in the training for veterinarians, with the results leading to a growing number of vets who will focus more on animal welfare within their work.”

Future poultry vets may operate in a sector that has more wiggle room than in the past.

The focus will shift more towards welfare, which includes the amount of space per animal in the poultry house and also feed.

Netherlands-based Poultry Health Centre vet Gerwin Bouwhuis said, “There is much to be gained in the poultry feed area.”

“I expect that we will switch to feed with less protein, which will be beneficial to the animal’s gut.”

“In addition, to more locally grown protein, and it is also evident that insects will become part of the poultry ration in the future.”

“This is a positive development, because chickens are naturally omnivores that eat seeds, herbs, worms and insects,” he said.

## Fewer vets

Poultry farmers will also feel the consequences of the decreasing number of vets that will specialise in farmed animals, meaning less poultry vets.

“This will influence the vets’ work,” Mr Cornelissen said.

“They will take on more of a managing role.”

“Other people will have to perform tasks such as blood and collecting salmonella samples.”

## Antibiotics

Poultry health special-

ists expect that the use of antibiotics will decrease further.

“10 years ago, 60 to 70 percent of antibiotic use was connected to problems in the digestive system,” Mr Bouwhuis said.

“These problems hardly occur now due to better feed and management.”

“Right now, the use of antibiotics largely focusses on dealing with enterococcus infections.”

He expects that the market will determine the pace in the reduction of antibiotics use.

“I think a reduction to 0 is a very real possibility,” Mr Cornelissen said.

Mr Bouwhuis also expects the resistance against so-called ionophoric coccidiostats will increase in the future.

“This means that we have to find other ways to control coccidiosis,” he said.

“I propose using a strict schedule with chemical coccidiostats that are alternated with vaccination.”

## More vaccines

Netherlands’ Poultry Practice the Achterhoek vet Peter Wijnen concludes that a further reduction of antibiotic use requires poultry to be better protected against bacterial pathogens.

“On the one hand, this can be achieved by ap-

plying even stricter farm hygiene regulations,” Mr Wijnen said.

“On the other hand, vaccination offers possibilities to improve the animal’s immune system.”

The pharmaceutical industry is working hard to improve the possibilities of protecting poultry against diseases through vaccinations.

“New vaccines will enter the market in the next couple of years,” Mr Wijnen said.

“These are combination vaccines that will protect poultry against multiple diseases at the same time.”

The possibilities for in-ovo vaccination, or vaccinating in the egg, will increase in the coming years, even though this is not a suitable application for all diseases.

Whether in-ovo vaccination will really take off largely depends on the costs according to experts.

“Economics also count,” Mr Cornelissen said.

The arrival of a practically usable vaccine that protects poultry against bird flu or avian influenza also seems to be a possibility in the future.

“However, the use of such a vaccine is often strongly dependent on possible trade barriers,” Mr Bouwhuis said.

## Animal health in 2030

A healthy chicken is more resilient to disease.

There will be fewer vets who are specialised in farmed animals, which means less poultry vets and the remaining vets will assume more managerial roles.

The use of antibiotics will possibly disappear, and feed and housing quality will gain importance.

## Free range

The fact that birds have

increasingly more access to outdoor space has consequences for animal welfare.

“Free range is good for the sector’s image,” Mr Wijnen said.

“There are however, two sides to the health aspect.”

“On the one hand, it means more space, fresh air, less animals per square metre and less disease pressure.”

“On the other hand, the

risk of contact with wild birds and other pathogen carriers increases.

“Proper hygiene management and design of free range areas are necessary.”

“The location of free-range farms is also important for the prevention of disease risks.”

“Fortunately, farms in the Netherlands are managed well, which leads to health benefits and controllable health risks.”



Increased pressure on using antibiotics and changes to poultry farming have consequences for animal healthcare. Photo: Lex Salverda

## Effluent pumps resist abrasion

MOVING effluent and wastewater is a continuing challenge.

Liquids can be abrasive and even corrosive requiring flexible options in pump design to combat the issues.

Aussie Pumps chief engineer John Hales said, “Our Aussie GMP effluent pumps can handle solids in suspension, but in a few applications we see premature wear on cast-iron impellers.”

“That’s why we came up with the stainless-steel impeller option, to avoid premature failure and give longer uninterrupted service life.”

The pumps are self-priming in design, with the capacity to pull

contaminated liquids through a vertical lift of 6m.

Self-priming means the user never has to worry about priming the suction hose.

It’s a simple matter of filling the pump with water and starting the motor.

Silicon carbide seals that are abrasion resistant are fitted as standard and every pump in the ST series has a stainless-steel wear plate mounted inside the cast-iron body to protect the castings.

The company is proud of its big 3” and 4” pumps, which are now available not only in high flow but also high

head capacity.

Using customer feedback from across the country, Aussie Pumps GMP engineers worked on programs to develop products that would not only pass solids in suspension but would offer high heads as well.

The pump range starts with 2” ports and go all the way through to 4”.

Bare shaft pumps in the same series are available with ports up to 8” that deliver flows of up to 9000LPM.

For further information including free technical documentation on Aussie Pumps complete agricultural package is readily available from [aussiepumps.com.au](http://aussiepumps.com.au)



The Aussie GMP semi-trash range of effluent pumps have an option of a stainless-steel impeller for abrasive applications to extend life and performance.

## Fighting pests with fungi in Australian chicken sheds

NEW research supported by AgriFutures Australia is optimising the use of an alternative control measure for the lesser mealworm based on live fungi.

The lesser mealworm, also known as darkling beetle, is a common insect-pest to the chicken meat industry due to the damage it can cause to the structure of chicken sheds through tunnelling and its ability to carry pathogens.

Lesser mealworms are often found in poultry production systems where deep litter and open floor housing provide optimal survival and reproductive conditions.

Following on from preliminary research that developed a proof-of-concept for non-toxic fungus-based pesticides – mycopesticides – to control lesser mealworm populations, new research is underway to optimise the use of mycopesticides for this purpose.

Leading the current research project is Department of Agriculture and Fisheries Queensland technical officer Steven Rice.

“What we’re doing now is testing the mycopesticide under various conditions including different litter use practices and different floor types

in meat chicken sheds,” Mr Rice said.

“We’re conducting field trials currently at two farms in the Caboolture area to compare the mycopesticide in full litter replacement and partial litter re-use systems.”

“We’re running the trials through the seasons so we can compare the fungi’s impact on the lesser mealworm populations in winter to what happens in the warmer months.”

“The initial results look promising.”

“The mycopesticide appears to reduce lesser mealworm populations under both litter systems but there’s more research to be done.”

Approved insecticides are currently used to control the lesser mealworm pest.

However, insecticides potentially leave residues in the litter and the lesser mealworm builds up resistance to them

over time.

An additional objective of this latest research project is to test the potential of using the mycopesticide in conjunction with insecticides to reduce overall chemical usage and maximise control of lesser mealworm populations.

“We’re doing preliminary laboratory trials to see whether the mycopesticide can work together with the insecticides currently approved for use to provide a better overall control effect,” Mr Rice said.

“We hope that the combined results of the field and laboratory work will attract a commercial partner that is interested in producing a mycopesticide that will be effective for use against lesser mealworm and have a low environmental impact.”

AgriFutures Chicken Meat Program manager research Annie Lane

said the development of an effective fungal-based control for the lesser mealworm has the potential to significantly benefit on the Australian chicken meat industry.

“With this research we have the chance to not only optimise a new natural control method for lesser mealworm but also increase sustainable practices in chicken meat production,” Ms Lane said.

“As consumers want more information about the provenance of their food, it’s more important than ever to explore natural options for pest control and maintain the consumer confidence that makes chicken the number one consumed meat in Australia.”

Read more about this project and register to receive updates from the AgriFutures Chicken Meat Program at [agri-futures.com.au/rural-industries/chicken-meat/](http://agri-futures.com.au/rural-industries/chicken-meat/)



# Specialised Breeders Australia continue to invest in supply security for egg producers

SPECIALISED Breeders Australia is the largest supplier of day-old chicks and point of lay pullets to the Australian egg industry.

Employing approximately 140 staff, SBA supplies the world's leading layer breeds Hy-Line Brown and Lohmann Brown to Australian egg producers.

SBA have announced that it has completed and stocked a new breeding farm in northern Victoria.

This facility is part of a multimillion dollar capital works program that has so far seen a rearing farm, two parent stock breeding farms and SBA's new commercial

hatchery, all commissioned recently.

The outcome of these investments is increased livestock supply security for Australian egg producers.

SBA chief executive officer Eugene Viljoen said, "We take our responsibility to provide a secure supply of high-quality layers to Australian egg farmers seriously."

"The ongoing capital works program is delivering best practice breeding, hatching and biosecurity measures across our production system," he said.

Situated between Rochester, where SBA's new hatchery is located, and the company's Huntly base, the site was carefully

chosen for its significant biosecurity buffer.

This new parent stock farm further reduces and spreads biosecurity risks while increasing supply chain resilience.

SBA livestock manager Steve Ligoli said, "The farm features shower facilities and modern tunnel-ventilated sheds, providing full environmental control through SKOV control panels."

"Each shed can hold up to 16,000 head of breeding stock to supply the commercial Hy-Line and Lohmann Brown hatching eggs for day-old chick production."

"The use of Hato 2900k warm white LED lighting alongside variable

speed BlueFans provide outstanding energy efficiency.

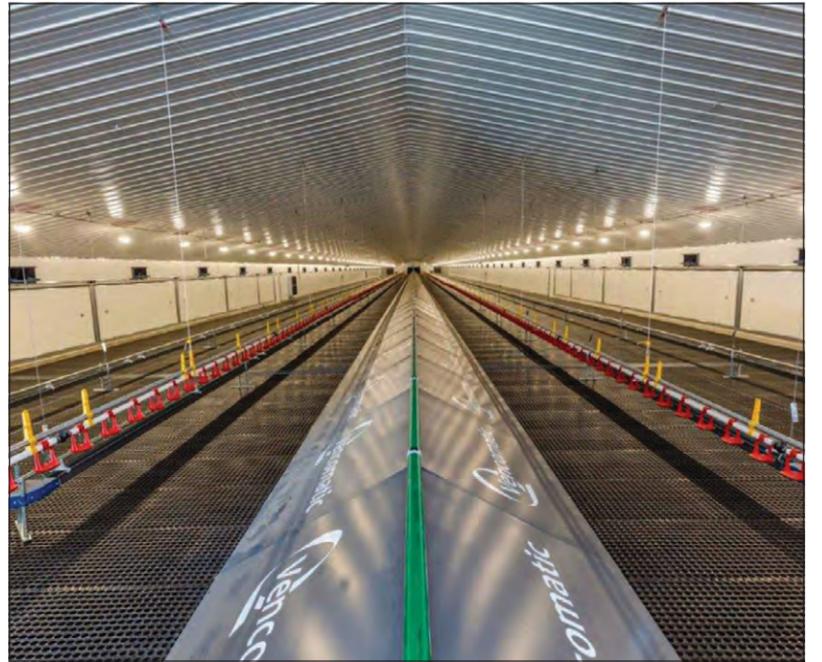
"The sheds are fitted with Vencomatic nest boxes and slats – we have configured the sheds to be fully slatted to provide the most hygienic hatching eggs possible."

"With three new farms, a new hatchery and an upgraded delivery fleet commissioned over the past four years, we are proud of the investments we are making to ensure a secure supply of world class livestock to Australian egg producers," Mr Ligoli said.

For more information on Specialised Breeders Australia, visit [specialisedbreeders.com.au](http://specialisedbreeders.com.au)



Each shed can hold up to 16,000 head of breeding stock to supply the commercial Hy-Line and Lohmann Brown hatching eggs for day-old chick production.



The sheds are fitted with Vencomatic nest boxes and slats configured to provide the most hygienic hatching eggs possible.



SBA has completed and stocked a new breeding farm in northern Victoria.

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# New approach to deliver holistic answers to the chicken meat industry

THE AgriFutures Chicken Meat Program Open Tender is now open.

The open tender is a fresh new approach for the AgriFutures Chicken Meat Program's research, development, and extension investments.

The new approach calls for multi-disciplinary research teams to collaborate and deliver a three-year program of research, rather than individual projects, with the aim of producing outputs and outcomes that will help industry to deliver a sustainable chicken meat production system.

Via the open tender, proposals will be assessed by the AgriFutures Chicken Meat Advisory Panel, with AgriFutures funding one proposal.

One consortium will be awarded the funding to undertake the program of research as per the terms of reference.

It is expected that consortium members will hold their own discussions to pull together the expertise to deliver against the key focus deliverables of the program RD&E Plan 2019-22.

AgriFutures Chicken Meat manager research Georgina Townsend said, "The research will leverage existing knowledge of broiler nutrition, diet composition and feed efficiency – their impact on gut health and interactions with the in-shed and external environment."

"The program of research seeks to understand the complex

interactions between these elements, and it is hoped that by further unravelling this story, the findings will contribute to chickens that are able to optimally develop while continually improving the industry's impact on the environment."

"Understanding the interactions of dietary nutritional composition, the impact on gut health and the internal and external environments will deliver research, with holistic answers to industry that result in better performance from individual birds and the overall flock," Ms Townsend said.

All proposals must address, at least, the first three key focus areas as listed below that are key objectives of the AgriFutures Australia Chicken Meat Program RD&E Plan 2019-22:

- Improved nutritional management and feed use efficiency
- Improved management of the internal shed environment
- Reducing pathogens before and during processing
- Enhanced chicken welfare
- Management strategies for chicken health
- Determining options to reduce environmental impacts
- Improved management of chicken production systems
- Improved options to

manage litter.

AgriFutures Chicken Meat manager research Annie Lane said, "Consortia are encouraged to bring cash contributions, with a budget request for this program of research expected to be up to \$1.5 million per year for three years."

"Our preference is for proposals to include both cash and in-kind contributions.

"The AgriFutures Chicken Meat Advisory Panel will consider all proposals put in front of it and the merits of each," she said.

Consortia considering making an application are also encouraged to review past research funded by the Program.

"We're interested in funding fresh new ideas that build on this past research and support the program goal of a diet that allows birds to reach their full genetic potential through improved health and welfare, reducing the reliance on antibiotics and optimising the shed environment, while mitigating the impact on the external environment," Ms Lane said.

The Open Tender portal is now open and will close on March 4, 2021.

Proposal assessment will commence in mid-March 2021.

For more information, visit [agrifutures.com.au/chicken-meat-open-tender-2020](http://agrifutures.com.au/chicken-meat-open-tender-2020)



# Egg packaging market global outlook and forecast 2020-2025

AN in-depth analysis and data-driven insights on the impact of COVID-19 are included in this global egg packaging market report.

The global egg packaging market by revenue is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate of over 4 percent during the period 2019-2025, and the market size is projected to reach \$3.7 billion by 2025.

The industry is majorly driven by the increasing demand for high protein foods across the globe.

The exponential growth in egg production has driven egg packaging, with consistent demand.

The majority of consumers across the world have preferred to consume eggs over meat as a safe and inexpensive source of protein, which is expected to boost the global market during the period 2020-2025.

The increasing demand for packaging in the food industry across the globe, especially in emerging countries of China, India, Brazil and Indonesia, has aided the growth of the egg packaging market with significant growth in 2019.

However, the volatility in raw material costs, particularly in Asia-Pacific, European and North American countries, has led to the fluctuation of packaging material, intense competition among manufacturers and increasing prohibitory regulations over plastic that are expected to restrict the growth and scope of the market.

The majority of poultry producers across the world are affected by the COVID-19 pandemic however, the impact varies markedly from region to region in 2019 and 2020.

In the second quarter of 2020, countries across the world were at different stages in the disease's progression, with relaxations in restrictions.

The global slump in restaurant dine-in across the world during the first and second quarters of 2020 has pushed egg packaging industries across the regions, with a major decline in production and demand.

On a global scale, APAC and Europe have

remained affected by the spread of the virus.

The following factors are likely to contribute to the growth of the egg packaging market during the forecast period:

- Increasing concerns over health and fitness
- Growing use of recyclable materials
- Growing meat-free diets
- Mounting production of eggs.

The study considers the present scenario of the egg packaging market and its market dynamics for the period 2019-2025.

It covers a detailed overview of several market growth enablers, restraints, and trends.

The report offers both the demand and supply aspects of the market.

It profiles and examines leading and prominent companies operating in the market.

## Egg packaging market segmentation

The global egg packaging market research report includes a detailed segmentation by material type, product type and geography.

The increasing concern to ban plastic across the globe is expected to bolster the market for paper-based packaging products in the egg industry.

Several vendors are actively involved in enhancing product designs with suitable paper materials that are highly attractive to customers.

Major countries in APAC, North America and Europe have made several legislations to ban the usage of single-use plastics.

The consumption of paper materials for packaging in APAC is predicted to register the highest market share of around 36 percent for moulded fibre-packed eggs in supermarkets and hypermarkets around the world.



The demand for egg cartons can be majorly attributed to the growth in demand and sale volume of eggs in retail stores.

This is because of increasing concerns from shoppers in supermarkets and grocery stores for an improvised design for handy packaging solutions.

Though the scope for innovations in packaging materials is low, several vendors changed their designs to attract customers in retail stores across the globe.

On a global scale, egg packaging companies have started to invest rigorously in recyclable folding cartons to offer eco-friendly solutions, thereby expecting to tap into a wide array of potential consumers across the world.

## Segmentation by material type

- Paper
- Moulded Fibre
- Paperboard
- Plastic
- Polystyrene
- PET
- PP, PVC, PE
- Others
- Segmentation by Product Type
- Carton
- Tray

## Insights by geography

The increasing number of innovations in the production process and packaging units of eggs across emerging markets is expected to drive the growth of the APAC egg packaging material market.

Consumers and farmers in the egg industry have increased their preference over paper-based materials.

Several manufacturers in the APAC egg industry have started emphasising effective packaging to provide safe and secure packaging solutions.

Therefore, the demand for alternative materials is expected to surge significantly across major

growing countries such as India, China and Australia during the forecast period.

The majority of egg tray manufacturing is environment-friendly and lightweight, with reduced wastage due to the increasing demand for biodegradable materials.

The growing concern on the usage of biodegradable plastics is encouraging vendors in the egg cartons market.

Highly plastic consuming countries such as India, China and South Korea have adopted to use eco-friendly solutions such as biodegradable plastic materials.

## Insights by vendors

The global egg packaging market has been highly fragmented due to the presence of multinational suppliers as well as regional contractors.

Vendors are trying to improve their market share by increasing production capacity and launching new products to expand their market base and grow their geographical reach during the forecast period.

Brodrene Hartmann AS, Cascades Inc. and Huh-tahmaki are a few of the major market participants.

Though the growing need for cost efficiency is expected to offer immense growth opportunities, the expected increase in the price of paper packaging materials is estimated to restrain the growth of market participants globally.

To make the most of the opportunities, the majority of vendors shifted their focus more on the growth prospects in the fast-growing segments and maintained their positions in the slow-growing segments across the world in 2019.

# Birds culled as a quarter of Japan's prefectures struck by avian flu

JAPAN officials have ordered more culling after the spread of the worst bird flu outbreak on record being found on farms in a quarter of the country's 47 prefectures.

The agriculture ministry reported that 32,000 birds were to be slaughtered and buried on discovery of avian influenza at an egg farm in Sukumo City in Kochi prefecture in southwest Japan.

The epidemic emerged in Kagawa prefecture in November 2020 and almost 30,000 birds have been slaughtered there after

more infected birds were found on two farms in the region.

A record 3 million birds have been culled to date and the outbreak has hit 12 prefectures across Japan.

While it is not possible for people to catch avian influenza from eating the eggs or meat of infected chickens, health officials are concerned the virus strain may make a 'species jump' to humans and cause a pandemic similar to the novel coronavirus.

According the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation and Japanese of-

ficials, the outbreak in Japan and neighbouring South Korea is one of two separate highly pathogenic avian influenza epidemics hitting poultry around the world, with both strains circulating in Asia and one spreading rapidly in Europe originating from wild birds.

Farms in Japan were ordered to ensure nets to keep wild birds out are properly installed and to disinfect and check hygiene regimes.

Japan has a broiler population of 138 million and an egg-laying flock of about 185 million hens.

# AgriFutures Chicken Meat Program welcomes new research manager

AGRIFUTURES Australia's general manager research John Smith has welcomed the appointment of Annie Lane in her new role as Manager, Research for the Chicken Meat Program.

Annie joins the team at a time of expansion for the program.

"Annie has worked for AgriFutures Australia for the past two years and her appointment builds on our commitment to the AgriFutures Chicken Meat Program," Mr Smith said, who also thanked outgoing manager Dr Sue Hatcher for her contribution.

Annie joins the rest of the team, consisting of manager research Georgina Townsend, coordinator research Tasmin Rowe and senior manager research Dr Mila Bristow.

The team collectively manage the program and its research, development and extension investments.

Annie will be managing projects which fall under

the food safety, environment and consumer needs objectives of the Chicken Meat RD&E Plan 2019-22, while Georgina will continue to manage the program's research investments for projects fulfilling the supply chain objective.

## No stranger to Australian agriculture

Agriculture has always been a part of Annie's life.

Having grown up on sheep and cattle property near Delungra in northern NSW, she attended Charles Sturt University in Wagga Wagga completing a Bachelor of Animal Science, with her honours project focussed on parasitology in freshwater fish.

Annie began working with AgriFutures Australia in late 2018 as co-ordinator research and worked across a variety of industries including pasture seeds, thoroughbred horse and honeybee and pollination programs, and more recently deer, buffalo, goat fibre and kangaroo programs.

"The chicken meat industry is very different from the other agricultural industries I have worked in," Ms Lane said.

"I am excited to learn new skills and be involved in delivering high quality research which will directly benefit the industry."

## Part of the team

The Australian chicken meat industry is an efficient and fast-paced industry which requires RD&E that can deliver high impact results to ensure chicken meat remains the number one consumed protein in the country.

In her new role, Annie is looking forward to working closely with a broad range of experts.

"As manager research, I am in the fortunate position to connect with industry experts and researchers to determine the crucial questions that need to be answered to ensure the chicken meat industry remains efficient," she said.

## Driving high impact RD&E to improve food safety, the industry's impact on the environment and meeting consumer needs

Through targeted, high-impact investment the AgriFutures Chicken Meat Program stimulates and promotes research, development and extension to grow the long-term prosperity of the Australian chicken meat industry.

With the support of the team, Annie will focus on managing the program's RD&E investments to improve food safety of Australian chicken, to develop and implement measures to protect and improve industry impact on the environment, and increase ability to meet consumer needs.

One key project within the food safety objective is PRJ-011593 sanitisers for commercial use in chicken meat production led by the University of Adelaide.

"As standard practice there are a number of interventions in place, from when a meat chicken leaves the farm to the processing plant, to control food borne pathogens in chicken meat," Ms Lane said.

"The carcasses are commonly washed in the processing plant using sanitisers to remove the contamination and to ensure a safe product for consumers.

"This project aims to identify and test alternative sanitisers efficacy in Australian conditions."

Another addressing the environment objective is PRJ-011589 best practice manual for managing litter.

While a large body of work exists based on Australian and international research, outlining the best practices for managing litter in the sheds and spent litter it is often documented for academic purposes and isn't in an easy to access format for the average producer.

"This project brings all the relevant information regarding litter management into one manual, describing the whole picture, and will provide the content in a web-ready format," Ms Lane said.

"The research team will also develop visual content such as videos to demonstrate best practice."

For more on these projects AgriFutures Chicken Meat Program, visit [agrifutures.com.au/chickenmeat/](http://agrifutures.com.au/chickenmeat/)



AgriFutures Chicken Meat Program welcomes new manager research Annie Lane.

# ABARES and ABS deliver new Australian farm database

A NEW secure database of Australian farms has been constructed as part of a multi-year collaboration between the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences and the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

The final report of the Agricultural Data Integration Project released by ABARES details this innovative work that integrates several existing datasets to unlock new insights and applications for Australian farms.

The report presents a range of new analysis undertaken with the database, exploring fine scale trends in crop production, the effects of seasonal climate and drought on farm outcomes, and measuring trends in water productivity in the Murray-Darling Basin.

ABARES senior economist and project lead Dr Neal Hughes said the dataset can help us better understand, measure and potentially forecast the effects of drought and climate change across different types of farms.

"This database provides a clearer picture of long-term trends in the agriculture sector, allowing us to publish datasets at finer spatial scales and with more consistency over time, than has been possible in the past," Dr Hughes said.

"There are exciting future applications, including supporting new approaches to drought risk management for farmers and undertak-

ing detailed evaluations of government programs or farm management practices."

The project combined ABS Agricultural Census and survey data since 2000-01 to construct the Farm-level Longitudinal Agricultural Dataset, which was then integrated with the ABS Business Longitudinal Agricultural Data Environment.

Project work was supported by the Australian Government's Data Integration Partnership for Australia.

ABARES executive director Dr Steve Hatfield-Dodds said the construction of this database was a significant achievement, providing government with a long-term asset that can be used to inform key issues, ranging from the drivers of farm productivity, to the effects of drought and climate change, to understanding policy impacts in areas such as water reform.

"The project represents an important milestone both for efforts to extract the best possible value and insight from existing government datasets, and for the development of a new, modern ap-

proach to agricultural data and statistics that delivers more to industry and government users, while reducing the respondent burden associated with surveys," Dr Hatfield-Dodds said.

As with all DIPA projects, the privacy and anonymity of an individual's information is protected, with the database de-identified and held in a secure environment to be used only for policy analysis and research purposes.

ABS industry statistics general manager John Shepherd said the project was a testament to the close relationship between ABARES and the ABS and their shared commitment to modernise Australian agricultural statistics.

"The ABS Five Safes Framework and secure DataLab environment allow this valuable work to be undertaken while strictly protecting privacy and confidentiality," Mr Shepherd said.

The Agricultural Data Integration Project report can be viewed by visiting [agriculture.gov.au/abares/research-topics/climate/agricultural-data-integration-project](http://agriculture.gov.au/abares/research-topics/climate/agricultural-data-integration-project)



## Woolworths announces Supplier of the Year

SANITARIUM, the brand behind iconic Australian favourites such as WeetBix, has been named Woolworths' Supplier of the Year.

Sanitarium Health Food Company is a wholly Australian-owned business, manufacturing its products locally with an emphasis on helping Australians eat healthier.

Woolworths director of buying Paul Harker said, "Sanitarium shares our ambition to support the wellbeing of the communities we serve, continuing to develop new healthier options across the grocery aisles."

"Sanitarium's dedication to customers also drove its rapid response in the early stages of the pandemic.

"Teams quickly consolidated production and pack sizes to keep up with demand and ensured its products made it to our shelves as

quickly as possible."

Woolworths' annual Supplier of the Year Awards were held in Sydney recently and recognised excellence across the thousands of suppliers the supermarket partners with to deliver high quality food and everyday needs to its customers.

XXXX Rivalea Australia was recognised as Woolworths' Sustainability Supplier of the Year for its high animal welfare standards and impressive carbon reduction innovations.

Rivalea has partnered with Woolworths over the past 30 years, providing high quality pork from its farms across NSW and Victoria.

Rivalea's methane capture program is an example of best practice on-farm emissions reduction, delivering an environmental benefit equivalent to taking 9000 cars off the road each year.

The methane collected is converted to electricity, which powers most of its largest farm and processing plant.

"As Woolworths works to create a better tomorrow through its own wide-ranging sustainability initiatives, the efforts of suppliers such as Rivalea can make a meaningful difference to communities, animals and the environment throughout the broader supply chain," Mr Harker said.

"This has been an unprecedented year for the communities we serve across Australia.

"The strong collaborative partnerships we have with our suppliers allowed us to work together quickly and effectively during the pandemic to ensure our customers could access the everyday essentials they needed.

"Thank you to our thousands of suppliers who have stood shoulder to shoulder with us in putting customers first, rapidly increasing production, pivoting to the projects that mattered most and thinking creatively to solve complex logistical challenges."



## Online registration open for virtual APSS February 9-10, 2021

WELCOME to the Australian Poultry Science Symposium.

Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 outbreak in Sydney, we have had to make the difficult decision to revert to a virtual only event for 2021.

We are confident that we will deliver an extraordinary online conference, with over 30 papers to be presented over the two days.

The APSS is the premier avian science conference in Australia, attracting delegates from across Australia and all around the world.

2021 will be the 32nd edition of the symposium.

Over the past four years we have witnessed a steady growth in attendance of the conference and, even during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic in February 2020, we came very close to achieving our 300-delegate goal.

The impact of the global travel restrictions will be hugely felt, however we are hopeful of increased exposure of the event and in turn, continue to grow the number of attendees again in the years to come.

We strongly believe that this is a great opportunity to expand the

reach of APSS.

This year's over-arching theme will be 'Social License for Poultry Production'.

There will again be an interesting array of local and international invited speakers and as always we will be inviting researchers far and wide to submit and present a large range of scientific papers, loaded with industry-relevant content.

Our extraordinary social program will also provide everyone with plenty of networking opportunities over the two-day event by using the most up-to-date conferencing software.

We will be able to offer our attendee's opportunities to network with each other virtually, as well as participate in the Q&A during the event.

For further information, visit [apss2021.com.au](http://apss2021.com.au)

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**Dr Tom Harrison** BSc  
Business Manager - Swine & Poultry  
27-33 Piper Lane East Bendigo Victoria 3550  
PO Box 2388 Bendigo DC 3554  
M: +61 428 668 266 P: +613 5445 5435 F: +613 5445 5914  
E: [tom.harrison@apiam.com.au](mailto:tom.harrison@apiam.com.au)

**Bruce Stewart**  
General Manager



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# Costco transitions to cage-free egg policy

COSTCO Wholesale, the world's second largest retailer, will over time transition to a new animal welfare policy that includes banning cages for animals in its global egg supply.

The move covers Costco's growing international footprint, which includes mainland China, Taiwan, Japan, South Korea, Mexico, Australia, Canada and Europe.

Costco financial planning and investor relations director Josh Dahmen said, "We are in the process of making that transition."

"We will continue to increase the percentage over time, with a goal of eventually getting to 100 percent, though this may take several years in several countries due to issues with availability," he said.

Costco is the first US retailer to issue a global

policy on the confinement of animals in its supply chain.

Chinese government-affiliated media reported that construction was underway on a new 50,000-hen cage-free egg laying farm for supply of eggs to Costco on mainland China.

Costco launched its first store on mainland China in 2019, amassing over 200,000 members in its first few months – additional stores are scheduled to open in 2021.

International locations account for nearly a third of Costco's total store count and as at 2019, Costco reported 239 international stores.

The company's decision comes in the wake of criticism from non-government organisations and Asian-American celebrities, including Walking Dead star Eleanor Matsuura and

Grammy-nominated musician Steve Aoki, who accused the company of animal cruelty and discriminating against Asian customers.

Studies by the European Food Safety Authority and others found caged egg farms have higher rates of contamination from key salmonella strains compared to cage-free farms.

The sale of caged eggs has been banned in recent years in Costco's home state of Washington as well as in California, Oregon, Michigan, Massachusetts and Colorado.

The company's updated animal welfare policy reads:

*In addition to focusing on animal welfare because it is the right thing to do, Costco believes failure to do so would create risks for the business and its shareholders.*

*The failure to provide adequately for the welfare of animals throughout Costco's supply chain could have significant adverse effects on the business and operations of the company and its investors.*

Spokesperson and program manager for the Lever Foundation – a Pennsylvania-based animal protection non-profit that worked with Costco for the past two years on making the commitment – Kirsty Tuxford said, "We applaud Costco for this landmark decision to use only cage-free eggs throughout its global supply chain."

"Costco's move will spare millions of animals from being confined for their entire lives in cages so small they can barely turn around.

"We commend Costco for being the first US retailer to address this key

animal welfare and food safety issue throughout its global supply chain," Ms Tuxford said.

Costco stock has risen 28 percent this year, with the company reporting

its most recent quarterly earnings data on December 9, 2020.

The retailer reported \$A3.02 earnings per share for the quarter, topping the consensus

estimate of \$A2.70 by \$A0.32.

The firm had revenue of \$A57.02 billion for the quarter, compared to analyst estimates of \$A55.76 billion.



Steve Aoki has penned an open letter with The Walking Dead's Eleanor Matsuura calling for the end of Costco's sale of caged eggs in Asia. Directed to the grocery chain's CEO, W. Craig Jelinek, the actress and EDM star state how caged egg sales violate the company's own animal welfare policy and put Asian customers at risk of food-borne illness. They follow up the second point with links to studies that have shown that caged egg farms have higher rates of salmonella contamination than cage-free facilities.

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Director Poultry Research Foundation

Faculty of Science  
The University of Sydney - Camden Campus  
N138 JL Shute Building C01  
425 Werombi Road, Brownlow Hill NSW 2570 Australia

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**Branko Karaconji** DVM 0448 055 159  
Veterinarian

**Steven Black** 0437 627 000  
**Ronnie O'Rorke** 0419 648 433

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