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# NATIONAL Poultry NEWSPAPER

Vol 3. No. 4 April 2020 National Poultry Newspaper PO Box 387 Cleveland 4163 Phone (07) 3286 1833 Fax (07) 3821 2637 Email ben@poultrynews.com.au



Australian Eggs managing director Rowan McMonnies.

## Egg supply steady as demand spikes

AUSTRALIAN egg farmers are reassuring customers there is no need to fear food shortages due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Retailers have limited egg purchases along with other household staples in response to panic buying, but any absence of eggs in stores is purely demand driven and not a reflection of the continuity of supply.

To date, there has been no impact on egg production or supply and Australian Eggs managing di-

rector Rowan McMonnies is reminding people that Australia is a food secure nation.

Mr McMonnies said, "Australia's 21 million hens are still laying eggs and farmers are working around the clock to get those eggs to their customers."

"We're confident of maintaining steady supply through autumn and winter, and there will be eggs readily available when the short-term stockpiling and panic buying stops."

"Of course, egg farmers are concerned about

the potential impact of coronavirus on their staff and wider supply chains, though there have been no reports of disruptions across the industry."

The government has recognised how important it is that essential services like food industries continue to operate.

The industry is working with authorities to ensure measures put in place to protect public health can still ensure a steady supply of eggs.

Individual egg farms are reconfiguring their operations to minimise risk, with strategies to limit disruption to the farm should one employee become infected.

"We have had to rethink the way we do things to provide for stricter team separation and social distancing principles applied in public," Mr McMonnies said.

"These measures will go a long way to mitigating risk and underpin continuity of egg supply for Australian consumers."



Photo: Australian Eggs

## COVID-19 changes the way we operate

THERE have been a few great events in the past month, but also huge changes to the norm.

Not surprisingly, the COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way we operate at Poultry Hub Australia.

We are now working from home and connecting on a regular basis using online platforms.

We are still open for business and will continue to support the Australian poultry industry.

In March, we attended EvokeAg in Melbourne.

EvokeAg is an event that allows delegates to explore what's next in the agrifood tech space, covering three main themes of food, farm and future.

The conference was an immersive experience, delivering diverse topics and cutting-edge innovation from across the nation and around the world.

It is the only event of its type where people come together to connect, collaborate and evolve all things agriculture in Australia.

The PHA team went along to learn what new things were available and also to showcase our virtual chicken experience.

There were about 1300 attendees and many of them visited the PHA space.

Of the delegates who attended the PHA display, many said "that was not what I expected", and thought the experience was "a great resource to teach chicken anatomy, which could be easily transferred to all agri-



by TAMSYN CROWLEY  
Director



within the New England region of NSW.

One of the successful new recruits to our industry is Adam.

After being unemployed and on the job-seeker list for over eight months, Adam was feeling down and lacking in self-esteem and confidence.

He felt he was never going to gain employment again, especially since his previous employment ended on a negative note.

Adam had been ac-

continued P2

cultural industries".

There were many businesses and organisations involved including state governments, universities, CSIRO, Department of Primary Industries and rural research and development corporations.

Overall, EvokeAg was a great event to attend.

Poultry Hub's Job Ready Training initiative has taken flight under the wings of Education Officer Bruce Dennison.

Since November, we have had 40 new registrations, 33 of whom have completed training.

Most pleasing is eight trainees have commenced employment either on a farm with broilers, on egg farms or in the processing plant



Adam, one of the recent graduates from the PHA Job Ready Training initiative.



Hailey Cameron and Bruce Dennison showcased PHA's virtual chicken at EvokeAg in Melbourne.



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## Poultry Industry Calendar of Events

### 2020

**APR 8-9** – National Poultry Show, London, Canada [www.westernfairdistrict.com/national-poultry-show](http://www.westernfairdistrict.com/national-poultry-show)

**MAY 17-19** – PIX/AMC Gold Coast [www.pixamc.com.au](http://www.pixamc.com.au)

**MAY 26-28** – Meat, Fish, Seafood & Poultry Summit, Crocus Expo International Exhibition Center, Moskovskaya, Russia [www.10times.com/meat-fish-seafood-poultry-summit](http://www.10times.com/meat-fish-seafood-poultry-summit)

**JUN 5-9** – National Poultry Show, Sydney, NSW [www.rasnw.com.au](http://www.rasnw.com.au)

**JUL 7** – Annual Poultry Club Show Ipswich Showgrounds, Ipswich, QLD

**AUG 16-20** – World Poultry Congress, Paris, France [www.wpcparis2020.com](http://www.wpcparis2020.com)

**NOV 4-5** – Poultry Xpo, Stratford, Canada [www.poultryxpo.ca](http://www.poultryxpo.ca)

### 2021

**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)

**SEP 20-23** – European Symposium on Poultry Nutrition, Rimini Italy [www.espn2021.eu](http://www.espn2021.eu)

**How to supply event details: Send all details to National Poultry Newspaper, PO Box 387, Cleveland, Qld 4163, call 07 3286 1833 fax: 07 3821 2637, email: [design@poultrynews.com.au](mailto:design@poultrynews.com.au)**

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# What responsibility do you have as an egg farmer?

ONE question egg farmers are asking is what is our responsibility when it comes to advising those we trade with, should a biosecurity incident occur on our farm?

Over recent months, Egg Farmers of Australia has been working with state government agencies in relation to formalising the way government agencies inform and advise an incident to industry.

Government is only one part of the story.

What is the responsibility of the individual farmer or owner of a farm?

What does this mean if an incident occurs on your farm?

Under biosecurity in each state, legislation



**Egg Farmers  
of Australia Inc.**

by **MELINDA HASHIMOTO**  
CEO



outlines your responsibility, so it is important to be aware of the steps you must take.

Information was sought in relation to NSW requirements, and Queensland's Department of Agriculture and Fisheries clearly explains information on their website as outlined below.

If you have any concerns in relation to your

responsibility pertaining to biosecurity legislation, please download a copy from the internet relevant to your state in order to understand the requirements and ensure risk can be reduced.

In NSW, the farmer and the owner have a general biosecurity duty under the Biosecurity Act 2015, which states:

"Any person who deals

with biosecurity matter or a carrier and who knows, or ought reasonably to know, the biosecurity risk posed or likely to be posed by the biosecurity matter, carrier or dealing has a biosecurity duty to ensure that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the biosecurity risk is prevented, eliminated or minimised."

In other words, the risk of spread to other animals or people is minimised, prevented or eliminated through good biosecurity, restricting movement of equipment, people and animals and advising other people that a property is infected or a possible biosecurity risk.

All Queenslanders have a 'general biosecurity obligation' under Queens-

land's Biosecurity Act 2014 (pp 40-45).

This means everyone is responsible for managing biosecurity risks "under their control and that they know about, or should reasonably be expected to know about."

Under the GBO, individuals and organisations whose activities pose a biosecurity risk must take all reasonable and practical steps to prevent or minimise each biosecurity risk, minimise the likelihood of causing a biosecurity event, and limit the consequences if such an event is caused, and prevent or minimise the harmful effects a risk could have, and not do anything that might make any harmful effects worse.

#### 24 General biosecurity obligation offence provision

(1) A person on whom a general biosecurity obligation is imposed must discharge the obligation.

Maximum penalty—

- (a) if the offence is an aggravated offence—3,000 penalty units or 3 years imprisonment; or
- (b) if the offence is not an aggravated offence—
  - (i) for a breach in relation to prohibited matter—1,000 penalty units or 1 year's imprisonment; or
  - (ii) for a breach in relation to restricted matter—750 penalty units or 6 months imprisonment; or
  - (iii) otherwise—500 penalty units.

(2) If the offence is not an aggravated offence, it is a defence for the person to show that the person had a reasonable excuse for failing to discharge the obligation.

#### Chapter 2 Significant obligations and offences

##### Part 1 General biosecurity obligation

#### 23 What is a general biosecurity obligation

- (1) This section applies to a person who deals with biosecurity matter or a carrier, or carries out an activity, if the person knows or ought reasonably to know that the biosecurity matter, carrier or activity poses or is likely to pose a biosecurity risk.

Page 40

Current as at 1 March 2020

Queensland Biosecurity - Excerpt regarding general biosecurity obligation from Queensland's Biosecurity Act 2014.

Queensland Biosecurity penalties - Excerpt regarding GBO offence provision from Queensland's Biosecurity Act 2014.

# COVID-19 changes the way we operate

from P1

tively looking for a new job when his job coach referred him to Poultry Hub's Job Ready Training, which proved to be

a life-changing moment for Adam.

He attended the four-day poultry training, where he gained valuable knowledge of the

poultry industry, hands-on skills, as well as confidence from the inclusive and welcoming environment.

Adam, with Poultry

Hub certificate in hand, attended an interview at a recruitment agency, where he was offered an on-farm experience to get a closer look at the em-

ployment opportunity.

He enjoyed this experience and was soon offered a position to do some floor walking and general farm work, of which he accepted.

When asked by Education Officer Bruce Dennison how work was going, "Absolutely loving it" was Adam's response.

Bruce keeps in regular contact with many of our participants to ensure they have ongoing support when transitioning into the industry.

"We have been in regular contact with Adam and his employer, to keep track of him," Mr Dennison said.

"We have received positive feedback from both Adam, the farm and the recruitment agency."

Through partnerships with other community organisations, Poultry Hub Australia has been able to provide support to all participants, ensuring young people continue to be employed in the poultry industry, and choose to stay on for a career in our ever-growing workforce.

For more details please contact [poultryhub@une.edu.au](mailto:poultryhub@une.edu.au)



A delegate from EvokeAg who tried out PHA's virtual chicken experience.

# Opportunities and challenges facing Australian livestock industries

A KEY theme of the recent 2020 Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences Outlook conference was the practical steps we'd need to take as an industry to reach the goal of lifting the value of Australian agricultural production to \$100 billion over the next decade.

Biosecurity through the supply chain plays a major role in achieving and protecting agricultural production, as was emphasised at ABARES by Queensland cattle producer and 2019 Farm Biosecurity Producer of the Year Melinee Leather.

"Our reputation for producing safe, quality food commands a premium for Australian produce at home and overseas – this is ultimately underpinned by our disease-free status," Ms Leather said.

"That status relies on our animal health and biosecurity system – from Australian Border Force all the way through to individual farmers – being prepared to not only respond to threats of pests and diseases but to be proactive, innovate and make improvements to protect our industries and ecosystems."

Rapid and transformative changes in the way livestock farmers do busi-

ness and the way consumers select products – driven by increasing demand, advances in technology, ecological considerations and climate variability – calls for a long-term, holistic approach to animal health and biosecurity policy in order to safeguard investment in livestock, and adoption of new technologies.

Central to the industry's success in this changing landscape will be addressing issues of protection against the risk of emerging diseases, and assurance of food safety, product integrity, provenance and traceability.

With these issues front of mind, Animal Health Australia commissioned Spiegare Consulting, which compiled a report titled Megatrends, Opportunities and Challenges Facing Australian Livestock Industries.

The Spiegare report provides insights into global megatrends and explores four possible mega-shock scenarios that could impact future productivity and profitability of Australia's livestock sectors over the next 10 years, through the lenses of animal health and biosecurity.

With the analysis of these scenarios, Australian livestock industries have a new outlook on

current and future challenges, as well as the opportunities they present.

AHA CEO Kathleen Plowman said: "The Megatrends report highlights how biosecurity, animal health and the health of our ecosystems are closely intertwined and critically important to Australia's future."

"When we think about these key trends and scenarios, and their potential effects on production systems and markets, we must ask what can be done to mitigate risk to our industries."

"We aim for this report to be a catalyst for animal and crop industries to discuss key issues, develop new strategies, identify transformative opportunities, and translate these to sustainable success for the industry into the future."

Ms Plowman believes sustained co-operative and collaborative efforts will be needed to ensure our livestock industries remain competitive and retain their social licence to operate.

"It's unlikely any one sector – across livestock, cropping and aquaculture – will be able to do this alone."

Ms Leather agreed, adding the key trends outlined in the Megatrends report as impacting on

the Australian livestock sector, reinforce the need for collaboration among industry, government, researchers and community.

"The livestock sector will need to strive for high-level scientific expertise and innovation to ensure new and more efficient solutions to biosecurity threats and animal health can be developed and applied as needed," Ms Leather said.

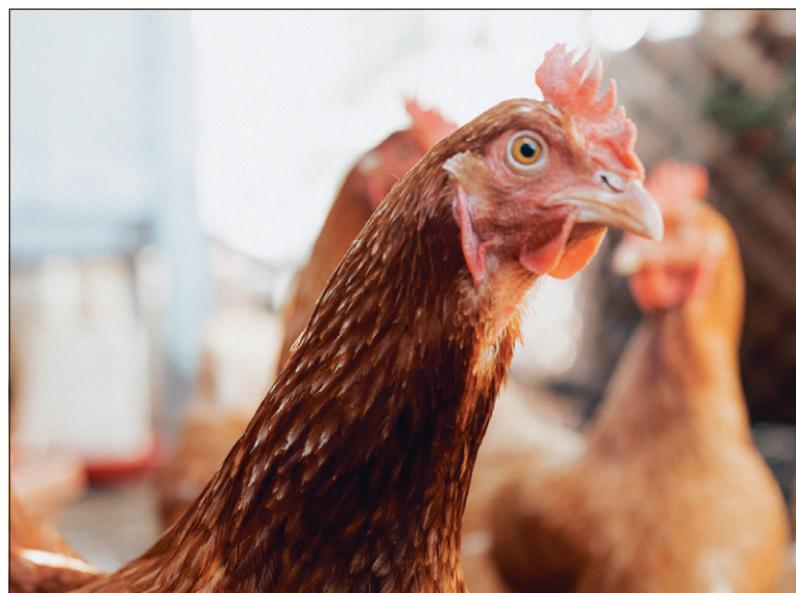


Photo: William Moreland

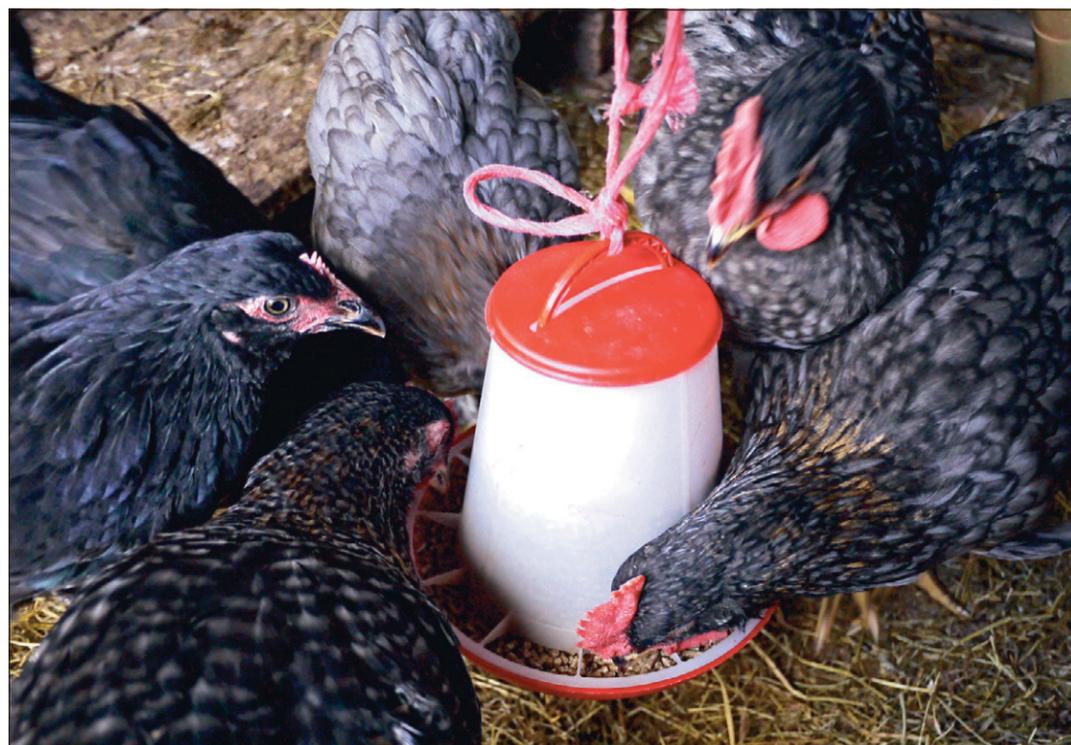


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Photo: Rebekah Howell



Photo: John Cameron

## Backyard chickens in huge demand as coronavirus-driven shopping frenzy empties supermarkets

FIRST they came for toilet paper, then pasta.

Now chicken breeders are being inundated, with more householders turning to backyard chooks for egg supplies as supermarket shelves empty of staple food products.

Bond Enterprises in Queensland's Lockyer Valley has had a 30 percent spike in sales of egg layers because people are looking to become more self-sufficient during the coronavirus pandemic.

Bond Enterprises supply retailers such as rural and produce supply stores and pet shops, as well as small commercial pastured farmers from far north Queensland through to South Australia.

Operations manager Travis Bond said: "People feel self-sufficient having birds in their backyard producing a table egg, they know where it's coming from and it's fresh."

"Sales for retail backyard chooks have declined quite considerably over the past five to six years."

It is a welcome boon for

an industry that has felt the impact of increased grain sales during Australia's drought.

"This is a little bonus for us, with the virus that's floating around and the general public being so wary of it."

While Bond Enterprises usually sells chickens at about 16-18 weeks, which is point-of-lay age, they are looking at having to sell younger birds not yet producing eggs to meet demand.

Mr Bond warns people will still have a wait before their chickens start laying eggs.

"Usually the point-of-lay chook will start laying within two to six weeks, but the wait will pay off even with the current increased cost of grain."

"It still comes out fairly equitable and fairly even with what you'd be paying for a medium-priced egg in the supermarket, as well as having the benefit of provenance," Mr Bond said.

While commercial egg layer breeders are flat out supplying the retail mar-

ket, smaller poultry suppliers dedicated to heritage breeds are also seeing a surge of interest in backyard chickens and more sustainable lifestyles.

Kate Grealy, who runs the Sunshine Coast-based Perma-Poultry Market, said a heritage bird can take much longer to produce their first egg — up to seven months in some

breeds — but are worth the investment in the longer term.

"They don't lay as many eggs over a year, but they live for many more years," Ms Grealy said.

"A commercial layer breed may lay eggs for about 14 months, whereas some of the larger heritage breeds may be laying for five to eight years."



Photo: Sheri Hooley

### The Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria President's update on COVID-19

THESE are challenging and extraordinary times for all of us, including The Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria.

The RASV has a proud history of celebrating agriculture, cultivating events and strengthening communities and much of what we do has been put on-hold as we deal with the impact of coronavirus COVID-19.

Over the past three weeks, major events, exhibitions and venues have all but ceased operation of their regular scheduled programs.

This is also true at Melbourne Showgrounds.

It's certainly no longer business as usual.

No one knows how long this issue will continue to affect us, but from recent government announcements one would expect at least 6 months.

This is challenging and we are working in a dynamic and complicated environment.

We are still planning for the 2020 Royal Melbourne Show to go ahead at this stage.

The issue of COVID-19 is evolving rapidly and we are considering various options as contingencies.

We will continue to monitor the situation and adhere to the regulations and advice

issued by the federal and state government and relevant health organisations as it unfolds.

This week, we received a message of support from the Victoria Governor and RASV patron Her Excellency, the Honourable Linda Dessau.

We thank her for her kind words.

Reluctantly we have had to postpone the 2020 Australian Distilled Spirits Awards in April and the 2020 Australian International Beer Awards in May, with options to defer either or both to later in the year being considered.

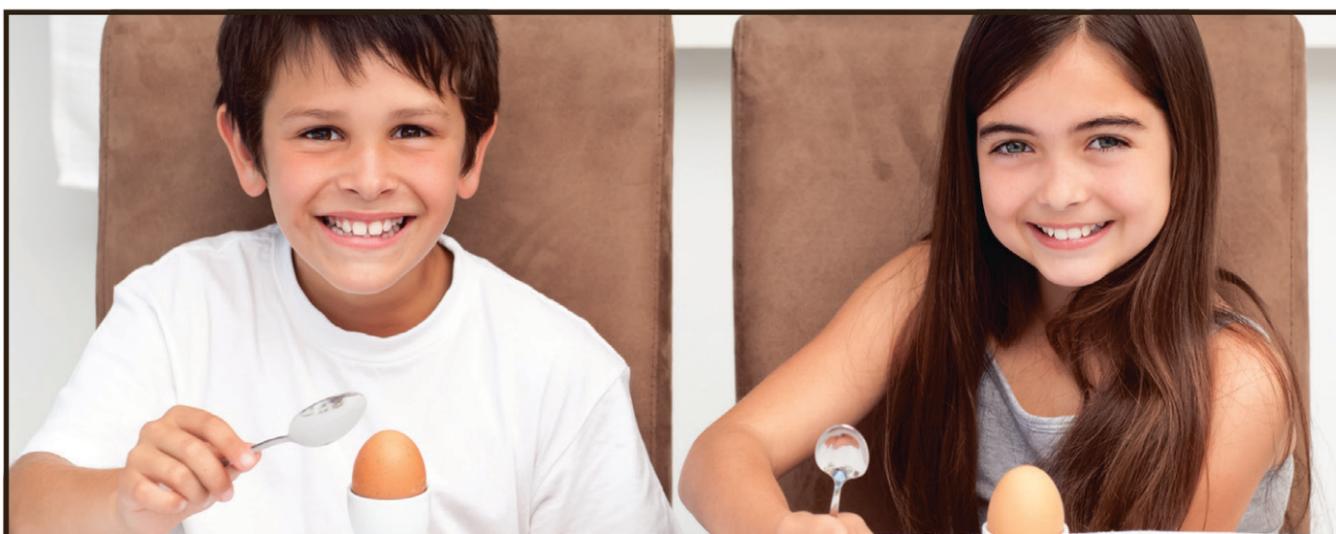
The issue is evolving rapidly, however, we will endeavour to keep you informed.

Be assured that the Board and Executive will continue to take considered and decisive action to best prepare the organisation to withstand this challenging period.

In the meantime, please continue to listen out for further government COVID-19 announcements and advice.

Thank you for your ongoing support and understanding during these unprecedented times. Please take care of yourself and your loved ones.

Matthew Coleman



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Photo: William Moreland



Photo: Martin Sanchez

## How knowledge of avian coronavirus infectious bronchitis virus in poultry relates to COVID-19 in humans

TO better understand the challenges associated with the COVID-19 disease in humans, poultry health professionals can draw on many years of experience attempting to control avian coronavirus

infectious bronchitis virus in poultry.

It is important to emphasize the COVID-19 virus is not associated with poultry or poultry products.

Coronaviruses are divided into Alpha-, Beta-, Gamma- and Delta- coronavirus groups.

Coronaviruses are responsible for a wide variety of existing and emerging diseases in humans and other mammals including food animals, as well as in birds including poultry.

Diseases associated with coronavirus infections cover a wide range including respiratory, enteric, neurological, renal and hepatic.

The coronavirus IBV affects poultry, causing respiratory disease in chickens and is in the avian Gammacoronavirus group.

Avian viruses in the Gammacoronavirus group do not infect or cause disease in humans.

The COVID-19 virus is in the Betacoronavirus group, along with SARS-CoV and MERS-CoV.

It was previously shown that SARS-CoV does not infect or cause disease in poultry.

Because the COVID-19 virus belongs to the same group as SARS-CoV and uses the same ACE-2 host cell receptor, it is highly unlikely that the COVID-19 virus will infect or cause disease in poultry, but it remains to be scientifically proven.

Based on knowledge at hand, and current lack of evidence of bird infections with the COVID-19 virus, poultry and poultry products are not considered to be a source of COVID-19 infection for humans.

The COVID-19 virus is primarily spread among people via respiratory droplets that contain the virus, with infections occurring via the nose, eyes and mouth.

Though highly infectious, it is an enveloped

virus — one that is easily killed by soap and common disinfectants.

**Where do coronaviruses come from?**

Bats are widely accepted as the reservoir for mammalian (Alpha- and Beta-) coronaviruses.

There are about 1240 different bat species harbouring as many or more different coronavirus types.

SARS-CoV and MERS-CoV came from a bat reservoir, infected an intermediate host then jumped to humans.

It is likely that the COVID-19 virus originated from bats.

Furthermore, preliminary data show some viruses isolated from bats to be close relatives.

An intermediate host for the COVID-19 virus has not been identified yet.

The reservoir for avian coronaviruses, including IBV, is not clear.

There are some closely related viruses in wild and domestic birds — pheasants, ducks, geese and pigeons, to name a few — but unequivocal evidence of a true reservoir is lacking.

**Why is it difficult to produce a vaccine against coronaviruses?**

Protective immunity against a respiratory disease, such as infectious bronchitis virus in poultry or COVID-19 in humans, requires a strong local immune response.

In poultry, we achieve this by using live attenuated vaccines, but live coronavirus vaccines are difficult to produce because attenuation often renders them unable to produce a strong local immune response.

Attenuation is accomplished by passage of the virus in a laboratory host system, for example embryonating chicken eggs or cell culture, but there is a fine line between attenuation and maintaining the virus' ability to infect and induce an immune response.

Over attenuation ren-

ders the vaccine safe but not immunogenic, whereas under attenuation will create a vaccine capable of inducing a strong immune response but may cause a severe vaccine reaction.

Then there is the problem of back passage of the vaccine in the host leading to a pathogenic virus.

Based on our knowledge of producing vaccines against IBV, production of a live-attenuated vaccine against COVID-19 with acceptable safety and efficacy may prove to be very difficult.

**What about using killed vaccines against coronaviruses?**

There are killed or inactivated vaccines against IBV for poultry, however they are difficult to develop.

Chemicals such as formalin or beta-Propiolactone used to kill the virus can destroy the integrity of the spikes, thus yielding a vaccine that does not induce a protective immune response.

In addition, for killed vaccines to be effective, they must be given after a live-attenuated 'priming' vaccine, which as discussed above has significant safety issues.

In humans, killed vaccines against respiratory viruses are used, for example against influenza virus, but this requires growing the virus to high titers, inactivating it and using safe adjuvants.

This has proved difficult to achieve for human coronaviruses.

**Why don't we have recombinant vaccines against IBV in poultry?**

And could a recombinant vaccine be developed for the COVID-19 virus?

The coronavirus surface-spike glycoproteins are embedded in a lipid envelope and have conformationally dependent epitopes that induce neutralizing antibodies in the host.

continued P7

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# How knowledge of avian coronavirus infectious bronchitis virus in poultry relates to COVID-19 in humans

from P6

When the spike protein is removed from the virus envelope or when it is expressed in a laboratory system, those conformationally dependent epitopes are not faithfully reproduced.

Thus, vectors such as fowl pox and herpesvirus of turkeys have not been suitable vaccine platforms for expressing coronavirus spikes.

Spike protein production by the virus in a natural infection is very specific and difficult to mimic, thus other recombinant vaccines, such as DNA vaccines, RNA vaccines and subunit vaccines, do not accurately reproduce spike.

Additionally, these vaccines usually do not stimulate adequate local immunity and have to be given many times to provide any protection.

Then there are genetically altered coronavirus vaccines derived from infectious clones.

Making changes to the genome of the pathogenic virus to create a safe, attenuated live coronavirus vaccine that is still capable of inducing an effective immune response is complex and often results in non-viable viruses or

insufficient protection.

It can be a fast track to finding a vaccine candidate, but the safety of these live vaccines must be rigorously tested.

Fortunately, it is not all bad news.

The immune system of a bird is very different from that of a human.

What doesn't work in poultry may actually work well in humans.

In addition, financially we can do a lot more in development and delivery of vaccines in humans than in poultry, where tight margins make it necessary for vaccines to improve the welfare of the flock while still yielding a satisfactory return on investment.

The goals and performance parameters for human vaccines are obviously much different than production agriculture.

Currently, there are many different coronavirus vaccines and platforms being developed or optimized for human use. **How do different serotypes or genetic types of coronavirus complicate vaccine development?**

In poultry, there are many types – serotypes or genetic – of IBV that do not cross protect.

Consequently, recovery

from one type does not immunise the bird against another type.

For this reason, we have had to develop a number of different IBV vaccines, such as Ark, Mass, Conn, DE, etc., to control the disease.

Fortunately, there appears to be only one type of COVID-19 virus circulating in humans.

However, full genome sequencing has shown that the virus is changing.

A number of mutations have been observed, but none appear to be maintained at this time, which suggests they are not important for transmission or virulence.

From a vaccine standpoint, only one type of COVID-19 virus circulating in humans means that only one vaccine type should be needed to protect against this disease.

**Are there treatments for coronaviruses?**

For humans, we have antiviral drugs for influenza, but there have not been any successful drugs developed specifically for coronaviruses.

Drugs against the viral-encoded proteases have been tried, as well as drugs that interfere with entry and egress of the virus from the host cell.

These and many other potential antivirals are presently being tested by several companies.

Two drugs currently in the news, chloroquine and hydroxychloroquine are being examined for their ability to ameliorate COVID-19 infections.

These drugs have been used against malaria, lupus and rheumatoid arthritis for many years.

Preliminary data out of China indicate that the drugs stop the spread of the COVID-19 virus in cell culture and are somewhat effective in treating humans.

However, until controlled clinical trials are conducted, their effectiveness against COVID-19 remains in question.

It is likely that this pandemic will not be over anytime soon.

In the meantime, follow government and World Health Organization recommendations to protect yourself and your family.

Poultry flocks do not appear to be at risk.

**Mark W. Jackwood, MS, Ph.D. Department of Population Health, Poultry Diagnostic and Research Centre, College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Georgia**



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**Big Dutchman.**



The author spotted this Tyrannosaurus-rex dinosaur earlier this year in Fremantle. Asteriornis gives a clear glimpse of what modern birds were like when T. rex was alive.



Chickens have come a long way since dinosaur days.

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## Evolutionary wonder chicken

TWENTY years ago, near the border of Belgium and the Netherlands, amateur fossil hunter Maarten van Dinther picked up a featureless block of rock the size of a pack of cards.

Though he didn't know it at the time, it contained a tiny and perfect skull from the oldest direct relative of modern birds ever discovered, a fowl that walked earth with dinosaurs.

Affectionately dubbed the 'wonder chicken' by the international team of scientists that analysed the fossil, it lived 66.7 million years ago, just 700,000 years before the asteroid impact that killed off all non-avian dinosaurs.

Named 'Asteriornis' in a paper published last month in *Nature*, the species – known from fossils of its hind limbs in addition to its skull – has features similar to ducks



Cant Comment by BRENDON CANT

and chickens, suggesting it was related to the shared ancestor of both groups, according to National Geographic.

Ornithologist and bird evolution expert at the

Senckenberg Research Institute in Frankfurt Germany, Gerald Mayr, who was not part of the new study, described it as an extraordinary and exciting find, which revealed insights into a poorly known chapter of avian evolution.

Asteriornis was a long-legged shorebird that could probably fly and likely combed the beaches of late Cretaceous Europe, which had strings of islands in warm and shallow seas and a climate similar to present-day Bahamas.

A palaeontologist at the University of Cambridge and study lead author Daniel Field said, "This is the first time we've seen the well-preserved skull of a modern bird from the age of dinosaurs."

The skulls of living chickens and ducks "are very different in the present day, so the skull of Asteriornis provides the first glimpse we've ever had at what the skull of the most recent common ancestor of these groups probably looked like."

Other living bird groups thought to have appeared during the Cretaceous period include the Paleognath birds, such as ostriches, emus, rheas and cassowaries.

Paleognaths, Anseriformes, and Galliformes are some of the deepest branches in the family tree of modern birds, and many other bird groups may not have appeared until after the asteroid impact.

After finding the 'wonder chicken' fossils in 2000, van Dinther donated the specimens to the Natural History Museum of Maastricht in the Netherlands.

The curator of the museum and co-author of the new study, John Jagt, sent the four small blocks of rock, with limb bones poking out, to Field in 2018.

From the outward appearance of the fossils, Field had low hopes of

finding anything more exciting than broken limb bones.

But birds from the late Cretaceous were rare, so he ran the fossils through a high-resolution CT scanner to visualise what was concealed in the rock.

He and his PhD student Juan Benito were staggered to discover a beautifully preserved, nearly complete 3D skull of a modern bird.

"It is the first modern bird skull from the entire Mesozoic era and one of the best preserved fossil bird skulls of any age," Field said.

The study authors named the new species after Asteria, the Greek Titan goddess of falling stars, who transformed herself into a quail – an appropriate name for a bird which lived shortly before the impact that marked the end of the dinosaur era.

Several finds in recent years shed light on the prehistoric origins of living bird groups and how these animals survived one of the biggest extinction events in earth's history.

Because many of the oldest fossils of modern birds are from the southern hemisphere, including the previous record-holder for oldest modern bird, Vegavis from Antarctica, some palaeontologists suggested modern birds originated on the southern supercontinent of Gondwana during the time of the dinosaurs.

But this new discovery of a bird older than Vegavis in the northern hemisphere challenged this theory.

"At this point I think the only thing we can say for sure is that the geographic origins of modern birds are truly mysterious," Field said.

"Only future fossil discoveries will be able to tell us where on earth modern birds originated."

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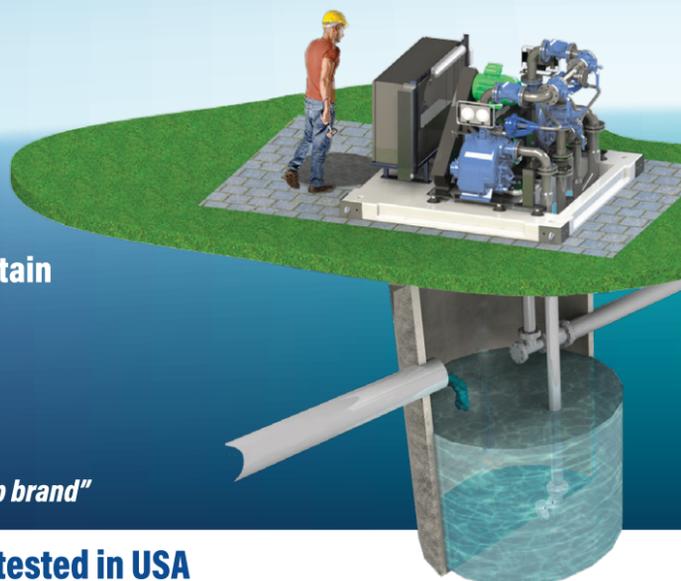
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# Coronavirus symptoms felt in agriculture sector

AS if the past years have not been challenging enough for many farmers and regional communities.

We are now dealing with issues we could not have imagined a month ago, with the coronavirus recently classified a pandemic.

The Queensland Farmers' Federation and state government are closely monitoring the effects of COVID-19, and are continuing to work with industry and government agencies to facilitate business continuity through supply chains, and to maintain Queensland's reputation as a safe, ethical and sustainable supplier of agricultural products.

With Queensland's quality agricultural produce being successfully exported to a range of countries, our industries will see adverse effects as a result of the disease.

A downturn in visitor numbers through our agritourism venues has been experienced and reduced domestic demand as the tourism, restaurant and cafe industries suffer.



by GEORGINA DAVIS  
CEO



However, it's critical to remind the public that Queensland, and indeed Australia, produces a wide range of fresh foods meaning that domestic food security is strong.

Financial assistance is now available to Queensland agribusiness exporters affected by the outbreak through the state government's Market Diversification and Resilience Grants Program.

QFF is encouraging farmers to investigate their eligibility for this support.

We continue to call on the Australian government to continuously monitor workforce availability and investigate extending visas for current seasonal work-

ers as travel bans are enforced.

QFF recommends farms and processing facilities create and continuously review business continuity plans to address issues that may impact their businesses, paying attention to supply chains and animal welfare.

We ask that farmers do not panic buy.

We appreciate some chemicals are manufactured overseas and demand for fertilisers and herbicides is rising based on increasing confidence and plantings stimulated by the widespread rain.

The recent bans for cargo ships docking into Australian ports will disrupt particular areas of our supply chains.

There are currently enough products to go around if farmers purchase only what they need to plant at this time and do not stockpile.

We must all remain diligent about the accuracy of information we share and take precautions to keep our loved ones and ourselves safe.



# PIX/AMC 2020 postponed

OVER the past few weeks, the PIX/AMC Organising Committee has been closely monitoring the guidance from state and federal health authorities and the World Health Organization regarding COVID-19.

At this time, with regret, we have made the decision to postpone PIX/AMC 2020, scheduled to take place during May 17-19 on the Gold Coast in Queensland.

Please know that we did not make this decision lightly.

After close monitoring of the situation, in combination with the decisions made by the



Australian government limiting non-essential gatherings and restricting international travel, we felt it was the right thing to do to protect the

health and safety of our attendees and staff.

We are working with the Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre to reschedule the

event to a suitable date. We will update everyone once we work through the rescheduling details with the GCCEC. What does this mean for you?

We ask for your patience as we work through the details in the coming weeks and will provide updates on how this process will play out with regard to postponement.

We apologise for any inconvenience this has caused.

We will continue to monitor new developments on COVID-19 and its impacts on the industry, and will update with rescheduling details.

# Experts say coronavirus is unlikely to have human-to-animal transmission

LIVESTOCK industries have been advised to exercise caution, despite no concrete evidence so far of human-to-animal transmission of the coronavirus strain COVID-19.

The virus, believed to have originated in a Chinese fresh meat market, has spread rapidly despite measures to close borders and isolate patients.

Professor of Infectious Diseases Modelling and Epidemiology at James

Cook University, Emma McBryde said the possibility of a spread through key livestock industries appeared small.

"The source of the virus is still unclear, though the virus is most similar to those found in bats.

"There was probably another intermediate host between bats and humans that was the original source of the virus, various animals have been implicated."

The only instance of the strain being found in animals since it began circulating among humans, was a dog that tested positive in Hong Kong.

Though the dog didn't become unwell from the virus, it may have been on its fur as a consequence of being near a person who had COVID-19.

Adjunct Professor from the College of Public Health, Medical and Veterinary Sciences

at JCU Graham Burgess said any mammal was a potential carrier of coronavirus.

"What that suggests is that any mammalian host is a possibility, and if we tried hard enough we could probably infect almost any mammalian host.

"To transmit it, those animals are going to have to be exposed to an infectious host, which is not easy as you have to have pretty close contact."

# Venue lockdowns drive chicken farmers to crack open alternate avenues of revenue

AS COVID-19 measures tighten and public venues close around the country, producers are relying on other avenues of income to get by.

Tasmania's largest egg producer Pure Foods is bracing for a hit to its hospitality revenue stream as restaurants, bars and pubs close around the state.

But its managing director and chairman of Australian Eggs Danny Jones is hoping customers will choose to instead stay home and have brekkie in bed.

"Our two main channels are retail and foodservice," Mr Jones said.

"We would expect to see that area of our sales impacted severely.

"We see about 35 percent of our sales go into foodservice.

"What we don't know is how much of that 35 percent will be transferred into retail.

"I think rather than having a cafe breakfast on Saturday or Sunday this weekend, people might sit down at home and have a cafe breakfast at home."

He said the venue lockdown had exposed some major unknowns.

"We'll need to go through a couple of weekly cycles, I think, to get a good feel for where eggs are going compared to

where they used to go," Mr Jones said.

## Changing business model

The situation is much the same for southern Tasmanian chicken farmer Calum Jacobsen.

Mr Jacobsen said he had lost 80 percent of sales recently due to restaurants closing.

Luckily he has quickly changed his business model.

"It's very short notice but we've had to think of new ways to sell chicken meat," Mr Jacobsen said.

"We've started an online ordering option for customers in Hobart and now Launceston.

"We've made up for about 50 percent of sales so far in a week."

He had also noticed a surge in demand for egg-laying chickens as more customers stay home.

"We don't sell egg-laying chickens because they're costly to raise.

"We do sell day-old chicks, and we've had lots of requests," Mr Jacobsen said.

"I don't think it's a bad idea for people to think of ways to grow their own food at the moment, but it needs to be from an educated perspective, not panicked.

"They require a lot of care and maintenance and

don't lay eggs 365 days a year."

## Plenty of eggs

Bernadette Cocks co-owns a fodder store east of Adelaide and has sold 300 chickens in less than four days.

It normally takes her about two months to sell that amount of stock.

"There was a bit of a scare on the internet saying there's not going to be any eggs in South Australia," Ms Cocks.

"It's silly.

"There will still be plenty of eggs."

She said many local restaurants will not be in the market to buy eggs, so farmers will need the support.

"Remember we've just come out of bushfires and drought," she said.

"The product is still

there and some will have a surplus, so we need to support them."

Despite the rise in chicken sales, Mr Jacobsen said there will be plenty of people who still need to buy eggs.

"I've spoken to a few egg farmers around and they generally have busy periods in winter while most people's home flocks aren't laying eggs," he said.

"Then through the summer, spring, and autumn period when chickens are laying more, they generally have a drop in sales.

"It affects businesses but there's always going to be people who need to buy eggs, and those who can't buy chickens, for whatever purpose."

Originally published by Eden Hynninen on abc.net.au



Calum Jacobsen has noticed a surge in demand for egg-laying chickens as more customers stay home. Photo: Calum Jacobsen

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## Save the date for the 2020 Future Waste Resources Convention from August 31 to September 2

THE 2020 Future Waste Resources Convention, themed Optimism and Collaboration for Resource Recovery in Queensland, will focus on and showcase real and practical solutions for managing secondary resources and value-adding these important resources in Queensland.

This unique conference between the resource recovery industry and primary producers will include specialist presenters and suppliers outlining real challenges, successes and case studies, as well as presenting technology currently in use.

It will provide insights into what the farming community and industry are currently achieving in waste diversion and value-adding to secondary resources.

The program ensures investment decisions made by industry, government

and waste generators, including primary producers, are informed as to the options available in supporting business confidence.

Commencing on Monday, August 31, from 3pm, the conference features an opening session from the federal government Department of Environment and state government counterparts on critical updates, including the proposed Council of Australian Governments export bans and new policy.

A Q&A session with Minister Trevor Evans will precede the networking event opening.

Sessions on Tuesday, September 1 will commence with a keynote from the Queensland government.

The conference will explore the complex planning framework challenges facing both industry and primary producers

with regards to citing critical resource recovery infrastructure with desirable solutions for change.

A discussion on where Queensland business is making investments for increasing its resource recovery performance and where these are working will provide insight into expansion across the state, and will be followed by specific stream presentations on energy, plastics/ag-plastics, organics and the emerging waste streams.

The final day keynote will be from the Opposition, before focusing on Energy – Queensland technologies and specific regulations, a detailed exploration of the COAG export bans in Queensland context, and look at disaster waste management including waste streams generated by the agricultural sector.

FWR provides the

ideal setting for all organisations, government and businesses to come together to discuss challenges and opportunities as we approach a critical time in Queensland, not least the Queensland government election on October 31, 2020.

The convention will showcase resource recovery achievements across waste management and agricultural sectors and offer networking opportunities across these two critical pillar industry sectors.

It will also facilitate collaboration and provide opportunities for optimistic discussion on managing our waste locally, generating new jobs and prospective investments.

For further information contact the Waste Recycling Industry Association on 07 3185 2747 or [memberservices@wriq.com.au](mailto:memberservices@wriq.com.au)

## Australian Eggs releases sustainability framework

POACHED, fried or in cake batter, eggs are a staple in the majority of Australian households, but have you ever questioned the industry's sustainability credentials?

Producing 800 million more eggs each year than it did 20 years ago, the Australian layer hen flock has saved an estimated 30,000 tonnes of carbon through more efficient feed processes in recent decades.

According to Australian Eggs, the industry's member-owned research and development corporation, the average laying hen is now capable of producing an extra 38 eggs per annum, while consuming five percent less feed.

Released late-March, the Australian Egg Industry Sustainability Report breaks down how the egg industry has progressed in areas such as hen welfare, food security, environmental outcomes and rural livelihoods.

Based on community canvassing conducted by the CSIRO, the report captures the views of thousands of Australians in an effort



egg industry coincided with a lowering of the environmental footprint through better genetics, improved farm management, uptake of on-farm solar and new waste management technologies.

to better understand evolving community expectations.

Australian Eggs managing director Rowan McMonnies said the industry was lowering its carbon footprint and better conserving resources in-line with evolving mainstream community expectations.

Mr McMonnies said, "Eggs are in 95 percent of Australian households and are a staple in the national diet."

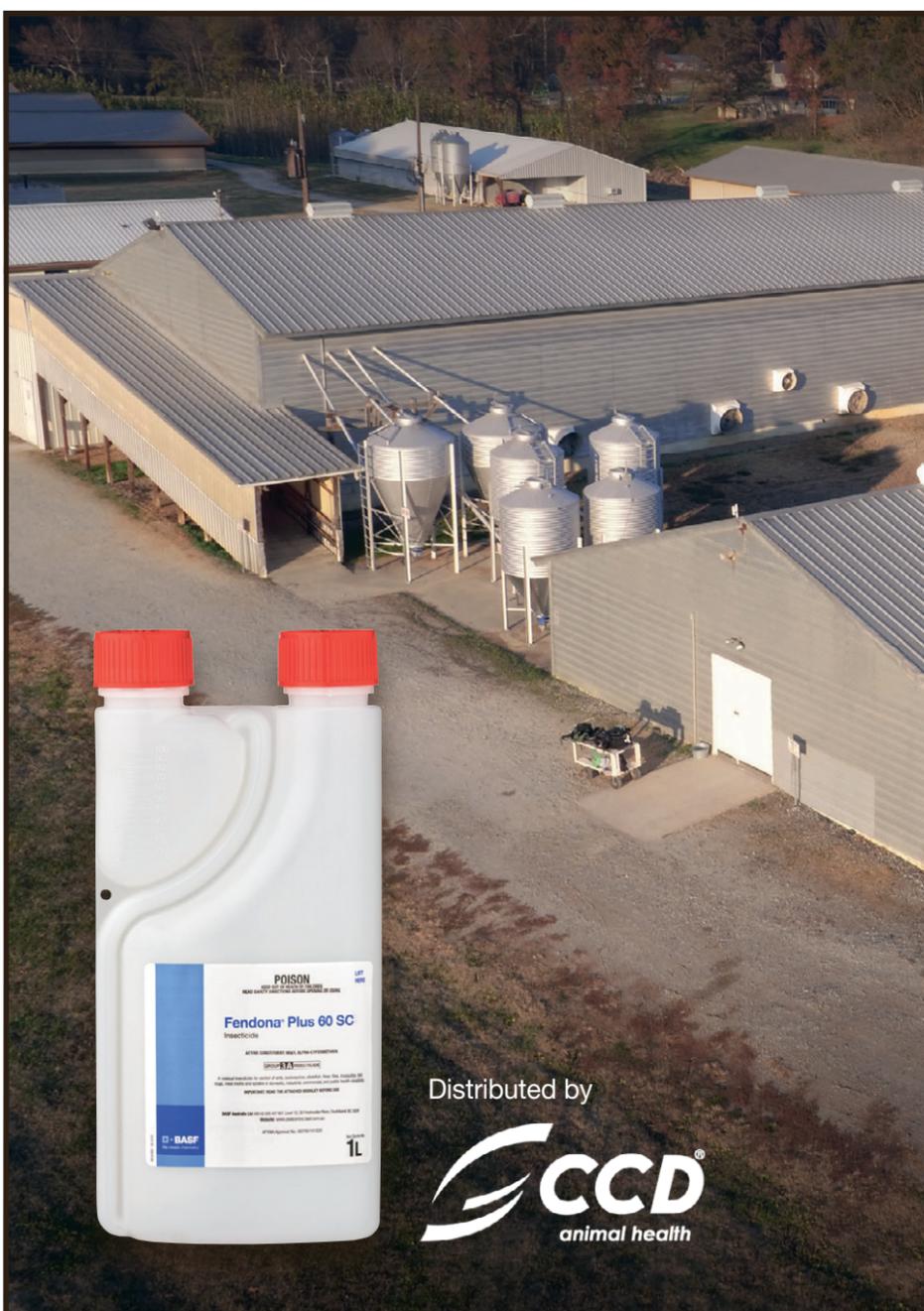
"While compared to other animal protein industries, eggs already had a relatively low carbon footprint, there was an expectation from the community that you could always do better."

"The CSIRO's community research showed us that Australians expect to see all industries reducing their impacts over time. "Productivity improvements across the

"Sustainability is more than just good environmental stewardship, so we've invested in a significant upskilling of the national egg farm workforce to raise animal husbandry standards and created a new risk assessment tool to help farmers stay profitable.

"We're making these improvements because they're the right thing to do, but it was pleasing to see in the CSIRO's community research report that trust in the egg industry increased over the last year."

Mr McMonnies said the sustainability framework report completes the second annual cycle of a three-year program of engagement with Australians, designed to ensure the industry farms eggs in a manner that is socially, environmentally and economically sustainable.





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# Co-operation the way through COVID-19 crisis

ISSUES facing the farming sector during the COVID-19 crisis were the focus of discussion during a recent telephone hook-up of Australia's agricultural ministers.

Federal Minister for Agriculture David Littleproud said the conversation was both co-operative and constructive.

"The Federal Government sought agreement from the states to adopt strict protocols for infection of staff found to have COVID-19, and for food processing under the standards set by the Food Standards Australia New Zealand.

"Adoption will provide clear direction to processors in addressing the safety and continuity of their business if any staff are found to have been infected," he said.

"This will provide confidence to the community that not only does food continue to remain safe but also reliable.

"Additionally, state

ministers were asked to agree to the live-stock saleyard and wool auction protocols to ensure these continue."

Minister Littleproud explained that this is an important link in the supply chain and the confirmation will reduce anxiety for the sector and producers.

"The saleyard and auction standards industry has put in place are practical in reducing the threat of COVID-19, and allow those who need to attend to do so.

"The standards include limiting attendance to essential saleyard staff, accredited livestock agents and genuine buyers.

"Thanks are extended to state and territory representatives for their hard work and dedication to Australia's agriculture and the nation's food security.

"Co-operation is how we will make it through this crisis, and post-virus we will have a stronger, more robust agricultural sector."



## Australian Organic stands with National Farmers' Federation

THE nation's leading organic industry body, Australian Organic, is joining the National Farmers' Federation in making an urgent call for agriculture and the food supply chain to be deemed an essential service for the purpose of the COVID-19 response.

Australian Organic CEO Niki Ford said: "As a member, we have been in weekly meetings with the NFF to support focus in the agricultural area, and now more than ever given the current crisis, will continue to back them."



"The NFF is committed to ensuring modern farming is not only viable and sustainable but continues its vital and growing contribution to the nation despite any challenging circumstances.

"The organic agricultur-

al sector makes up a significant portion of the industry, and we will be endeavouring to ensure the needs of organic growers are met during these difficult times."

The 2019 Australian Organic Market Report reveals the current area of land under certified organic management in Australia is over 35 million hectares, which is about 9.6 percent of farmland – more than half of all certified land area on earth.

There are currently more than 2000 certified organic primary producers in Australia including farmers, graziers, apiarists and wild harvesters.

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## C-Lines designs and provides high-quality livestock buildings



PART of the AGCO Grain & Protein division and with a worldwide presence, C-Lines specialises in designing and providing high-quality livestock buildings.

C-Lines have the adapted solutions to meet your needs – from small-scale production to high efficiency units.

C-Lines is able to design buildings of various types and purposes utilising their 'Generation' buildings for a faster return on investment and 'Evolution' buildings with a wider range of customisation and options.

Supported by a skilled engineering team headquartered in Orléans France, and further strengthened by a team locally, C-Lines is able to design complex buildings within a short time frame.

The scope of C-Lines expertise and proven local presence means they are well equipped and knowledgeable in local codes, building practices and farming needs to provide a total solution for your next project.

C-Lines is well established in both Australia and New Zealand, with satisfied and repeat customers from both leading corporates and small family farms, meaning C-Lines is a safe and low-risk choice.

Constructed of high-quality materials, C-Lines' buildings are durable and strong, making it suitable for many different environments.

In addition to animal houses, C-Lines build custom solutions such as hatcheries, slaughterhouses, poultry livestock buildings, industrial buildings, and cold stores.

With a wealth of experience, C-Lines are well equipped to design livestock buildings to suit individual needs.

C-Lines Australia and New Zealand product manager Peter Lutterschmidt said: "C-Lines thoroughly understands

these buildings need to adhere to the highest level of biosecurity standards."

"To aid in this, the inside of our buildings have no visible columns or roof trusses.

"Walls and ceilings are fully-lined and sealed, which in turn allows for cleaning to be completed with ease."

C-Lines offers expertise in the design and construction of poultry livestock buildings, in particular broiler houses and layer houses.

Broiler houses are the pride of the C-Lines product showcase and are well known for quality finishes that are used in a custom-made solution.

"Layer houses can be challenging due to the physical constraints of the equipment," Mr Lutterschmidt said.

"Where we lead the way is that a C-Lines layer house can be paired with our in-house Tecno layer

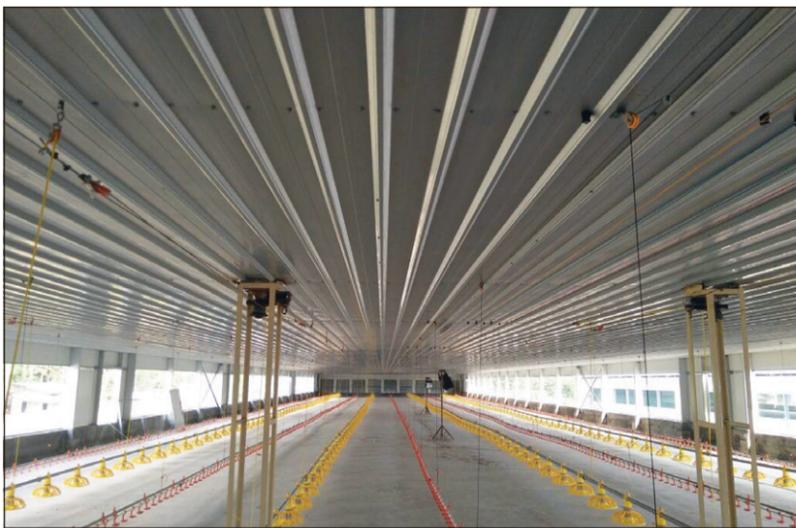
equipment and ventilation designed by Cumberland, two of AGCO Grain and Protein's poultry equipment companies, to provide a fully integrated solution.

"C-Lines are also specialists in complex projects such as hatcheries, processing plants and cold stores, and C-Lines Evolution buildings offer the best possible performance in terms of indoor environmental control, bio-safety and

process optimisation.

"C-Lines Evolution buildings, through their expert design and experience combined with the quality of materials used, is a great choice for your next project."

For more information regarding the C-Lines range of products, contact Peter Lutterschmidt on 03 9313 0313 or at peter.lutterschmidt@agcocorp.com or Gordon Hunter at gordon.hunter@agcocorp.com





Santrev director Luke Trevanion.

## Beware Australia of scam imitation businesses

REPUTABLE chicken housing, poultry shed and farm shed specialist Santrev Developments has experienced first-hand the threat of scam imitation companies in Australia's poultry industry.

Santrev director Luke Trevanion said the business was recently made aware of an imitation company operating in Australia, Singapore and the UK.

"It was unnerving to say the least, finding our company information had been stolen word for word, together with copies of our photos, testimonials and old logo," he said.

"We also discovered the imitation site contained one of our videos, after having removed and replaced Santrev's voice-over.

"The video features our employees, customers, directors and suppliers, though the scam compa-

ny has dubbed over the audio.

"Our present company logo had been removed from images containing Santrev uniforms and replaced with our old logo, which had been manipulated to carry the scam company's name.

"We found the imitation site after a customer asked an equipment supplier familiar with our product who they were.

"The company also used images from other poultry businesses and appears to be associated with a competitor judging by the content displayed on the imitation webpage.

"The worrying thing is that it had imitated our business using 100 percent of our digital property, and there may be more companies doing the same."

Santrev staff are assessing the company website and social media, and will watermark every digital asset moving forward.

"We encourage all suppliers and builders to follow our example and ensure they watermark their digital property to ensure imitation scam companies cannot claim it as their own," Mr Trevanion said.

Santrev is considering legal action.

"As a building company, we have a licence for each state we operate in, and while we have one on our website at the moment, we will ensure all relevant building licences are displayed," Mr Trevanion said.

"This would assist farmers to identify legitimate builders.

"We want to educate farmers across Australia what to look for when choosing a poultry builder.

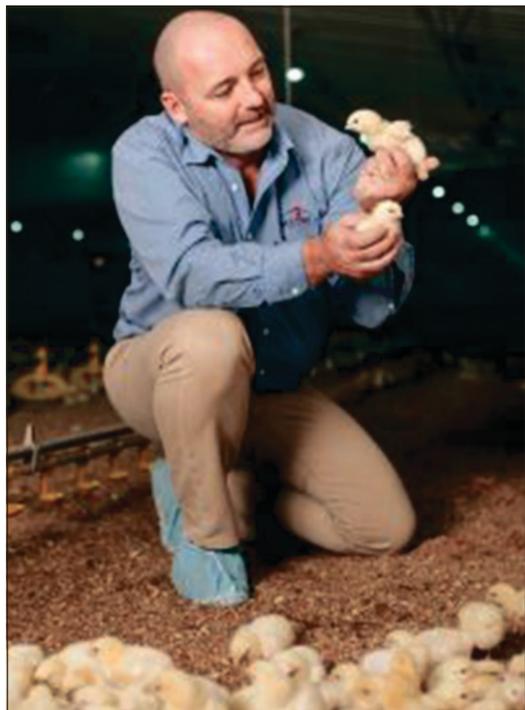
"In Queensland, under Queensland Building Construction Commission regulations, it is an offense to not display the company building licence on its website."

Mr Trevanion will be contacting the National Farmers' Federation and Queensland Farmers' Federation to convey the warning to farmers, and recommends farmers do an Australian business name search of any company they are considering hiring at [abr.business.gov.au](http://abr.business.gov.au)

"We understand farmers are the backbone of this country and we want to ensure they are protected from imitation companies," Mr Trevanion said.

"You can copy a website but you cannot copy the quality of a shed."

For further information, Luke Trevanion can be contacted on 0411 469 493 or by emailing [luke@santrev.com.au](mailto:luke@santrev.com.au)



## How to move animal waste sludge – an easy task for the right pump

MOVING animal waste sludge can be a difficult proposition for pumps.

It can be thick and corrosive, and is definitely only a job for the right pump.

As the waste liquid gets thicker, it becomes much less efficient to use a centrifugal pump, but the right peristaltic pump is an ideal solution.

Italian-made Ragazzini brand hose-pumps, distributed by Hydro Innovations, can move thick slurry comfortably when sized correctly and fitted with the right tubular element.

Ragazzini Rotho pumps use a roller on bearing method to 'squeeze' the tubular element, creating a vacuum on the suction side, enabling pumps to operate on high suction lifts.

The pumps are also capable of delivering pressures up to 15 bar, enabling them to push the sludge material over high static lifts or through long pipelines.

These pumps are fitted with a leak detection system that will stop the pump and send an alarm if the hose wears.

This is a float-type sensor that is located at the lowest point in the pump.

The pumps have no seals or valves to maintain, can run dry without damage, and there is no contact between the pumped media and moving parts.

Ragazzini pumps are designed to run slowly to promote longer hose life and they are able to pump liquids of sludge containing solid particles.

Flows from a few litres per minute up to 180 cubic metres per hour can be delivered, depending on pump model.

Ragazzini peristaltic pumps are available with a wide variety of hose options to suit abrasive and corrosive applications and are available with food-

grade hoses capable of being sterilized with hot water to 70C and steam to 120C.

Because the pump casing is not filled with lubricating fluid and the speed of the leak without detector, contamination is prevented and product loss is greatly minimised.

These pumps are perfect for clean in place or sanitise in place applications when fitted with the optional 'retractable roller'.

With this system, one of the rollers can be retracted via an over-centre rapid release cam and lever system.

This now enables full flow of a flushing/cleaning/sanitising fluid through the hose.

This new positioning system is essential for fully automated foodstuff handling applications that require regular cleaning and sterilisation of all the components in contact with the product.

Ragazzini pumps can also be run in reverse, making them ideal for tank emptying and filling operations.

Ragazzini pumps do not need the casing to be filled with lubrication fluid.

This reduces the chances of contamination and makes hose changes cleaner, quicker, safer and cheaper.

For more information, contact [sales@hydroinnovations.com](mailto:sales@hydroinnovations.com) or call 02 9898 1800.



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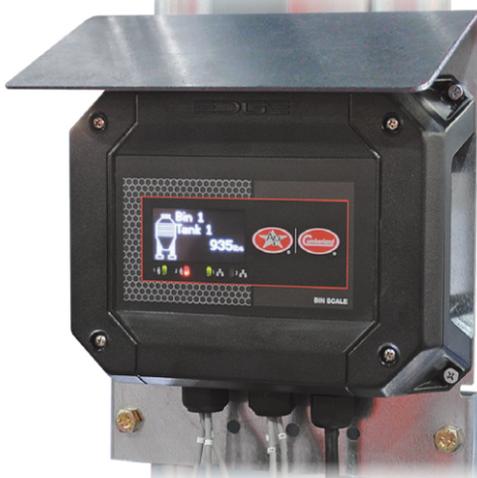
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