

Salmonella risk from backyard chooks

THE Victorian Department of Health and Human Services is investigating an outbreak of salmonella illness attributed to backyard chickens.

Most cases are from Melbourne's northern and western suburbs, as well as in Gippsland and western Victoria.

Victorian Chief Health Officer Prof Brett Sutton said investigations have not identified a common source as yet, but that most cases had contact with or consumed eggs from backyard chickens.

People are at risk of becoming sick after handling chickens and eggs, and after eating raw or under-cooked eggs.

Families with backyard chickens should be aware of the risk, and safe handling practices to limit the chance of salmonella infection are advised.

Deputy Chief Health Officer Angie Bone said poisoning from salmonella enteritidis can be avoided.

"There are a number of diseases you can get from animals, and it's always important to ensure you maintain good

hygiene after contact," Dr Bone said.

"It's important that people wash their hands after they've touched chickens, been in the coop or handled litter or feed.

"Kids love touching chickens and playing with them, but they need to be supervised when they're around chickens and avoid cuddling or kissing them."

It is important to examine the quality of any egg before eating it.

"Cracked, damaged or heavily soiled eggs shouldn't be used," Dr Bone said.

"Lightly soiled eggs need to be wiped down with a dry cloth or tissue – do not wash them as washing eggs can move salmonella from outside the shell to inside the egg through its pores."

Dr Bone said salmonella enteritidis is a very intrusive form of infection, and that it enters the egg before it is laid – whereas most salmonella attaches to the egg as it's laid from exposure to the chicken's stool.

Dr Bone said infants, the elderly and those with weakened immune

systems or medical conditions are particularly vulnerable and should be especially cautious.

Chickens infected with salmonella enteritidis can produce bacteria-containing eggs.

This can increase the chance of a person becoming ill with the bacteria if the egg is eaten raw or not thoroughly cooked.

If infection is suspected, seek medical assistance.

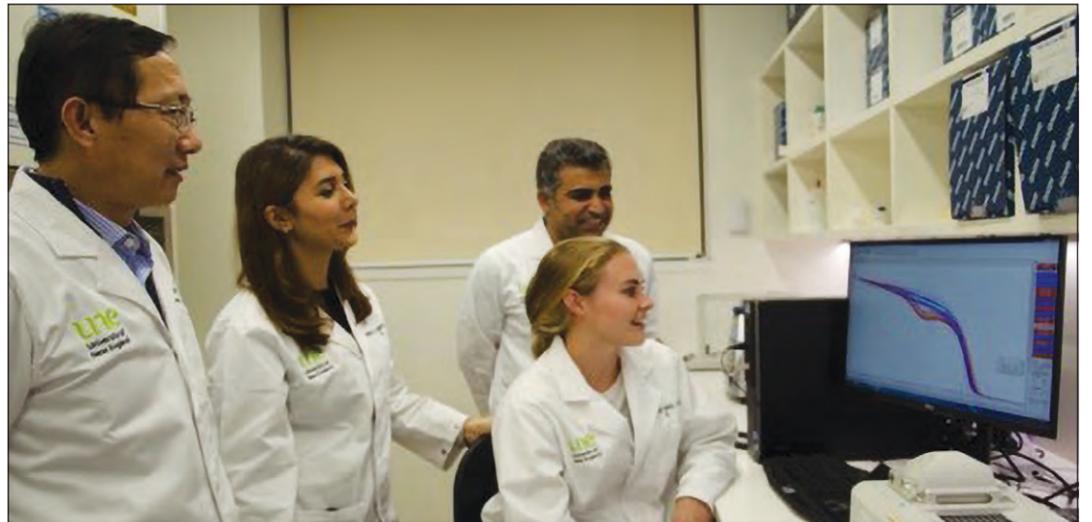
Symptoms present after 48-72 hours of exposure and can last for up to a week.

Dr Bone said symptoms are not like a 24-hour viral infection and include fever, abdominal pain, nausea and vomiting.

Australia experienced a large salmonella enteritidis outbreak linked to eggs in 2019.

Eleven poultry facilities in NSW and a Victorian egg layer farm discovered salmonella in late 2018, and all sites were quarantined and decontaminated.

Over 171 residents in NSW have been affected since the strain was detected in May 2018, with five in Victoria, three in Queensland and one in Tasmania.



Assoc Prof Shubiao Wu, Dr Kosar Gharib-Naseri, Dr Sarbast Kheravii and PhD student Ashley England.

Fast and accurate sexing method developed for chickens

Job Ready Training back in business

THIS month the Poultry Hub Australia team returned to the office.

We have all enjoyed having less Zoom meetings and chatting face-to-face, while maintaining social distance of course.

Though procedures have changed in the office since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is great to feel a little sense of normality again.

Poultry Hub's Job Ready Training is back in business.

We have our next training booked in for July in Tamworth and a series of other trainings across the New England region of NSW, which is very exciting.

We are still taking registrations, so if you are interested in taking part in this training program or want to know more, please contact us at poultryhub@une.edu.au

A great new piece of technology has been developed at the University of New England that I



by **TAMSYN CROWLEY**
Director



would like to share.

Assoc Prof Wu and his team have developed a fast and accurate sexing method to sex chickens using feather crude DNA.

In recent years, researchers have found it difficult to source sexed day-old broiler chicks for research purposes.

This was due to the change in genetics of current commercial broiler breeds resulting in feather sexing no longer being available.

This has forced many researchers to use parent lines or as-hatched commercial broilers to study

their nutritional needs and health.

However, issues would arise as parent lines may not respond to nutritional treatments and disease challenge in exactly the same way as commercial broilers.

Vent sexing is being used as an alternate method to feather sexing, yet this method – though fast and accurate – requires highly trained and experienced personnel.

In addition, most hatcheries were reluctant to allow vent sexers to sex a small number of birds on a regular basis for re-

searchers due to biosecurity concerns.

Other sexing methods include in-ovo sexing, such as near-infrared fluorescence, Ramen spectroscopy oestrogen radio-immune assays and genetic engineering modification.

These methods are technically complex and not feasible for research purposes where in-house hatching is not available for in-ovo sexing, and an engineered strain is not applicable.

Therefore, a fast and relatively larger-scale sexing approach for research purposes was required.

Molecular sexing methods have shown the most promise in meeting these requirements.

The method they developed is based on the fact that female birds are heterogametic (ZW), and males are homogametic (ZZ).

The quick DNA extraction and fast PCR run

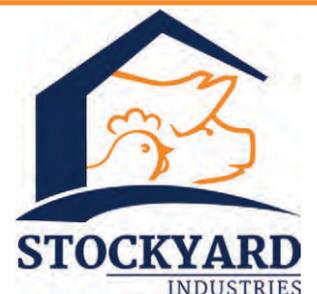
continued P2



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Poultry Industry Calendar of Events

2020

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

JUL 20-22 Poultry Science Association (PSA) Virtual Annual Meeting
poultryscience.org/PSA-Annual-Meeting

NOV 4-5 – Poultry Xpo, Stratford, Canada
www.poultryxpo.ca

2021

FEB 9-10 – Australian Poultry Science Symposium, University of Sydney, NSW
www.apss2021.com.au

APR 11-13 – Poultry Information Exchange/Australasian Milling Conference (PIX/AMC), Gold Coast, QLD
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

AUG 8-12 – World Poultry Congress, Paris, France
www.wpcparis2020.com

AUG 16-18 – World Poultry Science Association (WPSA) – Cambridge UK
www.wpsa2020.org

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

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Animal welfare standards and guidelines under review

EGG Farmers of Australia is set to put forward its views on the care of livestock on Australian farms to a panel currently reviewing the nation's animal welfare code.

The three-member panel was appointed by the federal government to review the introduction of new animal welfare standards and guidelines that will eventually govern all livestock farming across the country.

Egg Farmers of Australia is expected to meet with the panel in July or August.

The poultry industry has been waiting for up to six years for the guidelines to be implemented.

New guidelines and standards on the care of poultry will give egg farmers clarity and certainty on how they can develop their farms into



by MELINDA HASHIMOTO
CEO

the future.

It's unfortunate that this process has so far taken six years because without any updated guidelines on animal care, investment and growth in the egg industry has been impeded.

Egg Farmers of Australia is the peak voice of Australian egg farmers who operate caged, free-range and barn-laid farms.

The three-member panel will hear submissions



from many key animal industries before finalising the proposed guidelines for government approval.

Discussion points Egg Farmers of Australia will raise with the panel include:

- Egg Farmers of Australia's position on key farming issues.
- The status of the egg industry and the egg market.
- Egg market impacts and trends.
- Economic and social impacts facing the egg industry.
- The latest CSIRO Sustainability Framework for egg production.

Production issues including restructures of the industry, low returns and disease risks.

Costs relating to the long-awaited animal welfare standards and guidelines, and the resulting lack of investment and debt in the industry because the guidelines have taken six years to reach this point, with no outcome.

The need to retain caged egg farming in Australia – a key issue which will be emphasised to the panel. Consumers would face egg shortages if supermarkets continued a push against caged egg farms. According to the CSIRO, 40 percent of egg sales in Australian supermarkets are caged eggs, and the box market also makes up a large amount of egg sales from the caged sector. Without caged eggs, we would see a shortage of eggs nationwide.

Harmonisation

If only it was as simple as adding notes to a melody.

Egg Farmers of Aus-

tralia work with government agencies and bring to its attention issues that will develop and improve the industry.

Years ago, when the system was such that eggs were sold and consumed in the state they were produced, state legislation was more straightforward.

Roll ahead a few decades to a system where a number of businesses have multiple locations or suppliers in a range of states and are producing eggs under different rules.

Examples are the differences between states in egg stamping – as per the table below – control orders, auditing responsibility and salmonella enteritidis testing.

It is hoped that states implement the Australian animal welfare standards and guidelines for poultry in a timely manner, and that following endorsement of the Agriculture Ministers, that the legislation is placed on the forward program for actioning.



State	When egg stamping is compulsory
WA	When producing eggs at any volume.
NSW and ACT	When producing 240 or more eggs perweek. Numbers below this are only exempt when eggs are sold at farm gate OR for fundraising activity where the eggs will be cooked.
SA	When owning 50 or more egg producing birds OR selling eggs at a market OR supplying a food business.
QLD	When producing eggs at any volume.
VIC	When owning 50 or more egg producing birds.
TAS	When eggs are sold by egg producers to an egg business OR a food business OR at a market OR by way of wholesale.

Egg stamping table. Source: Australian Eggs Egg Stamping Guide

Fast and accurate sexing method developed for chickens

from P1

makes it possible to sex birds quickly with the protocol including labelling the chicks, processing the samples and accurate call of genotypes.

The DNA extraction procedure takes around 30 minutes with the basal part of chicken feathers, and the PCR procedure takes about 70 minutes for 100 birds.

The fact that they were able to successfully extract and use the crude DNA from feathers also makes this method favourable because it is a less invasive technique than extracting blood.

The assay was validated and the accuracy confirmed by the HRM-sexing of 1318 broiler chicks that were used for nutritional and disease challenge trials performed at the University of New England, and the results were

then verified by examining the sex of each bird upon dissection once the trials had been completed.

The cost of this DNA sexing method was also minimal with an estimate of approximately \$1 per bird for reagents

and lab consumables.

Overall, Associate Professor Wu and his team have developed a sexing protocol that can be used to sex chickens in a cost effective, accurate and fast way.

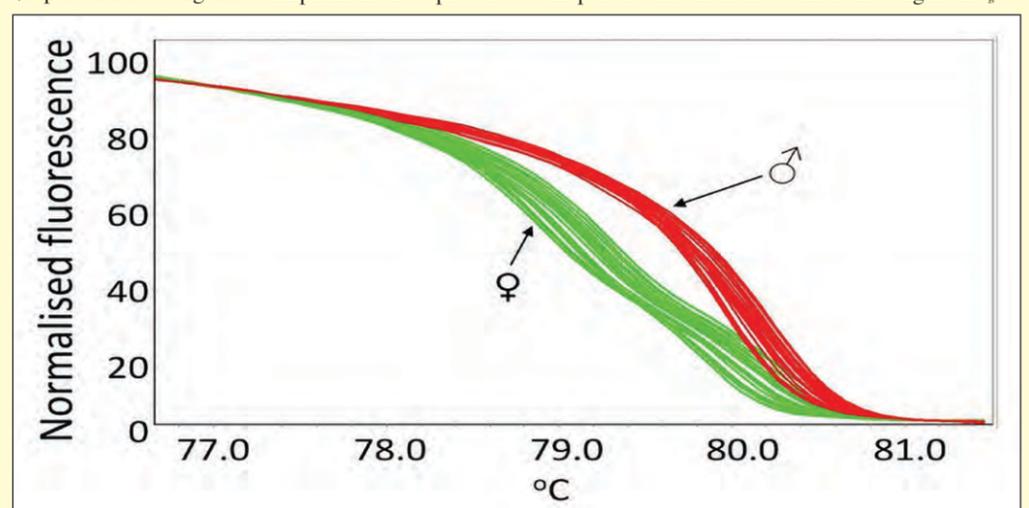
This method can be implemented practi-

cally for large-scale use where hundreds of birds are needed, such as in nutrition and disease challenge trials.

It is estimated that 500 to 800 birds can be DNA sexed within a day using this procedure and will provide researchers

with the ability to make use of sexed birds in their trials.

This will help to decrease the variation in experiments, resulting in a higher power to detect responses of the birds to the treatments under investigation.



Normalised HRM curve to identify male and female birds from feather crude DNA.

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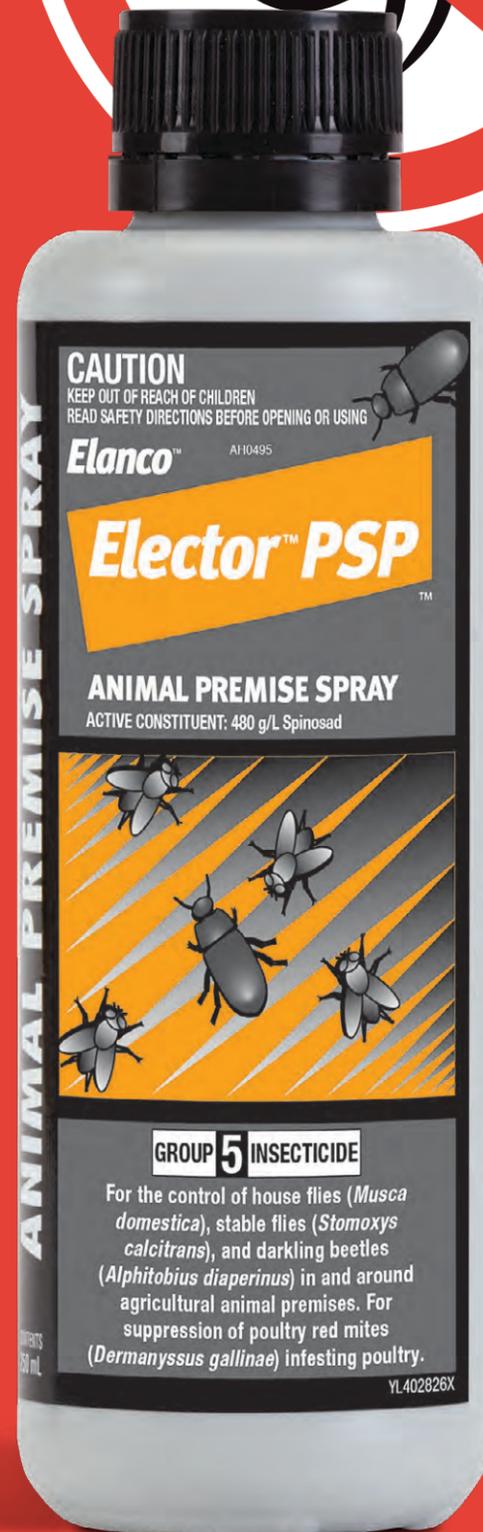
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Why you should listen to your newly hatched chicks



Photo: Jason Leung

EMERGING research suggests that 'listening' to the sounds newly hatched chicks make can aid early detection of welfare issues.

In nature, when distressed and uncomfortable with their surroundings, chicks attract their mother with a loud and distinct stress call.

In commercial chicken farming however, thousands of chicks are reared in batches.

In a study published by the Royal Society, a team of animal welfare and behaviour scientists from across the UK collected acoustic recordings in 12 typical flocks of 25,000 chicks.

They found that these calls could be identified above other noises such as farm machinery and regular calling.

Where previous research had linked distress calling to stress and anxiety-like states in chicks, this study shows it could predict flock-level behaviour, future growth and

mortality rate.

Professor in animal behaviour informatics at Newcastle University and principal investigator Lucy Asher said, "By analysing the calls chicks make in their first few days of life, it seems we are able to predict weight gained and the number of deaths in the whole flock for the whole life."

"This means we could have a very powerful tool to help chicken welfare."

"What is particularly useful is that this welfare indicator can be used early on in life, whereas most chicken welfare indicators are taken later in their life, when it is too late to make major improvements."

"As an added benefit this study shows how we can measure chick calls automatically, meaning no extra work for farmers, but more information to help them improve chicken welfare."

The researchers employed a method that involved the 'spectral entropy' of the soundscape – a value that describes how sound can vary from a clear, tonal note up to white noise.

As increasing numbers of chicks call in unison, the usual background noise of the farm becomes overall more tonal.

This 'computationally simple' way of counting distress calls could signify to farmers that chicks

require their attention and may ultimately improve welfare across the lifetime of the chick.

Reader in animal behaviour at the University of Roehampton Dr Alan McElligott said: "The results of this research show how useful vocalisations can be for monitoring welfare, and especially in an age when animal welfare needs should be central to progress in precision livestock farming."

The study involved researchers from the University of Plymouth, University of Roehampton, SRUC, and Newcastle University.

Findings are published in the Journal of the Royal Society Interface.



\$36 million for our agricultural communities – shows to go on

THE Australian Government is spending \$36 million to support agricultural show societies in recovering from the effects of COVID-19, ensuring they can continue after the pandemic.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development Michael McCormack said the COVID-19 pandemic has hurt agricultural shows, with most expected to be cancelled for 2020 in the interest of public health and social distancing measures.

"Agricultural shows are part of the fabric of regional Australia, showcasing everything positive about our communities and local industries," the Deputy Prime Minister said.

"These shows are estimated to contribute \$1 billion to the economy each year and attract six million patrons annually, supported by 50,000 volunteers."

"They create social bonds and improve mental health in parts of regional Australia where distance, drought, bushfires and now COVID-19 have caused significant hardship and distress."

Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management David Littleproud said the Supporting Agricultural Shows program will provide a one-off reimbursement to agricultural show societies to deal with cash flow pressures caused

by COVID-19-related cancellations of agricultural shows.

"This funding supports not only the big Royal Shows in each capital but right down to the small country shows because we acknowledge the role shows play in connecting agriculture and regional Australia to metropolitan Australians," he said.

"There is a real risk if we don't help that not only could Royal Shows cease to function the way they are now but also those small shows."

"In addition, \$100,000 will go towards supporting the Agricultural Shows Australia rural ambassador program, which will enable the vital community work the ambassadors perform in regional Australia to continue."

"I encourage my state and territory counterparts to also make a contribution to help agricultural shows survive the impact of COVID-19 because of the positive impact they have on their economies."

This funding complements the Australian Government's existing \$20 million Regional Agricultural Show Development Grants Program and will be provided under the \$1 billion Relief and Recovery Fund, which is supporting regions, communities and industry sectors that have been disproportionately affected by the coronavirus crisis.

The \$36 million Supporting Agricultural Shows program comprises three components:

- \$10 million in operational support for local show societies. Shows will be able to claim up to \$10,000 if their attendance last year was less than 2000, up to \$15,000 if their attendance was between 2000 and 4999 and up to \$70,000 if their attendance was over 5000.

- \$26 million in operational support for Royal Agricultural Show societies, which can additionally be used to claim for unrecoverable costs associated with preparing for the cancelled show.

- \$100,000 in operational support for Agricultural Shows Australia's Rural ambassador program.

All agricultural shows that have cancelled their show in 2020 because of COVID-19 will be eligible and they will not have to compete for assistance.

Eligible reimbursement costs are expected to include: bank fees, utilities, rates, insurance, fire alarms and equipment, cleaning supplies, telecommunications, IT system licensing costs, website costs, state/national show body affiliation fees and rent.

For more information on the fund, visit regional.gov.au/regional/programs/covid-19-relief-and-recovery-fund.aspx

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Paltry returns for poultry meat farmers

NSW Farmers is concerned for contract poultry farmers who are struggling to operate in an increasingly consolidated market, with many being forced from the industry.

NSW Farmers president James Jackson said most Australians would not be aware of the competition issues plaguing the poultry meat industry and that contract growers, including our chicken, turkey and duck farmers, need greater support.

"Most Aussies know about the issues in the dairy sector with \$1 a litre milk, but not too many know about what's happening in poultry," he said.

"Chicken is by far the most affordable meat on supermarket shelves, making it a popular protein choice for consumers.

"Australians now eat over 47kg per person of chicken per year, but poultry meat farmers are getting paltry returns.

"There are problems at retail with the price of chicken being kept artificially low, and problems at the processor stage, with limited

competition restricting the ability of farmers to negotiate their contract terms.

"Though the market for chicken is national, the market for growing services is geographically fixed.

"Over the past decade, we've seen the closure of multiple chicken processing plants in NSW and this has left growers with virtually no choice in who to contract to in their region."

The situation has weakened the bargaining power of farmers, restricting their capacity to negotiate fair contract terms.

"Worse still, many growers have been left with stranded assets and no ability to contract to a different processor," Mr Jackson said.

"The lack of competition in our supply chain has unfairly disadvantaged our farmers.

"The poultry meat industry does not reflect normal market conditions, and we are supportive of investigations being made into the industry."

The ACCC is aware of potential competition and unfair trading issues in the chicken

meat industry and has confirmed it will conduct an initial review of the sector.

This review, though a positive step, will not compel stakeholders to provide information nor government to act on recommendations.

"NSW Farmers is calling for a Treasury-directed ACCC inquiry into the poultry meat industry, which is more thorough than a market study," Mr Jackson said.

"This will clearly show the state of the industry and better highlight avenues of reform to support fair and effective competition.

"Similar to the dairy industry, we believe there is a need for a mandatory code to ensure contracts are fair and enable a sustainable supply chain into the future.

"A treasury-led inquiry will demonstrate this need."



The Australian Poultry Science Symposium 2021 is going ahead

THE Poultry Research Foundation, in conjunction with World Poultry Science Association Australian Branch, cordially invite you to the 32nd Australian Poultry Science Symposium at University of Sydney, Camperdown Campus on Tuesday, February 9 to Wednesday, February 10, 2021.

The Australian Poultry Science Symposium is the premier avian science conference in Australia, attracting delegates from across the country and around the world.

The conference will focus on the over-arching theme of 'social license for production of poultry' and will be presented as a hybrid event, meaning there will be a physical event in Sydney as well as streaming live online so that delegates can attend from their workplace or home.

In these unprecedented times, it was vital that international attendees could still participate in this world-renowned event, so by using one of the most cutting-edge conference platforms, the event will open globally, and potentially to an even larger audience than ever before.

It is predicted there will be a decrease in physical attendees, and so the decision was made to move the actual event back to

the University of Sydney Campus.

Though held at the Sheraton in Sydney's CBD for the past four years, which was very successful, it was not feasible for 2021 as numbers will obviously be impacted.

However, organisers are optimistic that the virtual event will help increase the exposure of the conference and put it in a positive position for many years to come.

As always APSS will

continue to feature an array of excellent speakers, as well provide delegates with opportunities to network and communicate by offering a lively social program for both physical and virtual attendees.

Save the dates – Tuesday, February 9 to Wednesday, February 10, 2021 – and start writing your papers.

Online paper submissions will open on Wednesday, July 1, 2020.

For more information, visit apss2021.com.au



32nd Annual Australian Poultry Science Symposium

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CQU alumnus Melinda's university path takes her from the farm to Tokyo and back again

CENTRAL Queensland University alumnus Melinda Hashimoto is the CEO of Egg Farmers of Australia.

A background in farming, a passion for education, business and politics and a love of language have come together to put CQU alumnus Melinda Hashimoto in charge of Egg Farmers of Australia.

Melinda has come a long way since graduating with a Bachelor of Education (Languages Other than English) from CQU in 2000, and now, as Egg Farmers of Australia CEO, she acknowledges the vital role her university studies played to put her in the top job.

Having grown up on farms with her family around Brisbane and later Central Queensland, Melinda always had dreams of the places and people in the world around her.

"I decided to study at CQU as it had a unique one-of-a-kind Japanese immersion course called The Language and Culture Initial Teacher Education: Primary program," Melinda said.

"From a young age I wanted to study a language.

"The school I attended introduced Japanese studies and I had the most inspirational teachers in years 7 and 8.

"I enjoyed their classes and believe their drive and commitment to providing an incredible learning experience for their students correlated in my goal to become a Japanese teacher."

It was also during her CQU Japanese studies that she met her husband Ryo and the next part of her journey began.

"My four-year course was completed in three-and-a-half years and I then went and taught at St. Brendan's for 18 months before moving to Japan for five years," she said.

"My husband Ryo and I worked at an international school and set up an elementary school starting with six students.

"After five years there were over 100 students enrolled – this feat was one of our huge achievements.

"Together we taught,

built resources and time-tables."

After returning to Australia, Melinda completed a Master of Business Administration while she worked three part-time jobs.

Eventually she found a job as a political and economic adviser to the Japanese consulate in Brisbane and later, with Trade and Investment Queensland's North Asia team.

"I was involved in politics at an early age," she said.

"My family sat around the table and discussed politics and I wanted to understand it.

"Bill O'Chee was a huge inspiration to me because he was one of the very few young politicians in my era and I believed age should not be a barrier to being involved in the political process."

At 20 when she was still a CQU student, Melinda was president of the Young Nationals.

This role allowed her to travel and meet a range of people and strengthen and change some of her views.

"Trade has always interested me, given Japan is

our second-largest trading partner and agriculture and mining are commodities in our region that make their way to Japan," she said.

"I really realised my love of trade when I worked for the Federal Minister for Agriculture."

Melinda has lived and worked in Yeppoon, Tokyo, Toowoomba, Canberra and now she's come full circle back to her farming roots as Egg Farmers of Australia CEO in Rockhampton, representing more than 270 Australian egg farms.

In Australia, more than 17 million eggs are produced daily to meet domestic consumption, and the industry contributes \$1.8 billion to the national economy.

"Our organisation is apolitical and one of the most enjoyable parts of the job is engaging with people from all levels of government, all parties and all walks of life," she said.

"It is really fascinating.

"This job would be difficult to do without previous experiences in education, trade, agriculture and

business, both practical and theoretical.

"Sometimes in life you need to take risks and be prepared to move around to gain experience.

"The experience in fast-paced environments helps a great deal.

"One challenge I have found is working with policy advisers who have never lived in the regions or have no experience with agriculture.

"When considering policy issues these advisers do not come with that lens and I have found my perspective has been helpful in improving policies.

"Everyone has different knowledge and experience and we can always learn from one another."

Melinda said the benefits of studying with a regional university spoke for themselves.

"Any learning opens your mind to new ideas, approaches and people," she said.

"Regional universities often have different offerings and a range of experiences in industry placement and community settings that makes your time

there enjoyable.

"Local students are lucky to have a regional university to attend and with online learning you can be engaged with your university wherever you are.

"Regional education allows for specialised industry placements and for international students they are able to have a study and lifestyle experi-

ence that they would not experience at home.

"Central Queensland University is well known for first of family.

"I am the first of my family to receive a formal university degree.

"My parents did not have the opportunity to attend university but were driven to ensure I had the opportunity, for which I am thankful."



CQU alumnus Melinda Hashimoto is Egg Farmers of Australia CEO.



John O'Hara recently finished up as Sunny Queen Australia CEO. Photo: ipswichfirst.com.au

Sunny Queen Australia CEO cruises out after 18 years

SUNNY Queen Australia CEO John O'Hara recently announced he is finishing up with the company after 18 years in the top job.

It was 2002 when O'Hara joined Sunny Queen, which originally launched 51 years ago as largely a state-focused business known as the Queensland Egg Board.

Now the Queensland farmer-owned giant has both a national and international presence to be proud of.

This transformation has taken time to achieve but was initiated

four years into O'Hara's term at the helm, when the company started using a small factory at Coolangatta to broaden its focus.

This include a range of egg-based foods, which proved to be a master stroke.

Then in 2016, a substantial investment of \$40 million in a new distribution and manufacturing plant in the Brisbane suburb of Carole Park saw the company further develop its future-focused food facilities.

This value-added egg processing facility enabled the company to

produce a mix of egg-based foods including quiches, omelettes and much more to meet the growing demands for food in Australia and Asia.

"Just when other companies in food and agriculture were selling up and moving interstate and offshore, we believed there was a great opportunity to invest locally," O'Hara said.

Sunny Queen Australia is now estimated to be worth about \$7.4 billion a year and holds a sizeable share of the breakfast market.

"For me, the timing was right and last November I said to the Board I wanted to go do something else," O'Hara said.

"You should go out when the business is strong, not when it's getting weaker."

Taking over as CEO is Julie Proctor, who has worked in several senior management roles within the business over the past 15 years.



Julie Proctor is the new CEO of Sunny Queen Australia. Photo: couriermail.com.au



Recipe



Cook time 35 min
Serves 6

Potato tortilla with chive mayonnaise

INGREDIENTS

Mayonnaise

- 4 egg yolks
- 500ml vegetable oil
- 2 teaspoons of Dijon mustard
- Juice of 1 lemon
- Salt, to taste
- Small bunch of chives, chopped

Caramelised onions

- 2 onions, sliced
- 4 tablespoons of oil

Tortilla

- 10 eggs
- 3 tablespoons cream
- 300g left over roasted potatoes, roughly sliced
- Small bunch of flat leaf parsley, picked and washed

METHOD

Mayonnaise

1. Place the egg yolks into a jug with the mustard, lemon juice and a pinch salt. Using a stick blender or mixer, blend the yolks to a paste.

2. While you continue to blend, slowly and steadily pour in the oil to combine it with the yolks. Once thick, stop blending and fold in chopped chives and season to taste with salt and pepper.

3. In a pan over medium heat, add the oil for the caramelised onions. Once hot, add the sliced onion and cook for 5 minutes until softened and caramelised. Leave aside to cool.

Tortilla

1. Mix the eggs and cream for the tortilla, then add the cooled caramelised onion and potatoes. Season with salt and pepper.
2. In a non-stick frying pan, heat the oil for the tortilla over high heat.
3. When hot, pour in the potato mixture and mix well with a spatula for 30 seconds.
4. Turn the heat down to medium and continue to stir to break

5. Run the spatula around the side of the tortilla to form the edges. Cook for 3–4 minutes or until the surface starts to set.
6. Cover the entire pan with a large plate and turn the tortilla over, then slide the uncooked side back into the hot pan. Continue to cook for a further 3–4 minutes. If you don't feel confident flipping the tortilla, pop the pan and the tortilla it into a preheated oven at 180 degrees and bake for 5 minutes until just cooked through. If you flipped the tortilla cook for a further 4 minutes until firm when pressed.
7. Flip onto a plate. Allow to cool and set for 10 mins, otherwise it will be hard to slice.
8. To serve, cut a slice of the tortilla, add a dollop of chive mayonnaise and parsley.

By Jo Barrett

For more recipes, visit australianeggs.org.au

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Uni fee reforms a boon for agriculture industry

THE cost of studying agriculture at university will be slashed from 2021 under an Australian Government higher education funding plan aimed at producing graduates for high-priority jobs for growth sectors.

Agriculture Minister David Littleproud said the whole agriculture sector will continue to thrive post-COVID-19 and will be helped by more access to educated, highly skilled workers.

"This announcement by the Education Minister that students who study agriculture will pay 62 percent less for their degree reinforces the sector's status as an

essential, high-growth industry," Minister Littleproud said.

"These reforms recognise the farming sector will lead Australia's economic recovery out of COVID-19 and towards the Ag2030 \$100 billion target.

"We have the brightest agricultural minds in Australia and the best farmers in the world."

The Australian agriculture industry is changing, including the adoption of technology, advanced equipment and new farming techniques, and the emergence of internationally competitive industry and business structures.

"The workforce and skill needs of the in-

dustry are changing too and this announcement means it will be more accessible for people to upskill for the breadth of agriculture, agribusiness and ag-tech jobs available today and in the future," Minister Littleproud said.

"The announcement by Minister Tehan supports our focus on securing Australia's food security supply chain and harnessing export opportunities.

"These reforms will also allow us to support more regional, rural and Indigenous students to access higher education, because we believe every Australian should have access to a world-class education."



Raw smoked eggs. An irresistible concept. While the author has never tried them, he couldn't resist writing on them, in his home fridge that is.

What are these hens smoking?

HOLY smoke, I could hardly believe my eyes.

As I was about to write this month's column on a somewhat poultry matter, I happened to open a June 26 online report from the ABC's Victoria Country Hour, titled 'Victorian farmers create world's first cold-smoked egg, and chefs are loving the results'.

Wow! Anyway, as a long standing lover of the somewhat mysterious salted duck eggs I buy occasionally from Asian supermarkets, I momentarily tried to join the dots and work out how anyone could produce smoked raw eggs.

Too hard, it seemed. So, here goes and to do justice to the ABC and the reporter, Gippsland girl Jane McNaughton, here's how it's done, word for word from her online report.

Smoked meat and veggies have increasingly become a popular food trend over the past couple of years, but have you ever heard of smoked raw eggs?



Cant Comment by BRENDON CANT

A family east of Geelong has begun infusing a smoky flavour into raw eggs through the pores of the shells, and in doing so increasing their shelf life to five months.

Julie Kos from the Smoked Egg Company said it took years to per-

fect the world-first product and clinical testing proves the smoking process eliminates bacterial growth and essentially stops the ageing process of the eggs.

"People just didn't understand, they heard the word 'smoked' and they thought it was a boiled egg, which is wasn't – it's still raw," she said.

The idea began when Julie purchased her husband Paul a smoker for their 30th wedding anniversary and decided to experiment.

"When he brought the smoked egg back and I cooked with it, we found that it had the most amazing flavour," she said.

"We realised the marriage between the egg and the smoking process was quite incredible."

Mr Kos, who runs 5000 laying hens on the family's Stonehaven property said the taste of the egg was like nothing he had ever eaten before.

"It's a mellow smoky flavour – people describe it as being like bacon and eggs, without the bacon," he said.

But as with any natural product, there is some variation between the taste of each egg depending on the age of the chicken that produced it.

"Sometimes you get a stronger hit than others and it really depends on the size of the egg," Ms Kos said.

"We can't control the natural pores in an egg, so sometimes the flavour isn't as strong, but most of the time it's a nice strong flavour.

The business buys in eggs which are cold-smoked in groups of 75,000 at a small factory off-site.

"We don't use our own eggs as Kossies Free Range Eggs have a beautiful creamy flavour which gets masked by the smoke," Mr Kos said.

But when the smoked egg was still in the research phase, the Kos's discovered more than injecting the egg with flavour.

Ms Kos noticed the egg whites were not breaking down in smoked eggs, so she wanted to discover if

the system was also pasteurising the eggs.

Food Innovation Australia funded research for the Smoked Egg Company to complete food safety testing with the CSIRO in Werribee, to understand the action that the smoking process has upon salmonella species.

"After eight weeks a normal egg had 21 million bacteria and the smoked egg had nothing," she said.

"It's a precise equation of time, temperature, humidity, volume of smoke and volume of product.

"We smoke close to freezing point and that sets it apart.

"We're the first people to smoke eggs commercially."

All eggs can harbour harmful bacteria, such as salmonella, which can have devastating health effects and Ms Kos said having a safe egg was important for people with vulnerable immune systems.

"We've got a safe egg for pregnant women, young children or people who are ill and should be eating bacteria-free food – and now we've got nature's own vitamin capsule that is bacteria-free," she said.

The smoky flavour of the eggs is praised by chefs at some of Melbourne's high-end restaurants and the shelf life of the product is applauded too.

Chef Johnny Di Francesco has incorporated the smoked eggs into his menu at his Melbourne restaurant Gradi.

"The reason why I use smoked eggs is because of the technology that is being used, the egg is so much safer to use, the shelf life of it is so much longer," he said.

"But also the uniqueness of the flavour – you can't get that through just smoking a dish.

"We started playing around with it and I thought, wow this is an awesome product to experiment with."

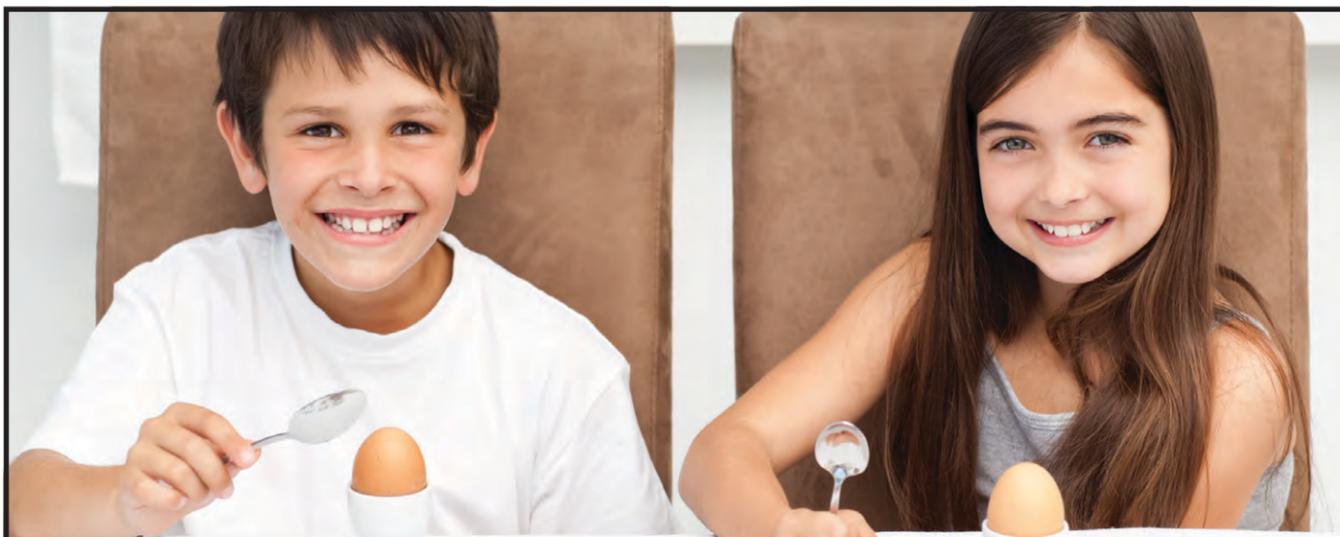
Mr Di Francesco said the eggs could be used in a versatile range of foods and can replace the flavour of smoked meat in vegetarian dishes.

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Now is the time to be a change maker: Nuffield applications are open for 2021

THIS is a year of change that will significantly impact global economies and change agricultural markets.

Now is the time for Australia's proactive agriculturalists to consider a Nuffield Scholarship that will provide the opportunity to research important rural concepts, techniques and systems that will secure the industry's future in a post-COVID world.

With applications for the 2021 Nuffield Scholarship program open now, farmers wanting to make positive change in their own businesses, communities and the broader agriculture sector will have the chance to do just that.

Each scholarship is valued at \$30,000, and with 20 on offer in 2021, the application period will run until Friday, Septem-

ber 11, 2020.

Interviews will take place across September and October.

Nuffield Australia CEO and 2013 scholar Jodie Redcliffe said though the impact of COVID-19 has led to differences in the 2021 scholarship program, it continues to present an unrivalled opportunity for emerging change-makers in the industry.

"For 70 years, Nuffield has remained committed to ensuring the delivery of high-quality and valuable scholarship programs that drive industry leadership, particularly through periods of adaptation and change," Ms Redcliffe said.

"With the current changes in both domestic and international markets, tough seasonal conditions and continually shifting

consumer demands, agriculture is more challenging than ever, and the future sustainability of our industry depends heavily on innovation and adaptation.

"A Nuffield Scholarship provides a platform to lead this wave of change by giving inquiring young farmers a life-changing opportunity to take their ideas to the next level."

Scholars undertake a global study program, researching their chosen topic across 14 weeks.

The 2021 scholars will have a small reduction in the group travel component, shifting from six to four weeks.

"Access to Nuffield's extensive global network is what sets this program apart," Ms Redcliffe said.

"It enables participants to learn first-hand how

other farm businesses around the world are tackling issues and barriers within the sector.

"The program opens doors that expose them to divergent thinking, which expands their big-picture understanding of topics."

Open to farmers, fishers and those in associated industries between 28 and 45 years of age, applying for a Nuffield Scholarship is done online via the Nuffield Australia website.

It is an inclusive and unique program that suits candidates who want to learn and grow in their businesses, and no tertiary qualifications are required.

"We're urging all young people in agriculture to visit the Nuffield website and look into applying," Ms Redcliffe said.

"Many successful ap-

plicants only fine-tune their research topics as they progress through the process, so I'd encourage people to apply even if they don't yet have a firm research topic in mind.

"We continue to deliver a co-operative and collaborative learning experience through this program, and we are here to help with ideas and answer any questions along the way."

The value of a Nuffield Scholarship extends far beyond the completion of the travel and research report.

"On completing their research, scholars become part of our 460-strong Nuffield alumni in Australia and a group of 1800 worldwide, which is a network of influential and forward-thinking farmers," Ms Redcliffe said.

Applications are open until Friday, September 11, 2020.

For more information and to apply, visit nuffield.com.au

Successful recipients of the 2021 Nuffield Scholarships will be awarded during the Nuffield Australia National Conference to be held in Brisbane on October 26, 2020.

To find out more on the 2021 Nuffield Scholarship program, visit nuffield.com.au/copy-of-eligibility-value-tenure-1

Australia's food security among the world's best

FOLLOWING a re-emergence of panic buying behaviour, Agriculture Minister David Littleproud has moved to reaffirm that Australia's food security is among the best in the world.

"People should not be panicking," Minister Littleproud said. "Our agricultural sector is ensuring an abundant supply of excellent-quality, fresh food from all parts of the country."

"Australian farmers have continued to calmly go about producing the best food in the world, and Australians can be assured there is no threat to their food security."

"Australia's food supply is safe and how we, our farmers and our supply chains have managed the pandemic through the crisis is the envy of countries all over the world."

"I want to stress to

all Australians that our food supply is safe.

"We are a country of 25 million, and we produce enough food for 75 million."

Australia has reliable, secure supply chains from the paddock to the kitchen.

"We continue to engage with state and territory governments to ensure supply lines remain open," Minister Littleproud said.

He said panic buying behaviour was completely unnecessary.

"To those bulk buying, I have a simple message: stop it."

"Take a leaf out of our farmers' handbook."

"Stay calm and we will get through this together."

"We have been through worse in the past three months and agriculture came through for Australians with flying colours." 🐔



Nuffield Australia CEO Jodie Redcliffe.



2020 Nuffield Scholar Johnny Gardener.



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Improving regional workplace safety

THE NSW government is helping businesses return to normal trade through the launch of a new suite of resources to guide businesses as they manage the risk of COVID-19.

Deputy Premier and Member for Monaro John Barilaro and Minister for Better Regulation Kevin Anderson launched the resources at a farm in Hoskinstown and said the resources go a long way to supporting regional businesses in NSW.

"Now that COVID restrictions are easing, it's time to get NSW's regional economy back up and running," Mr Barilaro said.

"I encourage every business to jump online and download these simple yet powerful tools to map out a safe way back to business that makes life easier for customers and workers as we make our way into recovery."

Mr Anderson said these new materials have been specifically created for non-customer facing businesses to ensure everyone across the state has access to industry-specific, practical guidance to prevent the spread of the virus.

"76,957 businesses have already downloaded the NSW Government's COVID Safety Plans, and we've now created additional resources for regional businesses such as

farms and agricultural businesses, hotels, offices, construction sites and warehouses," Mr Anderson said.

"The materials available include practical, inexpensive guidance to keep your workers safe during this time.

"Common misconceptions for agricultural workers are you can't ride in a car with others or that you can't hire seasonal workers anymore.

"That's simply not true so long as you have the right measures in place."

Some of the measures agricultural businesses and farms can take include:

- Avoiding close contact in vehicles and lowering windows for ventilation;

- Checking that workers are not displaying COVID symptoms;

- Ensuring drivers assisting with loading stock minimise contact with surfaces;

- Communication over phone or radio rather than in person where possible; and
- Contactless delivery through electronic paperwork rather than signature on delivery.

The new campaign materials including social media tiles, downloadable posters and checklists for all NSW agricultural businesses are available at nsw.gov.au/covid-19/industry-guidelines/agriculture

Biosecurity and what it means to Australia

AUSTRALIA is currently free of the world's worst animal diseases such as African swine fever, foot-and-mouth disease and avian influenza H5N1.

Animal pests and diseases are a major threat to Australia's livestock and poultry industries and an outbreak could impact on our access to export markets and undermine livelihoods.

There is an ongoing need to practice good biosecurity and report the first signs of disease.

Biosecurity means protecting the economy, environment and the community from the negative impacts of pests, disease, weeds and contaminants.

Biosecurity practices include disinfecting, signage, maintaining boundary fences, checking for strays, restricting visitor and vehicle movements, ensuring all machinery brought onto the property is cleaned, good husbandry, ensuring purchases are from reliable sources, inspecting the flock or herd regularly and quarantining new stock.

Avian influenza or bird flu

Bird flu is a highly infectious disease of birds, and several strains may affect humans.

All bird species are thought to be susceptible to bird flu and the disease can affect more than 140 bird species.

Many wild birds and waterfowl – especially geese, ducks and swans – carry the virus but generally don't show signs of the disease.

However, they can infect other birds and poultry

they come into contact with.

What to look out for

The clinical signs are variable and depend on a range of factors including the virulence of the virus, the species and age of the birds infected, the presence of concurrent diseases and the environment.

In very severe forms such as H5N1 the disease appears suddenly, and birds die quickly.

Common signs to look for are:

- sudden death in several birds;
- ruffled feathers;
- unusual head or neck posture;
- inability to walk or stand;
- reluctance to move, eat or drink;
- droopy appearance;
- respiratory distress;
- diarrhoea;
- swollen head, wattle or comb; and
- a drop in egg production.

The H5N1 strain has never been reported in Australia, though the Australian government has been aware of this strain of the disease since its emergence in 1997 and again when it took hold in many Asian countries in 2003.

There have been seven outbreaks of other highly pathogenic avian influenza strains – which have not caused disease in humans – in commercial bird flocks in Australia, all of which were successfully eradicated.

The last reported case was in 2013 in Young, NSW.

Previous outbreaks occurred in commercial poultry farms in NSW in

2012, Victoria in 1976, 1985 and 1992, and in Queensland in 1994.

Treatment

Avian influenza is a severe viral disease and there is currently no effective treatment available for birds once clinical signs of disease appear.

Vaccines are available for certain subtypes of AI, which may protect poultry from clinical signs of disease if they subsequently become infected.

However, routine vaccination for AI is not permitted in Australia.

Transmission

Avian influenza is spread by wild birds – particularly ducks – contaminating food or water supplies.

Migratory birds, predominantly shore birds and waders from nearby countries in South-East Asia, can pose a risk if they harbour AI infection and then mingle with and transmit this infection to waterfowl that are nomadic within Australia.

These nomadic birds can then mingle with and spread the infection to domestic birds such as poultry.

The disease is also spread by animal to animal contact, bites and scratches as well as the movement of infected live birds and poultry products or contaminated feed, equipment and materials.

The disease can survive in faeces, on feathers, eggs or meat and in water.

If your own birds, don't let their water and feed become contaminated, and store feed in a sealed container away from wild birds.

Only use town or bore water – if these sources are not available, drinking water should be treated with chlorine or other methods that would inactivate the virus.

Use netting or fencing to keep out wild birds.

Regularly clean bird equipment and pens with a household disinfectant, and do not share bird equipment with other bird owners.

Always thoroughly wash your hands and clothing with soap and hot water before and after handling birds.

Footwear can be cleaned with normal household disinfectants, washing soda and vinegar.

Biosecurity

The chicken meat and egg industries in Australia have strict biosecurity systems in place that include provisions to keep wild birds away from production birds.

Poultry farmers are on high alert and are backed up by diagnostic facilities and response plans, the equal of anywhere in the world.

Biosecurity isn't just the responsibility of commercial producers.

The Australian government has been working hard to make all Australian bird owners aware of the threat of AI and the importance of keeping pests and diseases away from birds and livestock.

Biosecurity campaigns have been undertaken with bird fanciers, small rural landholders and recreational shooters.

Outbreak response capability

Australia is well prepared to handle an outbreak of avian influenza should the disease occur here because of past experience, international connections, linkages with health and well-tested emergency response plans.

Animal health authorities have had contingency plans in place for many years to minimise the impact of an outbreak of AI in Australia.

These procedures are outlined in the Australian Veterinary Emergency Plan.

AUSVETPLAN describes the response measures that will be used should an outbreak occur, including the culling of infected birds, disposal method used for carcasses and sanitary measures that will be adopted at infection sites to contain the disease.

Border protection and biosecurity

Biosecurity officers at airports, seaports and international mail centres have been on high alert for bird and poultry products since the first, isolated cases of AI were reported in Asia in late 2003.

Birds, poultry meat and poultry products including eggs, egg products, feathers, and vaccines from overseas can carry diseases including AI.

Poultry meat and products are not allowed into Australia and are seized and destroyed by biosecurity inspection and quarantine agencies.

All incoming international mail is also subject to biosecurity intervention.

Additionally, incoming international passengers' baggage may be X-rayed, inspected or checked by detector dogs for biosecurity risk items.

Surveillance for avian influenza is undertaken under the Northern Australia Quarantine Strategy as bird flu is a target disease under this program.

Impact of an outbreak

A highly pathogenic avian influenza outbreak in Australia would have

devastating effects on Australia's poultry meat and egg industries, which contribute enormously to the Australian economy.

As an example, in 2003 the Netherlands culled over 30 million birds in order to eradicate the disease, the cost of which was more than \$A252 million.

The risk of a human pandemic influenza is serious.

Each additional human case gives the virus an opportunity to improve its transmissibility in humans.

The severity of disease and estimated number of deaths caused by a pandemic virus vary greatly and will not be known prior to the emergence of the virus.

Report suspected diseases

If you spot anything unusual in livestock or birds, report the suspect disease by phoning the Exotic Animal Disease Watch Hotline on 1800 675 888.

This hotline number will put you in touch with your local department of primary industries or agriculture.

Outbreak

Talk to your local vet, the chief veterinary officer in your state or territory, or call the 24-hour Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline on 1800 675 888 if an outbreak is suspected.

Further information

For detailed information on farm biosecurity measures and toolkit, visit farmbiosecurity.com.au

For more information on avian influenza and bird biosecurity, visit the agriculture.com.au website pages or consult the nationally agreed response plan AUSVETPLAN Disease Strategy – Avian Influenza.

More information on AI is also available from the Northern Australia Quarantine Strategy section of the agriculture.com.au website, as avian influenza is a target disease under this program.

Information about current national eradication programs is available on the government website outbreak.gov.au

This website also provides information on how to prevent and prepare for an outbreak and what to do in the event of an outbreak.

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Photo: Alexas Fotos

Elanco's pending acquisition of Bayer Animal Health

ELANCO Animal Health Incorporated recently announced that the European Commission has granted approval of Elanco's pending acquisition of Bayer AG's animal health business.

The company continues to progress toward a mid-year closing, anticipated August 3, 2020.

Elanco president and CEO Jeff Simmons said, "Approval from the European Commission is an important milestone towards the completion of our acquisition of Bayer

Animal Health."

"As the transaction edges closer to fruition, we look forward to turning our full attention to delivering innovation and an expanded portfolio of solutions for farmers, veterinarians and pet owners across the globe.

"The recent months have only underscored the critical work our farmers do in delivering meat, milk, fish and eggs, and the importance of providing pet owners and veterinarians with a variety of solutions in multiple channels from telemedi-

cine and e-commerce to direct home delivery.

"Combining Bayer Animal Health's leadership in these areas better positions Elanco to deliver on these needs."

The complementary nature of this transaction, combining Elanco's longstanding focus on the veterinarian with Bayer's direct-to-consumer expertise, will strengthen and accelerate the company's innovation, portfolio and productivity strategy.

The transaction advances Elanco's portfolio transformation, creating

a balance between the farm animal and pet businesses.

It will also expand Elanco's omnichannel approach, substantially diversifying its pet health business into the retail and e-commerce channels as Elanco continues to determine the best methods for reaching pet owners and veterinarians.

Elanco previously announced divestiture agreements in the range of \$A175 million to \$A204 million of revenue to help advance the needed regulatory reviews.

The EC's approval is conditional on several proposed divestitures.

In addition to EC approval, Elanco has received antitrust clearance for the transaction in China, Colombia, South Africa, Turkey, Ukraine, Vietnam, and provisional clearance in Brazil.

Elanco continues to cooperate with agencies in other jurisdictions.

Further, Elanco fully secured financing early in the first quarter of 2020 to complete the transaction through its completed equity issuance and pricing of its Term Loan B, which will fund at deal close.

The transaction remains subject to additional regulatory approvals and customary closing conditions.



Elanco president and CEO Jeff Simmons.

Supreme Court overturns Ingham's feed mill development approval

THE WA Supreme Court has denied poultry producer Ingham's development approval for its chicken feed mill northeast of Perth.

The proposed development was to incorporate a poultry farm on Wanneroo Rd in Sinagra, and Ingham's said it still planned to relocate off that site, which Stockland bought in 2017.

Supreme Court Justice Jeremy Allanson granted an application to overturn development approval for the \$24 million feed mill in Muchea, determined by the then-Mid-West/Wheatbelt Joint Development Assessment Panel last August.

The proposed feed mill was to be located

on a Brand Highway property owned by White Toro Pty Ltd, however investment company Harvis Capital lodged the Supreme Court application to overturn the panel's decision.

Harvis argued the use was not permitted in the agricultural resource zone, and approving the development undermined the viability of its own Brand Highway landholding, Muchea Industrial Park.

It was concerned the approval would set a precedent that could encourage other developments on less expensive agricultural resource land, and make it harder to attract buyers to the industrial estate.

Justice Allanson handed down his judgement on June 11 that the feed mill operation was not a rural industry use and therefore could not be approved in the agricultural resource zone.

The proposed development was for a 24/7 feed mill to process grain and meal into pellets that would be sent to Ingham's customers, and for six large silos.

An Ingham's spokesman said the company's legal department was reviewing the court's decision.

"The delays created by the court process have inevitably impacted on Ingham's plans in WA," he said.

"We are committed to our strong foundations in WA.

"Our plans to grow with our customers and continue to deliver high-quality Ingham's chicken products are unchanged.

"We are reviewing our plans, but our exit from Wanneroo remains on foot with work on our new hatchery under way."

The panel approved plans for a \$20 million hatchery that could accommodate up to 1.5 million day-old chicks at Muckenburra in the Shire of Gingin last year and approved some minor amendments to those plans in April.

The Supreme Court decision was raised during a Metro Outer DAP meeting on June 18, with lawyers for Harvis arguing another application for a feed grain mill in the City of Swan should not be classed as rural industry use.

Stockland planned to subdivide the 40ha Wanneroo Rd site for 600 to 800 homes, with development expected to take place in about 2022.

Planning documents lodged with the City of Wanneroo indicated Ingham's lease for the property was due to expire next December, with an option to extend it by 12 months.

A version of this story originally published by Lucy Jarvis of the Wanneroo Times on perthnow.com.au



Free trade talks with the UK

FREE trade talks between the UK and Australia officially began on June 29 as Australia looks to shore up trade relationships beyond China.

Australia's Trade Minister Simon Birmingham announced the formal start of trade talks after years of background negotiations between the UK and Australia.

The Australian government hopes to finalise a deal within the year, a much quicker pace than it usually takes to reach an agreement.

"Australia will be looking to secure better market access for goods exports, especially in agriculture, and high standard rules for digital trade and investment to expand our already deep economic relationship," Mr Birmingham said.

Despite the potential benefits of a UK trade deal, its value will pale in comparison to Australia's exports to China.

Economists estimate that Australia's exports to China were worth around \$150 billion in 2019.

Australia's National Farmers' Federation welcomed the announcement of the trade talks.

NFF president Fiona Simson said the negotiations indicate a re-

newed focus on the interests of farmers.

As a collective, Australian farmers export about two thirds of what they produce, with expanded export markets key to the agriculture sector's continued growth.

"The UK Australia free trade agreement represents an opportunity to build on what are already strong trade ties in the region," Ms Simson said.

"We look forward to our two governments arriving at an agreement, which will allow UK consumers to continue enjoying the Australian produce they have come to know and love."

"The removal of these barriers is necessary to ensure Australian farmers can engage in fair and healthy competition with their UK counterparts," Ms Simson said.

"We know that what's important to Australians in terms of how our food and fibre is produced, is also important

to the people of the UK.

"Our standards in relation to animal welfare, food safety, labour and the environment are exemplary, and are tailor-made to suit the unique circumstances of Australian agriculture.

"Australia's regulatory systems are world-class. "We are firmly committed to ensuring these standards are not compromised."

Continuing to expand and diversify Australia's trade profile is crucial to supercharge the nation's COVID-19 economic recovery.

"The farm sector and regional Australia are well placed to accelerate a return to the economic prosperity Australians have become accustomed to," Ms Simson said.

"NFF is optimistic that negotiations could be concluded promptly so the benefits for both countries could be realised in these universally tough economic times."



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Poultry shed wash down machine

LARGE scale poultry production requires shed decontamination between production runs of meat birds.

The ability to wash down sheds quickly ready for the next batch of birds means a reduction in downtime when the shed is unproductive.

Aussie Pumps has developed a high-flow, high-pressure portable engine drive machine designed for literally flushing away debris fast.

Called the 'Aussie Muck Off 125', the big machine produces a flow of 125 litres per minute and 568psi.

The machine is engine driven with either a Honda petrol or Kohler diesel engine.

The petrol engine powered version comes with a Honda GX390, 13hp GX series industrial engine.

The heart of the machine is a heavy duty Udor diaphragm pump.

Aussie Pumps operations manager Hamish Lorenz said, "We chose the Udor five piston diaphragm pump because of its unique high-flow, high-pressure specification."

"That whack of combined high-flow and high-pressure gets the job done quickly."

Aussie Pumps' engineers chose the combination of flow and pressure after extensive research with both agricultural, construction and mining plant.

The pressure washes mud and dust off fast,

cutting overall cleaning times dramatically.

The machine comes with an integrated pressure relief valve and gauge that enables the operator to select the required pressure for the job.

The unit is supplied with 20m of high-pressure hose and 'tommy gun' system.

"The Muck Off 125 can accommodate two operators, with each operator getting around 70 litres per minute

through the gun," Lorenz said.

"That's a good way to clean big sheds."

The only downside to the machine's unique performance is the need for a ready supply of water.

Plant operators can resolve this issue by having a standby water cart during the cleaning process.

The diaphragm pump – the heart of the machine – has advantages over high-pressure piston pumps in that it will

accommodate some impurities in the liquid being used to clean.

Another advantage is its ability to self-prime from between two and three metres.

The Aussie Muck Off 125 comes with a heavy duty filtration system and is also available in hydrostatic test configuration.

Further information on the Aussie Muck Off 125 is available from aussiepumps.com.au or call 02 8865 3500.



Wash down poultry sheds with the Aussie Muck Off 125.

Support for farmers facing biosecurity trespasser threats

MINISTER for Agriculture Jaclyn Symes tabled the Government's response to the Inquiry into the Impact of Animal Rights Activism on Victorian Agriculture in parliament on June 4, after considering the recommendations published in February.

"Our farmers and agricultural businesses should be free to do their work without fear of being targeted by animal activist groups, who put hard-working farming families, biosecurity and the animals they purport to protect at risk," Minister Symes said.

"These recommendations are not just about deterrence, but also education – the public deserves to know just how hard farmers and agricultural businesses work to keep their animals safe and well looked after."

The Inquiry's findings identified ways to further strengthen approaches to animal welfare and biosecurity, to build and maintain public confidence in agriculture.

The Government's response supports 13 of the 15 recommendations in full, one in principle and did not support one recommendation.

Recommendations supported include incorporating on-the-spot fines for biosecurity breaches caused by trespassers.

The Government will introduce this legislation with a view to making fines for this behaviour among the heaviest in Australia.

Other supported recommendations include working with farmers in developing biosecurity management plans and actions on animal welfare complaints for better public

education, and the consideration of implementing closed-circuit cameras in abattoirs.

The government is already acting to strengthen animal welfare in Victoria through several initiatives, including the modernisation of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals regulations.

The Inquiry was conducted by the Victorian Parliament's Legislative Council Economy and Infrastructure Committee in 2019 following several illegal activities in the name of animal activism.

The government is committed to maintaining Victoria's high level of biosecurity.

The 2019/20 Victorian Budget included a \$142.5 million boost to the state's biosecurity system – the largest investment of its type in the history of the state.

Extending Farm Household Allowance relief payments

THE Australian Government is extending the availability of the Farm Household Allowance relief payment for three months, providing \$2.1 million to eligible farmers and their families.

Agriculture Minister David Littleproud said the payments would support farmers who require more breathing space to begin to recover or make difficult decisions about their future.

"Farmers and their

partners will automatically receive \$13,000 a couple or \$7500 a single person, roughly equivalent to six months of the standard FHA payment, if they exhaust their FHA payments between July 1, 2020 and September 30, 2020," he said.

"Our changes to the FHA over the past year are making it easier for farmers and their partners to access support in times of hardship."

"This includes better access to financial

and case management support, as well as the opportunity to earn a greater amount of off-farm income.

"Australia's farmers are among the best in the world and we are committed to backing them on their path to recovery."

For more information, visit the Farm Household Allowance website at agriculture.gov.au/ag-farm-food/drought/assistance/farm-household-allowance

MultiCube bedding cubes for broilers

ESTABLISHED in 1989 as a family owned farm, MultiCube is located along the Murray River in the fertile agricultural region of northern Victoria and southern NSW and produce irrigated lucerne hay crops and dry land oaten hay crops.

In the early 1990s, the family installed its first hay cubing plant, producing lucerne cubes for the

Australian domestic market.

This has grown to a triple-head system, with MultiCube now producing hay cubes, double-compressed bales of hay and straw, and the unique bedding cubes.

MultiCube bedding cubes were conceptualised and developed by brothers Murray and Bryce in 2015.

After a few phone calls, they had arranged to provide samples to a local broiler farm, which was a corporately run farm for one of the larger integrators.

It was this opportunity that provided the first large-scale test for the high absorption capacity of the bedding cubes.

When a drinker line leaked and a large amount

of water swamped one section of the shed, the bedding cubes were applied, and within a few hours the excess moisture had been absorbed.

Through well-managed ventilation, the litter was restored to a level that the batch was then able to continue.

It was this first application that – with no pun intended – was the sink

or swim moment for MultiCube bedding cubes, as this led to an opportunity to further develop the cubes in trial batches of broilers.

Over the course of multiple trials and formulations, the current specifications of MultiCube bedding cubes were settled on.

The bedding cubes are currently available in bulk, which is a premium stand-alone bedding, however they also work extremely well when mixed with shavings, to dry out green shavings and to increase the absorption capacity of shavings.

Another very user-friendly packing is MultiCube compressed and wrapped bales, which are 20kg in weight, easy to move and work well when trouble spots develop in a batch.

The user-friendly compressed and wrapped bales are available Australia wide.

MultiCube supplies about 20,000 tonnes of both hay and straw product to domestic and export markets.

For further information on MultiCube products, contact Peter Moore on 0419 188 362 or sales@multicube.com.au or visit multicube.com.au



The size of each bedding cube is around 40mm.



MultiCube hay crop baled and on the conveyor.



Production of the unique bedding cubes.



Broiler shed laid with MultiCube bedding cubes.



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Norwegian supermarket chain wins international chicken welfare award

REMA 1000 Norway, a large supermarket chain in the country, has worked hard to improve broiler welfare.

Its progress has been recognised by winning the prestigious Good Chicken Award from the organisation Compassion in World Farming for its policy.

REMA 1000 will be the first retailer in the world to fully implement the industry welfare standard Better Chicken Commitment, embraced across businesses by brands such as KFC and Marks and Spencer.

While many brands have committed to the internationally acknowledged industry welfare standard, REMA 1000 is far ahead in terms of implementation, having already met the major conditions for all fresh, frozen and processed products.

Full compliance will be met in 2021.

This makes REMA 1000 Norway effectively the first large retailer,

with 642 stores across the country, to implement the best minimum conditions for broilers in the world.

This involves securing better welfare for what amounts to 12.5 million broilers a year, which equals 32 percent of the broiler retail market in Norway.

Open Cages CEO Connor Jackson is impressed with REMA 1000's new policy.

"This is a milestone for chickens specifically, and a significant step for animal wellbeing in general," Mr Jackson said.

"We should not underestimate the potential impact of REMA 1000's decision to improve the lives of chickens in the entire retail sector.

"The fast-growing chickens are heartbreaking to witness, and REMA 1000's bravery in removing them shines like a beacon of light for every retailer to follow."

According to Open Cages, REMA 1000 Norway's level of com-

mitment to chicken wellbeing is unique.

It is exceeded only by wholly organic retailers due to the specific requirements pertaining to organic products.

UK supermarkets such as Tesco have fallen under increasing criticism for their inaction on chicken welfare.

With multiple undercover investigations published in 2019 showing the realities of Tesco chicken farming, celebrities including Joanna Lumley (actress) and Chris Packham (TV presenter) called for the retail giant to safeguard the wellbeing of these animals by signing the commitment.

Significant welfare problems

Fast-growing chickens have become a topic of controversy recently.

Multiple animal protection organisations have called attention to the significant welfare problems pertaining to fast-growing breeds.

According to a Danish study, about 77 percent

of fast-growing chickens can't walk normally.

The Better Chicken Commitment requires a slower-growing breed, which significantly lowers the risk of disease and reduces the movement problems of the birds.

Furthermore, it lowers the stocking density, giving the chickens more space to move, as well as pecking substrates and perch space.

Open Cages works to secure Better Chicken Commitments from retailers and other vendors across Europe, as part of Anima International.

Recent commitments from major vendors such as REMA 1000 Norway have resulted in UK supermarkets falling further and further behind on animal wellbeing.

Despite being the subject of multiple Open Cages investigations last year, Tesco – the largest supermarket in the UK – has yet to agree to the Better Chicken Commitment.

Stop struggling with inferior equipment

A SOUTH Australian potato and carrot grower ended one of their processing frustrations recently by switching from a poor quality, unreliable centrifugal pump to a more robust and reliable Gorman-Rupp pump.

The producers are now using the Gorman-Rupp U3B60S-B pump to successfully and easily wash dirt from the vegetables and are planning more end-uses for this versatile piece of equipment.

The pump has been chosen in this size to enable future expansion of their plant and will additionally be used for irrigation and transfer from the overflow dam to the irrigation dam.

The growers are very happy with the new pump and that it is saving time and frustration, and above all is performing beyond their expectations.

Hydro Innovations are proud to be bringing Gorman-Rupp quality pumps to Australia.

For further information, contact our pump experts at hydroinnovations.com.au



The Gorman-Rupp U3B60S-B pump.



Producers use the Gorman-Rupp U3B60S-B pump to successfully and easily wash dirt from vegetables.

QCA fails to deliver electricity price spark

THE Queensland Competition Authority has failed to deliver the spark that farming businesses on transitional and obsolete tariffs need with the release of their final determination on 2020-2021 regulated retail electricity prices for regional Queensland yesterday.

Queensland Farmers' Federation CEO Dr Georgina Davis said the final determination included some good news for regional households who would see typical bills fall by 5.9 percent, and small businesses by 3.2 percent.

"However, it is very disappointing the QCA has maintained price levels for irrigation businesses on transitional and obsolete tariffs for the third year in a row, particularly during this difficult economic period," Dr Davis said.

"In a further blow to our farming community, there appears to be nothing in

the final determination that will offer highly seasonal businesses greater flexibility with tariffs that better match the seasonality of use.

"It is also disappointing that the new suite of tariffs, required to be suitable for a range of small agricultural activities and due to commence July 1, 2021, have not yet been priced.

"QFF calls for the QCA to be directed to price these new tariffs by October 1, 2020 to give farmers some time to assess the new retail tariffs and decide what is best for their business and if any structural change or new equipment is needed.

"As farmers now turn to their economic recovery, what they need more than ever is affordable electricity and price certainty to ensure their viability producing Queensland's food, fibre and foliage into the future."

www.qff.org.au



Photo: Matthew Henry

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Bruce Lockwood (Qld) Tel: 0400 700 559
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Rod Jenner B.V.Sc (Hons)
 Veterinarian

34 Norman Drive
 Cornubia, Qld 4130
 0418 877 521
 rod_jenner@hotmail.com



Mark Bennett 0427 627 774
Branko Karacnji DVM 0448 055 159
 Veterinarian
Steven Black 0437 627 000
Ronnie O'Rorke 0419 648 433

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 admin@nationalfeedsolutions.com.au
 www.nationalfeedsolutions.com.au
 PO Box 6370 Wetherill Park BC NSW 2164

TECHNICAL SYSTEMS AUSTRALIA PTY



Scotty Miller
 DIRECTOR

PO BOX 30, Donnybrook QLD 4510 AUSTRALIA
 86 Berrburum-Donnybrook Road, Donnybrook

PHONE: 07 5429 2028 INT: +61 7 5429 2028
 MOBILE: 0424 413 484 FAX: 07 5429 2038
 EMAIL: scotty@tsa.tech WEB: www.tsa.tech



Unit 2, 84-92 Barnes Street
 Tamworth NSW 2340
ccdanimalhealth.com.au

Alison Leary 0487 777 089
Fiona Selleck 0428 247 272
Fabian Barcelo 0447 444 674

BC@PR

Brendon Cant
 Managing Director

T +61 8 9430 9463
 M +61 417 930 536
 E brendon@inet.net.au

BCAPR Pty Ltd (ACN 159 299 966)
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NATIONAL Poultry NEWSPAPER

Ben Collins
 Managing Editor

BBus DipBusMan GradDipEd
 Phone: 07 3286 1833
 Fax: 07 3821 2637
 Mobile: 0439 708 602
 Email: ben@poultrynews.com.au

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0418 131 119
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Craig McCann
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M +61 488 025 555
 E c.mccann@becfeed.com.au
 W becfeedsolutions.com.au

Natalie Schwerin
 M.ScAg AARNe
 TECHNICAL MANAGER

M +61 439 862 788
 P +61 7 3723 9810
 E n.schwerin@becfeed.com.au
 W becfeedsolutions.com.au



Peter Cransberg
 B.AgrSc
 SALES REPRESENTATIVE

M +61 439 605 339
 E p.cransberg@becfeed.com.au
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Out-grower farmer Mr Chor and Dana Asia CEO Duncan Power in front of the specifically designed shed.



Example of carefully designed outgrower shed built in March 2020.

Poultry micro-enterprises for Cambodia's impoverished

CAMBODIA is a country facing the numerous challenges of a developing nation.

Many of its 11 million rural-based citizens are farmers living in extreme poverty due to rampant corruption, limited education and inadequate resources to improve and modernise farming techniques.

Since the COVID-19 outbreak, Cambodia's tourist industry has taken a huge hit.

Siem Reap in particular, home to world-famous Angkor Wat, is a town that relies on tourism, and with restaurants and hotels forced to close, countless local people face unemployment.

Most of those working in

the tourism industry have families in rural communities who rely on their income to survive, with those families now falling deeper into poverty.

With so many people desperate to earn a living in order to survive, now more than ever is the need for alternative income streams.

Australian-registered non-governmental organisation Dana Asia is acting to make a difference, using poultry rearing as an income stream opportunity through a network of small out-grower farms.

Farmers receive training in poultry rearing from hatch to slaughter and are equipped with the skills, resources and support to launch their own small

poultry businesses from their backyards.

Training and supervision of the project is overseen by poultry experts Ian Curtis and Peter van den Akker, both from South Australia, to ensure best practice at international standard.

The project funds the initial capital for construction of the biosecure shed and consumables, and the five-day old vaccinated chicks are purchased with a micro-finance loan, which is paid back at the point of sale of mature chickens.

Raising and selling chickens gives rural families a regular source of income, as well as new skills and an all-important supply of protein in their diets.

Sustainability is built into the project with sheds constructed using local resources and labour, as well as specially designed double rooves to maintain environmental efficiency and encourage optimum productivity.

Unique solar panels designed in South Australia provide clean e-coli free drinking water and electricity for chicks and pens.

The first pilot out-growers on the program were Ms Lorm Salat and her husband Mr Chor.

Due to an accident on a construction site, Chor is in a wheelchair and unable to work so Salat takes a leading role in earning income.

Salat had to drop out of

school after Grade 2 to help provide for her family and went to work at the Siem Reap dumpsite – very dirty and dangerous work for a young child.

Chor and Salat have two children and their family income was about \$A170 per month, which was not enough to buy rice and send the children to school.

Salat became known to Dana Asia when she joined the team at its training farm, and in December 2018 she was identified as a suitable candidate for the out-grower program.

A specifically designed shed was built on their land, so Chor could help take care of the chickens despite his disability.

Additional income from the out-grower program means Salat can afford to send her children to school and provide for her family.

Salat and Chor are achieving a remarkable 98 percent survival rate to point of slaughter.

The most in-need families can enjoy a potential 70 percent increase in their household income.

For a family living in poverty, this additional income is substantial – it could be the difference between a child going to school or not, and a family being able to buy medicine for their sick children or not.

This phase of the out-grower project is in its early stages of expansion and

urgently needs funding to be able to reach more rural villagers and provide them with highly sought-after native chickens.

To build one shed costs \$3500.

However, as little as \$10 a month can make a significant contribution to supporting the training of each out-grower farmer, so they can professionally manage their broiler chickens and become successful entrepreneurs.

Donations can be made online at danaasia.org/become-an-investor.

All donations are tax-deductible.

For more information on the project, please contact admin@danaasia.org

Duncan Power
Dana Asia CEO

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Ben Collins
Managing Editor
BBus DipBusMan GradDipEd

Phone: 07 3286 1833
Fax: 07 3821 2637
Mobile: 0439 708 602
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Business Manager - Swine & Poultry
27-33 Piper Lane East Bendigo Victoria 3550
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Director Poultry Research Foundation

Faculty of Science
The University of Sydney - Camden Campus
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425 Werombi Road, Brownlow Hill NSW 2570 Australia

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