

From media masterclasses to non-invasive biomarkers

THIS month we have facilitated a number of media related events, including 'Meet the Media' and 'Media Masterclasses'.

The Poultry Hub team thought, given the rise in both public engagement around how we farm and the huge increases in social media, it was time to provide the industry and our researchers an opportunity to tell their story.

The key question asked by journalists is: "So, what's your story?"

Participants learnt that they, as the person being asked the question, hold all the power in the relationship, and are known in the business as the 'talent'.

Television channel and newspaper journalists generally want a second voice, so participants were asked to think about who could play the supporting character in their story, and to make sure they were available.

These were a few of the tips and pointers that came up in conversation with the three journalists who took part in the online 'Meet the Media' forum held on Tuesday September 22.

Sarah Brooker from Science in Public moderated the discussion, and subsequent question and answer session.

Hosted by Poultry Hub, with the support of Australian Eggs and AgriFutures, the forum provided the opportunity for researchers, industry members and Australian businesses to be introduced to the media.



by **TAMSYN CROWLEY**
Director



Another Poultry Hub Australia initiative has been the healthy gut project.

I would like to share this story, written by Reza Barekatin, highlighting the great achievements he has made in his recently completed PHA funded project 'Identifying non-invasive biomarkers of intestinal permeability and inflammation in broiler chickens'.

"A healthy gut has always been essential for good well-being.

Even 2500 years ago, Hippocrates said: "All disease begins in the gut" – and poultry are no different.

Gut integrity sits at the core of gut health research to support health and growth in poultry.

Enterocytes are intestinal cells that form a physical barrier to prevent harmful bacteria and unwanted materials from entry into the gut, and also allow nutrient absorption.

When there is a 'dysfunctional gut barrier', there is a chance of bacterial translocation from the intestine into internal organs, often causing intestinal inflammation and impaired performance.

This can cost the indus-

try dearly, therefore early detection and intervention is critical when necessary.

In poultry, most currently available methods require bleeding or euthanising the animals, which are invasive and not beneficial on farm.

Hence, we identified the need to determine biomarkers with which the intestinal integrity is assessed rapidly and in a non-invasive manner.

A Poultry Hub Australia supported project, led by Dr Reza Barekatin at the South Australian Research and Development Institute in collaboration with Feedworks and University of Adelaide, specifically sought to identify selected proteins in excreta of chickens as biomarkers of intestinal permeability and inflammation, as a non-invasive method to assess gut integrity.

Most previous studies have focused primarily on necrotic enteritis models and sampling the intestinal contents.

In this study, we subjected meat chickens to two different 'leaky gut' models based on a stress-inducing factor (dexamethasone as synthetic

glucocorticoid) and a nutritional model (a rye-based diet).

Excreta of the individual birds were collected and assessed for specific biomarkers using chicken-specific enzyme-linked immunosorbent assays.

We found proteins, including fibronectin, alkaline phosphatase and lipocalin 2, in the excreta were responsive to the intestinal barrier dysfunction models tested in the study.

These need to be further validated in larger scale trials including samples from group-housed animals.

Once validated and commercial kits made available at an affordable price, the assays could provide a relatively rapid method to detect proteins that are either elevated

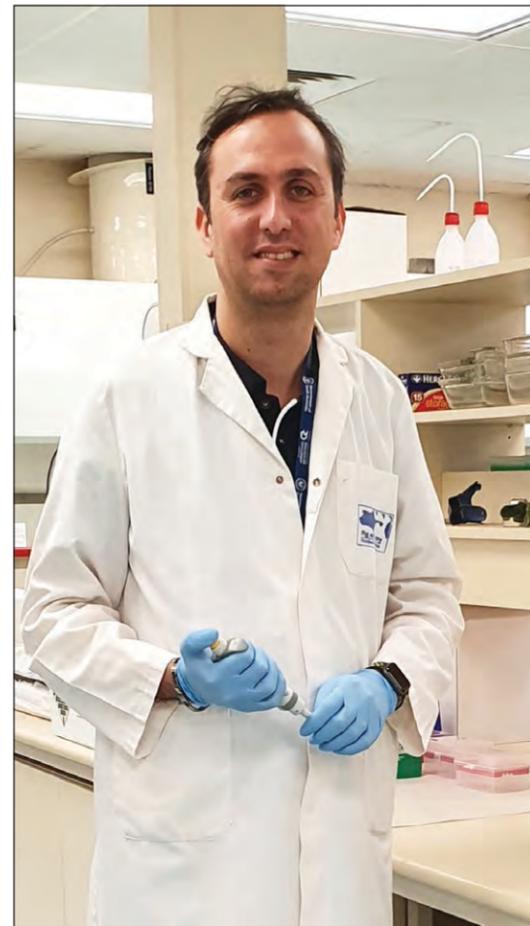
or reduced compared with healthy animals.

Ideally, such tests can be completed in less than a day and can indeed help industry to reduce costs associated with enteric diseases.

Meanwhile, the identification of additional biomarkers of gut health and real-time detection devices remain an active area of research.

Further, if the identified biomarkers are found responsive to certain feed additives, this can facilitate effective in-feed interventions to minimise the impact of gut health issues."

The results of this Poultry Hub project have been recently published and can be found at doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0237505



Dr Reza Barekatin highlights achievements in his recently completed project 'Identifying non-invasive biomarkers of intestinal permeability and inflammation in broiler chickens'.



Sarah Brooker from Science in Public hosted Prime7 Canberra News Editor Hannah Scott, Editor of the Weekly Times in Victoria Ed Gannon and News Director for FIVEaa in Adelaide Matthew Pantelis.



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Poultry Industry Calendar of Events

2020

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 162, Wynnum Qld 4178, call 07 3286 1833 or email: design@collins.media

poultrynews.com.au
07 3286 1833

HAVE YOUR SAY!

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

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

Please send your letters to: editorial@collins.media or PO Box 162, Wynnum Qld 4178

The nation's eggs are complying with biosecurity and provenance rules

RECENTLY my hometown of Rockhampton played host to Federal Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management, the Honourable David Littleproud MP.

The Minister was in town to talk about the hot topic of the Federal Budget.

It was great to be able to attend a roundtable with other industry representative groups and stakeholders in the agriculture industry.

The Minister was able to listen to our concerns and take them back to Canberra with him.

It was very pleasing to hear extra funding has been allocated to biosecurity.

Egg stamping

Egg Farmers of Aus-



by **MELINDA HASHIMOTO**
CEO



tralia have recently put together its Strategic Plan, which outlines that biosecurity is a topic always in the forefront of our minds.

One particular issue that has been raised is egg exemptions when it comes to egg stamping.

Egg Farmers of Australia, with input from farmer members and stakeholders, has put forward its

positioning by writing to government officials and bringing this matter to their attention.

Egg Farmers of Australia's position is that if a producer sells just one egg, they must have accreditation – all exemptions to egg stamping must cease to ensure traceability and provenance of eggs.

NSW, ACT, Victoria and

Tasmania are states that still have exemptions.

Food Standards Australia New Zealand requires individual eggs and egg products to be marked with a 'unique identifier'.

To comply with this, all egg producers must stamp their eggs with a unique code.

The process is regulated by the states, so producers must refer to the requirements of the state in which their eggs are packed.

The issue

Each state differs in their approach to egg stamping, and rules for each state can be found in the guide from Australian Eggs – australianeggs.org.au/what-we-do/leading-research/egg-stamping

As eggs are being distributed and moved across

borders, it is difficult to trace them, particularly with the different rules and regulations for each state (see table).

State roundup

Our volunteer Board members provide updates regularly at Board meetings on what is happening around the country.

There is never a dull moment in the egg industry with October 9 being World Egg Day!

Egg Farmers of Australia staff celebrated by hosting dinner with all dishes being egg related, in support of our farmers.

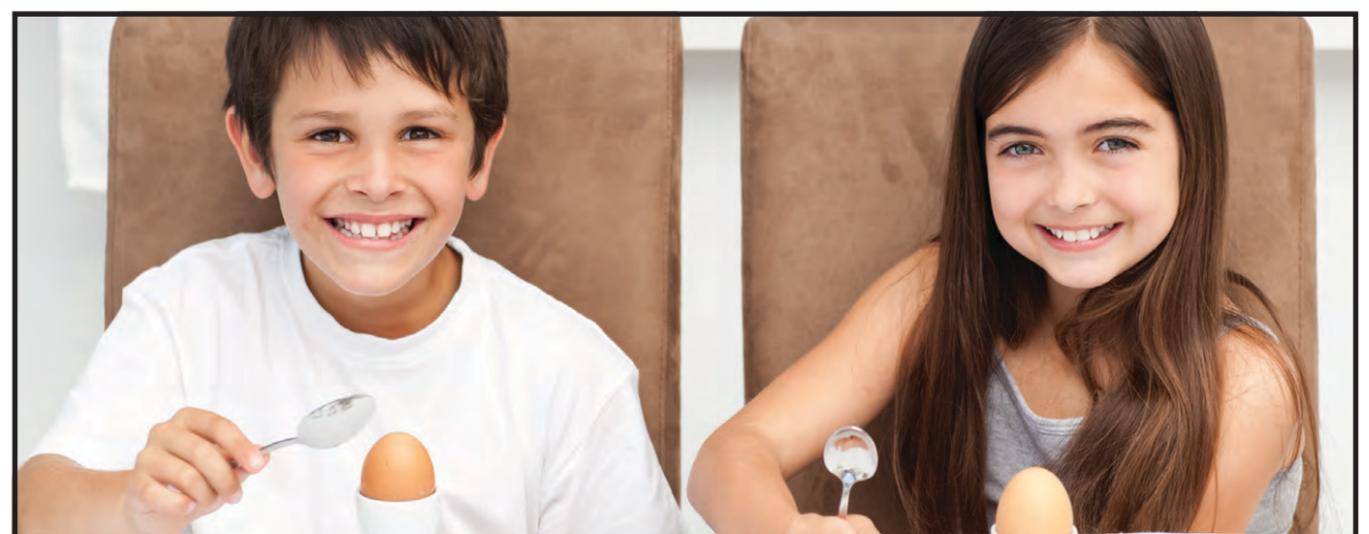
Queensland

With the many additional processes required to protect workers and the community from COVID-19, the main focus is

continued P3

STATE	Regulator	Contact	Additional information	Egg stamping exemptions*
QLD	Safe Food Production Queensland	1800 300 815	Unique identifier must be registered with Safe Food Production Queensland	No exemptions
NSW	Department of Primary Industries – NSW Food Authority	1300 552 406 www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au	The Food Authority must be notified of, and approve, any new or alternative egg stamp design to ensure that it is unique	Less than 240 eggs per week (less than 50 layers); AND ONLY sell directly from farm gate OR use for fundraising purposes where the eggs will be cooked
VIC	Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR)	136 186	DEDJTR will allocate a stamp code to use	Less than 50 layers (less than 240 eggs per week). Duck and quail eggs exempt
SA	Primary Industries and Regions SA (PIRSA)	(08) 8429 0837	PIRSA must be notified of any alternative egg stamp design to ensure that it is unique	No exemptions
TAS	Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water & Environment	(03) 6165 3091	Unique identifier must be approved by Biosecurity Tasmania	Less than 20 dozen eggs per week; AND ONLY supply eggs to work colleagues, friends and family
WA	Department of Health	(08) 9388 4999 foodsafety@health.wa.gov.au	Unique identifier is encouraged to be registered with the Dept Health Food Unit	No exemptions
ACT	ACT Parliamentary Counsel	1300 552 406 www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au		No exemptions
NT	Department of Health	(08) 8999 2400		No exemptions

Table 1: Egg stamping. **"No exemptions" means that ALL eggs must be individually stamped. **Source: Australian Eggs Egg Stamping Guide



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The attendees at the roundtable with Minister Littleproud held in Bundaberg.



Egg Farmers of Australia celebrated World Egg Day by hosting dinner with egg-based dishes.

The nation's eggs are complying with biosecurity and provenance rules

from P2

on COVID preparedness – with the development of protocols for dealing with a positive case in a workforce – which could then be accepted and endorsed by health authorities.

With the Queensland Government now in caretaker mode, we look forward to the outcome of the election to continue our work with the Minister and government officials.

Illegal farm raids have been occurring in the state and in one instance resulted in access by 30 activists to a piggery via an egg farm in southern Queensland in early October.

We will continue to work with other intensive industries to consider approaches to address the increasing incidents of breaches of biosecurity and trespass laws.

NSW

NSW egg farmers are

getting on with the job of providing eggs to consumers, while working within the confines of the COVID world we are now faced with.

This means increased staffing and production costs to ensure workers and the community are kept safe during this time.

Eggs are a staple in most Australian shopping trolleys and, with eggs being a very cost-effective source of protein, our farmers are making sure there is a steady supply.

Victoria

Victoria's poultry industry has faced various challenges over the past few months, including the recent avian influenza outbreak at the end of July.

Egg Farmers of Australia have been working tirelessly with the relevant government departments and officials to ensure that in coming weeks and months Victoria is declared free of AI and

able to continue supplying eggs, not only to Victoria, but to our important export markets.

Australian eggs are produced under strict animal welfare standards and food safety guidelines, making them a highly sought-after product by all.

Our Victorian farmers should be congratulated on their strength and sense of community in working with the state government under such tough circumstances.

Now, with the housing order lifted, farmers are able to get back to what they do best!

South Australia and Tasmania

To ensure our farmers were recognised for the great work they do, the members of parliament and ministers were reminded of World Egg Day.

We keep in regular contact with government officials and ministers to

ensure they are kept up to date on issues facing the industry, and have provided letters recently outlining issues such as spent hens, egg stamping, wild birds and animal welfare standards and guidelines.

As with all other states, COVID preparedness and management is extremely significant, however costly.

Of importance is farm safety and prevention, with farm safety workshops being held and attended by farmers in South Australia.

Earlier predictions for record crops and rainfall have remained consistent and are appreciated by our farmers.

Western Australia

To ensure our 'farmers voice' is being heard, we maintain contact with departmental officers to update them on issues of concern to our industry.

A meeting was held with Department of Primary

Industry and Regional Development representatives to discuss issues of traceability and egg stamping processes in Western Australia.

Legislation regarding the Animal Welfare and Trespass Bill has also been a focus.

After lobbying to the Nationals WA and independent parties, the Animal Welfare and Trespass Bill was debated in parliament in early September.

No decision has been passed on the bill, and with parliament in WA heading into caretaker mode in November, it seems unlikely to occur until the resumption of parliament after the March election.

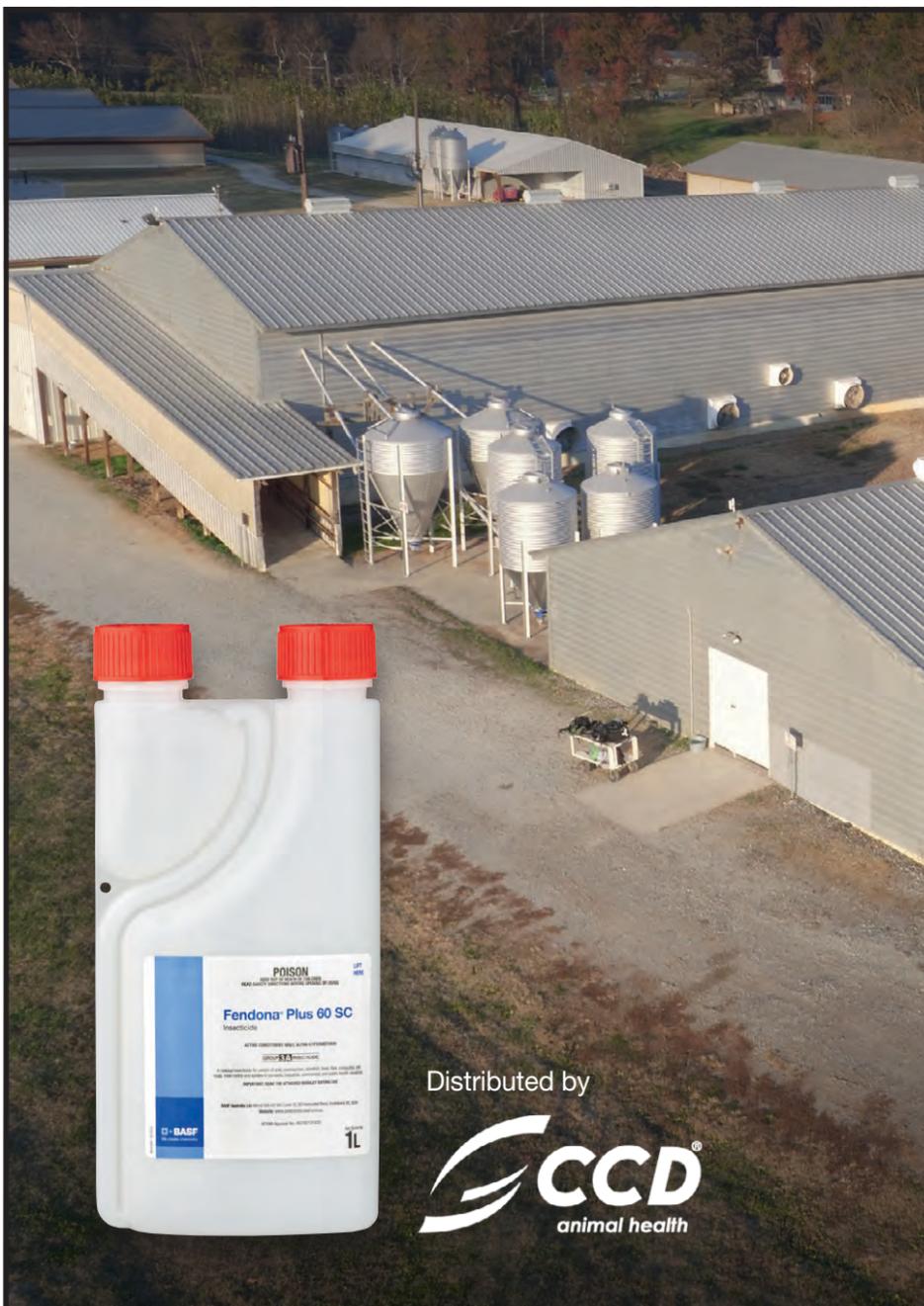
Commercial Egg Producers Association of WA will be holding the Annual General Meeting on Friday October 23, with CEPA hosting sundowner drinks for guests after the AGM.



The traditional egg sandwich was a hit.



Portugese tarts delighted.



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Just winging it together ahead of a long night.



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Socially speaking groups deliver

LET'S face it, social media is a good way to connect, learn, network and refresh.

Hence, for the benefit of readers and myself, I recently joined the Perth Poultry Facebook group, becoming about member number 4100.

This number of members, let alone followers, did surprise me, given the group only started two and half years ago.

I was even delighted to discover that three of my personal Facebook friends (and I choose to have less than a dozen) are friends of members.

While I don't keep poultry these days, I'm quite confident my FBF's likewise are bereft of our feathered friends and buy in eggs and chicken manure for their gardens.

Two are journalists (one a reporter on ABC TV Landline) and the other a QC.

With the Perth Poultry Group adding 24 new members to its flock in 24 hours, it's clear to me that chooks are winning fans and followers.

Maybe it's a COVID-19 thing, with a growing awareness of the pleasure and token sustainability to be had from having a few backyard chickens for fresh home-grown eggs or meat – albeit I suspect the latter is the lesser.



Cant Comment by BRENDON CANT

Either way, it's a good thing.

So, you may be asking what sort of posts do my fellow 'groupies' put up?

I can tell you it varies a lot, so here goes with a couple of samples.

One post, with heaps of comments in a day or so, came from a lady who had been paying \$3 per laying hen (for >100), apparently from an egg farm about to turnover its hens.

She then cared for them before on-selling them – supposedly as a rescue operation.

While plenty of posts are supportive, several question the motivation and balance of charity versus profit.

This, of course, is one of the inherent dilemmas of social media.

That is, even on Facebook people can be, well, pretty much faceless until being outed.

I liked this post and the cute pic the lady posted with it.

"So, I rescued four battery hens down in Albany who were in a horrible state with bald bums and bright red skin.

They lived separate to my Australorp flock for a few weeks until they settled in.

Then they started free ranging together.

At night they all go to bed independently into their own coops.

The other night I was so happy to see one of my Australorp girls with her wing around one of the rescues, who decided to join them in their coop!"

While many posts seek to get rid of roosters or seek solutions for egg-bound hens, others are a means to an end in terms of selling surplus stock, mostly by backyard breeders.

Talk about getting rid of roosters, NSW couple Ryan and Rebecca Cirello of R & R Roosters and their fabulous heritage

cockerel farm are doing a great job rescuing day-old male chicks from egg producers, growing them out on pasture until just before they start to mature and then selling them as table birds.

Situated at Llandilo, a semi-rural area near Windsor on Sydney's furthest fringe, Ryan and Rebecca have built a small business around growing these boys out until about 16 weeks of age.

According to 'Feather and Bone' – the wonderful e-newsletter of Feather and Bone Butchery in Marrickville, NSW – R & R Roosters provide a great product from every angle.

"It's a wonderful story of turning waste into nutrition, adding precious diversity in a monocultural meat chicken industry.

It supports a local food business in the Sydney basin and they taste damn good too!"

Roosters from breeds that specialise in egg production aren't considered great eating and they can't produce eggs, so they're largely seen as an irritating waste product and dispensed with on the day they hatch."

I think Ryan and Rebecca are to be applauded for their initiative.

I'm sure plenty of just-hatched male chickens will thank them too. 🐔

Aussie egg farmers not chicken when it comes to COVID challenge

IN striving to be the world's best, Australia's egg farmers aren't afraid to have a crack – with the industry leading the way in producing more with less.

Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management David Littleproud said World Egg Day on October 9 was an opportunity to recognise the important role the egg industry has played to ensure Australia's food supply during COVID-19.

"Eggs are in 95 percent of Australian households and are a staple in the national diet," Minister

Littleproud said.

"Maintaining a fresh, reliable supply of an average of more than 17 million eggs a day is a credit to the hard work of our producers, all those along the supply chain and of course the millions of layer and pullet hens in the national flock.

"All our farmers have answered the challenge of COVID-19 to provide food on the table for Australians and ensure our country is set up to recover strongly."

Minister Littleproud commended the egg industry's efforts dur-

ing the pandemic and welcomed the findings of the recent CSIRO research, which highlighted that providing safe, nutritious, affordable and secure food staples, such as eggs, is more important than ever.

According to the CSIRO Australian Egg Industry Community Research Report, 75.8 percent of respondents said that the pandemic made them more aware of the importance of food security, with 86.2 percent agreeing that producing eggs was an essential service.

Minister Littleproud said the Australian Government was supporting the Australian egg industry's advancements in areas such as food security and the environment, as outlined in its 2020 Sustainability Framework Report.

"Productivity improvements in the egg industry have coincided with a lowering of an already small environmental footprint through improved farm management, uptake of on-farm solar and new waste management technologies," Minister Littleproud said. 🐔

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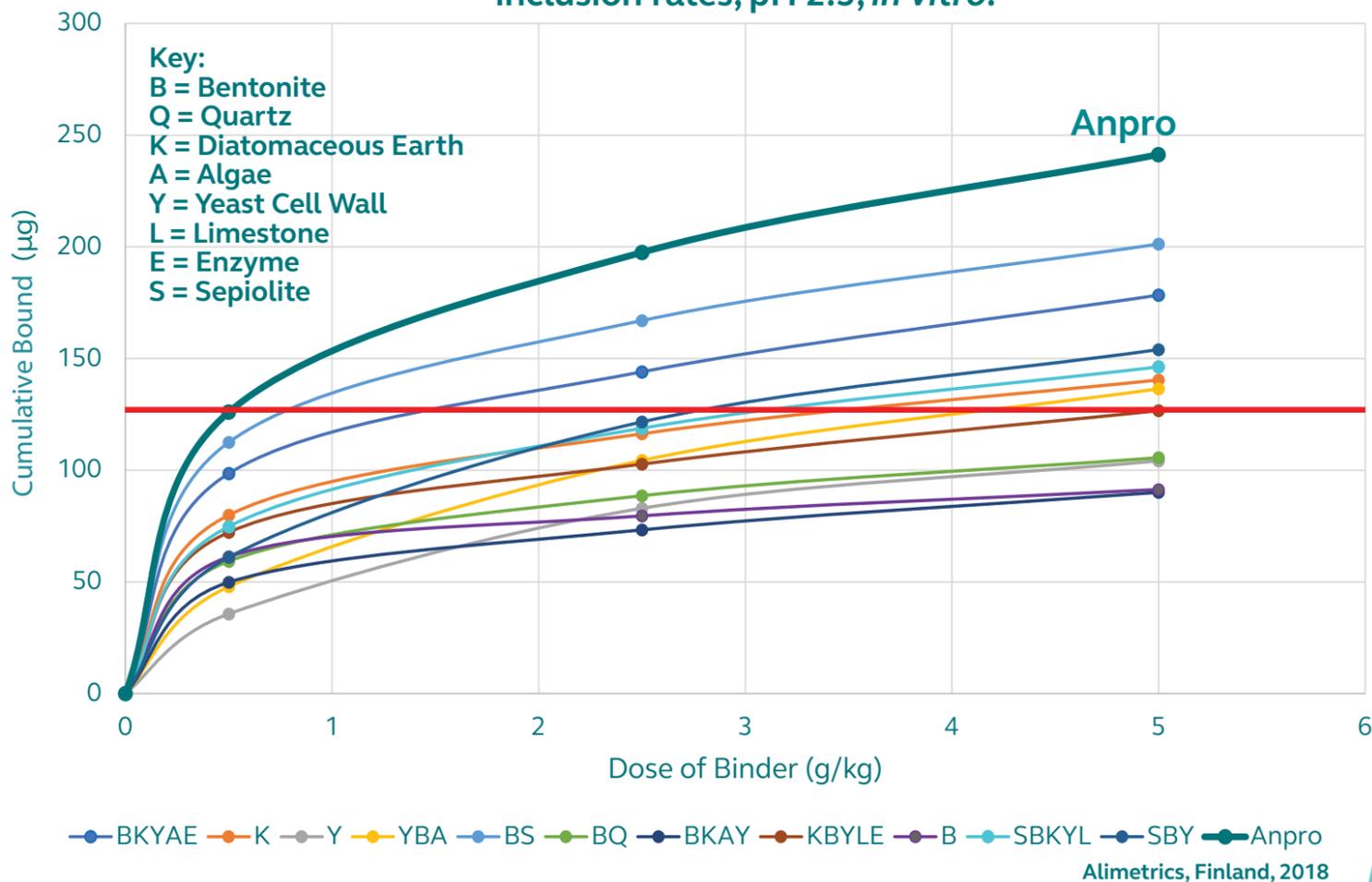
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Clean labelling interactive online workshop

THERE is enormous pressure on food product suppliers and retailers to present products as natural and as free from artificial substances as possible.

With this in mind, it is essential to know precisely how every ingredient and substance will or might be declared on the product label and marketing – if it has to be declared at all.

FoodLegal have organised an interactive online workshop to focus on the food labelling obligations under the Australia New

Zealand Food Standards Code.

The workshop will cover how these obligations under the ANZSC can be interpreted, applied and circumnavigated to present the cleanest image of your product, and of course, without misleading or deceiving your consumers in breach of the Australian Consumer Law.

The workshop also covers claims and marketing strategies that go hand-in-hand with clean labelling practices, such as claiming your product is ‘natu-

ral’, a ‘superfood’ or ‘100 percent free of anything artificial’.

FoodLegal will help answer questions such as:

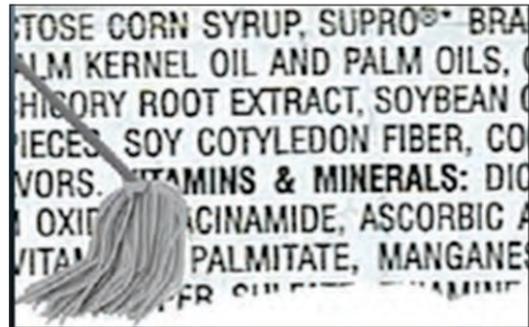
- How can I simplify my long ingredients list?
- When can I leave an ingredient off the label?
- What makes a substance ‘artificial’?
- When does a food substance become a processing aid, or a food additive, or a nutritive substance?
- How do I avoid breaching the Australian Consumer Law?

The FoodLegal interactive workshop will be held on Tuesday November 24, 2020 via Zoom at 9.00am to 1.00pm Australia Eastern Daylight Savings Time.

Early bird price offer for registrations before November 5, 2020.

Numbers are limited to ensure an interactive experience.

Register at foodlegal.com.au



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Housing order in restricted area ends in the Golden Plains Shire

THE housing order in place in the restricted area of the Golden Plains Shire to help manage detections of avian influenza ended at 11.59pm on Monday October 19.

Victoria's chief veterinary officer Dr Graeme Cooke said the end of the housing order will coincide with a reduction in the size of the control area to reflect the progression of the response to eradicate avian influenza detections in the Shire.

“While this is another step in the right direction, I strongly encourage bird owners in the

Golden Plains Shire to continue to practise good biosecurity and take steps to stop their poultry mixing with wild birds,” Dr Cooke said.

“The end of the housing order and the refining of the control area reflects the progression in the management of this outbreak, and therefore a reduction in restrictions placed on bird owners.

“As we have said throughout this response, we are taking an incremental approach to our management to be confident that the threat of avian influenza has

been eliminated and that if the situation changes, we can respond quickly.

“Information and intelligence gathered so far – along with no new detections – means we are able to take this step.

“Our surveillance operations, including swabbing and testing birds, will also continue to monitor the viral load of avian influenza in the area.”

However, several measures will remain in place until the end of the outbreak and checking the Agriculture Victoria website is advised to understand what those measures are.

“We are grateful for the efforts of both industry and the community for their assistance with this response, whether it has been supporting our ongoing surveillance efforts or reporting dead or sick birds to the Emergency Animal Disease Hotline,” Dr Cooke said.

All poultry and captive bird owners must continue to follow good

biosecurity practices in order to prevent a recurrence of the disease at any time.

These practices include:

- Keep drinking water and feed away from wild birds, pets and vermin
- Ensure birds’ feed and water is clean from droppings or animal waste
- Keep domestic birds away from potentially contaminated water sources such as streams, dams, ponds and puddles
- Feed your birds good quality feed from a reputable feed mill
- Regularly clean your chicken coop, including feeders, drinkers and equipment
- Frequently replace nesting materials.

Report sick or dead birds to the all hours Emergency Animal Disease Hotline on 1800 675 888.

For more information about maintaining good biosecurity practices go to agriculture.vic.gov.au/avianflu



Pump pushes sludge uphill

BLANTYRE Farms is a highly productive mixed farming and livestock business situated near Young in NSW.

The business needed a reliable pump to transfer sludge from its covered methane gas dam.

In other words, it found itself facing that very old, very Australian conundrum of how to push slurry uphill.

That’s when Blantyre

Farms’ maintenance manager Mark Schulz contacted Hydro Innovations, in search of a suitable pump for the application.

The problem for the farm was that the slurry had the consistency of molasses and pumping it 1km up a hill to the ponds proved no easy feat for standard pumps.

Hydro Innovations’ NSW regional manager Phil Rothheudt said, “Or-

dinary pumps just couldn’t handle the slurry.”

The solution was to use a Ragazzini MS3 Peristaltic Pump.

The operation of this style of pump is derived from human ‘peristalsis’ intestinal muscle movements – an alternating contraction and relaxation of muscles around a tube to coax the contents through.

“Peristaltic pumps are usually found in medical situations, and often used to pump blood,” Mr Rothheudt said.

Mr Schulz was happy with the results and said, “The information supplied by Phil to select the correct pump for our application was great, as was the communication for the actual purchase.”

“Our success is due to a team with many years of

expertise,” Mr Rothheudt said.

“We can turn an enquiry around in the same day and offer a solution – we know the specifics – that’s what matters.”

Ragazzini pumps use a roller on bearing design, so the casing does not have to be filled and re-filled with expensive lubricating fluid.

This means hose changes are quicker and cleaner, and owners are able to take advantage of Ragazzini’s fast leak detection system, which alerts owners when a hose needs replacing.

Pumps can be used on suction lifts up to 9m and can produce pressures to 15 bar.

For more information, visit hydroinnovations.com.au or call 02 9898 1800.





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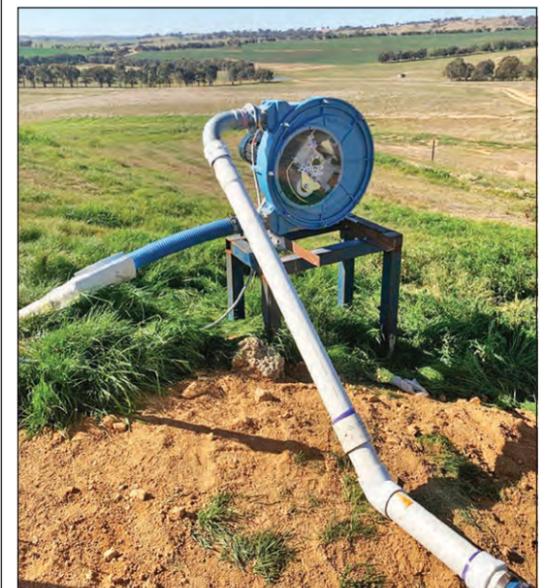
Before After

Ben@HydroInnovations.com.au

02 9898 1800

www.HydroInnovations.com.au/PP6/





A Ragazzini MS3 Peristaltic Pump pushes sludge uphill.

Billions of reasons to celebrate World Farm Animal Day

MORE than 2.5 billion layer hens, meat chickens, pigs, turkeys and farmed Atlantic salmon have now benefitted from higher welfare farming conditions through the continued efforts of the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme.

Announced to coincide with World Farm Animal Day on October 2, the latest statistics highlight the positive impact of the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme, which is Australia's leading animal welfare certification program.

In 2019 alone, more than 174,000 layer hens, 509 million meat chickens, 116,000 pigs, 122,000 turkeys and 4.7 million farmed Atlantic salmon were raised to the RSPCA's detailed higher welfare standards.

RSPCA Australia's chief executive officer Richard Mussell said the RSP-

CA Approved Farming Scheme is intended to improve the lives of as many farm animals as possible.

"The scale of Australian animals farmed to the RSPCA's higher welfare standards clearly illustrates the sheer number of lives positively impacted by the scheme," Mr Mussell said.

"We know consumers care about farm animal welfare and want greater assurance about how the food on their plate is farmed.

"Independent certification is the best way of guaranteeing welfare and, with the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme, Australians are fortunate to have a logo they can trust, to find eggs, meat and fish that have come from a farm with a focus on animal welfare.

"RSPCA Approved products are now widely available in supermarkets, con-

venience stores and are on the menu at some of our favourite restaurants."

The RSPCA has animal welfare standards for laying hens, meat chickens, turkeys, pigs and farmed Atlantic salmon, and they focus on providing good housing conditions specific for these animals.

The standards are based on the best available animal welfare science, RSPCA policy, leading farming practices in Australia and overseas, and take into account the commercial realities of farming.

"Importantly, RSPCA Australia works collaboratively with farmers and industry to ensure not only do the RSPCA's standards improve welfare for farm animals, but they're also attainable in Australia," Mr Mussell said.

"All eligible farms are assessed against these standards by trained RSP-

CA assessors, who visit all participating farms two to four times a year.

"The rigorous assessment process behind the scenes is a critical aspect of the scheme."

The COVID-19 pandemic had heightened focus on supply chains and interest in farming practices from consumers seeking assurance.

"Through the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme, we are proud to work with dedicated farmers and forward-thinking brands who have raised the bar for farm animal welfare in our country," Mr Mussell said.

"It's also now easier than ever for Australians to choose humanely farmed products and that is having a big impact on how millions of animals are farmed every year."

Find out more by visiting rspcaapproved.org.au



Photo: Michelle Tresemer

Devastating bird flu outbreak in Victoria sees NSW prepare for the worst

INTERSTATE officials are not taking any chances after Australia's worst-ever avian influenza outbreak in Victoria.

With more than 460,000 birds having been destroyed to date, NSW Department of Primary Industries chief veterinary officer Sarah Britton said the threat could not be underestimated.

"This is probably the biggest avian influenza outbreak we have had in Australia," Dr Britton said.

"In Victoria there have been seven premises affected, six of them being poultry."

AI was first detected at a free-range egg farm in Lethbridge north-west of Geelong in late July.

Agriculture Victoria said three different strains of the virus were detected, meaning that the out-

breaks were not all connected.

Outbreaks in NSW had been rare, but Dr Britton said tens of thousands of birds had been destroyed in the past decade after flocks became infected.

"There were outbreaks in 2012 in Maitland and 2013 in Young, but we have only had a couple of premises at any one time," Dr Britton said.

At that time about 50,000-layer hens in Maitland were destroyed with quarantine zones put in place.

Biosecurity vets said they were monitoring wild bird populations across NSW, and experts had joined forces to keep AI out.

"In NSW we have put together an incident management team and that sets up for emergency responses," Dr Britton said. Hunter Valley chicken

farmer Jess Pitkin has a flock of about 90 breeders and an additional 300 other birds on her farm.

"It is imperative to have that quick response," Ms Pitkin said.

"These diseases can get around and be devastating, and small operators don't have livestock insurance, so the cost is really big."

Ms Pitkin said the coronavirus pandemic had helped to shine a light on the importance of biosecurity measures, and that biosecurity controls for humans could be replicated when it came to birds.

To prepare, she was limiting farm visits, taking extra caution with people who keep backyard chooks and asking customers to park their cars at a distance from her farm gate.



Photos: Andrea Lightfoot



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Have your say on a new animal welfare act

VICTORIANS have the chance to help improve animal welfare in the state by shaping new legislation, with a Directions Paper setting out key proposals and options for a new Animal Welfare Act now available for public comment.

Minister for Agriculture Jaclyn Symes recently encouraged Victorians to have their say on the options for the new laws, which will help keep a high standard of animal welfare and support the state's farmers to maintain access to important export markets.

"Victorians love their animals – that's why we are encouraging people to provide their feedback and shape new legislation that will help make sure people treat animals hu-

manely," Minister Symes said.

A new act will deliver on the government's election commitment to replace the current Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986 – which is more than 30 years old.

The Directions Paper sets out several proposals for the new act, which aim to strengthen Victoria's reputation as a humane and responsible producer of food, and to maintain public confidence in the agriculture industry, research institutions and many other animal sectors.

Among the proposals put forward for comment is the setting of minimum standards of care people must provide for animals.

This would mean people caring for animals

must meet the basic needs of the animal – such as providing adequate food and water, and veterinary treatment for an injury or illness – rather than simply outlawing cruelty.

Other options being considered are how best to deliver on the government's commitment to recognise animal sentience – meaning they feel pleasure, comfort, discomfort, fear and pain – in the legislation, and how to ensure regulators are better able to drive behavioural change, monitor compliance and undertake enforcement.

This would further protect the welfare of animals, with penalties better aligned with the seriousness of the offence, and authorised officers better able to ensure animal

carers are doing the right thing.

Recognising animal sentience would also bring Victoria in line with other Australian and international jurisdictions.

"Right now, animal welfare obligations are spread through multiple acts, regulations, several national standards and guidelines, and almost 30 codes of practice," Minister Symes said.

"Our new laws will simplify the rules and help those doing the right thing demonstrate their high standard of care for animals."

The Directions Paper was developed following extensive consultation with key industry and community stakeholders about our existing laws and opportuni-

ties for improvement.

The government has already made reforms to improve animal welfare, including mandatory pain relief when mulesing sheep, regulating appropriate fruit tree netting to protect wildlife and introducing the Pet Exchange Register to improve the traceability of cats and dogs.

The government is also investing \$3 million to support not-for-profit and community vet clinics, animal shelters and foster carers to purchase equipment and improve their services.

The Directions Paper and survey on the proposals for the new act are available at engage.vic.gov.au

The survey closes on Monday December 14, 2020.

Virtual hatchery connects farm to classroom

HOME schooling and delivering stimulating and practical lessons for students in the classroom has been made easier, with the Australian Eggs 'All About Eggs' education program launching a brand-new virtual hatchery experience.

Thanks to the power of technology, the virtual

hatchery gives students the opportunity to enjoy a real farm experience without actually being there.

The idea for the virtual hatchery experience was hatched in response to COVID-19 restrictions that prevented schools from participating in excursions centred around real-life chicken hatcheries.

These excursions allowed students to watch chickens hatching and in their early growth phase.

This forms the foundation of a learning program, teaching students what it takes to get an egg from farm to plate.

The virtual hatchery, through a series of short videos, capture how chicks are born, grow and change within their first few days in a hatchery.

Each segment has been designed to teach students about life cycles and see first-hand where eggs come from.

Supported by additional activities that link with the Australian curriculum areas of Visual Arts, Science, and Health and Physical Education, the virtual hatchery experience aims to educate students about how chicks develop inside an egg, the properties of eggs, the needs of living things and how eggs fit into a balanced diet.

Developed in partner-

ship with Kimberlin Education, the All About Eggs program provides a variety of fun and informative activities across primary and high school education, to encourage learning about chicks, hens, egg production and the importance of the egg industry in Australia.

In addition to the virtual hatchery video series, Australian Eggs enlisted the help of Poultry Welfare Manager at Days Eggs, chick expert and egg farmer, Jess Spencer, to host a live and interactive learning session.

Broadcast from the farm in South Australia where Jess is responsible for the health and welfare of almost half a million laying hens, the session gave students the opportunity to participate in egg-themed activities and quizzes, as well as ask questions that could be answered directly from the source.

The session, held on

Thursday October 22, was free to attend.

Australian Eggs managing director Rowan McMonnies said, "In Australia, over 17 million eggs are consumed every day."

"The virtual hatchery program gives us the opportunity to teach students in metropolitan, regional and remote classrooms across Australia about Australian farming practices and connecting them with their food source.

"The process of egg farming happens faster than in other agricultural industries, and students will learn about how many egg farming businesses raise the hens and collect, wash, grade, pack and transport the eggs to market themselves – sometimes all in the one day," Mr McMonnies said.

For more information on All About Eggs and the virtual hatchery program, visit australianeggs.org.au/education

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Official launch of the Australian feed ingredient database

FEED represents the primary cost of broiler production, therefore the formulation of cost-effective diets that meet broiler nutritional requirements is critical.

To ensure this objective is met, nutrient specifications of feed ingredients must be accurately determined.

Due to the tight time constraints and fast pace of the industry, feed ingredients delivered to the feed mill are unable to be analysed via wet chemistry.

Consequently, near infrared calibrations are often used within integrated operations to estimate the nutrient composition of feedstuffs.

However, these readings often end up being received as 'historical' data, as it can be some time before they reach the nutritionist due to practical constraints, and consultant nutritionists may not have access to NIR and must rely on book values.

Thus, Australian broiler nutritionists have expressed concern, as many nutrient specification databases contain dated information or lack Australian specific data.

Therefore, to address this concern, recent Australian and global feed ingredient data for commonly used Australian feed ingredients has been compiled to assist Australian broiler integrator nutritionists achieve more precise diet formulation and realise improvements in production efficiency, reduced safety margins and feed costs.

The primary objective of this database is to assist

Australian broiler nutritionists in diet formulation – however, the database should also prove useful to other industry members and poultry researchers.

This database, supported by AgriFutures Chicken Meat, compiled data from a total of 12 companies or databases, including Adisseo, Ajinomoto, Cootamundra Oil Seeds, DuPont, Evonik, Poultry Hub, Novus, Premier Nutrition and RCI.

The authors would also like to acknowledge the following open access sources which were also included – Feed Grain Partnership, Feedipedia and INRAE-CIRAD-AFZ Feed Tables.

Further data was also sourced from published journal articles where required.

Data is reported for 42 ingredients with 102 nutrient specifications per ingredient.

The mean value, sample numbers, and standard deviations are also reported.

Importantly, the standard deviation and sample number provided mean that the quality and accuracy of the data can also be determined.

One of the main observations from this project is that the standard deviation or variability of the Australian data was quite high, particularly in relation to the global data.

While we have some excellent data, it is clear that our vast continent brings with it challenges in consistency, as the wide variation of environments, climates, growing methods, cultivars and such that exist are likely all at-

tributing to this variation.

This is problematic, as the Australian data is almost as variable as the global data, but contains a fraction of the number of samples that the global data contain.

Thus, the accuracy of the prediction of the true mean of the population is poor for many ingredient nutrient specifications.

However, the data we presently have may be quickly enhanced by ensuring all data provided presents the number of samples or standard deviation, as this is critical to assess the extent of variation within our feed ingredients and subsequently the level of uncertainty within diet formulations.

Thus, there are three key recommendations arising from this project:

- To increase the amount of recent Australian nutrient data where possible – in particular areas of high variation, lacking mean values or standard deviations including non-starch polysaccharide measurement, minerals (particularly digestible calcium), digestible amino acids and starch (within some cereals including triticale, sorghum, corn, oats)

- Perhaps more importantly, strong focus needs to be placed on improving our sampling methodology and reporting practices within industry and research to ensure an accurate representation of the nutrient content and variability within Australian feed ingredients

- Continue to capture new data (with mean, sample number and standard deviation) and pro-

gressively backfill older data (and add missing descriptive data where possible) to build on the robustness of this database, so that this resource may continue to compile and deliver relevant information to nutritionists and researchers.

By compiling and assessing the variation within current Australian and global feed ingredient nutrient specifications, it is clear that there are areas which are lacking recent Australian data, particularly sample numbers and standard deviations.

Thus, not only does this project deliver a useful resource for Australian poultry nutritionists, industry and researchers, it is clear where focus should be placed moving forward.

However, in order to be useful to industry in the long term, it is essential that the database is updated and continues to expand on a regular, ongoing basis, so that it may continue to provide relevant information and highlight areas which require further research or change.

The database, available in PDF form, may be downloaded from agrifutures.com.au/product/database-of-the-nutrient-content-of-australian-feed-ingredients

Both the PDF and excel versions may be downloaded from extensionaus.com.au/chickenmeat/rde/feed-database

Questions regarding the database may be directed to Dr Amy Moss at amoss22@une.edu.au
Dr Amy Moss



University of New England Postdoctoral Fellow Dr Amy Moss.

2021 Australian Poultry Science Symposium



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42 Ingredients



102 nutrient specifications per ingredient



Mean values, sample numbers and standard deviations



Data grouped by company, Australian and global data

APSS Registration is now open

DUE to ongoing uncertainty with COVID-19 restrictions, we will be offering virtual registrations only at this time.

More information will be made available on how to upgrade your registration if the physical event in Sydney can go ahead.

Download the third announcement document, which details important dates and links for authors submitting papers for next year's

conference, as well as prices of all of our sponsorship levels for APSS 2021 at apss2021.com.au

Important dates
October 1, 2020

Online registration portal opened

Credit card payment will be required when registering online.

If you are unable to register online or need to register for visa purposes, please contact Benjamin Geist at benjamin.geist@sydney.edu.au

sydney.edu.au for a manual registration form.

December 13, 2020

Author registration deadline

Registration to be completed by authors with accepted papers for presentation, otherwise they will be withdrawn from the program.

For more information, contact 02 9351 1656, benjamin.geist@sydney.edu.au or jo-ann.geist@sydney.edu.au or visit apss2021.com.au

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Aussie Pumps has worked with operators to come up with a package that covers everything, from the growing right through to the final production of the edible end product.

Aussie Pumps chief engineer John Hales said, "We have managed to go all the way, from initial birth and production, through the growing cycle to product on supermarket shelves."

Keeping sheds clean to grow healthy chicks is mandatory – it is a legal obligation and a matter

of good business.

Aussie Pumps produces a range of Australian conceived, designed and built pressure cleaners, all the way up to 5000psi machines.

They can be electric or engine drive.

They all feature stainless-steel frames, heavy-duty Bertolini triplex pumps, and are fitted with solid ceramic pistons and 'cool-fin' crank cases.

The range includes flows of up to 40L per minute, making them suitable for both wash and flush activities, and are designed in line with Aussie Pumps registered 'Scud' concept, where the stainless-steel frames are designed to have virtually zero sharps.

Several poultry farmers have graduated to

hot wash and steam cleaning machines, to not only clean but to disinfect at the same time.

The World Health Organisation has said that using hot water at over 60C will kill almost all germs.

Aussie Pumps range starts with electric drive machines from 1800psi to 4000psi, with flows up to 21L per minute, and a hot water range able to reach temperatures of up to 130C.

The machines come in stainless-steel frames and are mounted on four wheels, to make portable for anywhere on the farm.

Best of all, using steam means the elimination of caustic or harmful carcinogenic chemicals being used for cleaning in the shed.

Pumping effluent is all part of the job.

The Aussie Pumps range includes super heavy-duty cast-iron semi-trash pumps capable of moving up to 2300L per minute, with recently introduced models that can pump small compressible solids in suspension.

The new machines feature flows and high heads, with the ability to handle up to 1200L per minute and pump to a vertical lift of up to 80m.

They all self-prime and are built in a monoblock style execution, with the quick open impellers and front-opening port for easy

cleanout, and silicon carbide mechanical seals and stainless-steel wear plant are used.

As an ISO9001 certified company, Aussie Pumps believes in delivering products that work.

Aussie Pumps also makes a range of trash pumps that are suitable for use in any situation, from farming to processors.

These machines, with flows of up to 6000L per minute, the ability to pump to heads of 47m and driven by either petrol or diesel engines, are part of Aussie Pumps quick prime range.

They all feature excellent priming capabilities, with several models capable of lift of up to 7.6m, and are designed to handle solids in suspension of up to 7.6cm (or 3") in diameter.

The company also makes agricultural spray units – with flows of up to 125L per minute and pressures up to 50 bar, powered by Honda petrol or Yanmar diesel engines and in handy stainless-steel carry frames – are capable of being used for anything from wash and flush to spraying agricultural chemicals or even disinfectants.

For more information, including Aussie Pumps free Agricultural Solutions Brochure, visit aussiepumps.com.au or contact one of Aussie Pumps distributors throughout Australia.



Don't risk illegal food sales on social media

BUYING food from unregulated vendors on social media puts both you and your family at risk of food poisoning.

The Food Safety Information Council has warned Australians not to buy or sell food prepared in unregulated home kitchens on social media sites.

Food Safety Information Council chair Cathy Moir said that people selling unregulated food through social media sites such as Facebook and WeChat were putting the public at risk, as it was unlikely they would meet the required food safety standards.

"We first became aware of this practice after media reports in May 2020, and since then this practice has increased significantly, with a range of high-risk foods such as curries, spring rolls,

dumplings, roast meats, baked goods, pastas, seafood and even raw sausages being offered," Ms Moir said.

"Government and enforcement agencies are clamping down on unregistered food businesses – though new sellers keep popping up, putting a considerable strain on our health services."

Unregulated food sales pose a food safety risk, can have severe health consequences and are illegal.

The rules around the production and selling of food in Australia are strict and anyone selling food must adhere to the state or territory regulations.

Licensed sellers comply with labelling requirements, food safety knowledge and controls, which cover hygiene, safe cook-

ing and cooling rules, correct refrigeration, safe storage and transportation.

Prior to purchasing food, ask these questions: Is the location the food is collected from a home address?

Does the vendor have a website or social media page that proves it is a licensed food business and, if not, can the vendor prove it has a food licence or is a registered business?

Is the food a much cheaper price than you would usually pay?

If in doubt, don't take the risk of buying unsafe food.

"If you are considering turning your hobby into a business, we recommend contacting your local council for advice on how to set up a food business, safely," Ms Moir said.

For more information, visit foodsafety.asn.au

Anpro does not bind dietary minerals

MOULD growth in forage, feed and bedding on farm, both pre and post-harvest, is a common problem that results in loss of nutrients, reduced feed intake and production of secondary fungal metabolites, or mycotoxins.

Mycotoxins can cause liver damage, immunosuppression and increase susceptibility to diseases.

Mycotoxicosis in live-

stock worldwide has been extensively researched and is recognised as a major concern for the health and welfare of the animals, as well as for efficient production.

Adsorbents used to counter the negative impacts of mycotoxins may have undesirable consequences of binding other nutrients from the daily ration.

This must be considered in the choice of adsorbent used.

Anpro is an adsorbent that can help mitigate the potentially harmful effects associated with the presence of secondary fungal metabolites found in feed and raw materials.

Trial design

Samples of Anpro were tested for their effect of binding minerals in vitro by Alimetrix in Finland.

Three doses of binder were used: 0.1 percent, 0.5

percent and 1.0 percent at both pH 2.5 and pH 6.5.

The macro minerals assessed were potassium (K), calcium (Ca), magnesium (Mg), sodium (Na) and phosphorus (P).

Results

There was no effect of Anpro on the recovery of minerals from the solution.

That is, Anpro did not bind any of the minerals at any dose or either pH tested.

A broad spectrum, low inclusion control system for feed quality management, Anpro adsorbents are effective at reducing the contamination of secondary fungal metabolites from moulds and do not bind dietary minerals.

Anpro is a cost effective, broad spectrum mycotoxin management tool, even at low inclusion levels.

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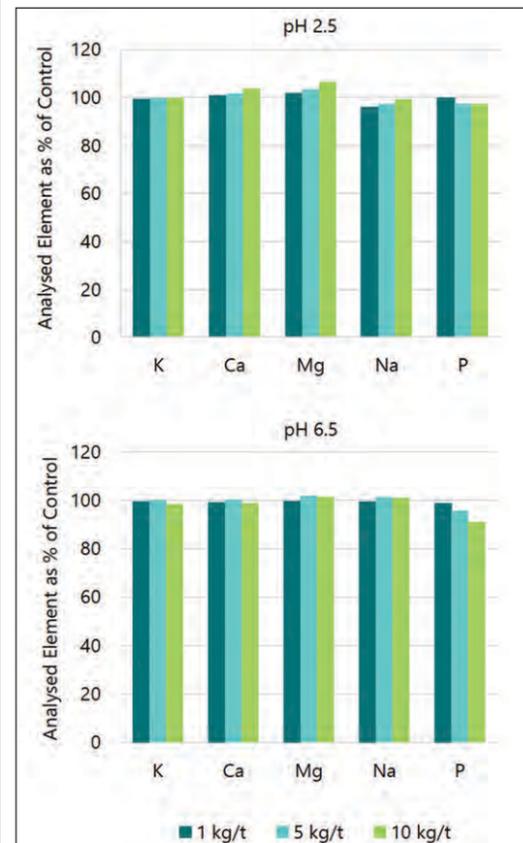
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Effect of Anpro on Mineral Binding at pH 2.5 and 6.5.



Modernising the meat export regulatory system

CRITICAL government and industry action to modernise the Australian export meat inspection and regulatory system is underway following the \$328 million Busting Congestion for Agricultural Exporters measure, announced by the Australian Government as part of the 2020/21 Budget.

The Busting Congestion for Agricultural Exporters package will fund reforms for Australian agricultural sectors, including the meat processing sector, to reduce unnecessary red tape, get products to export markets faster and support jobs in rural and remote Australia.

The package, worth more than \$328.4 million over four years from 2020-21, will:

- Support Australia's agriculture industry to grow towards a \$100 billion in farm gate returns by 2030 – from \$61 billion currently

- Maintain and strengthen existing preferential access to overseas markets

- Support economic recovery, and provide jobs in rural, regional and remote Australia

- Support government efforts in response to COVID-19, bushfires and drought, and

- Provide an immediate freeze on increases in fees and charges, to assist exporters with the impacts of COVID-19, with stepped increases to be spread over four years consistent with the government's cost recovery policy.

The measures announced in the budget will support the development of a more competitive meat industry by bolstering Australia's reputation as a provider of high-quality safe meat, underpinned by a robust regulatory system.

To deliver strong outcomes for the export meat processing sector, a package of modernisation proposals has been developed in conjunction with, and strongly supported by, industry leaders – including senior representatives of the Australian Meat Industry Council and other export meat processing establishments.

Deputy Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment's Agriculture Trade Group David Hazlehurst said the modernisation of the export meat sector will be the most comprehensive undertak-

en since the 2011 Australian Export Meat Inspection System reforms.

"The package will modernise Australia's regulatory approach, making our systems best practice and enabling the Department, in its role as the agricultural export regulator, to undertake its assurance more efficiently," Mr Hazlehurst said.

Major modernisation proposals includes the 'Digital Services to Take Farmers to Markets' and 'Building a More Competitive Meat Industry' measures.

The Digital Services to Take Farmers to Markets measure includes an investment of \$222.2 million to modernise Australia's agricultural export systems by reducing red tape and improving regulation and service delivery for our producers and exporters.

Practically, this measure will transition departmental export systems online and provide a single portal for transactions between exporters and government, streamlining processes for exporters and helping them experience faster and more cost-effective services, while continuing to meet trading partners' requirements.

The Building a More Competitive Meat Industry measure embeds modernisation activities that will keep Australia's export systems world leading and introduces new regulatory assurance tools that reward high levels of conformance and targets any areas of poor compliance.

The measure also introduces flexible assurance methods, including smarter technology to ensure the Australian meat industry maintains and expands its global position as the number one supplier of choice.

Key modernisation proposals include:

- A digital modernisation roadmap investing in technology and identifying opportunities to improve regulatory activities such as developing electronic processes to replace paper-based forms, bringing in 'smart' technologies for agreed verification activities and doing away with manual processes and outdated technologies to bring in administrative efficiency

- A commitment from industry leaders to the full implementation of the 2011 Australian Authorised Officer AEMIS

reforms from March 2021, supported by a six-month transition timeframe – practically this means that department will no longer provide Food Safety Meat Inspectors where the function could otherwise be provided through the use of Australian Government Authorised Officers, instead the department will only continue to provide a government veterinarian and a FSMA who will undertake the final disposition of product at each export meat establishment in accordance with market access requirements

- Post-mortem inspection and disposition modernisation activities to align modern food safety science and our meat standards

- The ongoing implementation of a formal, transparent market access prioritisation framework

- With a focus on high performing quality systems, transitioning export establishments to six-monthly audits with annual audits introduced for highly compliant processing establishments that have capacity to provide real time and quality data assurance to the department, and

- Improvements to systems and processes, such as streamlined approval variations for Approved Arrangements, and assessing new technologies such as smart-glasses, other virtual technologies and enhanced processing equipment, for introduction at export meat processing establishments in a simplified and more timely way.

AMIC's National Processor Council chair Terry Nolan said the Australian export meat sector understood the vital role it plays in achieving our joint aim of \$100 billion in farm gate returns by 2030.

"A key pillar of this is building exports – and our sector plays a key role in Australia's overall agricultural export growth," Mr Nolan said.

"Knowing that we can continue to deliver high-quality and safe meat products to a global market is paramount.

"It's also incredibly important that we work with government to make sure that our regulatory system continues to be contemporary, fit for purpose and robust.

"We are proud to play our part in driving modernisation for the benefit of the whole agricultural sector."

Fairfax family snaps up farms

A NEW agriculture business headed by John B. Fairfax has acquired farms near Tamworth and in southeast Queensland to the value of \$23 million, amid a surge of high net worth and institutional capital into food-producing rural property.

Established in November last year, Fairglen Farms comes under the umbrella of Sydney-based Marinya Capital, the family office of the former media baron.

Ownership is split evenly between John B. Fairfax, his wife Helen and their son Nicholas.

According to its website, Fairglen Farms will invest in "large-scale agricultural businesses for the Fairfax family."

"Our primary focus is growing our assets across Australia and New Zealand while developing long-term strategic partnerships across the agricultural supply chain."

Heading up the Fairglen Group as chief executive office is Janelle

Cashin, the former chief operating officer of poultry giant Inghams and a non-executive director at SunPork.

Ms Cashin declined to comment on the Fairfax family's broader plans for Fairglen Farms citing the newness of the venture.

"There's not much to talk about yet," Ms Cashin said.

Fairglen's first acquisition is a 990.5-hectare mixed-farming property on Somerton Road in Klori, about 40 kilometres north of Tamworth.

Property records show it was acquired for \$17.5 million.

In southeast Queensland in the Scenic Rim region, Fairglen paid \$5.45 million for an 88-hectare poultry farm at 58 Sawmill Road in Aratula.

The property was offered for sale by the Majeed family's L&N Sunshine Group.

The Fairglen acquisitions follow a stream of high net worth and institutional funds into farmland on the back of strong commodity

prices, rising demand for food security and the resilience shown by the agricultural sector during the pandemic.

John B. Fairfax has strong ties to farming through both his success in turning Rural Press into a successful publishing empire, and family investments in agriculture and its support of nature conservation.

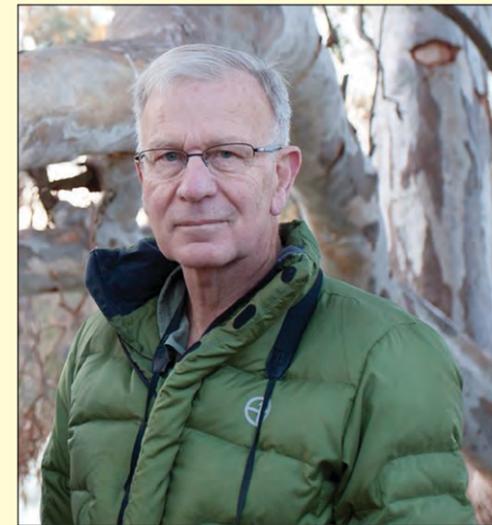
It has also been reported that Mr Fairfax

spent \$14 million on a 144-hectare poultry farm on Mount Walker Rd at Rosevale in the Scenic Rim.

The acquisition was through 41Boulders Pty Ltd, which has the same shareholders and directors as Fairglen.

The property has approval for 12 sheds housing up to 480,000 chickens.

First appeared on afr.com



John B Fairfax is expanding his agricultural investments. Photo: Danielle Smith

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EACH ONO

These sheds are purpose built to brood and raise meat birds or layers on pasture. They are on sliders and can be moved by tractor on farm. They have gas fittings to enable heating and an IBC watering system. They are completely enclosed with heavy duty walls which open for ventilation and raisable mesh sides to allow access to pasture. These brooders are suitable for growing out 500 birds.

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Rabobank senior grains analyst Cheryl Kalisch Gordon.



Australian winter crop production outlook.

Australia on track for above-average winter crop

AUSTRALIA is on track for a major recovery in grain production, with the winter harvest set to come in at above-average levels, according to recently released forecasts by agribusiness specialist Rabobank.

In its Australian Winter Crop Production Outlook 2020/2021, the agribusiness bank said that after three successive years of below-average production due to drought in many parts of the country, Australia's "long-awaited grain production recovery is here" – with the nation expected to harvest 47.4 million tonnes of winter grains, oilseeds and pulses this year.

This is an increase of 63 percent on last year and 16 percent above the five-year average.

For NSW, it represents a staggering 366 percent increase on last year's harvest, and for Queensland 139 percent – with all grain-growing states in Australia set to record an increase in production.

Rabobank senior grains analyst Cheryl Kalisch Gordon said in the report,

"This increase not only represents a recovery, but also puts production back over average levels."

"A 22 percent year-on-year increase in planted hectares, together with well-timed and above-average rainfall in most regions, support our expectations for 28.8 million tonnes of wheat, 11 million tonnes of barley and 3.3 million tonnes of canola to be harvested in Australia in 2020/21," Dr Kalisch Gordon said.

This will see Australia stage a major return to the global grains market, with Rabobank forecasting the nation's grain exports to increase 93 percent on last year.

According to the report, exports would be supported by a relatively-low Australian dollar – forecast to remain at around 70 US cents for the coming year – and comparatively high global grains prices.

"The last time Australia had export volumes in these ranges, the Australian dollar was 10 US cents higher and global grain prices were around

35 percent lower than our current forecasts for the year ahead," Dr Kalisch Gordon said.

"Both these factors will assist in moving these anticipated export volumes and support a good year for Australian grain farmers."

From famine to feast
 NSW would be the driving force behind Australia's grain recovery in 2020/21 after being "the epicentre of devastatingly low grain production in recent years."

"NSW has gone from worst performer to best in only 12 months, to lead the pack when it comes to grain production," Dr Kalisch Gordon said.

"We expect a year-on-year lift of 12 million tonnes – a massive 366 percent increase – in grain production in NSW, which would put the state's harvest neck and neck with its record 2016/17 harvest.

"Seasonal conditions in NSW have been near to ideal and in stark contrast to recent years.

"Most production gains will be made in the central west, but above-average

yields are also expected in the north and south of the state.

"All other states are set for an average or above-average harvest, with the exception of Western Australia.

"Here, a poor start and lower rainfall across the growing season means we expect a hit and miss year for WA, with the state's harvest volume to come in above last year but still 10 percent below the five-year average."

Wet spring
 The report said with a La Niña now declared active by the Bureau of Meteorology – for the first time since 2010 – and expected to deliver a wet spring, this would help finish crops and improve soil moisture in the eastern states, ahead of summer crop planting.

"Above-average spring rain will be beneficial, especially for regions that had a drier July and August, though the risk of a wet harvest – especially in parts of Victoria and NSW – is heightened," Dr Kalisch Gordon said.

"Above-average rainfall

during later spring does, of course, introduce challenges to harvest and the prospect of impact on quality.

"In areas that have already begun harvest, such as northern NSW, rain delays have already interrupted progress.

"This brings with it the real risk of downgrades to the quality of the grain which, if widespread, could have a substantial impact on the market due to the change in the quality profile of grain on offer."

COVID concerns
 The report said Australia's grain sector had been able to proceed with an almost 'business as usual' production year, despite the upheaval caused by COVID-19.

Challenges related to the availability of harvest labour and contractors were also expected to be managed for the most part, with forward planning and workarounds in place.

"Early season concerns regarding input availability due to COVID were managed so that there were no material impacts on production and, for the most part, we expect the

same with harvest," Dr Kalisch Gordon said.

"However, the need to manage a wet harvest period without the typical labour force may deliver some regionally significant production and quality downgrades."

Market outlook
 Notwithstanding the need to rebuild domestic grain stocks following drought, Australia is on track to export 19.8 million tonnes of wheat, 5.6 million tonnes of barley and 2.7 million tonnes of canola this year, Rabobank forecasts.

According to the report, while global wheat stocks are forecast to grow again by more than five percent in 2020/21, the location of those stocks outside key exporting nations means global prices are expected to be supported.

"With a combined 15 million tonne year-on-year reduction in wheat exports from the European Union and Ukraine this year, the world is looking to Australia's recovery to help keep the market in balance," Dr Kalisch Gordon said.

The bank forecasts Chicago Board of Trade wheat to trade around US cents 580 per bushell (\$A8.18/bu) over the coming 12 months, up 12 percent year on year and approaching 40 percent higher than 2016/17, when Australia last harvested an above-average winter grain crop.

"Despite supply renewal in Australia, we expect domestic prices to be supported by both global prices – which we expect to be near to 40 percent higher than the last time Australia had an above-average harvest – and by an Australian dollar that is lower than 2016/17," Dr Kalisch Gordon said.

"This will keep prices in line with the five-year average and off the lows of 2016/17."

Barley
 Based on the outlook, with barley representing close to 23 percent of this year's winter crop harvest, 2020/21 is expected to be the second-highest barley crop on record (albeit still 19 percent behind 2016/17).

Export opportunities for Australian barley are also

very different to 2016/17, with China's introduction of tariffs on Australian barley effectively ruling out significant volumes being sold to that market in the near term.

"Instead sales to feed-grain markets – such as Saudi Arabia, Japan and Thailand – will dominate Australian barley exports this year," Dr Kalisch Gordon said.

"This will mean pricing that is competitive relative to other origins of feed grain and at a discount to corn.

"These exports will also not replace the volumes that would have gone to China."

As such, domestic barley stocks will grow this year, keeping local prices at a broad discount to wheat in 2021.

Canola and pulses
 Despite an increased Australian canola harvest, Australian canola prices are expected to remain supported in 2020/21.

EU import demand for canola will approach record volumes this year due to a significantly below-average European rapeseed (canola) harvest for the second year running – with Australia 'in the box seat' to provide non-genetically modified canola, the European preference, to that market.

"We also expect Australian genetically modified canola prices to remain supported in 2020/21, based on higher year-on-year pricing in the global edible oil complex more broadly, and potential Chinese demand for GM canola," Dr Kalisch Gordon said.

Cash or carry
 According to the outlook, after successive years of drought, the generation of cashflow would be critical for many Australian grain farmers this season.

"However, alongside this there is also increased on-farm storage capacity among growers, as well as the recent memory of high grain pricing due to drought while interest rates are at record lows," Dr Kalisch Gordon said.

"With this in mind, we expect a large number of farmers will choose to carry grain, especially barley, into 2021."

Poultry farm near airport sells as development site

A POULTRY farm near the future airport at Badgerys Creek in Sydney's west has sold for \$14.5 million to buyers in the food industry, who have earmarked the site for future industrial development.

The 3.96-hectare block is the first site to have been sold since the NSW government gazetted the rezoning of 6500 hectares of land as part of five 'priority precincts' in the Western Sydney Aerotropolis to provide for employment, residential and environmental uses.

NSW Minister for Planning and Public Spaces Rob Stokes said the rezoning of the Aerotropolis Core, Badgerys Creek, Northern Gateway, Agribusiness and Wianamatta – South Creek would provide the potential for 100,000 new jobs, as well as

homes to 30,000 residents once fully developed.

The poultry property at 205 Lawson Road was sold to two families in the food industry – the Barba and Putrino families – who plan to operate their own businesses on the land and speculatively develop it into an industrial site.

The block has been earmarked to be rezoned for flexible mixed use and employment purposes.

CBRE's Elijah Shakir, Andrew Sukkar and Fabio Screpis negotiated the sale.

Mr Shakir said the sales campaign had attracted significant interest because of the scale of the site and its proximity to the new airport, which is due for completion in 2026.

"We have a number of mandates from buyers seeking similar sites

to capitalise on opportunities associated with the development of the airport and surrounding government infrastructure totalling over \$5.25 billion," Mr Shakir said.

He said the site benefited from good access to major transport routes, which would be enhanced by the proposed North South Rail

Line and South West Rail Link extensions, M12 Motorway and M9 Orbital.

The sale equates to a new record pricing of \$366 a square metre, which highlights the demand for land in the area among both owner-occupiers and institutional investors looking for sites that

have potential to be re-developed into industrial property.

"The transaction sets a new benchmark for the Badgerys Creek precinct, representing a 28 percent uplift on the previous record set two years ago when the Aerotropolis precinct maps were first issued," Mr Sukkar said.



Industrial use has been proposed for the poultry farm recently sold at 205 Lawson Drive in Badgerys Creek.

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Results from commercial trial show improved laying hen performance and reduced mortality

A NEW commercial study with hy-line brown hens at a large layer farm in Western Europe has shown that adding Orego-Stim – a source of 100 percent natural oregano essential oil – in layer diets results in more saleable eggs per hen and a reduced mortality.

Two sheds of 90,000 hens were fed either a standard diet (control) or standard diets supplemented with Orego-Stim from 16-81 weeks.

Inclusion of the OEO-based additive initially

began at 450g per tonne of feed from 16-34 weeks of age and was then reduced to 300g per tonne of feed from 34-81 weeks of age.

The supplementation of the OEO feed additive from start until end of lay resulted in 13 more eggs per hen by 81 weeks and a 2.2 percent reduction in mortality.

Egg quality was also improved compared to hens fed the control diet.

OEO supplementation resulted in fewer cracked and dirty eggs, providing a 1.6 percent increase in first class eggs.

Anpario technical support coordinator Dr Emma Lund said, "Overall, the beneficial combination of improved egg quality, egg numbers and larger egg weights resulted in more saleable eggs, increasing the producer's income."

"The producer received a 26.9 percent and 21.6 percent higher income from extra-large and large eggs respectively, compared to the control shed.

"This gave an impressive return on investment of 5.5:1."

"Orego-Stim is a high-quality eubiotic manufac-

tured by Anpario and contains 100 percent natural oregano essential oil," Dr Lund said.

"The study demonstrates it can be a cost-effective, natural solution for improving hen gut health, which is key to supporting liveability and laying performance.

"Hens supplemented with Orego-Stim had a greater peak production and a consistently improved persistence of lay."

With proven efficacy across a multitude of species, phytogetic feed additives such as OEO can

provide a multitude of benefits in supporting laying hen health and performance.

OEO sources produced from the whole oil contain a multitude of naturally occurring compounds, which work in synergy to offer several well-documented properties and functions.

This includes antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, immunomodulatory and antioxidant functions, all of which have a role in supporting optimal health and performance.

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