



NATIONAL Poultry NEWSPAPER

Vol 8. No. 1 January 2025 National Poultry Newspaper PO Box 162 Wynnum 4178 Phone (07) 3286 1833 Email ben@collins.media



Andrew Postregna and EFA CEO Melinda Hashimoto.

2025 sees changes at EFA helm

AS 2025 gets underway, it brings some fresh faces to the helm of Egg Farmers of Australia.

Brett Langfield of LPC Trading is the new chair and NSW director on the EFA Board.

Brett replaces retired NSW director Bede Burke, who served as chair for eight years.

Bede will continue to serve on the board of Australian Eggs, our industry's research and development corporation.

Meanwhile, Bernard Egan also joins the EFA Board as the new Western Australian director.

He replaces Ian Wilson of Fremantle Egg



Egg Farmers of Australia

by MELINDA HASHIMOTO
CEO



Co, Ian also moved to the board of Australian Eggs.

The Egg Farmers of Australia Board looks forward to tackling new issues and agendas in 2025.

As CEO of our national egg farming body, I schedule time to visit many egg farmers

around Australia.

More recently, it was great to visit Tamarix Eggs in the south Dandenong area of Victoria.

The business is run by Andrew and Lisa Postregna and their children.

It is another proud Australian-owned and family run business that supplies to some of Australia's top food traders, from quality restaurants, cafés and bakeries all the way through to takeaway outlets and independent supermarkets.

Australia's commercial egg sector supplies about 6.9 billion eggs annually for Aussie consumers.



EFA's Kylie Jackson with Andrew Postregna.

Welcome to a year of innovation and progress

AS we step into 2025, Poultry Hub Australia is excited to share a year filled with opportunities, innovation and progress for the Australian poultry industry.

With a robust calendar of events and the continued implementation of our strategic plan, PHA is committed to supporting industry growth and addressing emerging challenges through targeted research and collaboration.

This year, PHA has an array of events planned to bring together stakeholders from across the poultry sector.

These events aim to foster collaboration, share knowledge and showcase the latest research and innovations.

Stay tuned for announcements about workshops, conferences and networking opportunities throughout the year.

Whether you're a producer, researcher or industry partner, there will be something for everyone to engage with and benefit from.

PHA is proud to announce the funding of two exciting projects under our industry research funding initiative.

This program underscores our commitment to fostering collaboration between scientists and industry stakeholders to develop applied research solutions that address key challenges in the poultry sector.



Exploring the potential of betaine and xylanase

Led by Dr Shemil Macelline, this project investigates the potential impact of betaine and a high dose of xylanase in moderately reduced crude protein diets based on wheat for broiler chickens.

The findings could lead to innovative approaches to feed formulation that balance performance and sustainability.

Optimising dietary energy and nutrient ratios

Led by Dr Kosar Gharib-Naseri and Dr

Sosthene Musigwa, this project aims to enhance broiler performance while reducing body fat content by optimising dietary energy, digestible lysine and essential amino acids-to-true protein ratios in reduced protein diets.

This research could pave the way for more efficient and sustainable feeding practices.

Poultry Hub Australia's seed innovation grant provides an exciting opportunity for researchers to explore high-impact short-term projects.

This grant is designed

to encourage innovative solutions that directly address industry needs and challenges.

We look forward to announcing newly funded projects under this program and sharing updates on their progress.

As we continue to implement our strategic plan, PHA remains dedicated to driving innovation and delivering practical solutions for the poultry industry.

By investing in research, fostering collaboration and addressing key challenges, we aim to support a sustainable and thriving future for all stakeholders.

We look forward to working with you in 2025 to make this a landmark year for the Australian poultry industry.

Together, let's embrace new opportunities and achieve great things!



PHA announced the funding of two projects under its industry research funding initiative.



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Poultry Industry Calendar of Events

2025

JAN 28-30 – IPPE 2025, Atlanta Georgia, USA. www.ippexpo.org

FEB 10-12 – Australian Poultry Science Symposium, Sydney, Australia. www.apss2025.com.au

FEB 18-19 – Australasian Veterinary Poultry Association Scientific Meeting, Wagga Wagga, NSW. www.avpa.asn.au/events

MAR 5 – 2025 NSW Poultry Industry Golf Day, Lakeside Golf Club Camden, NSW. Email: david.sherwood@ewnutrition.com

MAR 12-14 – VIV Asia, Bangkok, Thailand. www.vivasia.nl/

APR 7-9 – Western Poultry Disease Conference, Calgary, Canada. www.wpdcfoundation.org/wpdc-2025

APR 7-9 – 2025 International Poultry Council Annual Meeting, Casablanca, Morocco. internationalpoultrycouncil.org

JUN 23-26 – 24th European Symposium on Poultry Nutrition, Maastricht, Netherlands. www.espn2025.eu

JUN 24-26 – 11th International Symposium on Avian Influenza, Newfoundland, Canada. harlowagency.swoogo.com/isai2025/6355095

SEP 14-17 – 20th European Symposium on the Quality of Eggs and Egg Products and the 26th European Symposium on the Quality of Poultry Meat, Zadar, Croatia. eggmeat2025.com

How to supply event details:

Send all details to National Poultry Newspaper, PO Box 162, Wynnum Qld 4178, call 07 3286 1833 or email ads@collins.media

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07 3286 1833



ACMF's Dr Mary Wu with Agriculture Minister Julie Collins and chef Manu Fieldel.



Deputy CEO Verity Price attended the Chicken Meat Consortium at UQ.

Australian Chicken Meat Federation year in review

OVER the past year, the Australian chicken meat industry has navigated the challenges presented by several high pathogenicity avian influenza outbreaks across states.

Despite this, our industry has shown exceptional resilience and proactive engagement in our key strategic areas of biosecurity, sustainability, animal welfare, workforce development, food safety and security, and research and development.

We are proud to present the significant achievements of our industry over the past year and to outline our priorities as we look to the year ahead.

Biosecurity

Over the past 12 months, ACMF played a pivotal role in managing the outbreaks of HPAI in Canberra, NSW and Victoria.

Under the leadership of ACMF chief executive officer Dr Mary Wu, the federation has significantly contributed to the Consultative Committee for Emergency Animal Disease.

As the industry liaison, ACMF had the capacity to assist in coordinating the cross-jurisdictional disease response, while also promoting proactive measures to eliminate the virus in order to minimise its impact on the supply chain.

Amid the concentrated focus on response efforts, ACMF also held a National Avian Influenza Summit, gathering key stakeholders from egg and poultry meat supply chains as well as government officials and researchers.

The summit focused on core issues related to H5N1 preparedness and was an opportunity for a range of biosecurity stakeholders to discuss priority actions moving forward.

We are pleased to report that through sustained campaigning and

advocacy by our industry, along with other commodity groups, we have successfully petitioned the Federal Government to invest in H5N1 preparedness, with a particular focus on wild bird surveillance.

With a total investment commitment of over \$100 million dollars by the Federal Government, we anticipate stronger national biosecurity arrangements to support preparedness operations and protect our agricultural sector and wildlife ecosystems.

ACMF has also been actively involved with Animal Health Australia, contributing to the variations and amendments of Animal Health Australia's Ausvetplan.

As a writing group member for the destruction manual, disposal manual and avian influenza manual, ACMF has provided critical feedback to ensure industry's interests are well-represented in national biosecurity policies.

This input is vital for refining the plan to better address industry challenges during disease outbreaks.

We anticipate these collective efforts will support our preparedness and response capacity in the years ahead, as we face the increasingly likely scenario of H5N1 reaching Australian shores.

Laying the groundwork for a timely and effective biosecurity system capable of meeting emerging EAD challenges will continue to be a core priority for our industry and we are eager to continue this work into 2025.

Sustainability

Despite the HPAI challenges industry faced throughout the course of 2024, we have demonstrated a strong commitment to sustainability and climate adaptation through several key initiatives.

In August, ACMF and AgriFutures Australia proudly launched the sector's first Australian chicken meat industry sustainability framework at Parliament House.

This groundbreaking framework, the first of its kind globally, sets clear and measurable sustainability metrics and targets for the chicken meat sector.

The event, attended by over 150 producers, growers, politicians and supply chain participants, featured a chicken-based canapé menu curated by chef Manu Fieldel and a series of short speeches on the Australian chicken meat industry's journey in becoming the most consumed and smallest environmental footprint meat protein in Australia.

Again, we would like to thank our working group members and our friends at Parliament House for supporting such a successful event and the development of the framework itself.

ACMF also responded to the Productivity Commission's call for submissions on circular economy opportunities, emphasising the importance of rendering systems and biogas facilities in reducing landfill waste.

We also actively participated in the Emissions Reduction Assurance Committee's Integrity Committee Stakeholder Roundtable for monogastric livestock, facilitating discussions on carbon reduction without compromising productivity.

Our industry's sustainability framework was showcased at the Australian Renderers Association symposium and discussed at the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action's climate adaptation workshop, to communicate our industry's ongoing commitment to reducing greenhouse

gas emissions.

Additionally, ACMF engaged with Environment Protection Authority Victoria on new legislation regarding agricultural digestates usage, supporting waste-to-energy applications.

Economic circularity is a topic that all levels of government are very much engaged in, and we are eager to collaborate with governments and researchers to explore further opportunities for our sector.

We are extremely grateful that we had so many opportunities to engage with government and other industry stakeholders on the topic of sustainability and spearhead such initiatives, despite the challenges we faced with HPAI over the course of the year.

Animal welfare

This year, our policy team provided detailed feedback on the proposed reforms to both Victoria and South Australia's animal welfare laws.

Our submissions discussed the poultry industry's commitment to upholding high standards of animal care and protection, often exceeding regulatory requirements.

We emphasised the importance of operationally viable and evidence-based legislative changes to support the growth and innovation of industry.

From initial consultation feedback, we were pleased to see South Australia choosing to adopt some of our core recommendations surrounding the composition of the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee and the powers of the minister under this proposed legislation.

While the outcomes of our engagement with the Victorian Government on its animal welfare reforms will not be known for a few more months, we assure industry that we will continue to en-

gage with policymakers to support a fit-for-purpose animal welfare system in Victoria.

In addition to focusing on major state-based reforms, we also had the opportunity to support the implementation of the poultry welfare standards and guidelines in Western Australia, the first state to incorporate these national standards into legislation.

As states progress with the implementation of these standards, our priority remains achieving national consistency and harmonisation, ensuring that animal welfare is upheld while safeguarding the broader interests of industry and the community.

ACMF has also supported these efforts through providing feedback to the animal welfare standards and guidelines for livestock processing, to ensure the basis for its inclusion in state-based legislation is infallible.

We will continue these efforts into 2025.

We also had the opportunity to respond to the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries' call for submissions on the renewed Australian Animal Welfare Strategy.

Our submission discussed the need for robust industry stakeholder input and a commitment to a science-based approach to welfare.

Additionally, ACMF provided feedback via a stakeholder workshop on developing a national statement on animal welfare to support the strategy's direction.

We had the opportunity to again relay the importance of underpinning this strategy with an acknowledgment of intensive livestock farming as a legitimate agricultural practice fundamental to our national food security and economy.

We also attended targeted engagement

continued P4

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Mycotoxin news from dsm-firmenich ●●●

Deactivate Mycotoxins Activate Performance



Powered by science to actively defend against multiple mycotoxins*

Why is my flock's performance so variable?

Variability, or lack of uniformity, in the broiler and layer flocks negatively impacts throughput and profitability of a poultry operation in many ways. The problem can manifest itself as delays in achieving market weight or egg production targets. Extensive research by dsm-firmenich in understanding of the mode of action of mycotoxins is shedding more light on the role mycotoxins can be playing in the variability of poultry performance across all production phases.

Mycotoxins consists of a wide range of chemically distinct compounds which affect different aspects of a bird's metabolism. The synergistic interaction of many mycotoxins, even at low contamination levels, has been shown to significantly affect bird performance. The main mycotoxins routinely identified to be a concern in feedstuffs for poultry over the many years the dsm-firmenich mycotoxin survey has been undertaken are shown below.

Deoxynivalenol (DON; commonly found in grains, by-products and bedding), in simple terms, affects how proteins in the body are synthesised. Proteins in the gut wall lining and the array of immunoglobulins and other proteins involved in immunity and health are targeted by DON. The effects of DON are typically seen as reducing feed intake and nutrient absorption and depressed immunity, the latter often triggering disease outbreaks. Even a few days exposure to DON can trigger profound effects which last many weeks and contribute to variability.

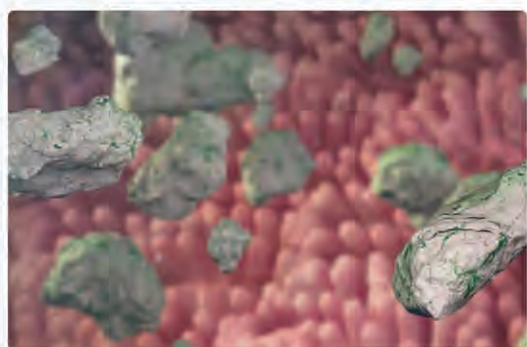
Zearalenone (ZEN; commonly found in grains and protein meals) is a compound that can also have effects in the gut but is mostly a problem in the laying flock as ZEN interferes with oestrogen activity and therefore affects ovulation and egg output. Impaired production of fertile eggs in breeder operations has important flow on effects on broiler operations.

Fumonisin (FUM; found in almost all feedstuffs surveyed) can have wide ranging effects on gut function and organs such as the lungs, liver and kidneys. Fumonisin work by interfering with the lipid component of cell membranes (especially the brain) and so all cells are potential targets.

When you consider the above brief summary of which feedstuffs mycotoxins contaminate and the diverse nature of their actions, it is not surprising that even low levels of different mycotoxins can be a significant and intermittent factor in the variability of bird performance, even without seeing 'mouldy' feedstuffs.

For more information on the Mycotoxin Survey results and how you can mitigate the effects of mycotoxins in your flock please contact Casey van der Bergh at dsm-firmenich, details below.

How does the Mycofix[®] product line work?



Adsorption

The mineral adsorbent selectively binds adsorbable mycotoxins and endotoxins



Biotransformation

The combination of patented enzymes and biological components converts mycotoxins into non-toxic metabolites



Bioprotection

The plant and algal extracts support the liver, immune system and gut integrity

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For more information on
Mycofix Solutions scan here



Australian Chicken Meat Federation year in review



ACMF hosted the National Avian Influenza Summit.



Mary Wu at Animal Health Australia Engagement Week.



ProTen and ACMF presented the Safety Smart Broiler Chicken Farming Award.

from P2 sessions with the secretariat of the Animal Welfare Task Group to discuss the process for developing and reviewing Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines.

We anticipate more opportunities to provide feedback to this strategy as the Federal Government advances national priorities in supporting a holistic animal welfare system.

Workforce development

This year, ACMF and AgriFutures Australia launched a targeted workforce strategy aimed at fostering job creation, facilitating workforce entry, enhancing retention and promoting skills devel-

opment within the industry.

A key aspect of this strategy is its emphasis on attracting young talent and other priority groups to cultivate a diverse and sustainable workforce.

This will be achieved through establishing clear and meaningful career pathways, ensuring training programs remain relevant to industry skill needs, and focusing on employee wellbeing and development.

We extend our appreciation to the ACMF Workforce Working Group members for their ongoing collaboration and input into the trajectory of this strategy.

Their expertise has been invaluable in developing workforce development materials and informing our priorities moving forward.

Aligned with the priorities of this strategy, ACMF released a curriculum-aligned case study focused on the Australian chicken meat industry for Stage 6 students.

This resource supports educators in dispelling persistent myths about the industry and provides students with a thorough understanding of the vast array of roles available within the chicken meat sector.

The resource was promoted across various educational networks and websites to support its uptake, particularly targeting school leavers

as a key demographic for workforce entry.

ACMF has also continued to actively engage with Jobs and Skills Australia throughout the year.

JSA's Food Supply Chain Capacity Study aims to identify workforce requirements within the food supply chain to safeguard Australia's food security.

ACMF's feedback has been instrumental in ensuring workforce needs are accurately captured and relayed to the government.

Notably, JSA has committed to expanding the scope of their study to include the veterinary and biosecurity workforce, addressing concerns about meeting a surge in labour needs during emergency animal disease outbreaks.

From these discussions on industry skill needs, we welcomed JSA's decision to include 'poultry farmers' on the draft core skills occupation list.

ACMF's various submissions to JSA outlined the core skills required to maintain a reliable supply of Australia's favourite meat protein and the impact of industry skill shortages upon the broader economy and level of food security.

JSA's recommendation to the Federal Government to recognise poultry farmers in its renewed migration and skilled visa programs is an extremely positive outcome in supporting industry's capacity to tap into the international talent pool amid nationwide skill shortages.

Another core workforce initiative ACMF was actively involved in over the past year was the establishment of the first broiler chicken farming specific safety prize in Australia.

ProTen, with the support of ACMF, launched an award program set to be delivered annually over the next three years, which will recognise excellence in on-farm safety initiatives.

Alongside ProTen chief executive officer James Wentworth, ACMF deputy CEO, and member of the award's judging panel, Verity Price had the pleasure of presenting the inaugural award to Tasktrans at its headquarters in Victoria.

We are exciting to see another round of outstanding applications as we continue this award program next year.

Food safety and security

The topic of food security continues to be an important topic for our sector.

ACMF's policy team provided feedback to the Legislative Council En-

vironment and Planning Committee's inquiry into securing the Victorian food supply, looking specifically on the impact of urban sprawl on the state's food security.

This inquiry provided an opportune platform to discuss the importance of a supportive policy framework to facilitate future growth and investment in our sector.

The report's findings will help inform the Victorian Government's priorities on supporting the state's food industries.

Within the realm of food safety, our industry demonstrated its ongoing commitment to antimicrobial stewardship in advocating for the de-registration of neomycin preparations for poultry, supporting the use of better alternatives and the need to safeguard public health through judicious antibiotic usage.

While the final decision is expected in February 2025, we commend our members for their contributions to this decision-making process, demonstrating a commitment to public health and animal welfare.

We also had the pleasure of working with the Food Safety Information Council in its campaign 'Look before you cook'.

In advocating the health benefits of chicken meat, it is equally important to us that we support initiatives that educate consumers on the safe preparations of foodstuffs.

What was of particular interest to us was the survey findings from FSIC regarding the uptake in food label compliance among Australian consumers.

This was extremely pleasing news as most foodborne illness comes from unsafe food preparation in the home kitchen.

Looking ahead, we will continue supporting the Food Safety Information Council as the national food safety information disseminator and initiatives such as Food Safety Week, both of which are extremely valuable junctures of protecting Australian consumers from preventable illness.

Beyond our focus on food safety and security, we also had the opportunity to showcase the impressive nutritional credentials of chicken meat to the NSW Health primary produce forum and the National Health and Medical Research Council.

Both organisations were eager to support the nutritional health of priority groups, including older Australians, through an evidenced-based approach in developing dietary guidelines

and public health programs.

One of the many aspects of our industry that we are extremely proud to represent is the nutritional benefit of chicken meat.

We will continue to collaborate with regulators, researchers and other organisations to further the positioning of our industry in providing a dietary staple of significant benefit to public health.

Research and development

Over the past year, our industry had many opportunities to engage with high-value research and development projects through our partnership with AgriFutures' Chicken Meat Program.

We were extremely pleased to see such a strong focus on our key strategic priority areas of sustainability, biosecurity, health, welfare and food safety and are excited by the opportunities for commercial adaption.

We also supported the chicken meat consortium's efforts as a program member, with ACMF deputy CEO Verity Price attending an industry forum in September to hear cutting-edge research on optimising gut health, welfare and sustainability.

At the Evoke Ag conference in Perth in early 2024, we had the pleasure of attending a presentation by Dr McCarthy on her artificial intelligence algorithm that automatically weighs poultry flocks and identifies health concerns through camera monitoring.

This has been well received by the industry, and we are eager to see the future prospects for commercialisation.

Conclusion

The past year was a testament to the resilience and proactive spirit of the Australian chicken meat industry.

Despite facing significant challenges, including HPAI outbreaks, the industry made remarkable strides in key priority areas such as biosecurity, sustainability, food safety, animal welfare and workforce development.

While this review highlights many key initiatives and achievements, it is impossible to capture every effort and success in a single summary.

We extend our gratitude to all stakeholders for their unwavering dedication and look forward to continuing our collaborative journey in supporting a prosperous and sustainable chicken meat industry.

ACMF



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Snack Brands sticks with trusted pumps

HYDRO Innovations was proud to have been selected to provide Gorman-Rupp pumps and other specialised pump equipment to the new 30,255sq m Snack Brands Australia manufacturing and logistics facility under construction at Erskine Park in western Sydney.

Snack Brands will use this facility for its manufacturing and distribution needs, consolidating several existing Sydney facilities into the new high-tech hub.

Snack Brands Australia – known for brands such as Kettle, Thins, Samboy and Cheezels – produces over 200 million packets of these snacks annually.

Hydro Innovations has been supplying water and wastewater pump equipment, service and technical support to both the Snackbrands Blacktown and Snack Brands Smithfield facilities for many years, specifically the Gorman-Rupp wastewater and water pumps, recognised as the world leading product in this field.

Snack Brands Australia project manager Mark Harrison insisted on again employing Hydro Innovations and Gorman Rupp pumps for the new facility for their reliability, safety features, longevity, ease of servicing and maintaining the product.

On this project, Gorman Rupp T4A71S-B HDI (hard iron) fitted pumps were chosen to handle the often-challenging wastewater being pumped. Gorman-Rupp Super T Series pumps do not have to be removed from the pipe system or need cranes or hoists to receive maintenance.

They are easy and safe to access, making them popular with both operators and asset owners.

For further information on Hydro Innovations, the range of specialised pump and aeration products, together with the services provided, call 02 9898 1800 or visit hydroinnovations.com.au

On this project, Gorman Rupp T4A71S-B HDI (hard iron) fitted pumps were chosen to handle the often-challenging wastewater being pumped. Gorman-Rupp Super T Series pumps do not have to be removed from the pipe system or need cranes or hoists to receive maintenance.



The new 30,255sq m Snack Brands Australia manufacturing and distribution facility under construction.

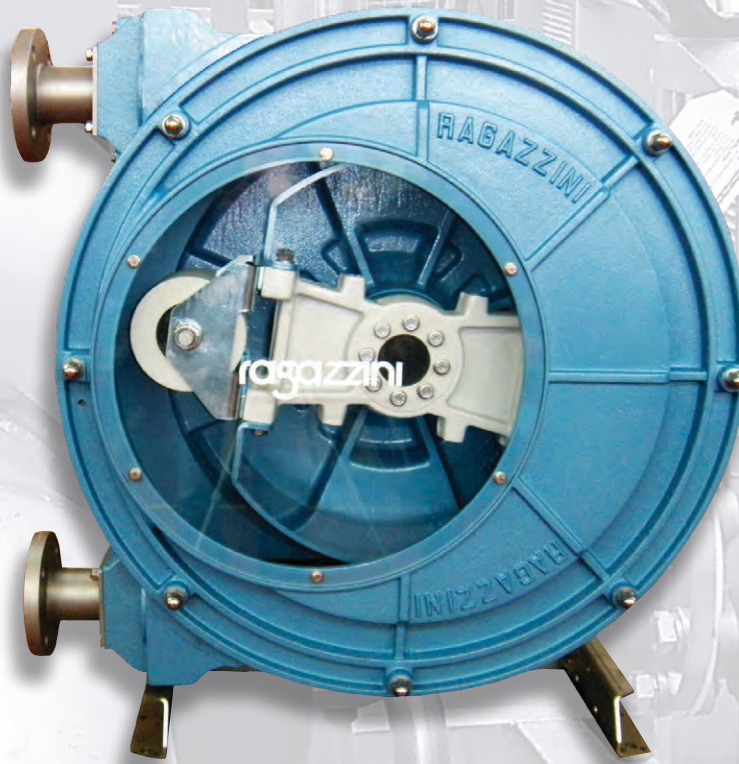


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Snack Brands Australia insisted on employing Hydro Innovations and Gorman Rupp pumps.



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While the author has no chicken tips for 2025, his dog has!



Let's hope all in the chicken industry put their best feet forward in 2025.

Cant Comment welcomes comments

REFLECTING seems almost right for the first of my 2025 monthly columns.

Tips for chickens in 2025 is too high risk for me, so reflection only it is.

Hence below are snippets from each of the 12 months of 2024, beginning with January 2024.

These may act as a reminder of the issues industry faced in 2024 or simply as a refresher as to what was on my mind at the time.

You may wish to ponder on my thoughts.

By all means let this publication know if you strongly agree or disagree, though be willing to share your thoughts publicly, keeping them polite and informative.

I'll begin each extract with its published headline.

Be advised, the snippets are not necessarily from the opening paragraphs of the columns.

Managing avian influenza

Though a scary and lurking threat here, Australia remains free from HPAI H5N1.

While avian influenza outbreaks have previously occurred here, they've been caused by domestic strains that have evolved to become highly pathogenic rather than an incursion from globally circulating HPAI strains.

Clucking chicken call signs

In the study, accepted and published last November in *Royal Society Open Science*, researchers investigated whether humans could correctly identify the context of calls or clucking sounds made by domestic chickens, the most commonly farmed species in the world.

"We found 69 percent of all participants could correctly tell if a chicken sounded excited or displeased," Professor Henning said.

Dozens of choices when it comes to eggs

Most customers, including myself, set out with personal boundaries when shopping for animal products, par-



ticularly for eggs.

Those boundaries might encompass concerns about animal welfare, price points and health and diet implications, with all often mired in the plethora of social media commentary that we must digest, discern and then act on... or not!

Systematic packaging can crack egg choices

I had suggested that how eggs were packaged, branded and presented at retail outlets was highly persuasive when it came to how consumers decided on production system preference.

This was often due to clever, colourful and sometimes questionable imagery on cartons.

Formidable females flourish in welfare

I now know that International Women's Day is a global day recognising and celebrating the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women.

How this event could ever have been labelled a cause celebre or bone of contention is beyond me.

It also marks, I understand, a call to action for speeding up women's equality.

That the spinning wheels of sexual equality should even need to be sped up is rather damning – sorry to say this to you 'backward folks' out there.

Poultry penned in pictures

I cook chicken regularly and enjoy poultry-based products in my home and when out.

Also, I promote chicken's many virtues to the unfamiliar and unconvinced, even going so far as trying to turn vegetarians.

I don't bother with ve-



gans... too many agendas running there.

Committing to better chicken welfare

Numerous companies across Europe, spanning retailers to restaurants and catering businesses, have already signed up to Better Chicken Commitment, a framework of standards promoted by animal welfare non-government organisations to enhance animal welfare, which exceeds current European Union legislation.

BCC commits its signatories to apply several requirements such as the use of slower growing chicken breeds, lower stocking density and use of enrichment tools, to 100 percent of their fresh, frozen and processed poultry supply chain by 2026.

Ducks always in my sights

Ducks have fascinated me since I was a young boy, when helping Dad kill, pluck and gut our Muscovies.

I confess, while I never helped Mum cook them, I certainly helped eat them.

When it came to eating ducks, out of bounds in our backyard were a few random colourful characters known as Khaki Campbells.

More or less pets and valued as snail snatchers, they weren't up to roasting standard, so were reprieved from visiting the bloodied chopping block – a jarrah stump with two strategically spaced nails.

Australian meat chickens to taste better lives

While most of the attention on chicken welfare in Australia is on egg layers, now is the time to shift that dial and create a better living standard for broilers.

A barrier burning away in the background is a gob-smacking low level of public awareness about meat chicken welfare.

Most poultry purchasers don't know the difference between meat chickens and layers.

So, correcting that is what welfare lobbyists need to crack before they can successfully shift shoppers to change their buying decisions when it comes to chicken meat.

Block broods over broilers

Let's hope consumers think before they buy and have higher welfare choices available to them when it comes to plating up chicken.

Meat from happy healthy chickens, preferably pasture-raised, is the way to go.

Broilers breaking down due to poor genetics is not.

International and national days of our lives

Governments, the private sector, farmers, academia, civil society and individuals must work together to ensure there is a greater variety of nutritious, affordable, accessible, safe and sustainable foods in order to achieve food security and healthy diets for all.

It's really that obvious and that basic.

AAA battery rating for Australian Alliance for Animals

Battery cages for layer hens should have no place in our egg production system.

Sure, I hear the many claims by battery cage proponents, including that banning them will mean reduced productivity and likely higher prices for consumers. But those advocates are clearly tone deaf.

Increasingly, the more the public sees and understands what the lives of hens in battery cages look like, the more they will refuse to shell out for eggs laid under such brutal conditions.

Meanwhile, my best wishes to everyone for 2025.

It's sure to be yet another big year. 🐔

Guide to emergency animal disease responses

AN outbreak of a serious emergency animal disease can be disastrous for producers, causing significant personal stress and anguish as well as financial hardship.

The livestock industries can lose sales opportunities both domestically and internationally in the wake of a damaged reputation for our produce, and the broader Australian economy could lose billions in trade and employment.

What is an emergency animal disease?

Diseases such as foot-and-mouth disease and mad cow disease are obvious examples of EADs.

However, the definition also includes unusual severe outbreaks of established diseases that may cause sudden trade disruptions, such as the 1997 anthrax outbreaks in Victoria.

It also includes new diseases where it is not immediately apparent what the disease is, such as the occurrence of Hendra virus in Queensland in 1994.

Under the Australian EAD Response Agreement, listed EADs must meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Known disease that does not occur in Australia and for which it is considered to be in

the national interest for the country to be free

- A variation of an endemic disease which, if it became widespread here, would have a national impact

- A serious infectious disease of unknown or uncertain cause, which may be an entirely new disease

- A known endemic disease occurring in such a severe outbreak form that an emergency response is required to ensure there is neither a large-scale epidemic of national significance or serious loss of market access.

What are the main emergency animal diseases that could affect my property?

There are a number of different types of diseases that are not present in Australian livestock.

Some major diseases of concern for poultry include avian influenza and exotic Newcastle disease.

There are many other diseases that would have a serious impact if an outbreak were to occur.

For a full list of diseases in the Australian veterinary emergency plan, see the AHA website.

Good farm biosecurity should be used to protect your livestock from the risks of an EAD.

What happens in an emergency animal disease outbreak?

Generally, Australian policy is to eradicate any introduced exotic animal disease as quickly as possible.

This could involve:

- Establishment of disease control zones, quarantine and movement controls

- Possible destruction and disposal of infected and exposed animals

- Decontamination of infected premises, vehicles, equipment and animal products

- Surveillance of susceptible animals

- Restriction of the activities of certain enterprises.

The disease may also be controlled through vaccination, campaigns to control disease carriers, animal treatment and wild animal control.

Infected and disease-free zones are established to contain the disease and retain business continuity in disease-free areas.

Controlling and eradicating EADs is done using the guidelines in Ausvetplan, a coordinated national response plan.

As each state and territory is responsible for controlling and eradicating animal disease locally, each has its own emergency dis-

ease control legislation which supports the national guidelines.

What happens to me in an emergency animal disease outbreak?

The more serious the outbreak, the more impact it could have on you and your family.

An outbreak of a disease such as FMD, where heavy restrictions are placed on moving stock, can have a serious effect on families.

On some properties, all movement – people as well as animals – may be temporarily restricted, creating problems for school and work.

Longer term restrictions can significantly affect businesses due to reduced trading opportunities.

Prevention is definitely better than cure.

Good farm biosecurity practices will lower the risks of disease entering your property.

If my property is affected, will my livestock be destroyed?

Whether livestock need to be destroyed – or for that matter, livestock products or other materials – depends on the disease and its nature.

Your local authority working under the state or territory emergency response plan would make the decision about your stock in the event of an infection on

your property.

Compensation is available for stock lost due to an EAD or destroyed by the authority to prevent disease spread.

For details of reportable diseases, visit agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity-trade/pests-diseases-weeds/animal/notifiable

Can I leave my property during a disease outbreak?

Without realising, people can spread disease on their clothing, footwear and vehicles or even on their skin or nasal passages.

Many diseases can survive long periods outside their obvious host and can hitch a ride to another location.

For this reason, if you suspect a serious disease in your stock, don't leave your property or allow anyone else to do so until an inspector has discussed with you what you must do to prevent disease spread.

Once a process is in place, which may include managing movement and disinfecting clothing and equipment, you will generally be allowed to leave.

Can I move stock during a disease outbreak?

If you are aware of an outbreak of an EAD, you must not move any stock around your property or to other places

• continued P8



There are many diseases that would have a serious impact if an outbreak were to occur.



When an outbreak of an EAD is confirmed, the state or territory authority will quarantine the infected property immediately.



Some major diseases of concern for poultry include avian influenza and exotic Newcastle disease.

HEALTH GUARD



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Guide to emergency animal disease responses

from P7

until you get the 'all clear'.

This is because you may cause the disease to spread, as many diseases are readily spread from animal to animal.

In the case of foot and mouth, a national livestock standstill, banning all movement of susceptible animals, may be immediately declared for a few days to allow the authorities to assess where the disease already is, without the situation getting worse through continuing movements.

It is a criminal offence to move stock during a stock standstill.

Can I sell products such as milk, eggs, meat?

This depends on the disease, but you won't be able to sell your products until there's no doubt they have not been in contact or contaminated with the disease organism.

As this may be very difficult to establish, it might be necessary to suspend all sales.

What can I do to help during an outbreak?

In the event of an outbreak:

- Stay informed
- Visit outbreak.gov.au for information about outbreaks in Australia
- Your state or territory department of agriculture or primary industries website will have specific information for your local area
- Remember to cooperate with local authorities, they are there to

eradicate the disease as quickly as possible, as well as help you.

How long will it be before I can resume my normal farming activities and what do I need to do?

The period between eradicating a disease and resuming normal farming is one of the most difficult things to predict, as it depends on the spread of the individual outbreak and the nature of the organism responsible.

Once a disease has been officially eradicated, there will be a period of time before normal activity can recommence.

Given the impact on producers' income, every effort will be made to limit this period and, of course, livestock producers are part of the decision making process and will be pressing for an early return to normal activities.

It is very important to have good farm biosecurity practices in place all the time, but particularly during and after an EAD outbreak.

Preventing a disease outbreak

That's exactly what farm biosecurity is all about.

Simple biosecurity measures that will go a long way towards preventing a disease or detecting it quickly.

In the event of an outbreak, good farm biosecurity is critical to assist the eradication process.

Everyone must play their part.

How does an emergency animal disease response work?

EAD control requires a coordinated response drawing on significant resources and input from all tiers of government and a range of industry groups.

When an outbreak of an EAD is confirmed, the state or territory authority will quarantine the infected property immediately.

They may also quarantine other properties, such as those close to the infected property or because of recent animal, people or vehicle movement.

They also advise the Australian Government, the other states and territories and the national organisations of the affected industries, so that management groups can convene and that agreed consultative disease management and funding arrangements can be put into place.

The state chief veterinary officer:

- Initiates quarantine, movement controls and assessments around the initial site
 - Alerts state emergency management agencies to activate the animal diseases emergency plan
 - Consults with national counterparts and advisors to seek agreement on the preferred national control strategy.
- Field activities are controlled from a local control centre usually established in the vicinity of the outbreak.

ity of the outbreak.

Statewide measures are directed from the state control centre.

Who should I contact if I suspect an outbreak of a serious livestock disease?

Early intervention is vital in an EAD outbreak.

If you suspect a pest or disease outbreak or have seen something unusual and you're not sure whether it's an exotic pest or disease, report it.

Don't worry how insignificant it may be.

Small signs may be an early indication that something's wrong.

Your suspicions of a serious livestock disease must be reported to your local government or private vet or a stock inspector, or you can call the free Emergency Disease Watch Hotline on 1800 675 888.

The hotline operates to assist the early reporting of EADs.

Two documents have been published to help livestock producers survive an emergency disease outbreak, scan the QR code below for these.

For further information, visit farmbiosecurity.com.au or outbreak.gov.au



Scan for documents.



Edward Alexander, the new CEO of Inghams Group.

New Inghams Group CEO with retirement of Andrew Reeves

INGHAMS Group Limited recently announced that current chief executive officer and managing director Andrew Reeves would retire from the role in mid-2025.

Following a comprehensive global search that included internal candidates, the Inghams Board has endorsed the current chief executive of its New Zealand business Edward Alexander as his replacement.

Inghams chair Helen Nash said, "Andrew has done an exceptional job leading the business since his appointment in early 2021, successfully stabilising the business and optimising its performance."

"His preparedness to step into the leadership role in 2021 from his position as a non-executive director of the company is a great demonstration of his commitment to the business and our team across Australia and New Zealand."

"After an extraordinary 40-year executive and board career, we understand his decision to retire from full-time executive life," Ms Nash said.

"Andrew will leave the business in a sound operating and financial position, with solid underlying fundamentals and positioned for future growth."

"On behalf of the Inghams Board, our employees and shareholders, I would like

to thank Andrew for his invaluable contribution and service to Inghams, including his two earlier years as a non-executive director."

Mr Reeves said, "It has been an honour to be part of the success of Inghams."

"During my time leading the company, we successfully navigated a global pandemic, stabilised and returned the business to strong profitability, and set in place a clear strategy and investment plans to support future business growth."

"After much thought and careful consideration, the time has come for me to hand over the reins to the next generation of leaders to take Inghams forward."

In announcing the appointment of Ed Alexander, Ms Nash said, "We are thrilled that Ed has accepted the role."

"Ed joined Inghams in 2015 and has held several key leadership roles, culminating in his appointment as chief executive New Zealand in June 2022, with responsibility for all aspects of the New Zealand business."

"Under Ed's leadership, the New Zealand business successfully navigated significant Covid-related operational challenges with the business achieving remarkable results, including materially improving underlying earnings and completing the strategic acquisitions of Bromley Park Hatcheries

and Bostock Brothers organic chicken business to improve Inghams' positioning within the market," Ms Nash said.

"Ed is an established operational leader – with extensive experience in the company across sales, corporate development, strategy, integrated business planning and commercial optimisation, which makes him uniquely qualified to lead the business – and will ensure an orderly leadership transition."

Commenting on his appointment, Mr Alexander said, "I am honoured by the appointment and excited by the opportunities that we have in front of us as a business."

"The company's long history has been built around a core philosophy of being deeply customer-centric, doing things 'the right way' and making bold moves where it makes sense to do so."

"These principles remain an important foundation for where we are today, and I look forward to leading the business into a new era of sustainable growth," he said.

"On a personal note, I am very grateful for the mentorship that Andrew has provided me over the past three and a half years, as well giving me the opportunity to step into the role of chief executive of NZ."

"I have learnt a great deal from him, and I wish him every future success."

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Groundbreaking research tackles global antibiotic resistance crisis

RESEARCH in Adelaide is unearthing a potential natural solution to stop the rapidly growing global issue of antibiotic resistance, listed by the World Health Organisation as one of the top 10 public health threats facing humanity.

Scientific trials underway between the University of South Australia and locally based biological company Neutrog Australia have potentially uncovered soil-based weapons to target the problem at its source.

Antibiotic resistance has become a major roadblock to the effective treatment of many infectious diseases, with urinary tract infections being one of the most prevalent, particularly among women.

Many intensive farming operations use antibiotics as a preventative measure to ensure the health and wellbeing of animals and workers against naturally present pathogenic bacteria such as e coli – a common cause of UTIs – and salmonella.

The overuse of antibiotics in commercial, intensive agriculture and its potential link to antibiotic resistance has been the subject of global research over many years.

Now in a joint study, Neutrog and the University of South Australia have uncovered a potential breakthrough to provide a biological natural alternative to antibiotics.

Through its own processing and testing of poultry manure to make biological fertiliser, Neutrog's research and development team has identified certain microbes that exhibit a unique and natural ability to inhibit and suppress bacterial pathogens.

Neutrog's R&D team is led by world renowned microbiologist Dr Uwe Stroehrer,

Many intensive farming operations use antibiotics as a preventative measure to ensure the health and wellbeing of animals and workers against naturally present pathogenic bacteria.

while the company's biological advisory board is comprised of leaders in the fields of infectious disease, bacteria and plant science, including Professor Paul Manning, who was previously the head of molecular sciences at Astra Zeneca in the US.

"Initially we had been looking at how these microbes performed against plant and soil pathogens to help commercial growers control disease and improve soil health while providing an alternative to increasingly ineffective chemical treatments," Dr Stroehrer said.

"The microbes passed with flying colours, which posed the question, if they perform so well against plant and soil pathogens, what's to say they couldn't influence human and animal pathogens?"

"We have teamed up with the highly respected microbiology researchers from the University of South Australia to further these trials.

"The initial results have been very encouraging and we're now in the midst of further testing to confirm the bacteria fighting qualities of these individual microbe species and to pinpoint the genes involved."

UniSA head of microbiology Associate Professor Rietie Venter said the project demonstrated a holistic approach to antibiotic resistance.

"We are aiming to provide a one health solution that addresses issues across the interconnected sectors of animal health, envi-

ronmental health and human health," Assoc Prof Venter said.

"Microbes must fight each other to survive in a hostile environment and most antibiotics come from microbes.

"Australia is home to a rich and under-exploited microbial diversity that we are mining for novel antimicrobials to fight antimicrobial resistance."

If the trials are successful, Neutrog will seek to make the microbes available to commercial agricultural producers across the globe.

"By introducing a biocontrol agent into the bedding of chicken, pig and cattle operations, we are effectively building a biological barrier to reduce the potential transfer of pathogens between animals and humans," Dr Stroehrer said.

"Achieving a reduction of the pathogen load in these types of growing environments would significantly lessen the requirement for the overuse of antibiotics in livestock.

"This could lead to improved animal husbandry and the potential reduction in antibiotic resistance to human pathogens, further down the line.

"Through these trials we are tackling a problem at its source, rather than at the point it eventually manifests in the human population.

"The broader implications of a possible breakthrough could revolutionise commercial agriculture and human health outcomes worldwide."



Dr Uwe Stroehrer and Associate Professor Rietie Venter.

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Poultry, meat and eggs are essential to the food supply worldwide.

Safe feed leads to more efficient production

SUSTAINABLY producing meat and eggs for consumers is critical to meet the increasing demand for protein food sources to feed a growing global population.

Poultry, meat and eggs are essential to the food supply worldwide.

As the largest centralised input into poultry production, feed significantly influences food safety, security and sustainability.

Anitox director of nutrition and live production Dr Enrique Montiel said, "Feed is fundamental to each stage of poultry production, from breeding operations to grow-out and layer operations."

"Similarly, each of these stages has specific goals related to food safety pathogens, such as salmonella, and productivity goals largely impacted by gut health."

"The role of feed as a fomite has been extensively evaluated."

"A strong body of literature evidence feed as a fomite for avian pathogens in poultry production, most notably salmonella."

Feed hygiene influence on producer food safety initiatives

Over 500 publications link salmonella to animal feeds.

Wang et al reviewed

nearly 40 publications over the course of more than 50 years focusing on salmonella detection and prevalence in broilers, summarising data from over 40,000 samples.

"Literary analysis of these studies allowed researchers to isolate the relative contribution of various factors influencing salmonella prevalence in broiler operations," Dr Montiel said.

"According to the literary review by Dr Wang, feed was observed to have a 4.8 percent contribution to salmonella positivity in broilers."

Pathogen transmission via feed is concerning because of its ability to interact directly with the gastrointestinal tract and exert influence on the microbiome.

"For example, the findings from Wang et al directly state that the feed itself accounts for 4.8 percent of the salmonella prevalence in poultry production systems," he said.

"This excludes the fact that feed contributes to the pathogen prevalence in the gut and consequently to the horizontal transmission observed in grow out, laying and breeding facilities."

Poultry producers generally accept that prevention is the best protection against pathogens within poultry production systems and deploy many strategies

and tactics to reduce inbound microbial loads.

"Today's producers have strict comprehensive biosecurity programs intent on mitigating pathogen transmission in poultry production, including vaccination programs, wash-in and wash out procedures and feed pathogen control measures," Dr Montiel said.

Implement effective feed pathogen control

Organic acid and heat treatment are commonly used strategies for controlling feed source pathogens.

Heat treatment, when performed at 86C for six minutes as recommended by Aviagen, serves as an effective kill step for salmonella but offers no protection against recontamination.

Recontamination post-heat and during transit to the farm is a significant challenge.

"Post-heat conditions, particularly in coolers, can become favourable to microbial survival, meaning any persisting microbes within feed can rebound, contaminating feed production lines and subsequent loads of feed," Dr Montiel said.

"In mills, where pelleting is the only pathogen mitigation strategy, this is especially true as the temperatures typically fall between 80-85C and are not sustained for a time long enough to achieve effective contamination control."

Increased awareness and loss of control tools such as antibiotics have led many producers to pay more attention to feed contamination.

Organic acids are a common tool used and efficacy depends on the acid or acid blend used.

Formic, propionic and acetic acid have all demonstrated efficacy at high inclusion rates, usually 4-8 kg/MT.

When combined with heat treatment, higher microbial load reductions may be observed.

"Making a real significant impact on feed microbial loads and pathogen prevalence requires an understanding of feed and feed ingredient microbial risk," Dr Montiel said.

"When the risk is high or the tolerance for risk is low, feed sanitation may be the best fit."

"Feed sanitation reduces feed microbial loads, controls pathogens such as salmonella and provides continued protection against recontamination."

"Decreasing microbial loads in feed also contributes to intestinal balance and the development of a healthy microbiome."

See Figure 1.

Reducing inbound feed microbial loads helps producers take effective action against pathogen prevalence within live production and meet their food safety goals.

However, continued research into the im-

continued P11

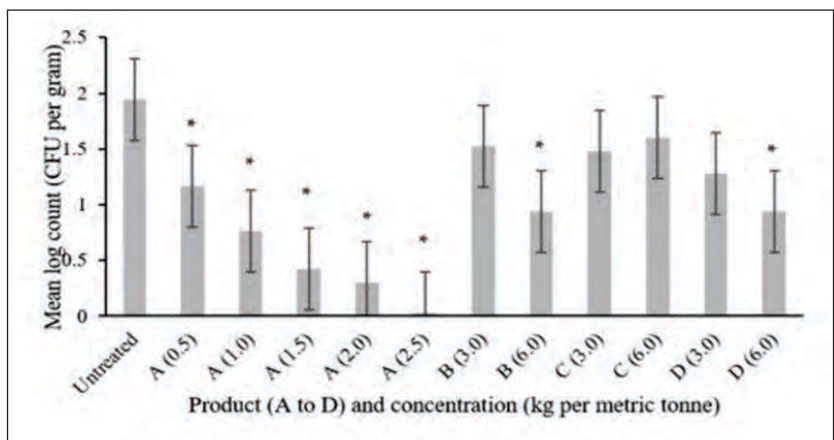


Figure 1: Finio, Anitox feed sanitiser depicted as product A, demonstrates high-level salmonella control at much lower inclusion rates than for a variety of commercially available organic acid mixtures.

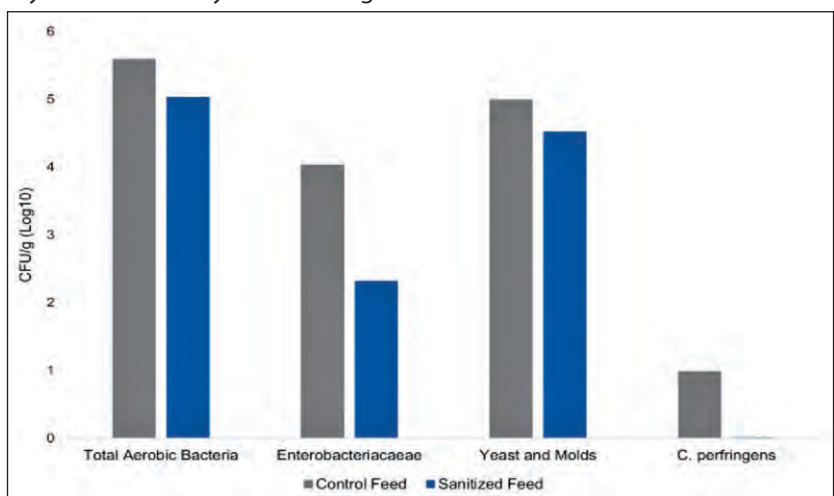


Figure 2. Feed sanitiser Termin-8 reduces feed microbial loads.

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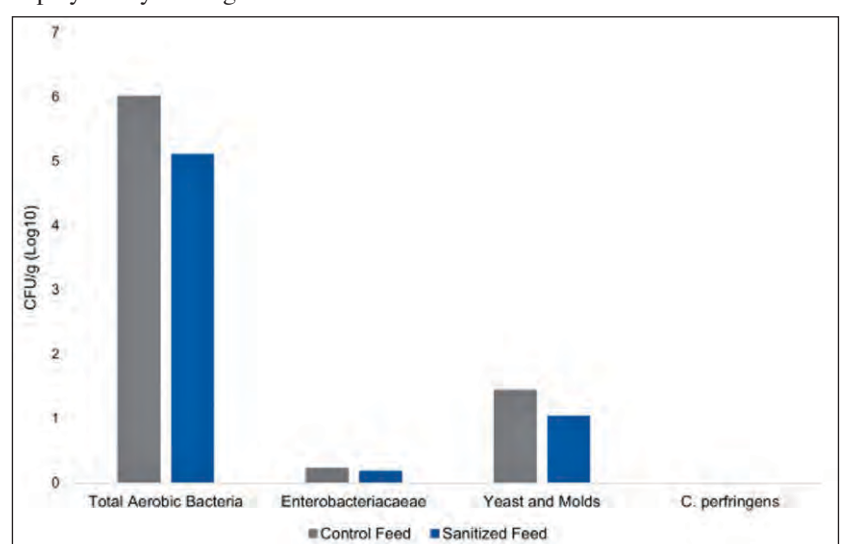


Figure 3. Eggs from hens fed sanitised feed exhibited lower eggshell surface microbial loads.

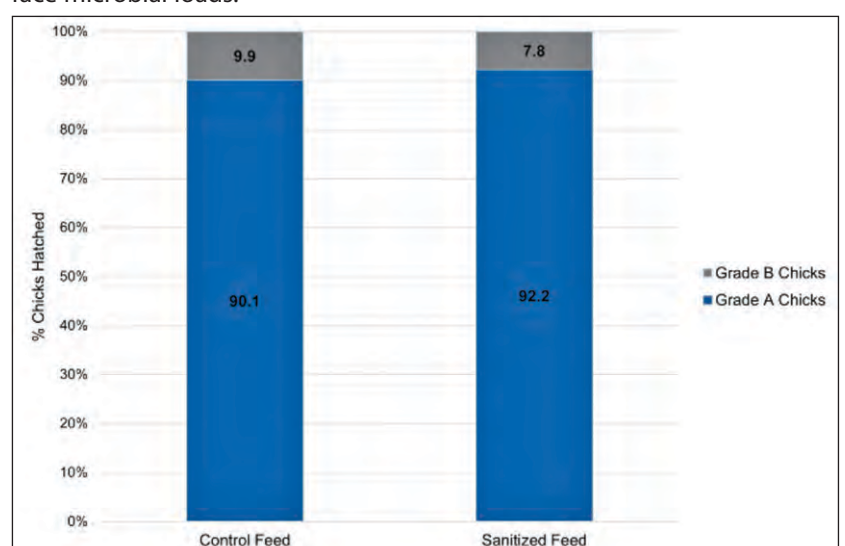


Figure 4. Chicks from hens fed sanitised feed were more likely to receive 'Grade A' ratings.

Safe feed leads to more efficient production

from P10
 pact of feed sanitation on poultry production demonstrates that reducing feed microbial loads can also support feed efficiency and producer bird performance and productivity goals.

Feed sanitation impact on bird performance

Variable microbial loads and pathogen prevalence in feed can challenge balance within the microbiome and lead to dysbiosis, impacting gut health and thus poultry health and performance.

“We worked with Dr Jeanna Wilson at the University of Georgia and Dr Dan Moore at Colorado Quality Research to evaluate the impact of feed sanitation on broiler breeders and broilers,” Dr Montiel said.

“In both trials, feed sanitation significantly reduced feed microbial loads compared to the control diets.

“Both trials evidence that controlling microbial loads in feed positively impacts poultry health and performance.”

Avila et al demonstrate that broiler breeders fed sanitised

feed exhibited lower mortality during production, reduced egg-shell contamination and increased production of ‘Grade A’ chicks.

“A feed sanitiser was found to effectively reduce total aerobic bacteria, enterobacteriaceae, clostridia as well as yeast and moulds in feed,” Dr Montiel said.

“Additional results demonstrated that broiler breeder hens consuming a sanitised diet had a 4.5 percent lower mortality compared to hens fed a control diet.”

See Figure 2. The study also revealed that fertile eggs from hens consuming sanitised feed had reduced shell microbial loads (see Figure 3) and late-lay eggs from the same hens had a 4 percent increase in ‘Grade A’ chicks (see Figure 4).

Post-hatch offspring of the hens fed sanitised feed demonstrated lower seven-day mortality, especially in offspring of week 60 lay, in which seven-day chick mortality was reduced by 3 percent.

“Trial results from our work with Dr Dan Moore have been

submitted for publication and indicate that broilers fed sanitised feed prior to and during a necrotic enteritis challenge model exhibit less severe lesions and reduced mortality, as well as improved weight gain and feed conversion,” Dr Montiel said.

Effective feed hygiene programs successfully reduce feed microbial loads and the risk of pathogen entry into live production.

Feed sanitation has been shown to not only control feed source pathogens and reduce microbial loads but has also demonstrated a beneficial impact on bird health and performance.

Managing risk and supporting performance through feed sanitation gives producers the power to meet operational safety and productivity goals.

Producers who want to take effective action to protect their animals against feed contamination and those wanting to learn more about feed pathogen control options can get more information at anitox.com/broiler-performance

Clean sheds for healthy chicks

WITH the threat of biosecurity issues, Australia’s poultry industry needs to build defence barriers to combat potential disease.

Aussie Pumps produces high-pressure water blasters and steam cleaners, designed specifically for the tough duties of all hygienic functions in the industry.

Its range of products is comprehensive, with loads of labour-saving devices that can cut cleaning times dramatically.

Aussie Pumps chief engineer John Hales said: “Our attitude is to design and build machines as if we were going to use them ourselves.”

The company’s unique ‘Scud’ 3000 and 4000psi pressure cleaners do a mighty job in cleaning up sheds, with even larger machines, bigger flows and less pressure being capable of carrying out fast efficient decontamination of sheds.

“We know this is a never-ending task for the industry,” Mr Hales said.

“Keeping sheds clean and hygienic is an essential and continuous task in any poultry operation.”

The company also produces terrific hot wash machines capable of 2000psi at 80C.

“Our little Sizzler hot-wash machine comes at a bargain price and is fitted with all the safety equipment you might need,” Mr Hales said.

The Sizzler boasts not only a heavy duty steel chassis with stainless-steel cover but also has a durable triplex pump driven by a slow-speed four-pole motor with thermal cut out.

The double loop mild steel coil ensures accurate temperature monitoring, while four wheels with flat-free tyres make it easy to push around the sheds.

The hot-wash machine also offers total delay stop for automatic shutdown of the machine when the gun is not in use.

“Another big success in the poultry industry is a portable Honda engine drive version of much the same machine, but with much more capability,” Mr Hales said.

That machine is the Aussie Heatwave, a mobile steam cleaner powered by a Honda electric-start petrol engine, producing 4000psi pressure,

13LPM flow and 130C steam capability.

The beauty of the machine is it comes in a stainless-steel frame and is convenient and easy to push around.

“It’s a mobile hot-wash hero,” Mr Hales said.

Free training course

Aussie Pumps has developed a free safety training course for operators of pressure cleaners.

It focuses attention on the safe operation of the machines and explains the basics of how the triplex pump technology is used in high-pressure water blasting works.

“Understanding how the machine works helps the operator to avoid errors, such as dry running, and aids in their confidence

and safety,” Mr Hales said.

Further information on Aussie Scud pressure cleaners for poultry operations is available from Aussie Pumps, including the brand new *Blaster Blitz 9* catalogue.

You can access it online or call Aussie Pumps on 02 8865 3500 to have a free copy sent out.

It has loads of information, including troubleshooting, safety and is an indispensable guide for making the right decision on pressure cleaner selections.

Further information on the stainless-steel pumps and the full catalogue is readily available from aussiepumps.com.au



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Letter to the Editor - Letter to the Editor

It is the responsibility of those making submissions to ensure the correctness of their claims and statements. The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the publisher.

IN response to a Cant Comment article, the following is some feedback from one of our readers.

Hello Brendon, although I do not agree with your views on egg farming, your articles always make for interesting reading.

Before I begin, it is important to note that the farming system will not guarantee animal welfare.

Farm management is the key to animal welfare and it should be the farmer's number one priority when farming any animals.

In National Poultry Newspaper Vol 7 No. 12 December 2024, you make some points to support your argument, however it is important that you expand these points and tell the whole story.

You mention the countries that have

phased out or are in the process of phasing out caged egg production.

You should also mention that over 80 percent of the world's egg production still comes from caged hens.

You mention how caged hens have weaker bones but forget to mention that more birds suffer broken bones in the non-caged system compared to the caged system.

You mention the welfare issues without telling readers how the non-caged systems have more disease issues, with an increase in parasites internally and externally resulting in the increased use of chemicals and antibiotics.

You also mention that an increasing number of Australians are choosing to buy eggs from alternative systems.

The fact is that super-

markets are not giving people the choice.

Why?

To increase their profits.

Surprising?

Keep in mind, supermarkets only sell about 40 percent of the eggs produced in Australia.

Natural behaviours are important, however scientists agree that our layer hens originate from the old jungle fowl, where natural behaviours such as foraging, perching and dust-bathing were critical to their survival.

The caged hens of today are well protected from predators, they are well fed and free from parasites, therefore these behaviours are no longer critical to their survival.

It is also important to mention that the caged system has a lower carbon footprint compared to non-caged systems.

You may ask where

I got this information from?

I am a farmer who has been looking after poultry for over 50 years and have farmed in all three systems – free range, barn and caged.

What I have learnt has come from practical experience, not out of a book.

Many people may not be aware, but the egg industry started with free range and barn laid systems, and they worked well when the farms were small.

The problem was that people wanted to live in the cities and the farms needed to get bigger to feed the growing population.

That was why the caged system was designed.

This system was designed for volume production.

As a farmer, I chose the caged system be-

cause it offered a bio-secure and fully automated method where I could manage the volume of birds I needed to meet the increased demands of my customers and improve the welfare of my birds.

As a bonus, this resulted in both food security and food affordability for my customers.

In Australia, we are now seeing many companies or farmers choosing to run the non-caged systems in volume to increase profits.

Unfortunately, this is also increasing the risk of disease.

It is not a coincidence that disease outbreaks in the egg industry have increased with the increase in these alternative systems.

Wild birds are carriers of diseases, in particular migratory birds.

As farmers, we cannot control wild birds.

Allowing large commercial flocks to roam free outdoors increases the risk of disease and it is only a matter of time.

There will be a new pandemic, few doubt it.

They will possibly come more frequently as a result of climate change and increased contact between humans and animals.

Expert concerns are more focused on figuring out what the infectious agent will be and if we are prepared to face it.

Most infectious disease specialists are

looking to the US, where the H5N1 avian flu continues to mutate and dangerously approaches humans.

The pandemic potential of this highly pathogenic strain keeps the whole world on alert due to its acquired ability to transmit among mammals and from cattle to workers on farms.

Below is a list of the more recent avian influenza outbreaks in Australia, all began in free range:

- 1997 – Tamworth NSW
- 2012 – Maitland NSW
- 2013 – Young NSW
- 2020 – Lethbridge Victoria, Bairnsdale Victoria, Kerang Victoria
- 2024 – Lethbridge Victoria seven properties, Terang Victoria, Hawkesbury NSW six properties, ACT two properties.

Facts support that wild birds, in particular migratory birds, carry the AI virus and spread it around the world.

Biosecurity on a free-range farm is near impossible, and it has become a numbers game.

The more birds you have outdoors the higher the risk.

While many people think letting the birds roam free is better, consider what the farmer is ordered to do when there is a disease outbreak?

We are ordered to lock up our birds.

In conclusion, we should not become fixated on a farming system.

We should be working together to assure the best animal welfare outcomes, no matter the farming method.

As farmers, the health and welfare of our chickens is and will always be our number one priority.

Our family chose to run the caged system because we had to meet the increase in demand for our product and the caged system allowed us to increase supply and better manage the health and welfare of our birds.

We understand our product is not for everyone.

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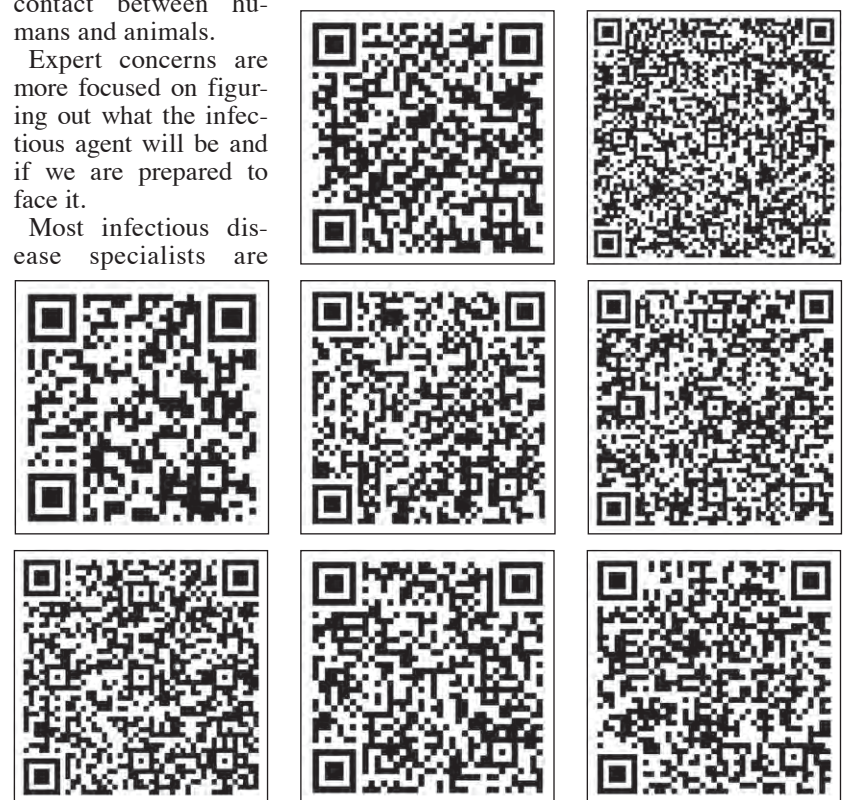
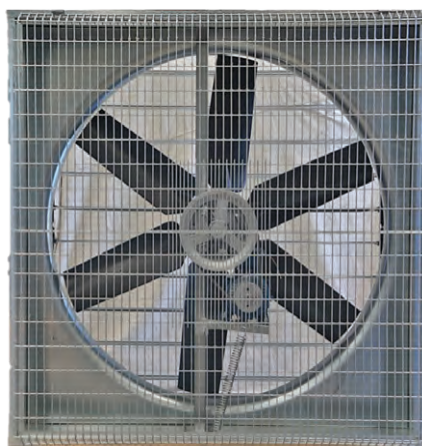
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Brian Ahmed of LT's Egg Farm. Photo: Holly McGuinness

Why humans kill animals - Part 1

KILLING animals has been a ubiquitous human behaviour throughout history, yet it is becoming increasingly controversial and criticised in some parts of contemporary human society.

Over a three part series, researchers from around the globe review 10 primary reasons why humans kill animals, discuss the necessity or not of these forms of killing and describe the global ecological context for human killing of animals.

The article can be viewed in its entirety at sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0048969723039062

Humans historically and currently kill animals either directly or indirectly for the following reasons:

- Wild harvest or food acquisition
- Human health and safety
- Agriculture and aquaculture
- Urbanisation and industrialisation
- Invasive, overabundant or nuisance wildlife control
- Threatened species conservation
- Recreation, sport or entertainment
- Mercy or compassion

- Cultural and religious practice

- Research, education and testing.

While the necessity of some forms of animal killing is debatable and further depends on individual values, the authors emphasise that several of these forms of animal killing are a necessary component of our inescapable involvement in a single functioning finite global food web.

They conclude that humans and all other animals cannot live in a way that does not require animal killing either directly or indirectly, however humans can modify some of these killing behaviours in ways that improve the welfare of animals while they are alive or to reduce animal suffering whenever they must be killed.

Encouraged is a constructive dialogue that accepts and permits human participation in one enormous global food web dependent on animal killing and focuses on animal welfare and environmental sustainability.

Doing so will improve the lives of both wild and domestic animals to a greater extent than efforts to avoid, prohibit or vilify human animal-

killing behaviour.

Introduction

The killing of animals by humans has been a common practice throughout history and this pattern continues in the present age.

Countless animals are killed daily, either for direct consumption or indirectly through competition for resources, and the nutrients released through this process ultimately find their way back into the environment.

Ecology textbooks refer to this as the 'food chain' or 'food web'.

Animal killing by humans and animals is ecologically ubiquitous, yet some sectors of contemporary human society condemn, criticise or oppose animal killing by humans, attempting to prevent or minimise human involvement in the global food web.

Some more extreme adherents have even suggested that non-human predators might also be prevented from killing their prey.

Criticism of animal killing comes in many forms.

Modern hunter-gatherers and subsistence farmers are criticised for killing wild animals to feed themselves or to protect what little crops they

can produce.

Livestock producers are criticised for raising and then killing domestic livestock and the wild predators and competitors of their livestock.

Crop producers face the same criticism when they kill animals during tilling, during harvest or when they protect their crops from being eaten by other animals.

Conservationists are criticised for killing exotic, invasive or overabundant animals to protect native biodiversity.

Hunters are criticised for killing animals for food, sport or pleasure.

Cultures and religions are criticised for killing animals and disregarding animal suffering during various rituals.

Researchers, scientists and educators are also criticised for performing dissections or experimenting on and killing animals in laboratories or for field-testing ecological hypotheses related to animal killing.

This widespread criticism of killing animals occurs at all scales.

It is directed towards global food industries such as the beef, dairy, pork, poultry and egg industries.

As well as government agencies at all levels, including for example the US Department of Agriculture or Australian state and local governments.

And is even targeted towards specific individuals including anglers, recreational hunters, wildlife scientists and meat eaters.

Support for this criticism arises from a variety of perspectives.

As examples, some have argued that animal killing by humans is immoral, unethical, irreligious, unjust, unacceptable or just plain wrong.

Others claim that animal killing ignores 'animal personhood' and that animals should have rights equal to humans – that animal abuse, violence or murder is unacceptable and criminal – and many people have held and still hold this belief.

Many also view the act of animal killing as cruel or harmful, regardless of how it is accomplished or how instantaneous or painless it might actually be, and hence advocate for only non-lethal practices or complete cessation of animal killing, ostensibly to stop animal suffering.

continued P15



Several forms of animal killing are a necessary component of our inescapable involvement in a single functioning finite global food web.



Associate Professor Benjamin Allen, research co-author and wildlife management and research team leader at the Institute for Life Sciences and the Environment at the University of Southern Queensland.

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Why humans kill animals by Ben Allen - Part 1

from P13

Some have argued that animal killing does not resolve some of the issues it aims to address and is therefore unnecessary – for example, it does not stop depredation of livestock or does not contribute to the conservation of endangered species.

Others have further argued that killing animals is an inefficient way to obtain nutrition and that animal killing will be reduced by seeking our life-sustaining nutrients from lower trophic levels – that is, vegetarianism or veganism.

The authors agree with many of these perspectives and do not attempt to address or dispute each of these claims or worldviews.

Rather, as valid, strongly held and important as these differing views might be, they consider them largely tangential to an ecological perspective on animal killing by humans and our undeniable role at the apex of the global food web.

The philosophical, medical, veterinary, husbandry and ecological literature is

replete with robust debate on the acceptability of killing various animals in diverse circumstances, and it is clear that many people support or accept animal killing in one way or another while some others oppose it.

However, much of the ‘for versus against’ multidisciplinary literature on this subject typically fails to put contemporary animal killing behaviour by humans into an evolutionary or ecological context, and an explanation for why humans kill animals and why we cannot avoid it has not been well articulated.

Humans do not live independently of other species.

We are an inescapable part of the global food web and our action, inaction and mere presence on Earth has diverse consequences for animal life.

The disciplines of anthropology, archaeology, climate change, ecology, evolutionary biology, religious studies, philosophy and ethics, taxonomy and others implicitly attest to the interconnectedness of humans with

other living organisms. We consider this a self-evident fact that should be understood by, or at least understandable for, most people.

Over three parts, the authors will provide a brief overview of 10 primary reasons or categories of reasons why humans kill animals, or 10 primary forms of human animal-killing behaviour.

The broad definition of killing includes the intentional and unintentional actions and inactions of humans that directly or indirectly cause animal death, because any alternative or more restricted definition would knowingly omit important modes of human animal-killing behaviour.

Animal killing is also multifunctional.

Thus the 10 reasons described are non-exclusive and overlap in many cases, some may also be considered to fall into multiple categories, and the stated categories might also be reorganised in an alternative variety of acceptable ways.

Though the rationale might apply to many

types of animals, the discussion focuses on vertebrate animals, which are almost universally recognised as being sentient.

The authors argue that killing such animals is an unavoidable component of human life on Earth that might be reduced in some cases but is impossible to eliminate.

They further argue that ethical debate over whether or not to kill animals is unhelpful, and that a critical analysis of when and how to kill animals is much more relevant and consequential to improving animal lives.

Encouraged is a future focus on animal welfare and the ecological sustainability of our animal-killing behaviours, rather than focussing on binary ethical or philosophical issues such as ‘killing or not killing’ or ‘lethal or non-lethal’ animal management.

Though human dimensions – including worldviews, values, perceptions, attitudes, motivations, emotions and behaviours – are important drivers of why humans kill or do not kill animals, the

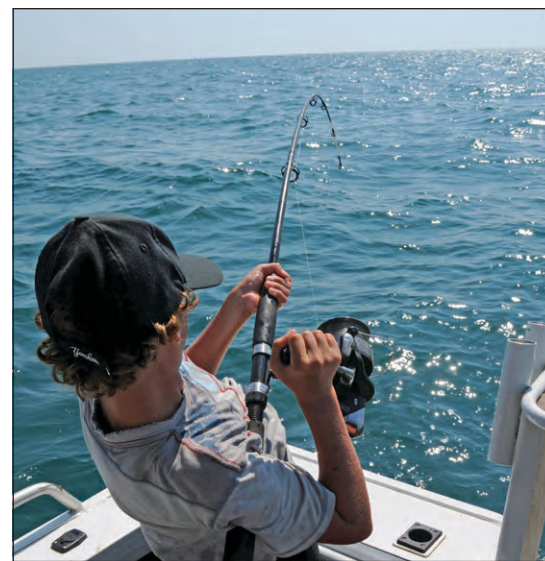
primary aim was not to systematically review the sociological or psychological literature on anthropogenic reasonings for killing animals.

Rather, the aim is to ecologically contextualise animal killing behaviour by humans, describe some of the implications of this for contemporary debates about animal ethics, and so provide a resource for those engaging in discussions about the permissibility and acceptability of killing animals.

The authors’ intended outcome is to redirect some of the philosophical and ethical debates away from intractable tensions between fundamentally different and somewhat theoretical worldviews towards applied issues that have a greater capacity to collectively improve the lives of both animals and people.

Next month, Part 2 will cover the first five of the 10 reasons of why humans kill animals and why we cannot avoid it.

Ben Allen
University of Southern Queensland



Widespread criticism of killing animals occurs at all scales, including anglers, recreational hunters and wildlife scientists.

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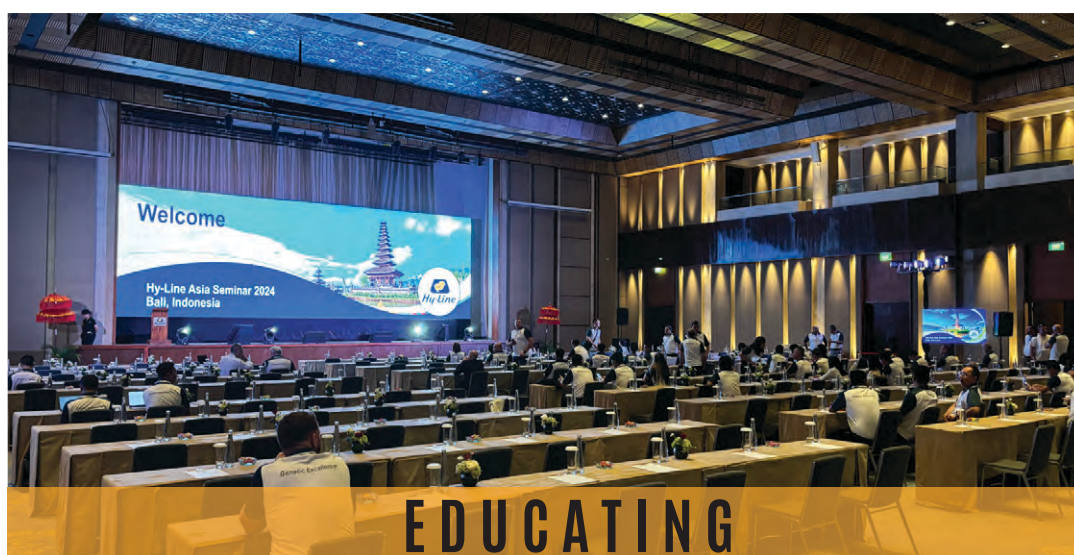
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