NATIONAL Poultry NEWSPAPER

Vol 9. No. 2 February 2026 National Poultry Newspaper PO Box 162 Wynnum 4178 Phone 0450 672 553 Email ben@collins.media

Chicken meat industry now an $8 billion powerhouse new AgriFutures report confirms

AUSTRALIA'S chicken meat sector continues to hold its position as the nation's fastest-growing livestock industry, with a new AgriFutures Australia report revealing an impressive $8 billion contribution to the national economy.

The new 'Economic Contribution of the Australian Chicken Meat Industry' report highlights a decade of sustained growth, expanding employment opportunities and strengthening regional economies across the country.

Commissioned by the AgriFutures Chicken Meat Program in partnership with the Australian Chicken Meat Federation, the report outlines the scale and significance of a sector that has weathered multiple challenges, including the workforce shortages brought about by COVID-19 as well as rising input costs.

The report outlines the scale and significance of a sector that has weathered multiple challenges. Scan the QR code to read the full report.

According to the findings, the industry value added has increased by an estimated 21 percent in real terms since the last economic modelling, averaging 3.9 percent annual growth, while employment has surged by 34 percent – or about 6 percent per year – across farms, processing facilities and supply-chain roles.

The economic impact is felt most strongly in regional Australia, where chicken meat operations are a major economic driver.

The report shows that in the Riverina region of southern NSW, the sector contributed $161 million in direct value added, supporting around 5.6 percent of the combined full-time equivalent workers in agriculture and manufacturing in the Riverina region.

Similar benefits were seen in Bendigo in Victoria, Logan-Beaudesert in Queensland and North Adelaide in South Australia, further cementing the industry's broad national footprint and its role in strengthening food security, rural employment and regional development outcomes.

Growth has been supported by the average Aussie consumer, with a steady rise in

☛ continued P2

Enhancing rapid decision support for emergency animal disease outbreaks

Egg Farmers of Australia

by MELINDA HASHIMOTO
CEO

HASTE – derived from enhancing (ha), support (st) and emergency (e) – is the overarching name for a suite of modelling and artificial intelligence tools being developed to support industries affected by emergency animal disease outbreaks.

Its focus is on providing rapid evidence-based decision support during high-consequence events.

Over the past 12 months, industry representatives – including myself – have worked closely with the HASTE team, providing practical insights to support mathematicians and researchers developing predictive models for livestock industries.

This collaboration ensures tools are grounded in real-world operational realities while maintaining scientific rigour.

For egg farmers, the term 'AI' often immediately evokes avian influenza, whereas more broadly it refers to artificial intelligence.

It is important to distinguish between artificial intelligence and modelling.

AI typically uses large volumes of data to generate predictions or classifications, while modelling represents an abstraction of biological or operational processes.

For example, AI may help predict which types of farms are at higher risk, while modelling may be better suited to determining appropriate quarantine durations or evaluating control strategies.

AI raises particular concerns around data governance, ethics and privacy.

Predictive modelling also carries risks if outputs are misinterpreted or misused.

For instance, if a model predicted potential disease spread between states before an outbreak occurred, a trade partner viewing this information could make precautionary trade decisions that were not justified by on-ground impacts.

These considerations reinforce the need for careful governance and controlled use of modelling outputs.

HASTE's work to date has included modelling disease entry points and using these to inform surveillance strategies.

Internationally, modelling frameworks developed for wildlife disease are being adapted to Australian contexts, particularly in relation to migratory birds.

Genetic sequencing analysis of H5N1 viruses already uses machine-learning techniques, drawing on decades of global data linking genetic markers to virulence and transmissibility.

Further work could be undertaken using Australian outbreak data in collaboration with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation's Australian Centre for Disease Preparedness and independent researchers, though this would require industry support and resolution of data access issues.

A unified risk model integrating wild bird surveillance, farm proximity and environmental factors could provide significant value to the egg industry.

While such a model is still some way off, several universities are developing complementary components that could ultimately be integrated.

Key barriers include data gaps, funding limitations and cross-sector willingness to share information in a timely and usable format.

HASTE's modelling is explicitly aimed at evaluating the effectiveness of control measures such as culling, vaccination and movement restrictions.

The accuracy of these tools depends heavily on the availability, quality and timeliness of surveillance data, with ongoing human oversight remaining essential.

Ethical and policy considerations are central to HASTE's approach.

☛ continued P2

NATIONAL Poultry NEWSPAPER

Poultry Industry Calendar of Events

2026

MAR 10-12 – Health & Nutrition Asia, Bangkok, Thailand. https://healthandnutrition.viv.net

MAR 16-18 – Western Poultry Disease Conference, San Diego, USA. https://www.wpdcfoundation.org

MAR 18-20 – Alltech ONE Conference 2026, Lexington Kentucky, USA. https://one.alltech.com

APR 22-24 – International Conference on Poultry Intestinal Health, Istanbul, Türkiye. https://icpih.com

MAY 12-14 – Food with Purpose - PIX, AMC and APL event, Gold Coast, Australia. https://www.pix.au/conf26

MAY 13-14 – British Pig and Poultry Fair, Birmingham, UK. https://pigandpoultry.org.uk

MAY 16 – Rare Poultry Breeders Association Annual Show, Maitland Showground NSW, Australia. president@rarepoultrybreedersassociation.com

JUN 2-4 – 14th International Coccidiosis Conference, Ghent, Belgium. https://icc2026.eu/register-for-the-icc2026/

JUN 2-4 – VIV Europe, Utrecht, The Netherlands. https://europe.viv.net

JUN 13 – Hamburgh Club of NSW Annual Show, Mudgee, Australia. hamburghclubnsw@gmail.com

JUL 4 – Hamburgh Club of NSW Annual Photo Show, digital. hamburghclubnsw@gmail.com

JUL 10-13 – Poultry Science Association Annual Meeting, Toronto, Canada. https://www.poultryscience.org/opportunities/conferences

JUL 14-17 – World's Poultry Congress, Toronto, Canada. https://www.wpc2026toronto.com

JUL 28-30 – American Association of Aivan Pathologists Annual Meeting, Orlando, USA. https://www.aaap.info/future-annual-meetings

NOV 10-13 – EuroTier, Hannover, Germany. https://www.eurotier.com/en/

How to supply event details:
Send all details to National Poultry Newspaper, PO Box 162, Wynnum Qld 4178, call 0450 672 553 or email design@collins.media

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Chicken meat industry now an $8 billion powerhouse

☛ from P1

national chicken meat gross production value between FY18 and FY24, increasing by 23 percent from $3.29 billion to $4.06 billion.

This upward trajectory reflects strong consumer demand among Australian households, who now consume more chicken meat than any other protein.

This year's per capita consumption is expected to rise above 55kg this year, continuing Australia's standing as a one of the top chicken-consuming nations globally.

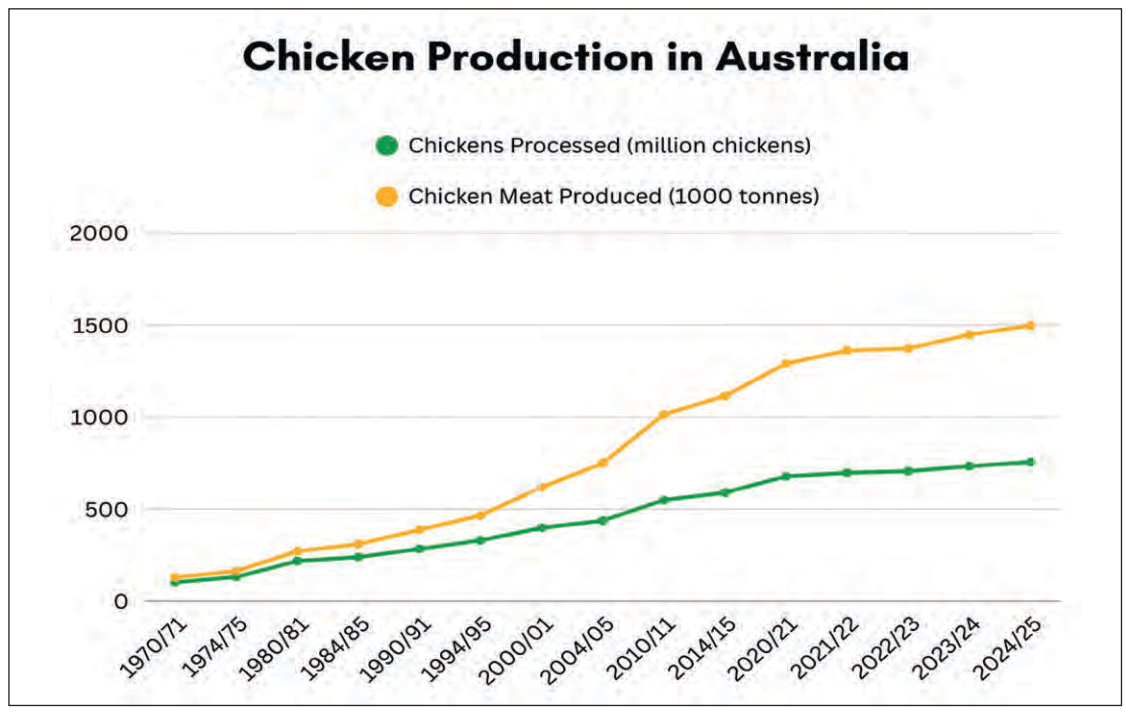
The report also acknowledges the industry's sustained investment in innovation, high-quality animal husbandry and increasingly sustainable farming systems, including the increasing efficiency of production and processing over time.

Such investment continues to strengthen the Australian chicken meat sector's reputation as a reputable, reliable and sustainable component of the national food system.

As Australia looks ahead to strengthening food security and supporting regional growth, the new AgriFutures report demonstrates that the chicken meat industry remains one of the country's most dynamic agricultural success stories in creating jobs, driving investment and feeding the nation.

You can read the new report by scanning the QR code provided on page 1.

ACMF



Australia has seen substantial growth in chicken meat production over the past few decades.

Enhancing rapid decision support for EAD outbreaks

☛ from P1

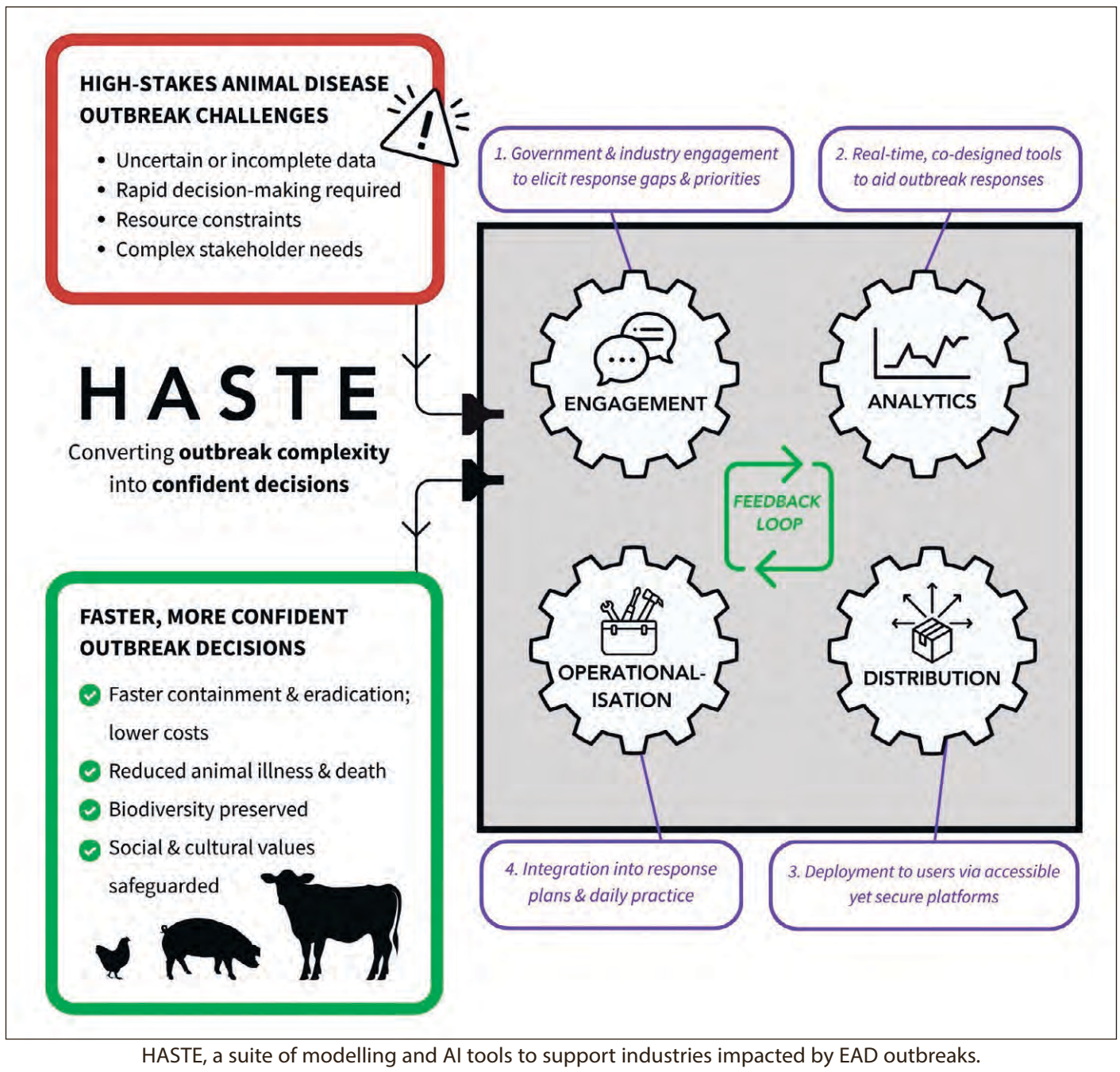
A training program accompanies the tools to ensure outputs are interpreted and applied appropriately.

HASTE is also developing robust model-evaluation methodologies to assess reliability in real time during outbreaks.

Ultimately, AI and modelling can support faster more confident decision making in the early stages of an avian influenza outbreak by reducing uncertainty, supporting cost estimates, evaluating control strategies and helping stakeholders align on outbreak status.

In the future, these tools may also guide vaccination and biosecurity zoning decisions – an outcome that sits squarely at the heart of HASTE's objectives.

With thanks to Chris Baker and Simon Firestone of HASTE for their assistance with this article.



HASTE, a suite of modelling and AI tools to support industries impacted by EAD outbreaks.

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LOHMANN

New national coordinator strengthens feral cat and fox management across Australia

THE Centre for Invasive Species Solutions recently welcomed a new national feral cat and fox management coordinator, bolstering its capacity to help land managers reduce the negative impacts caused by feral cats and foxes on agricultural production and the environment.

Yasmin Aly joins national feral rabbit management coordinator Heidi Kleinert and national wild dog management coordinator Greg Mifsud in driving vital national invasive species coordination.

CISS chief executive officer Shauna Chadlowe said, "Feral cats and foxes kill more than 2.6 billion native animals every year and are a leading cause of mammal extinctions in Australia."

Yasmin Aly, the new CISS national feral cat and fox management coordinator.

"They roam vast distances and prey on reptiles, birds, frogs and mammals – the scale of the problem is immense.

"Cats now inhabit every corner of the continent and are a major threat to Australia's precious biodiversity.

"There's no silver bullet to this problem, which is why a nationally coordinated response is more important and more urgent than ever."

Meanwhile, primary producers are hit with at least $198 million in fox control costs and livestock losses every year.

Foxes kill and maim small livestock, particularly lambs and poultry.

Feral cats are also associated with the spread of certain livestock diseases.

"These impacts aren't abstract – they affect real farmers, real businesses and real livelihoods," Ms Chadlowe said.

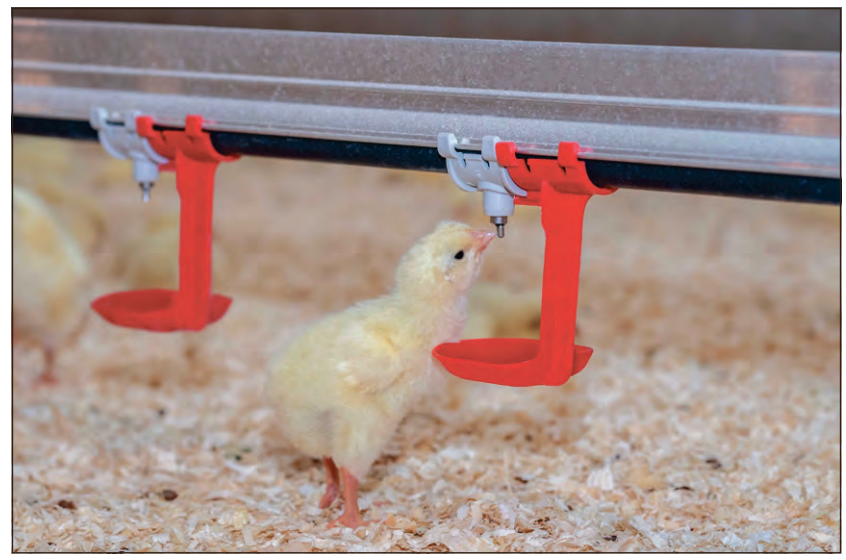
"Supporting our farmers with coordinated practical solutions has never been more important.

"This role will build on the national leadership CISS has provided in feral cat and fox management since 2021 – raising awareness of their far-reaching impacts, sharing research and best practices and supporting land managers in their control efforts.

"National coordinators are the glue in Australia's invasive species system.

"They play a crucial role supporting effective, coordinated and humane best-practice management."

As national coordinator, Ms Aly will work alongside a wide range of stakeholders, including government, industry and the broader community to support on-ground control efforts and foster adoption of support tools and trusted resources such as PestSmart and FeralScan.



Plasson's nipple drinker systems are engineered to deliver consistent water access at bird level, supporting uniform intake, reduced spillage and improved litter conditions.

Why water delivery and bird distribution are defining next gains in poultry production

AUSTRALIAN poultry producers are operating in an environment where margins are tight, labour is stretched and performance gains increasingly come from refining systems rather than pushing inputs harder.

In this landscape, the details matter.

Water delivery, bird movement and infrastructure reliability are no longer background considerations – they are core drivers of efficiency, welfare and consistency.

This is the space where global poultry equipment specialist Plasson Livestock has built its reputation and where Plaus Agency is bringing that experience directly to local farms as the exclusive stockist of Plasson poultry systems in Australia.

Plaus Agency was founded by a director with over 15 years of hands-on experience as a poultry farmer.

After working daily with the realities of large-scale production, managing birds, troubleshooting systems and dealing with downtime caused by unreliable equipment, the gap became clear – Australian producers needed access to proven field-tested infrastructure that performs under pressure, not just on paper.

Water delivery as a performance tool

Water intake remains one of the most sensitive indicators of flock health and performance.

Modern broilers

☛ continued P5

Plasson's migration fence is easy to install, simple to adjust and built for low maintenance.

Why water delivery and bird distribution are defining next gains in poultry production

☛ from P4

and breeders depend on consistent easily accessible water to maintain feed intake, growth and uniformity.

Yet many sheds still operate with legacy components or mixed systems that compromise pressure balance, weak points and long-term reliability.

Plasson's globally recognised nipple drinker has earned its reputation by addressing these issues at bird level.

Designed for durability and consistent activation, the nipple supports uniform water access across the line while helping reduce spillage and wet litter.

When paired with Plasson regulators, pressure consistency is maintained from start to finish, eliminating the variation that often results in uneven bird performance and problem areas within the shed.

A standout innovation increasingly gaining attention is Plasson's 'water-on-demand' concept.

Rather than allowing water to remain constantly pressurised along the line, the system responds dynamically to bird demand.

The result is better control, reduced leakage risk and a more responsive system that aligns water availability with actual consumption patterns.

For producers focused on litter quality and early detection of flock issues, this level of control is a meaningful step forward.

Infrastructure that supports bird density

Beyond water, shed efficiency is heavily influenced by how birds move within the environment.

Plasson's migration fence system is designed to manage bird distribution during brooding and grow out stages, supporting even access to feed and water while reducing crowding and stress.

Effective migration control contributes directly to uniformity, particularly during critical ventilation stages when bird migration is being established.

Equally important are the components that often receive less attention until they fail.

Plasson's spherical T-joints – used in cross auger systems – are engineered to guarantee a feed line is completely full before feed proceeds to the next line, thus ensuring all feed lines remain full.

These seemingly small design choices translate into fewer failures, less downtime and more predictable system performance over the life of the shed.

Why producers are changing systems

Switching equipment is rarely about chasing novelty.

It is about reliability, repeatability and confidence that the system will perform day after day.

For producers managing multiple sheds or high bird numbers, the cost of inconsistency quickly outweighs the cost of upgrading infrastructure.

The approach behind Plaus Agency is simple – bring globally proven Plasson systems into Australian sheds, backed by local understanding of how poultry farms actually operate.

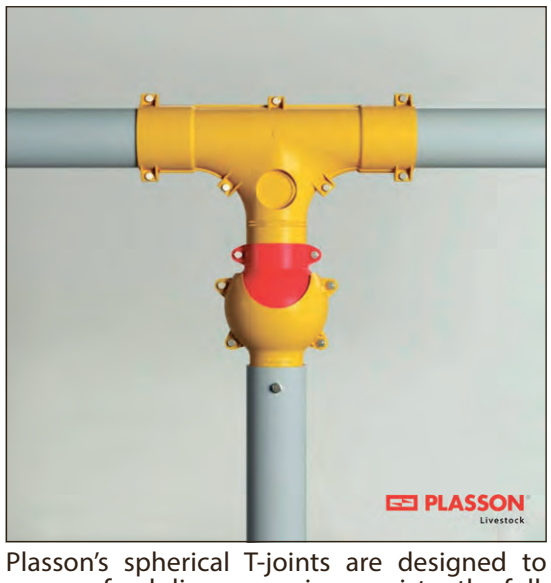
The result is not only new equipment but a shift toward systems that actively support production goals rather than quietly limiting them.

As Australian poultry continues to evolve, the producers who gain the next performance advantages will be those who focus on fundamentals done exceptionally well.

Water delivery, bird movement and system integrity may not always make headlines, but they are increasingly where the real gains are being made.

For more information, visit www.plagency.com.au

Plagency



Plasson's spherical T-joints are designed to ensure feed lines remain consistently full, reducing system downtime and supporting reliable feed delivery across the shed.

Plaus Agency directors Johann and Louis bring over 15 years of hands-on poultry farming experience.

One way to improve animal welfare

Dr Jed Goodfellow – co-founder of Australian Alliance for Animals and its director of policy and government relations – addressing the One Welfare symposium at Murdoch University on how he sees national progress towards independent offices of animal welfare.

Cant Comment

by **BRENDON CANT**

HAVING participated in the One Welfare symposium at Murdoch University in November last year, I was happy to endorse a subsequent letter the organisers wrote to Western Australia's Premier Roger Cook.

The January 20 letter called on the Cook Labor Government to take immediate action to progress the update of the Animal Welfare Act to improve animal welfare outcomes in WA.

The symposium explored the One Welfare policy framework and how its application could advance human, animal and planetary health and welfare.

Presenters – including Jed Goodfellow from the Australian Alliance for Animals – identified structural conflicts, under-resourcing, inconsistent enforcement and fragmented policymaking as core barriers to effective animal welfare governance in Western Australia.

One key message was delivered unanimously by attendees – that the Cook Labor Government urgently needed to address poor animal welfare outcomes by establishing a voice for animals that was independent of agribusiness and other vested interests.

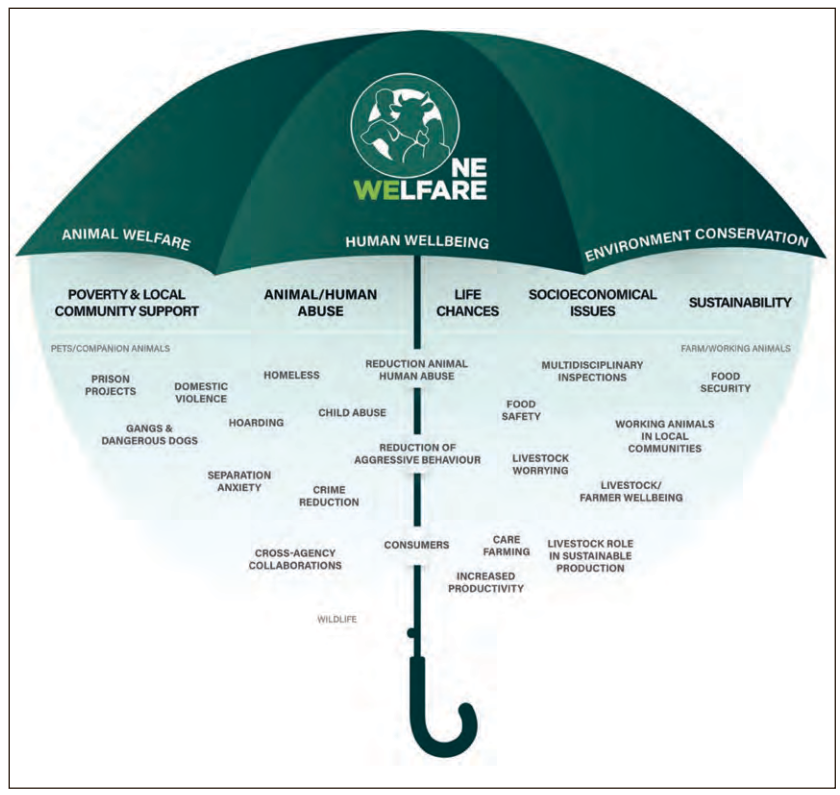
Such a body must be appropriately resourced, adaptive and scientifically informed.

An office or commission for animal welfare must cover all animals and be capable of providing leadership, transparency, evidence-based advice, enforcement oversight and whole-of-government alignment through a One Welfare approach.

The One Welfare principle recognises evidence-based links between human, animal and planetary health and welfare.

In support of the request, key priorities outlined to Premier Cook included the five below.

☛ continued P7



The One Welfare policy framework.

Gorman-Rupp eliminates daily wastewater blockages at Central Agri's Trafalgar plant

CENTRAL Agri Group is one of Australia's leading fully integrated beef farming, backgrounding, feed lotting and meat processing companies.

Established in 1991, it has loyal domestic customers, supplies to over 50 exports markets and has invested heavily in state-of-the-art meat processing facilities.

The problem

Their Trafalgar plant did however have some issues with its wastewater pump.

They were running copies of the Gorman-Rupp self-priming pump on their green waste and were attending the pump daily to fix issues with regard to blockages in the pump.

On occasions these issues would cause the well to overflow and require the need for outside contractors to be called in to help deal with the inflow into the well.

Another processor who is running genuine Gorman-Rupp pumps recommended they contact Hydro Innovations.

The solution

Hydro Innovations recommended the existing pump be replaced with a Gorman Rupp T3A71S-B 'Super T Series' trash pump fitted with an 'Eradicator' solids management system, with hardened internal parts to deal with the grit and stringy materials that flow to the well.

The well has a high loading of grass and so the pump was set up to deal with the grass.

Benefits of the installation

The plant maintenance supervisor Josh said, "The Gorman Rupp pump is a great pump, far better than what we had before."

He has not had to attend the pump at all compared to the once or twice per day the previous pump required.

The savings are quickly adding up and Josh has all that time back to work on other projects within the plant that he could not get to before.

Gorman-Rupp self-priming trash pumps are available in sizes from 2" through to 10", with flows to 200L/s and pressures to 90m.

They have been extremely popular in the very difficult wastewater pumping applications in animal process plants across Australia.

More information on these pumps may be obtained from Hydro Innovations at info@hydroinnovations.com.au or call 02 9898 1800.

Hydro Innovations

The solution to Central Agri's Trafalgar plant wastewater pump issues was a Gorman Rupp T3A71S-B 'Super T Series' trash pump fitted with an 'Eradicator' solids management system.

One way to improve animal welfare

☛ from P6

Establish an independent office or commission for animal welfare

Participants overwhelmingly agreed that WA needed a statutory independent authority – structurally separate from agriculture portfolios and protected from political cycles – to ensure impartial oversight of animal welfare.

Strengthen enforcement, compliance and monitoring statewide

Participants expressed concern that the current enforcement system was constrained by insufficient inspectors, unclear role delineation and inconsistent responses, particularly in regional and remote communities.

Modernise, standardise and periodically review animal welfare legislation

Participants emphasised the importance of ensuring that WA's Animal Welfare Act remains aligned with contemporary science and evolving public values.

Integrate a One Welfare approach across government

Participants stressed that animal welfare does not exist in isolation but is deeply interconnected with human wellbeing, community safety, environmental sustainability and social services.

Improve public awareness, education and accessibility

Participants highlighted the lack of accessible information on animal welfare responsibilities and reporting pathways.

The letter to Premier Cook concluded as follows.

The 120 attendees at the One Welfare symposium acknowledged that your government has taken early steps to improve animal welfare outcomes and you indicated your support in 2023 for an independent voice for animals such as a commission or office of independent animal welfare.

We respectfully request that the Cook Labor Government consider this recommendation in the context of the long-delayed update to WA's Animal Welfare Act and associated framework and the broader strategic direction of the state.

The consensus is that advocates and animals have waited for too long for improvements.

The independent voice must be progressed without further delays.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss these findings with you and your ministers, and to contribute to building a modern, collaborative and future-focused animal welfare system for Western Australia.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to the wellbeing of our communities.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Robyn Whitaker, Veterinary and Community Care

Dr Jed Goodfellow, Australian Alliance for Animals

Lisa Baker, Future of Food

Protecting animal welfare standards

A NEW study by Dr Lev Bromberg from the La Trobe University examines the process by which Australia's animal welfare standards are created and whether they truly protect animals or simply serve industry interests.

"Over the last decade, there have been growing concerns about the limitations of the Australian animal welfare regulatory framework," Dr Bromberg said.

"Central to these concerns are the statutory standards that define what is legally permissible under animal protection legislation.

"There are also substantial community and scientific concerns that the minimum animal welfare standards remain too low."

Using a new approach that recognises not only humans but other sentient animals as regulatory as stakeholders, Dr Bromberg's research focuses on the way poultry welfare standards were created in Australia.

"The findings show how the standard-setting process for poultry welfare in Australia was heavily influenced by private industry-aligned interest groups and that the interests of animals were subordinated," Dr Bromberg said.

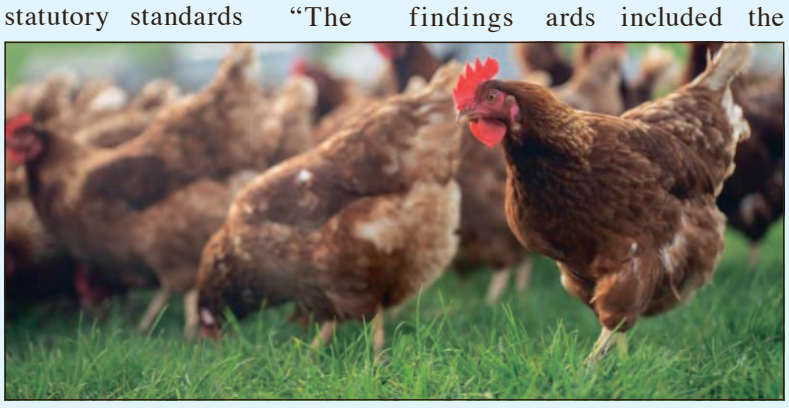
"For example, draft standards originally allowed battery cages, despite evidence that these intensive systems cause hens to suffer.

"After intense public pressure this process was changed and the final standards included the decision to phase-out battery cages."

Dr Bromberg said these changes demonstrated that procedural legitimacy matters.

"This is the first study to evaluate the legitimacy of animal welfare regulation from both a process-oriented and multi-species stakeholder perspective," he said.

"It illustrates the need to address gaps in representation of vulnerable stakeholder groups and shows that meaningful change can only happen when the voices of all stakeholders – including animals – are taken seriously."



New study findings show how the standard-setting process for poultry welfare in Australia was heavily influenced by private industry-aligned interest groups.

Scan for the full study.

AgriFutures Australia chair Mick Veitch.

AgriFutures Australia welcomes new chair

AGRIFUTURES Australia welcomes the appointment of Mick Veitch as its new chair.

Mr Veitch was appointed for a three-year term, which commenced on January 11, 2026.

The appointment marks an exciting new chapter in leadership for AgriFutures Australia, with Brianna Casey commencing as AgriFutures Australia's new managing director on Monday January 19.

These appointments signal AgriFutures Australia's ongoing commitment to proactive leadership, strategic growth and broad stakeholder engagement across Australia's agricultural sectors.

Mr Veitch brings to the role a distinguished record of public service, having served as a Member of the NSW Legislative Council from 2007 to 2023, including as the Shadow Minister for Primary Industries and Regional NSW.

Before entering parliament, Mr Veitch grew up on a farm in the Riverina, gaining firsthand experience of rural life.

He began his working life as a shearer and later served in community and disability services roles.

This grassroots experience provides him with a deep understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing producers and regional communities across Australia.

AgriFutures Australia managing director John Harvey welcomed Mr Veitch's appointment and said the organisation looks forward to the leadership he will bring during an important period of growth and strategic development.

"Mick's deep understanding of agriculture, regional dynamics and policy, coupled with his demonstrated leadership, positions AgriFutures Australia for even greater impact," Mr Harvey said.

"Under Mick's leadership, AgriFutures Australia will continue to advance strategic research and development that builds resilience, drives productivity and unlocks new opportunities for Australian farmers, producers and rural communities."

Mr Veitch said he was honoured to take on the position and was looking forward to working with the organisation's stakeholders and levied and emerging industries.

"I'm pleased to be appointed as the new chair of AgriFutures Australia, which plays a critical role in championing innovation and supporting the industries and people who power regional Australia," Mr Veitch said.

"I am excited to have the opportunity to contribute to the organisation's next phase of growth and ensure we invest in the ideas and technologies that will shape the future of agriculture.

"I look forward to working closely with the board, management and our industry partners to create long-term benefits for our producers, regional communities and emerging industries."

The appointment marks a significant transition for AgriFutures Australia, following the tenure of outgoing chair Cathy McGowan, who led the organisation for the past three years.

"On behalf of the AgriFutures Board and staff, I extend our sincere thanks to Cathy for her leadership, contribution and commitment to our industries and to regional Australia," Mr Harvey said.

"Under Cathy's leadership, AgriFutures Australia has strengthened its connections with rural communities.

"She has been a driving force for cross-sector collaboration and a tireless champion for a prosperous and caring rural Australia.

"Cathy's dedication to nurturing the next generation of rural leaders, building their capacity, resilience and leadership skills, has left a legacy that will benefit the Australian agricultural sector for years to come."

AgriFutures services the research, development and extension needs of 13 thriving rural industries, including chicken meat, rice, honey bee and pollination, ginger, tea tree oil, pasture seeds, export fodder, thoroughbred horses, kangaroo, buffalo, deer and goat fibre.

AgriFutures Australia is also responsible for investing in building the leadership skills of those who work in the industry, researching issues that affect the whole of agriculture, identifying and supporting emerging rural industries and engaging in the global agrifood system.

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The white face tends to take a fair while to develop to its best, particularly in the females.

When it was first introduced to the English-speaking world, the Spanish had very useful utility qualities

The Spanish always attracts interest when it appears on the show bench.

Spanish fowls a rare breed

Rare Breeds

by **GRANT ANDREWS**

AMONG the breeds in the Mediterranean group of fowls is one that has a unique characteristic that sets it apart from all other breeds found in Australia.

This breed is commonly referred to as the White-Faced Spanish, though strictly speaking its standard name is the Spanish.

Unlike any other breed, the Spanish has a large smooth white face and earlobes that extend well below the wattles in the best specimens, making it unmistakeable in appearance.

However, it is this very characteristic that has led to the Spanish being rare.

Because no other breed has this feature, breeders have been unable to introduce new genetics into the breed without losing the distinguishing white face.

And, as a consequence, it has been inbred to the point where many strains suffer from some degree of inbreeding depression, which may manifest itself as a difficulty to rear stock to maturity and a decrease in life expectancy.

Breeders work to overcome this by sharing stock among themselves in a bid to keep the gene pool as wide as possible.

British research has shown the Spanish to be the most genetically pure of the breeds present in the United Kingdom, largely as a result of the need to breed within the breed to maintain the white face.

The Spanish was among the first of the Mediterranean breeds introduced

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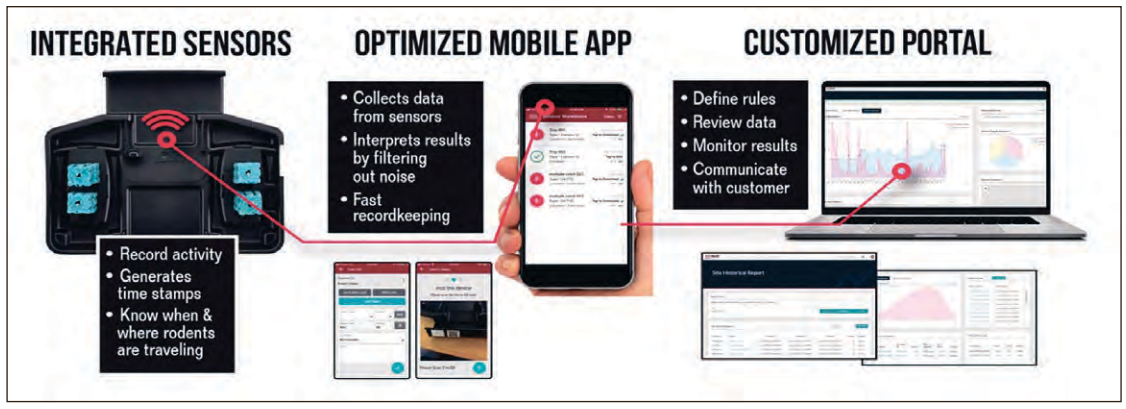

The perfect solution for pig and poultry facilities where rodent populations are high and biosecurity is critical.

New and improved rodent control from Rudduck

WITH the latest science and newest technology from Rudduck, rats and mice don't stand a chance.

Rudduck is launching two new and very exciting products for the war against rodents in intensive animal production facilities.

The first is Fastrac – a new and better bait with a new non-anticoagulant active ingredient that is extremely fast acting and effective.

Traditional anticoagulant rodenticides – both first generation (multi-feed) and second generation (single feed) – will take up to a week to kill a rat, and during that time it will keep eating.

These active ingredients have been clearly shown to build up in the food chain and traces are commonly found in dead birds of prey as well as dogs, cats and even pigs and poultry.

The active ingredient in Fastrac is brometh-alin, which will kill a rat in a day or two and causes a stop-feed reaction as soon as a lethal dose is consumed.

This means that population control happens much faster and with much less bait than with an anticoagulant – and it will control anti-coagulant resistant rodent populations.

Fastrac is registered in Australia for use up to 30m from buildings and permanent structures, which makes it ideal for fenceline baiting.

Fastrac is an excellent option for bait rotation and particularly for clean-out of animal housing.

The other tremendous innovation from Rudduck is a rodent bait station that incorporates a fully integrated Bluetooth sensor for detecting, reporting and timestamping rodent activity at that station.

This means that a producer can have a complete overview and timestamp of rodent activity around their facility.

It is also a huge time saver – no longer does the operator have to open every single bait station on each inspection to see if bait has been taken – other than when routine bait replacement is scheduled.

A quick walk-past scan will tell if rodents have been active in any particular station, so only those stations need to be opened and bait checked.

Pulse Rat iQ is the perfect solution for livestock producers, especially pig and poultry facilities where rodent populations are high and biosecurity is critical.

Each rodent bait station includes a fully integrated Bluetooth sensor for detecting and timestamping rodent activity.

The station holds up to eight blocks of bait or two snap traps.

All that is required for this monitoring is a mobile phone with the Bell IQ App downloaded and matched to the stations.

There is no on-going cost to the system beyond purchasing the stations.

Rudduck is a supplier that provides pest control solutions to farmers and rural customers through a network of rural resellers.

With a 100-year heritage and expertise in pest control, they provide their customers with the knowledge, support and confidence to solve many pest control problems.

Rudduck's current product range includes a range of professional pyrethrum-based products including Rudduck Py Matic and Rudduck Py Zap (pyrethrum concentrate), specialist rodent products and fogging equipment.

With active growth plans underway, the product range is expected to expand significantly into the future.

Visit www.rudduck.com.au

Rudduck

Spanish fowls are a rare breed

☛ from P10

into the UK, and stock was imported into Australia from that source early in the nineteenth century.

The breed also has a long history in the US, being included in the first book of standards published there in 1874.

While the American standard cites the large smooth white face and earlobes as distinct characteristics of the breed, it offers the advice that "the standard descriptions for these sections should be adhered to strictly, for extreme development of any one quality is obtained only by subordinating other qualities, such as size, stamina and activity, which must be maintained in this breed as well as in all other breeds of poultry."

Unfortunately, this does not appear to have been the case with early British fanciers of the breed, who sacrificed the breed's utility qualities for the over-development of the white face.

When it was first introduced to the English-speaking world, the Spanish had very useful utility qualities.

It was renowned for the abundance of its large white eggs and was considered the equal of the other Mediterranean breeds in this respect.

However, concentration on the development of the white face for exhibition purposes led to its utility characteristics being neglected by breeders.

Nevertheless, some strains of the Spanish are still reasonably good layers, with the large white egg still in evidence.

As well as the standard sized bird, a bantamised version of the breed is also seen on the show bench and has increased in popularity in both Australia and the UK in the past couple of decades.

In addition to the original black variety of the breed, the Australian standard also recognises a blue and a white variety – though the black variety is the most frequently encountered colour in both large fowl and bantams.

A few fair quality blue bantams have been occasionally shown in the past decade or so, but quality large fowl in blue or white are very few and far between.

The breed always attracts a lot of interest when it appears on the show bench, and good quality black large fowl are often in the running for champion rare breed in show.

This is a breed with which I have had personal experience, and one that I have found rather challenging to maintain.

I find that the chicks do best when they are segregated from other more-robust breeds and respond well to a little extra attention in the way of higher protein feed for a little longer than many other breeds.

I have learnt from experience not to cull birds too early, as the white face tends to take a fair while to develop to its best, especially in the females, who as youngsters often look like they are not going to develop a white face at all.

This is a breed that requires patience and persistence if progress is to be made to get it anywhere near the standard requirements.

PIX 2026 developing our future

AS Australia's poultry industries face accelerating change, PIX 2026 arrives at a pivotal moment for connection, collaboration and forward thinking.

Held at the Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre from May 12-14, 2026, the Poultry Information Exchange will again join with the Australian Milling Conference and Australian Pork Limited under the banner of Food with Purpose 2026.

Together, these events will bring industry leaders, innovators and decision-makers from the poultry, pig and milling sectors together to explore practical pathways for productivity, resilience and long-term sustainability across production, processing and supply chains.

Keynotes grounded in insight and application

A defining feature of Food with Purpose 2026 is its strong keynote program, headlined by Dr Scott Bolland and Dr Jo Coombe.

Their combined expertise sets a clear tone for an event focused on real-world impact and credible actionable insight.

Dr Scott Bolland is widely recognised for his work in industry transformation, leadership and the practical adoption of innovation.

His keynote will examine how businesses can build resilience and foster long-term commitment within an evolving workforce, while operating in production environments increasingly shaped by artificial intelligence and rapid technological change.

With a strong focus on application, Dr Bolland will translate complex concepts into practical strategies relevant to farming, processing and supply-chain operations.

Joining him, Dr Jo Coombe brings deep experience at the intersection of science, strategy and stakeholder engagement.

Known for her ability to translate research into tangible industry outcomes, Dr Coombe will explore the future of food systems and the critical role collaboration plays between industry, research and policy.

Her session will challenge conventional thinking while inspiring collective action across primary industries.

Exhibition, innovation and opportunity

Beyond the speaking program, PIX 2026 will feature a vibrant exhibition showcasing the latest technologies, products and services supporting primary industries.

From agtech and data solutions to feed ingredients, infrastructure, animal health and professional services, the exhibition floor remains a central hub for innovation, networking and commercial opportunity.

Demand for exhibition space is already strong and, with limited availability, prospective exhibitors are encouraged to secure their place early.

PIX consistently attracts a highly engaged audience of producers, business owners and decision-makers, making it a valuable platform for launching products, strengthening relationships and increasing industry visibility.

Supporting future leaders and producers

Early bird registrations are now open, offering delegates the opportunity to attend at a reduced rate.

The PIX Young Delegates Program continues to support the next generation of poultry industry leaders by providing tailored learning opportunities, meaningful networking and direct engagement with experienced professionals.

New for 2026, the PIX Poultry Grower Rebate Program has been introduced to reduce financial barriers for poultry producers attending the event.

By supporting farmer participation, the program helps ensure valuable knowledge, tools and innovations reach farms across the sector.

Applications for the Young Delegates and Grower Rebate will open soon via the PIX website.

PIX 2026 is more than a conference and trade show – it is a meeting point for ideas, partnerships and progress.

To register, exhibit or learn more, visit www.pix.au and be part of the conversation shaping the future of Australia's poultry, pig and milling industries.

The chicken meat industry is a major contributor to the Australian economy.

Major economic contribution of Australia's chicken meat industry

AS stated in the Australian Chicken Meat Federation article on page 1, our chicken meat industry is the nation's fastest-growing livestock sector, contributing $8 billion to the economy.

Commissioned by the AgriFutures Chicken Meat Program in partnership with ACMF, the 'Economic Contribution of the Australian Chicken Meat Industry' report confirms that employment in the chicken meat industry continues to rise, with tens of thousands of new roles created across farms, processing facilities and regional communities.

AgriFutures Australia general manager of levied and emerging industries Samantha Beresford said the findings provide valuable insights for policymakers, industry and regional stakeholders.

"Access to credible relevant data helps industry and government work together to plan for the future – from infrastructure and workforce development to sustainability and innovation," Ms Beresford said.

"This report is a clear example of how strong data supports smart decisions.

"It reinforces AgriFutures' focus on investing in people, learning and innovation to build a sustainable high-performing agricultural future.

"As well as the chicken meat industry being a major contributor to the Australian economy, it stands alone as AgriFutures' largest levied industry, and research like this showcases the strength of partnerships and collective investment that will benefit levy payers, consumers and regional communities alike."

The report highlights how efficient protein production can meet this growing consumer demand while minimising environmental impact, aligning with Australia's broader sustainability and food system goals.

Chicken meat is leading the charge, being recognised as the most environmentally sustainable land-based protein.

Life-cycle analysis confirms commercial chicken meat production uses far less land than other animal proteins, making it a smart choice for a growing population.

The industry also delivers strong environmental benefits through waste minimisation.

Around 30 percent of a chicken's mass — including bones, feathers and intestines — is upcycled into products such as high-protein pet food.

This clever reuse slashes waste and reduces the need for extra protein sources, boosting resource efficiency across the entire sector.

Australia's chicken meat industry continues to deliver value, jobs and innovation, underpinning food security and supporting the long-term sustainability of regional communities.

Deepak Subedi commenced his PhD at the Poultry Research Foundation USYD in October 2025.

Deepak's journey toward safe sustainable poultry and food production

DEEPAK Subedi is a PhD student at the Poultry Research Foundation at the University of Sydney.

He completed his Bachelor of Veterinary Science and Animal Husbandry from Tribhuvan University in Nepal in 2020.

His research journey began during his undergraduate studies, where he conducted a case-control study to identify risk factors associated with low pathogenic avian influenza.

This work was later published in a peer-reviewed journal, marking the foundation of his academic career.

Following graduation, Deepak worked as a poultry veterinarian in Nepal for two years.

During this period, the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted routine field activities, providing him with an opportunity to strengthen his research profile.

He utilised this time to write review articles and conduct cross-sectional studies, resulting in multiple publications on animal and zoonotic diseases, including rabies, lumpy skin disease, COVID-19, mastitis, avian influenza, anthrax and African swine fever.

In 2022, Deepak moved to the US to pursue a Master of Science in Poultry Science at the University of Georgia.

His graduate research focused on meat safety and food microbiology, with hands-on laboratory experience working on major foodborne pathogens such as salmonella, campylobacter and clostridium.

His MS thesis, titled 'Effect of chlorine dioxide treated water on the prevalence and concentration of salmonella and campylobacter in broilers', highlights his academic work in poultry science.

After completing his MS degree, Deepak joined the Eastern Regional Research Center of the US Department of Agriculture in Wyndmoor, Pennsylvania as a research fellow.

There, he worked on a fresh produce safety project entitled 'Survival of pathogens on work-in-process fresh-cut produce ingredients', further broadening his expertise in food safety beyond poultry systems.

After 11 months at USDA-ARS, he commenced his PhD at the Poultry Research Foundation USYD in October 2025.

Currently, Deepak is conducting a literature review evaluating how dietary protein influences the health, welfare and meat quality of broiler chickens.

As a veterinarian, he is particularly interested in understanding how variation in poultry diet influences gut health, welfare and overall productivity, while ensuring food safety across the production chain.

To date, Deepak has authored over 45 peer-reviewed publications, accumulated more than 1000 citations and reviewed more than 80 manuscripts for scientific journals.

He aspires to pursue a career in academia, where he aims to conduct research and train the next generation of scientists and professionals in sustainable animal production, with a strong emphasis on animal nutrition, health, welfare and food safety.

Benjamin Geist
Poultry Research Foundation

Deepak completed his Bachelor of Veterinary Science and Animal Husbandry from Tribhuvan University in Nepal in 2020.

Columbia to test new strategy for curbing bird flu on poultry farms

WHEN it comes to resisting bird flu, chickens on poultry farms are like sitting ducks.

Last year, a highly pathogenic avian influenza virus H5N1 ripped through poultry farms across the US, prompting farmers to cull tens of millions of chickens to contain the outbreaks.

As egg production plummeted, egg prices soared to sky-high levels.

Though the outbreaks have slowed and egg prices have decreased, the virus hasn't gone away.

Scientists believe it's only a matter of time before avian influenza comes roaring back and does further damage to the agriculture industry.

Chicken farms are not where researchers Professor David Brenner and Assistant Professor David Welch at the Columbia University Center for Radiological Research expected to test their antiviral technology.

Their first deployments of far-UVC light – a type of ultraviolet light that swiftly and safely kills viruses and other pathogens – began as an effort to prevent indoor transmission of airborne flu and COVID viruses among people in medical centres, schools and restaurants.

But amid growing concerns about avian flu outbreaks, they realised that the technology might also help farmers curb the spread of bird flu on poultry farms.

"Our studies show that far-UVC light offers a safe and practical way to inactivate any type of virus in the air, reducing the chance of transmission," Prof Brenner said.

Now with the support of a $2 million Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Poultry Innovation Grand Challenge award from the US Department of Agriculture, Prof Brenner, Assistant Prof Welch and their team at Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons will begin testing far-UVC technology to improve biosecurity on poultry farms.

The funding is part of the US Federal Government's efforts to prevent another egg crisis, which includes $100 million in grants for research on vaccines, treatments and other strategies to prevent the spread of highly pathogenic avian influenza virus.

UVC light but safer

Over the past 15 years, Prof Brenner and his team have been developing far-UVC light as a safe alternative to conventional UVC,

☛ continued P15

Amid concerns about avian flu outbreaks, researchers realised that far-UVC technology might help farmers curb the spread of bird flu on poultry farms. Photo: Bernhard Falkinger

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NATIONAL **Poultry** NEWSPAPER

Ben Collins
BBus DipMgt GradDipEd
Publisher

E: ben@collins.media **M:** 0439 708 602
PO Box 162, Wynnum QLD 4178

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Laboratory experiments will measure the effectiveness of far-UVC light against H9N2, an avian influenza virus that causes less severe disease in birds, and H5N1 in the air, on surfaces and in water. Photo: Veronika Andrews

Testing far-UVC light on a working poultry farm gives researchers an opportunity to see how it performs in that environment.

Columbia to test new strategy for curbing bird flu on poultry farms

☛ from P13

which quickly inactivates viruses and bacteria by damaging their DNA and has been used for decades to decontaminate unoccupied spaces.

Far-UVC light is similarly effective at inactivating microbes.

But unlike conventional UVC, far-UVC light cannot reach living cells in the skin and eyes, making it safe for use in occupied spaces.

Numerous studies at Columbia and elsewhere have demonstrated that far-UVC light is highly efficient at killing viruses, including influenza, and that it is safe for human exposure, making it suitable for reducing virus levels in indoor environments filled with people and animals.

Since the pandemic, far-UVC light fixtures have begun to be produced at scale and have been installed in a variety of settings, including a clinic at Columbia University College of Dental Medicine, a long-COVID clinic at Mount Sinai Icahn School of Medicine and a variety of educational, recreational and agricultural settings around the US.

While studies suggest that far-UVC light can reduce transmission of airborne viruses indoors, demonstrating its efficacy in the real world is difficult.

"Testing far-UVC light on a working poultry farm – filled with dust and a number of other elements you wouldn't find in a controlled lab setting – gives us an opportunity to see how it performs in this environment," Assistant Prof Welch said.

From bench to barn

In earlier studies, the Columbia team has shown that far-UVC light can kill viruses in tiny droplets in the air as well as on surfaces.

In the new study, the researchers will conduct laboratory experiments to measure the effectiveness of far-UVC light against H9N2, an avian influenza virus that causes less severe disease in birds, and H5N1 in the air, on surfaces and in water.

Next, the Columbia team will test whether far-UVC can prevent airborne transmission in chickens.

The study will use an experimental animal housing unit designed by scientists at St Jude Children's Research Hospital, in which infected and uninfected chickens share the same air but cannot touch each other.

Finally, the team will collaborate with poultry science experts at Texas A&M University to test the implementation of far-UVC light in a barn housing hundreds of chickens.

Parallel studies will be conducted to measure the effects of far-UVC exposure on chickens' eyes and general health and development.

Beyond the barn

Chickens aren't the only species affected by highly pathogenic avian influenza – the virus has also spread to dairy cows and other mammals, including a few dozen people, mostly farm workers or people exposed to backyard flocks.

While today's avian flu viruses cannot be transmitted from person to person, scientists think they may eventually develop that capability.

"There's a real concern that avian influenza viruses could potentially jump from birds to humans, and become transmissible between people, triggering a pandemic," Prof Brenner said.

"If you can prevent mass transmission between birds, you may also be able to reduce the risk to humans."

David Brenner is a professor of radiation biophysics and director of the Center for Radiological Research at Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons.

He and co-inventors have been granted a US patent (US1078019B2) titled 'Apparatus, method and system for selectively affecting and/or killing a virus'.

David Welch is an assistant professor of radiation oncology at Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons.

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