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NATIONAL Poultry NEWSPAPER

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The chicken meat industry careers panel presented to University of Sydney animal science students.

ACMF partners to cultivate next generation of poultry careers

ATTRACTING and developing the next generation of talent remains a key priority for the Australian chicken meat industry. As the sector continues to evolve and embrace innovation, technology and sustainability, there is an increasing need to connect students and graduates with the diverse career opportunities available across the poultry supply chain.

Recently, the Aus-



tralian Chicken Meat Federation partnered with the University of Sydney and industry representatives to engage with students interested in careers in agriculture, ani-

mal science and the broader food production sector.

As part of the visit, ACMF participated in a careers panel featuring Baiada Poultry general manager group agriculture Kath Balding, ProTen development manager Ashley Etherington and ProTen national human resources manager Meagan Carey.

The panel provided students with valuable insights into the wide range of career pathways available within the chicken meat industry, highlighting opportunities across nutrition, farming, animal welfare, research and development, people and culture, operations and leadership.

Panel members shared their own career journeys and discussed how the industry offers rewarding and dynamic careers

continued P2



ACMF and industry representatives at the USYD pathways and partnerships night.

Women in ag leading future of egg industry

ACROSS Australia's egg industry, women are not only participating but shaping its future.

From farm management and innovation to advocacy and leadership, women are stepping forward with confidence, capability and a clear vision for what comes next.

The Egg Farmers of Australia industry awards, sponsored by Specialised Breeders Australia, has played an important role in recognising this contribution, highlighting individuals whose work reflects



by MELINDA HASHIMOTO
CEO



reflects the balance required in modern egg farming – maintaining high welfare standards while ensuring operational efficiency.

Her recognition underscores the increasing visibility of women who are managing farms and driving improvements in how they operate.

Alex-Kate Langfield brings a strong voice to industry representation and engagement.

With a deep understanding of production systems and animal care, her work

continued P2

both excellence and influence.

Among these standout leaders are Jodi Courtice, Alex-Kate Langfield, Jessica Spencer and Laura Manion – four women whose careers demonstrate the depth of talent and

commitment within the sector.

Jodi Courtice represents the strength of practical on-farm leadership within her own business.

With a deep understanding of production systems and animal care, her work



Dr Jodi Courtice from Industry Veterinary Services.



Dr Alex-Kate Langfield from Hatch House.



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Poultry Industry Calendar of Events

2026

AUG 12 – 2026 National Renewables in Ag Conference – Orange, NSW. <https://renewablesinagconference.com.au>

AUG 26-28 – ILDEX Philippines 2026 – Manila, Philippines. <https://ildex-philippines.com>

SEP 1-3 – Shell Egg Academy 2026, Indiana, USA. <http://shelleggacademy.org/>

SEP 22-24 – Poultry Asia 2026, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. <https://www.poultryasia.com/>

SEP 27-30 – Mediterranean Poultry Summit 2026, Split, Croatia. <https://www.mpn-wpsa.org/split2026/home/index.php>

OCT 6-8 – 2026 Latin American Scientific Conference (PSA) – Parana, Brazil. <https://poultryscience.org/opportunities/conferences/latam-scientific-conference>

OCT 13-14 – Poultry Symposium for Live Production – Arkansas, USA. <https://www.thepoultryfederation.com/events/poulttrysymposium>

OCT 14-15 – Dutch Pork & Poultry Expo 2026 – Hardenberg, Netherlands. <https://www.porkpoultryexpo.nl>

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

NOV 25-27 – Poultry India, Hyderabad, India. <https://www.poultryindia.co.in>

How to supply event details:
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ACMF attended a careers fair for agriculture and animal science students.



ACMF partners to cultivate next generation of poultry careers

from P1 that combine science, technology, innovation and food production.

Students were particularly interested in learning about emerging technologies, sustainability initiatives and the variety of roles that exist beyond traditional farming positions.

In addition to the panel discussion, ACMF attended a careers fair for agriculture and animal science students, providing an opportunity to connect directly with undergraduate and post-

graduate students exploring future career options.

The event generated strong interest from students undertaking poultry-related research, as well as those considering their next steps following graduation.

The careers fair also enabled valuable networking and conversations with students, researchers and academic staff.

Discussions focused on the skills required by industry, current research priorities and the many opportuni-

ties available within the poultry sector, from technical and scientific roles through to farming, management and corporate careers.

It was particularly encouraging to see the high level of enthusiasm among students and their genuine interest in contributing to the future of Australian agriculture.

Many students expressed an eagerness to learn more about the poultry industry and the important role it plays in providing affordable, nutritious and sustainable pro-

tein for Australian consumers.

We are pleased to see initiatives such as these contribute to the delivery of the Chicken Meat Industry Workforce Strategy.

These activities support our ongoing commitment to strengthening partnerships between industry and educational institutions, raising awareness of the diverse and rewarding career opportunities available within the chicken meat sector, and attracting future talent to support the sector's

long-term growth and success.

ACMF would like to thank the University of Sydney, the student organisers and industry panellists for their support in making the event a success.

We look forward to continuing to work collaboratively with universities and industry partners to inspire future poultry leaders and showcase the many rewarding career pathways our industry has to offer.

ACMF

Women in ag leading future of egg industry

from P1 connection are to the future of agriculture.

Whether engaging with stakeholders or contributing to broader industry discussions, her leadership reflects a new generation of professionals who understand that farming today extends well beyond the farm gate.

Jessica Spencer's contribution speaks to the technical and

progressive side of the industry.

With a focus on continuous improvement and innovation, her work demonstrates how the egg sector is evolving.

From embracing new technologies to refining production practices, her approach reflects the importance of adaptability in an increasingly complex agricultural environment.

Laura Manion exem-

plifies the next wave of agricultural leadership – passionate, informed and forward-thinking.

Her recognition highlights the importance of supporting emerging leaders and ensuring that the industry continues to attract and retain talented individuals.

Her journey reinforces that there is no single pathway into agriculture and that diverse experiences only

strengthen the sector.

Collectively, these women represent more than individual achievement.

They reflect a broader shift within the egg industry – one that values diversity, encourages leadership at all levels and recognises the importance of different perspectives.

This shift is not only positive, but also necessary.

As the industry navi-

gates challenges such as biosecurity threats, regulatory change and evolving consumer expectations, strong and diverse leadership will be critical.

The recognition of these award winners also sends a clear message to others in the industry – there is space to lead, to innovate and to influence.

For young women considering a career in agriculture, these examples matter.

They demonstrate that success is not limited by tradition and that the industry is actively evolving.

With each award, each recognition and each success story, the pathway becomes clearer and more accessible.

The egg industry has always been built on resilience and adaptability.

Today, it is also being shaped by inclusion and opportunity.

Leaders such as Jodi Courtice, Alex-Kate Langfield, Jessica Spencer and Laura Manion are part of that story and are helping to write its next chapter.



Jessica Spencer from Days Eggs.



Laura Manion from Pure Foods Eggs.

NATIONAL Poultry
NEWSPAPER

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New RSPCA standard creates compliance pathway for Better Chicken Commitment

AFTER a two-year review process, RSPCA Australia released its revised meat chicken standard in mid-July.

The new standard will, for the first time in Australia, provide a certification pathway for chicken meat producers to meet the globally recognised Better Chicken Commitment.

Within the new standard, the RSPCA has created a certification level for higher-welfare slower-growing breeds, packaged with other key animal welfare reforms which raise standards for living conditions and slaughter.

This is a major step towards bringing the Better Chicken Commitment into Australia's chicken meat supply chains.

Australian Alliance for Animals strategy director Dr Bidda Jones said, "Fast-growing breeds – which suffer high rates of pain, injury and illness, birds crowded together unable to move freely and live shackling prior to slaughter – are prevalent throughout the Australian chicken industry, including in current RSPCA Certified supply chains."

"While the base RSPCA standard will still allow these practices, the release of higher-welfare requirements offers a practical pathway for chicken farming practices to match current science and community expectations for animal welfare," Dr Jones said.

Research commissioned by the Australian Alliance for Animals in February 2026 revealed that seven out of 10 Australians find the current way chickens are bred, farmed and slaughtered is unacceptable.

The independent nationally representative survey covered three key aspects of meat

chicken farming, finding:

- 78 percent of Australians think selectively breeding chickens to reach market weight size in 35 days, leading to difficulties with walking and standing, is unacceptable

- 83 percent think that keeping tens of thousands of chickens inside sheds at high stocking densities with no access to daylight is unacceptable

- 74 percent think that suspending chickens upside-down by their legs before stunning them in an electrified bath is unacceptable.

"These results demonstrate that, despite the wide uptake of certification labels, the chicken industry is failing to meet public expectations for animal welfare," Dr Jones said.

"The good news is that there is an alternative."

"The Better Chicken Commitment requires higher-welfare slower-growing chicken breeds, more space and natural light inside chicken sheds and more humane and reliable slaughter methods."

Better Chicken Commitment campaigner April Broadbent said, "With over 640 commitments from food businesses to date across the world, there is a clear trend away from fast-growing chicken breeds and towards the Better Chicken Commitment as the baseline for animal welfare."

"Australians are horrified by current industry practices and want higher animal welfare standards," Ms Broadbent said.

"The RSPCA's new higher level is the only certification standard that addresses the significant welfare problems associated with selecting chickens for

extreme growth, a key step towards meeting consumer expectations for chicken welfare.

"Food businesses that claim to be leaders in animal welfare now have a clear pathway to adopting the Better Chicken Commitment – if they don't take up this opportunity, their customers will

be asking why."

Producers, growers, food businesses and any other industry-affiliated groups or individuals are welcome to get in touch to discuss the Better Chicken Commitment by contacting business@betterchicken.org.au

Better Chicken Commitment



Scan for the revised RSPCA Australia meat chicken standards.



Scan for more information on the Better Chicken Commitment.



RSPCA AUSTRALIA STANDARD

Meat Chickens

July 2026

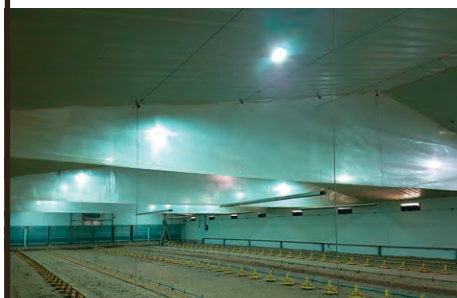
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Within the new standard, the RSPCA Australia has created a certification level for higher-welfare slower-growing breeds.

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Slower growing broilers at an RSPCA Assured (UK) farm. All RSPCA Assured chicken meat products are compliant with the Better Chicken Commitment. Photo: RSPCA UK

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H5N1 in Australia and why wild birds matter to poultry

DOCTOR Lee Campbell is a comparative immunologist whose research investigates how Australian wildlife species respond to different pathogens.

Her background includes research in avian immunology and avian influenza, including host responses to highly and low pathogenic avian influenza viruses.

She is a postdoctoral research fellow in the

Sydney School of Veterinary Science at the University of Sydney and has presented at the Australian Poultry Science Symposium.

The following was written by Dr Campbell specifically for this publication.

After years of devastating poultry and wildlife populations across the globe, highly pathogenic avian influenza H5N1, clade 2.3.4.4b has officially arrived in Australia.

The first detection was in a brown skua found near Esperance, Western Australia.

At the time of writing, 27 detections in wild seabirds have been recorded across Australia.

There have been no detections in poultry or Australia's agricultural production system.

Whether H5N1 becomes established in Australian wildlife remains to be seen.

For producers, the important question is whether these remain isolated cases, largely in migratory seabirds, or whether the virus begins circulating more widely in resident Australian birds.

Everything the virus does before it reaches a commercial flock occurs first in wildlife (see Figure 1).

Wildlife surveillance, additional immunological research and models of wild bird movements and behaviour in Australia could identify relevant risk factors before infection in a commercial flock becomes the first warning.

Avian influenza viruses have circulated among wild birds for

thousands of years and generally cause little disease in their natural hosts.

So-called low pathogenic avian influenza viruses regularly circulate in wild birds, especially ducks and other waterfowl, including those in Australia and surveillance has given us a reasonable understanding of some of the species involved and the environments where these viruses occur.

This means this newly introduced strain is not entering an empty landscape.

This distinction matters because influenza viruses are constantly changing.

A defining characteristic of influenza viruses is their ability to evolve, including through a process called reassortment (see Figure 2).

These viruses contain eight separate gene segments and, occasionally, when two or more viruses infect the same cell, they can swap these segments, creating new viral combinations.

Australia already has endemic LPAI viruses circulating in wildlife, meaning H5N1 is entering an environment where interactions with local influenza viruses are biologically possible.

Whether reassortment will occur in Australia, or what any resulting viruses would look like, cannot be predicted.

Continued surveillance and sequencing will be needed to detect if it does.

Influenza viruses also accumulate mutations as they replicate,

some of which can affect the species or tissues they infect (see Figure 2).

Such changes may have helped the current strain expand into mammals, including scavengers, seals and dairy cattle.

To survive and spread, viruses rely entirely on their hosts.

Which birds become infected, how sick they become, how far they move, which habitats they use and how often they encounter poultry all influence where the virus goes and how it spreads.

Understanding the behaviour of wild birds is therefore essential for understanding the behaviour of the virus.

Additionally, not all wildlife will respond the same way to being infected by this virus (see Figure 1).

Some will get sick and die and will not be able to transmit the virus long distances.

In others, receptor differences or early immune responses may prevent the virus from establishing a successful infection or being transmitted.

The species likely to have the greatest impact on spread are those that can be infected without developing severe illness.

Because they remain mobile while shedding the virus, they may carry it over long distances and expose new hosts.

In other parts of the world, we know that many of the reservoir hosts of avian influenza virus are ducks, especially dabbling ducks.

continued P5

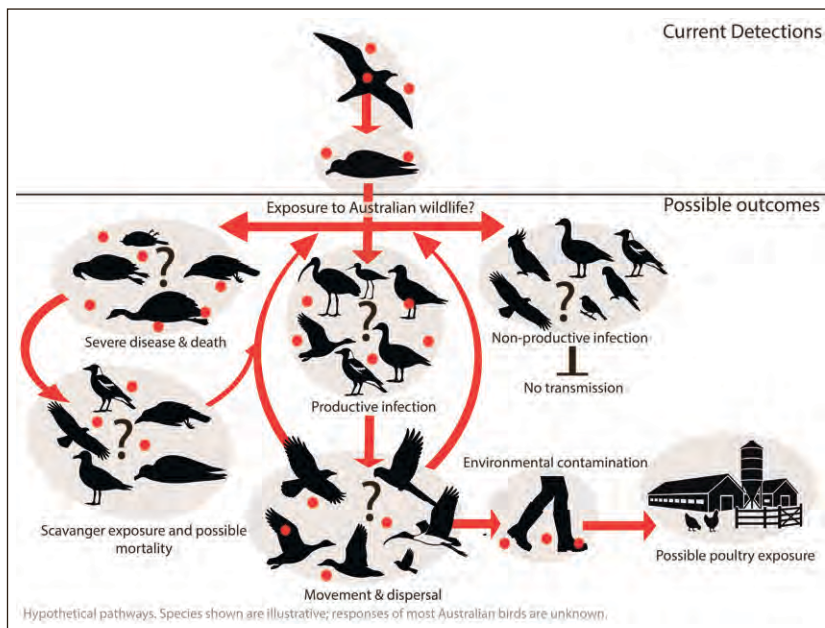


Figure 1. Possible pathways for H5N1 to move through Australian wildlife and reach poultry. The species shown are examples, as we do not yet know how Australian birds will respond.

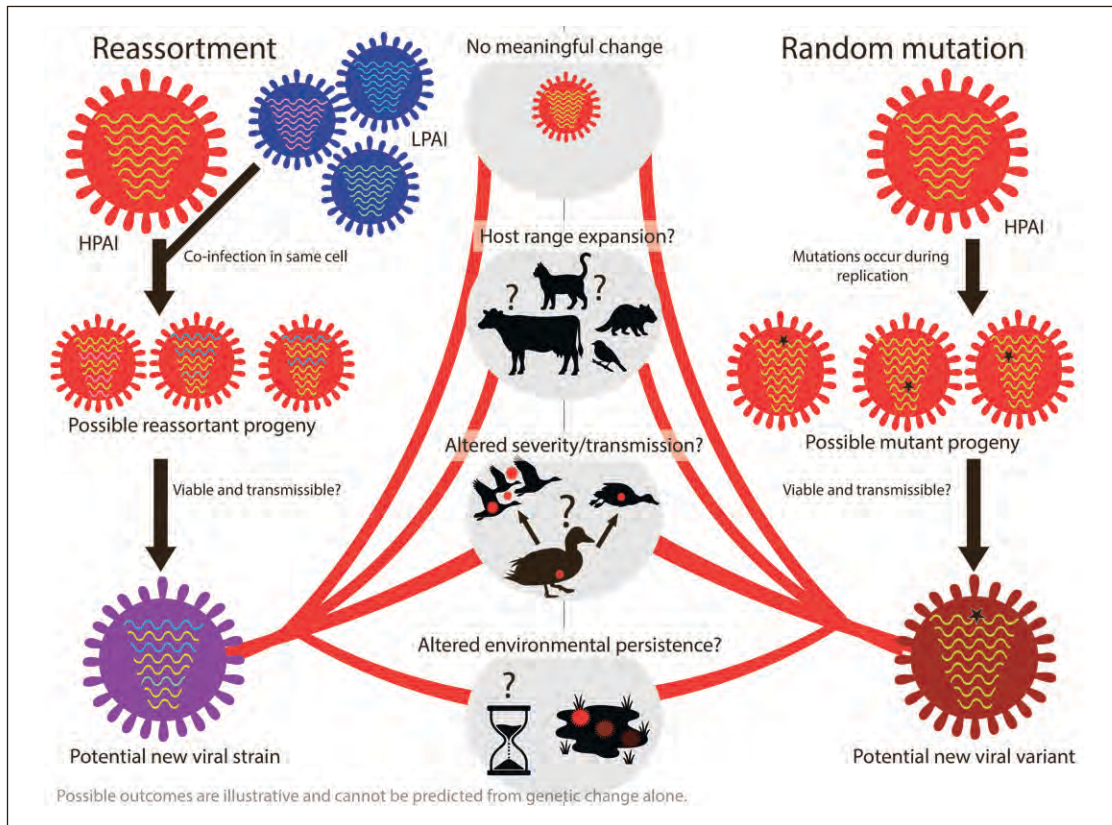


Figure 2. Avian influenza can change by reassorting with other strains or through random mutations. These changes may do nothing, or may alter which animals it infects, how it spreads, the disease it causes or how long it survives outside a host.

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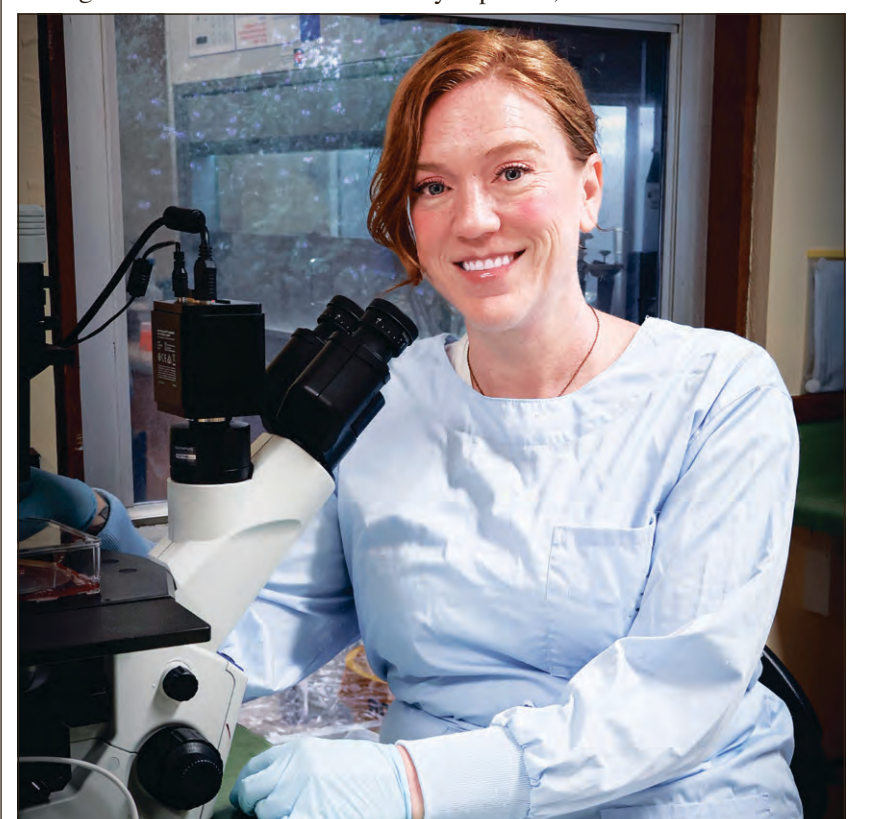
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Dr Lee Campbell

H5N1 in Australia and why wild birds matter to poultry

from P4

As many Australian duck and waterfowl species are distinct from those studied overseas and have followed separate evolutionary histories, we do not know absolutely which individual species here will be most likely to spread the virus.

This is also why Australia should not assume H5N1 will behave exactly as it has elsewhere.

Much of what we currently know comes from Europe and North America, where bird communities, immune responses, migration patterns, climates and landscapes differ from those found here.

Many migratory waterfowl species in North America and Europe do what is called 'staging'.

That is, flocks containing thousands of birds converge at the same time each year, share close quarters and by association their viruses, resulting in somewhat predictable patterns of spread as they migrate to and from their breeding and feeding grounds.

Australian waterfowl tend to operate on different migratory patterns.

Many Australian waterfowl are nomadic, following rainfall rather than strict seasonal flyways, which may produce more sporadic patterns of movement and infection.

For producers, this information provides advance warning.

Knowing which species are infected, where and when they move and how they interact with poultry can refine risk assessments and better target biosecurity efforts.

The aim is to recognise when isolated wildlife detections have developed into a pathway towards poultry, rather than discovering that change through the first infected flock.

The risk begins in wildlife but whether it reaches poultry depends heavily on the barriers maintained at the farm.

Consistent biosecurity – including clean footwear, controlled access and protected feed and water – remains the most

effective defence.

Current steps for preventing, reporting and detecting HPAI

- Prevent poultry and wild birds from accessing the same feed and water

- Use water supplies protected from wild-bird contamination and appropriately treat surface water where it is used

- Review access controls for people, vehicles and equipment entering production areas

- Clean and disinfect poultry housing, equipment and vehicles regularly

- Monitor birds for sudden deaths, reduced feed or water intake, falling egg production, breathing difficulties or unusual neurological signs

- Do not touch sick or dead wild birds – immediately report unusual illness or deaths in wild birds or poultry to the 24-hour Emergency Animal Disease Hotline on 1800 675 888.

For more information, contact lee.campbell@sydney.edu.au



Dr Lee Campbell

Inghams makes strategic investment in Australian food technology start-up

INGHAMS Group Limited recently announced a seed-stage equity investment of \$1.05 million in Just Meat Protein Pty Ltd.

JMP is an Australian food technology company commercialising Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation-developed hydrolysed poultry protein technology, for which it holds an exclusive worldwide licence.

Under the terms of the investment, Inghams has acquired a 10 percent shareholding in JMP, and Inghams chief growth officer Caroline Hayes will join the JMP Board.

Inghams also has an exclusive first-right supply arrangement with JMP in Australia.

JMP's proprietary process converts chicken meat into premium powdered protein ingredients targeting sports nutrition, functional foods and specialised nutrition markets.

Inghams' research estimates the global sports nutrition market alone is worth \$38.54 billion and

projected to grow strongly.

Other addressable market segments include aged care and meal replacement, protein-fortified mass-market foods and specialty nutrition, including military and space applications.

Inghams chief executive officer and managing director Ed Alexander said, "The investment in Just Meat Protein is precisely the kind of innovation-led high-value adjacency we have been looking to establish and

is strongly aligned to our strategy to maximise the value we generate from every bird we process."

"The investment allows us to secure an early and strategically advantaged position in a category we believe has significant growth ahead of it."

Just Meat Protein CEO and co-founder Ellie Whelan said, "A growing population, the rapid rise in GLP-1 use and the shift towards more conscious consumers are all feeding a

huge growth in demand for new protein sources."

"For us here at Just Meat Protein, to be able to solve for this problem through targeting low-value cuts is not only a commercial win but a positive shift towards a more sustainable food system."

"We're excited to take this world-first technology to market with the support of our seed investors, including Inghams Group."

Inghams



Just Meat Protein CEO and co-founder Ellie Whelan.



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WEO hatching plans for sustainable egg production

'WHICH came first, the chicken or the egg' is an age-old riddle easily settled when we acknowledge that dinosaurs laid eggs, the fish that first crawled out of the sea laid eggs and the weird articulated monsters that swam in the warm shallow seas of the Cambrian Period 500 million years ago also laid eggs.

So, given that eggs came first and they are still hatching in every corner of the world, their sustainability must be integral for a global body such as the World Egg Organisation.

Of course, sustainability must be front and centre in all agricultural systems.

If not, then production waivers over time, potentially reaching the point of no return.

For now, let's focus on egg production and how the WEO seeks to shape a sustainable future.

Egg production is already one of the most environmentally friendly forms of agricultural production, as hens convert feed into protein very efficiently and require a relatively small land base to do so.

The environmental impact of egg production is mainly due to two key factors:

- What goes in – feed is up to 81 percent of total environmental impact
- What comes out – manure is up to 46 percent of total footprint.

WEO champions continuous development and improved sustainability across the global egg value chain through collaboration, knowledge sharing, sound science and leadership.

Sustainability is a growing priority across global egg sector, with producers increasingly

Cant Comment
by BRENDON CANT



innovating and investing in practices that reduce environmental impact while supporting efficient food production.

The global egg industry is focusing more than ever on feed supply chain transparency to ensure responsible and sustainable production.

This includes working with suppliers that avoid deforestation and land use change, protect biodiversity and high conservation value ecosystems and implement nutrient management plans and regenerative farming practices.

Some feed suppliers are also embracing circular agriculture by incorporating upcycled co-products, by-products and former foods into hen diets.

Leveraging these materials in hen feed avoids the environmental impacts associated with growing feed crops and sending these waste by-products to landfill.

Research suggests that replacing soy, for example, with these alternative materials could reduce up to 60 percent of greenhouse gas emissions from poultry diets.

Local sourcing is another important strategy, helping reduce transport-related emissions while supporting environmentally and socially responsible farming systems closer to home.

Many egg producers are also now vertically

integrated, giving them full control over the egg supply chain through their own operations.

The egg sector is also focused on improving feed-to-energy conversion efficiency by optimising hen nutrition, gut health, housing conditions and on-farm environmental controls.

Better efficiency means hens require less feed to produce nutritious eggs, reducing the impact of every egg produced.

Hen nutrition can also play a role in reducing emissions of highly potent greenhouse gas emissions such as methane from manure.

Carefully balanced hen diets can lower manure production and reduce nitrogen, phosphorus, odours and moisture levels.

Egg producers are increasingly investing in technologies and practices that transform manure into valuable resources, including renewable energy, biochar and organic fertilisers.

Through anaerobic digestion, manure can be converted into biogas, reducing methane emissions while generating renewable electricity that can power farm operations.

On-farm manure management improvements, including increasing the manure removal frequency from hen housing and manure belts, also mitigate emissions because the manure emission factor increases with longer residence times.

Innovations in manure drying, storage and field application are also minimising emissions and lowering risks.

Dried manure pellets can improve precision fertiliser application, supporting crop growth while reducing the need for synthetic fertilisers.

Across the egg value chain, producers are demonstrating how innovation, collaboration and continuous improvement can support more sustainable food systems.

By focusing on feed efficiency, responsible sourcing and circular manure management, the global egg sector is helping build a more resilient and resource-efficient future for agriculture.

In 2015, 193 world leaders committed to the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals, representing a shared vision to eradicate poverty and social inequality and tackle climate change by 2030.

WEO has committed to advocate ongoing improvement in sustainability within the egg industry and work in partnership with the UN to fulfil its SDGs.

The global egg industry is reducing its environmental footprint by transitioning to renewable energy, optimising feed efficiency and adopting digital 'smart sheds'.

These strategies aim to address major challenges such as land use and greenhouse gas emissions while meeting UN SDGs.

Key sustainability initiatives include the below.

Precision feed optimisation

Since feed cultivation (such as soy) is the most environmentally destructive and land-in-

continued P7



An omelette enjoyed by the author seaside last year in Kastela, Croatia. Let's hope global egg production, despite challenges, remains sustainably high enough to satisfy demand for such culinary delights.



Pasture raised eggs from Allington Family Farm are all about sustainability. Farmers Travis and Zoe travel four hours from Tenterden in WA's Great Southern every weekend to sell at several Perth farmer's markets. Their efforts are appreciated by many loyal supporters, including the author.

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Sugar refinery upgrades with Gorman-Rupp

BUNDABERG Sugar is one of Australia's oldest and most respected agricultural companies, with a history of sugar production lasting more than a century.

At the Millaquin Sugar Mill in Bundaberg East, efficient fluid-handling systems are critical to keeping production moving.

Recently, the engineering team began a targeted upgrade of their pumping infrastructure to improve reliability and efficiency.

The refinery faces the tough task of managing aggressive wastewater and grit-heavy process fluids.

To handle this, the

team turned to Hydro Innovations for Gorman-Rupp self-priming centrifugal pumps.

Brendan Garrett from Bundaberg Sugar supported the review of this project, which highlighted a strategic shift towards rugged above-ground infrastructure.

The first stage involved installing a new Gorman-Rupp wastewater pump.

The unit immediately proved its worth.

"Gorman-Rupp are a reliable pump," Mr Garrett said.

"It runs so quietly we can barely hear it, while the other pump is loud and sounds like it is about to fail."

The team already has a second Gorman-

Rupp wastewater pump on-site.

They are simply waiting for that noisy existing pump to finalise its run before dropping the new unit straight into position.

Beyond standard wastewater, the refinery requires heavy-duty equipment for its recovery pit, a harsh environment filled with abrasive materials.

For this gritty application, they selected a Gorman-Rupp T3A71S-B pump with hardened internals to withstand severe wear.

The mechanical team is currently sorting the motor match and configuration ahead of installation.

By choosing Gorman-Rupp's above-ground

design, Bundaberg Sugar eliminates the need for cranes or wet-well entry.

Maintenance operators and technicians can now monitor, inspect internals or conduct routine maintenance safely and easily from the workshop floor, ensuring long-term up-time for the mill.

For further information regarding the extensive range of Gorman-Rupp self-priming pumps and the services that Hydro Innovations are able to offer to remedy your wastewater, sewerage, aeration and any pump issues, visit www.hydroinnovations.com.au or phone 02 9898 1800.

Hydro Innovations



A Gorman-Rupp T3A71S-B pump with hardened internals was selected for the harsh environment of the refinery's recovery pit.

WEO hatching plans for sustainable egg production

from P6

tensive part of egg production, the industry is researching sustainable alternative plant-based proteins.

Additionally, producers are utilising precision feeding to minimise waste and reduce the total carbon footprint.

Smart technology and animal welfare

Producers are employing automated housing systems (for example, 'smart sheds') to closely monitor and regulate indoor climates.

These systems precisely track water and feed consumption, leading to reduced resource waste and improved bird health.

Renewable energy integration

Farms worldwide are making substantial investments in solar power, composting and water recycling to operate off-grid or supplement their grid electricity.

Genetic advancement and flock longevity

The industry is selecting hen genetics that extend production periods (some reaching up to 100 weeks), which yields more eggs with fewer resource inputs.

Clearly, there are some exciting and promising developments on the sustainability front.

Let us hope they remain sustainable.

Broken promises and false starts will hatch broken eggs and we don't want that.

Note, the World Egg Organisation, established in 1964 as the International Egg Commission, exists to connect people across the globe to share information and develop relationships across cultures and nationalities, supporting the growth of the egg industry and promoting eggs as a sustainable, inexpensive and nutritious food for all.



Egg shoppers often scramble to find what fits their budget, welfare, sustainability and environmental objectives. Displays such as this one at the author's local Aldi store might help.

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H5N1 avian influenza

■ Is your business protected from the threat above?

AUSTRALIA'S poultry industry is on high alert as the global spread of H5N1 avian influenza continues to pose a significant biosecurity risk.

While producers have invested heavily in on-ground biosecurity measures, one of the greatest threats remains beyond their control – wild and migratory birds carrying the virus.

No matter how robust your farm's biosecurity protocols are, they cannot prevent birds from flying over your property, landing on sheds or contaminating water sources and feed areas.

The risk from above

Wild birds are recognised as the primary carriers of H5N1 avian influenza.

Once the virus enters a poultry operation, the consequences can be devastating for individual businesses and the wider industry.

An outbreak can result in the destruction of commercial poultry within the designated control zone, lengthy business disruption, movement restrictions

and substantial financial losses.

Wild birds can introduce disease by:

- Flying over and landing on sheds and infrastructure

- Coming into direct contact with commercial flocks

- Contaminating water supplies and feed areas

- Introducing H5N1 without any visible warning signs.

Creating an aerial biosecurity perimeter

As technology continues to evolve, autonomous drone systems are emerging as another tool that may assist producers in reducing the presence of wild birds around poultry operations.

Barko Drones spe-

cialises in the Matrice 4TD and DJI Dock 3 autonomous drone and charging system, designed to operate around the clock with minimal human intervention.

The system follows a programmed flight path around a property, providing continuous aerial patrols day and night.

Equipped with speakers that emit shotgun blasts, sirens and predator calls, together with high-intensity flashing lights, the drones are designed to deter wild birds from approaching sheds and other critical infrastructure.

For poultry producers looking to strengthen their biosecurity strategy,

automated aerial bird deterrence offers an additional layer of protection alongside existing on-farm biosecurity practices.

To see the Barko Drone bird deterrent system in action, scan the QR code below.

For more information contact Barko Drones on 0455 927 360 or info@barkodrones.com.au

Barko Drones



Scan to view the wild bird deterrent system.



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Safety Smart Broiler Chicken Farming Award 2026

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Applications open for the 2026 Safety Smart Broiler Chicken Farming Award

THE Australian Chicken Meat Federation is pleased to announce that applications for the 2026 Safety Smart Broiler Chicken Farming Award, proudly sponsored by ProTen, opened on Monday July 20, 2026.

The award recog-

nises individuals who and businesses that have demonstrated outstanding leadership and innovation in improving safety outcomes on Australian broiler chicken farms, with a \$5000 prize and trophy awarded to the winning applicant.

The inaugural 2024 award was won by TaskTrans, whose innovative safety initiatives impressed the judging panel and set a high benchmark for future applicants.

The recognition highlighted the important role that practical industry-led solutions play in creating a safer working environment during pick up through their innovative 'Seen' system.

In 2025, Hazeldenes was recognised for its strong commitment

to safety leadership across its farming operations and contract grower network.

Its winning application showcased safety leadership workshops, the introduction of a hazard reporting frequency rate key performance indicator and regular 'safety walk and talks', helping to strengthen accountability, proactive risk management and safety culture throughout the business.

The success of the program demonstrates the industry's ongoing commitment to improving health and safety outcomes.

Importantly, the award is not limited to large-scale projects.

Applications may include equipment

continued P9

H5N1 AVIAN INFLUENZA - BIOSECURITY ALERT

H5N1 AVIAN FLU IS THE BIGGEST THREAT THE POULTRY INDUSTRY HAS EVER FACED

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The 2024 SSBF Award winner, TaskTrans.



The 2025 Safety Smart Broiler Chicken Farming Award winner, Hazeldenes.

How to achieve good plucking during poultry processing

ACHIEVING excellent plucking results is one of the most important steps in poultry processing.

The objective is not only to remove feathers efficiently but also to protect the quality of the carcass.

Poor plucking can result in skin tears, wing fractures, bruising, weight loss and reduced product value.

Successful plucking requires a balance between effective feather removal and gentle handling of the bird, with operators continuously monitoring and adjusting processing conditions.

One of the most critical factors is scalding.

Water temperature and immersion time determine how easily feathers are released.

If the water temperature is too low, feather removal becomes difficult and incomplete.

However, temperatures above 55-56°C (131-133°F) can begin cooking the bird, causing approximately 20g of weight loss per bird while also damaging skin quality.

For this reason, water temperature should always be carefully balanced with immersion

time and the number of scalders used in the processing line.

Environmental conditions inside the plucking room also have a major influence on performance.

The room should remain warm to maintain process stability and prevent sudden temperature changes between the scalding water and the surrounding air.

Cold air entering the processing area can reduce feather release and negatively affect plucking efficiency.

Air conditioning should be avoided in the plucking area, fans should not blow directly onto the line and doors should remain closed whenever possible, especially during colder months.

Bird size is another important consideration.

In Australia, where many processing plants handle birds of different weight, processors must adjust their equipment accordingly.

Line speed, machine settings and scalding conditions should all be adapted to match bird weight.

Seasonal variations

also require attention, as the optimal settings during summer often differ from those needed in winter.

Continuous monitoring and timely adjustments help maintain consistent results throughout the year.

The selection of high-quality plucking fingers is equally essential.

Correctly matched fingers improve feather removal while minimising carcass damage.

Modern manufacturers, such as Duram Rubber Products, offer a wide range of designs, hardness levels and colours suitable for different machines and processing requirements.

When selecting plucking fingers, processors should also consider the quality of the raw materials and the manufacturer's certifications, such as ISO 9001, USDA and HALAL approvals.

Just as important is the manufacturer's experience and ability to provide technical support after installation.

Ultimately, successful plucking depends on careful attention to

every stage of the process.

Proper scalding, controlled environmental conditions, adjustment for bird size and season and the use of correctly selected high-quality plucking fingers all contribute to cleaner feather removal, reduced carcass damage and improved yield.

By continuously monitoring these factors and making timely adjustments, poultry processors can achieve consistent high-quality plucking while maximising both product quality and profitability.

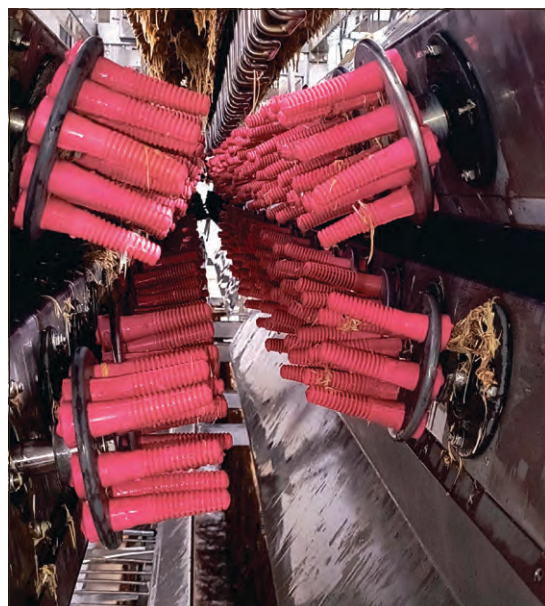
As the exclusive Australian stockist of Duram Rubber Products, Plaus Agency is proud to supply the full Duram range to processors across Australia, working closely with customers to identify the most suitable plucking finger for their equipment and production objectives.

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Plaus Agency



Duram's colour options make it easy to identify replaced fingers and differentiate machine setups.



Duram rubber plucking fingers are engineered for consistent feather removal, extended service life and reliable performance.

Applications open for the 2026 Safety Smart Broiler Chicken Farming Award

from P8 modifications, engineering solutions, training initiatives, process improvements, technology adoption or any innovation that has contributed to safer broiler farming operations.

ACMF encourages growers, farm managers and poultry businesses from across Australia to share

their safety success stories and apply for this year's award.

Further information, eligibility requirements and application details are available via the ACMF website – scan the QR code below.

If you have implemented a safety initiative that has made a difference on farm, now is the time

to showcase your achievements and help drive continuous improvement across the Australian broiler chicken farming industry.

Don't miss the opportunity to apply before Monday September 21, 2026.

The winner will be announced in October.

Be sure to stay

tuned via the ACMF LinkedIn page and website for updates on the safety prize.

ACMF



Scan for more details.

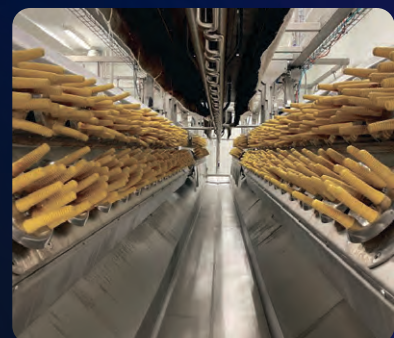
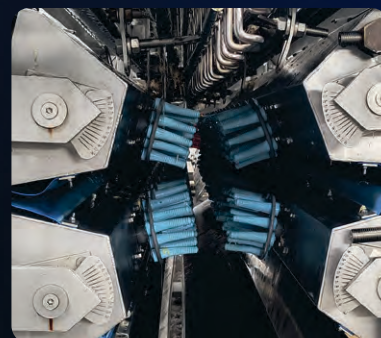
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Update on H5N1 bird flu

AS at 2pm AEST, July 28, 2026, Australia had 27 confirmed detections of H5N1 bird flu in wild seabirds.

- 10 in Western Australia
- 14 in South Australia
- 2 in NSW
- 1 in Queensland.

This is the serious H5 bird flu strain that has been circulating globally.

There have been no detections in poultry or the wider agriculture industry.

There is no evidence of any large scale deaths.

The Consultative Committee for Emergency Animal Disease has reviewed its previous advice and continues to support heightened biosecurity measures in poultry for up to a further two weeks while risk-based

guidance is finalised.

This includes options for states and territories to utilise non-mandatory measures, including voluntary housing of free-range poultry where practical and consistent with animal welfare requirements.

State and territory governments are responsible for surveillance and response activities on the ground.

They are actively working with industry to provide guidance on implementation of enhanced biosecurity measures, as appropriate. Find out more about bird flu in your state or territory by scanning the relevant QR code below.

National coordination is being led by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, scan the relevant QR code below for the latest updates.

The risk to human health remains low. Australia is well prepared to respond quickly.

See what we are doing by scanning the relevant QR code below.

Report signs of bird flu

If you notice sick or dead birds or other animals showing signs of bird flu, you should not touch them or get too close.

Record your location and report it to the 24-hour Emergency Animal Disease Hotline on 1800 675 888.

DAFF



Scan for latest DAFF updates.



Scan to view what's being done.



Scan for information in your area.

What is H5 bird flu?

H5 bird flu is the most serious type of bird flu. It mainly affects wild and domestic birds, but can also infect some mammals. It has killed millions of animals worldwide.

How it spreads and the impacts

H5 bird flu can infect and kill wild birds.

It can spread to other birds and some mammals. Human infection is rare.

This can impact food supply, the environment and the economy.

If you see sick or dead animals

- Avoid** contact and keep your distance
- Record** date, time, location and take photos
- Report** to Emergency Animal Disease Hotline

1800 675 888

Find out more at birdflu.gov.au or scan the QR code.



As hatcheries utilise more automation and technologically advanced equipment, the role people play in driving performance can be overlooked.

Inside modern hatcheries

■ Why people still power performance in production

WITH more flock health interventions shifting from the field to the hatchery, this phase of production is playing an increasingly important role in setting a foundation for flock performance.

This three-part Hatchery Health Team Insight series will explore three pillars shaping modern hatchery success – people, process and protection – and draw on practical experiences from hatcheries around the globe.

This is the first instalment in the series.

The role hatcheries play in modern poultry production is significant, laying the groundwork for flock health and business performance.

As hatcheries utilise more automation and technologically advanced equipment, the role people play in driving performance can be overlooked.

Hatchery experts suggest the importance of skilled personnel and operational discipline is only growing stronger.

Zoetis cluster biodevice support specialist APAC Ekapol (Duke) Pruengpanyanont said: “Proficient staff are vital to all hatchery operations because every

detail can directly impact hatchability and chick quality.”

The reality is becoming more important as hatchery managers face growing pressure to improve consistency, maximise flock performance and operate efficiently amid ongoing labour and disease pressure.

Technology depends on human execution

While modern hatcheries rely on automation and advanced vaccine delivery systems, experts caution that technology alone does not guarantee results.

Zoetis global hatchery veterinary and technical services manager Dr Nicky Love said, “When we

talk about our in ovo vaccination device, it performs critical vaccination functions in the hatchery.”

“However, things can go very wrong if everything around the in ovo process is not taken care of, and that requires people.”

Dr Love said issues such as hygiene lapses, inconsistent vaccine handling or overlooked daily maintenance needs can quickly undermine otherwise reliable systems.

Trained staff who monitor check steps surrounding in ovo vaccination can have a tremendous impact.

“You can have the best equipment in the world, but if seem-

ingly small things are wrong, the outcome is not great,” she said.

This operational reality is reshaping how hatcheries approach workforce development.

Rather than reducing labour demands, technology is changing the type of expertise hatcheries require.

Process oversight and continuous training are becoming more important for hatchery personnel at every level.

Why daily habits matter

Hatchery teams operate in environments where small inconsistencies can create large downstream consequences.

continued P11



Small deviations can often have an outsized impact on any number of factors, including vaccine efficacy.

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Inside modern hatcheries

from P10

From visiting hatcheries around the world, both Dr Love and Mr Pruengpanyanont summarised what successful hatcheries are focused on:

- Biosecurity and hygiene
- Quality control measures
- Cross training and retraining
- Cultures where employees are encouraged to identify areas for improvement.

Dr Love said one of the biggest risks hatcheries face is the gradual normalisation of shortcuts.

"We do things so often day in and day out that we start to find shortcuts," she said.

"And then when that person trains the next person, they train all those shortcuts."

Small deviations can often have an outsized impact on any number of factors, including vaccine efficacy.

In the controlled environment of the hatchery, staff have the unique opportunity to improve

consistency and early flock protection but only when operational execution remains strong.

The best hatcheries build a culture of improving

Some of the world's most successful hatcheries are not necessarily the most technologically advanced.

Instead, high-performing operations share common culture characteristics, including paying attention to details, being open to feedback and providing continuous learning for teams.

Mr Pruengpanyanont said he has visited hatcheries in regions with limited access to advanced technology that still consistently produce strong chick quality because they execute the fundamentals exceptionally well.

These hatchery leaders are also open to specialised knowledge in areas such as embryology and immunology that Zoetis can provide to help teams understand the 'why' behind everything they do.

"We have local teams who work with veterinarians and hatchery managers every day to look holistically at hatchery operations, build on what they are doing well and address challenges," he said.

Encouraging decision makers "to not underestimate the value an outside partner can bring to provide objective insights and tailored services that may be needed."

However, in many regions of the world, finding and retaining skilled labour is a challenge.

This is where external expertise can play an even bigger role.

Beyond being a bio-device and vaccine provider, Zoetis Hatchery Health Team members work alongside hatchery personnel to reinforce best practices, identify opportunities for improvement and help bridge knowledge gaps that may emerge as turnover occurs.

The Zoetis team's support extends beyond local field personnel

to include specialists in embryology, immunology, equipment maintenance, flock management, research and development, creating access to a breadth of expertise that many hatcheries would find difficult to maintain internally.

"The goal is not simply to solve problems when they occur, but to proactively transfer knowledge and build confidence in day-to-day hatchery decision making," Mr Pruengpanyanont said.

"This model is about empowering hatcheries by drawing on our experience collected from hatcheries all over the world."

Looking ahead, the important role that hatchery operations play in flock health suggests that human expertise will remain essential to making systems work effectively.

Even the most advanced hatchery technologies still depend on people to deliver results.

Zoetis



Some of the world's most successful hatcheries are not necessarily the most technologically advanced but they execute the fundamentals exceptionally well.

NFF deeply disappointed by new increased US tariff

THE National Farmers' Federation is deeply disappointed in the US' decision to impose a new 12.5 percent tariff on Australian exports, replacing the existing 10 percent tariff that was scheduled to expire on July 24, 2026.

The new increased tariff represents a further and unnecessary trade barrier between two trusted allies with a long-standing agricultural and economic partnership underpinned by the Australia-US Free Trade Agreement, which provides for zero tariffs on two-way trade.

NFF chief executive officer Michael Guerin said the decision was a step in the wrong direction.

"Australian agriculture is profoundly disappointed by this announcement," Mr Guerin said.

"Rather than moving back towards the free and fair-trading arrangements that have served both our countries well for two decades, the US has chosen to further increase barriers to trade, despite Australia's long-standing record of high standards and responsible trade.

"The increase from 10 percent to 12.5 percent adds further challenges for Australian exports, particularly given a number of other economies received a lesser tariff of 10 percent.

"The NFF has long championed free and fair trade, not just for agriculture but all industries, recognising its role in global economic growth, stability and food security.

"Australian agriculture is unwavering in its commitment to this."

Mr Guerin said Australian agriculture remained committed to a considered and measured approach.

"Australia's interests are best served by pursuing open markets, maintaining our reputation as a trusted and responsible trading partner and continu-

ing to strengthen our trading relationships around the world," he said.

"While some major agricultural exports appear to remain exempt, including Australian beef, the decision is nevertheless a disappointing setback for Australian exporters.

"Australian farmers are among the least subsidised in the world and have built a global reputation for producing high-quality, sustainable and reliable food and fibre.

"We will continue working with government and industry to ensure Australia's trade interests are protected and to expand opportunities in markets that value the quality and integrity of Australian agricultural products."

NFF



NFF chief executive officer Michael Guerin.

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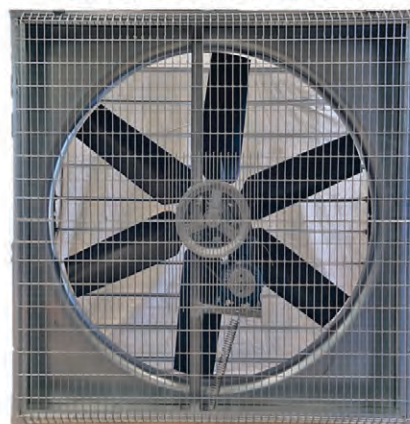
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Insights into imported breeds

IN the middle of the twentieth century, an embargo was placed on the importation of live poultry and fertile eggs into Australia, due to outbreaks of Newcastle disease in both the US and the United Kingdom.

Within a year of the ban taking effect, poultry fanciers were complaining of the negative effect this was having on exhibition birds, there being no way to introduce new bloodlines for breeds that were showing the ill effects of inbreeding depression.

Within a couple of decades of the introduction of the embargo, some of the larger commercial breeders recognised that the local stocks were not keeping up with the gains being made elsewhere and began lobbying for a means to access some of the more efficient laying and table strains that were available overseas.

Eventually, the Torrens Island quarantine station was established to enable the importation of hatching eggs and in August 1990, the first batch of eggs arrived at the facility.

From that time until 2013, the Torrens Island station was used exclusively by the commercial poultry industry.

However, a group of poultry fanciers – who were keen to introduce both new genetics for breeds existing in Australia as well as breeds that were not available here – established a syndicate known as the Australian Rare Poultry Importation Syndicate.

Individuals were able to buy into the

syndicate and have the chance to be part of the importation of eggs, something they would not have been able to do on an individual basis.

Unfortunately, this importation met with failure when some of the birds tested positive for salmonella pul-lorum shortly before being released from quarantine.

This resulted in the entire cohort being euthanised.

Realising that a further importation would be very unlikely, the organisers made the decision to destock the quarantine station that they had established in the UK to supply the hatching eggs.

Shortly before destocking was complete, two individuals who had been involved in the failed ARPIS venture decided to step in and keep the UK facility operational on a private basis.

In 2014, a smaller importation of purebred hatching eggs was attempted through the now closed Spotswood Animal Quarantine Station in Victoria by those private individuals under the name of AvGen Poultry.

Though only a limited number of breeds were involved, the importation was successful and

for the first time in almost a century, breeds such as the Crève-cœur and Redcap were to be found on Australian soil.

Additional to those two breeds, the importation also included Old English Pheasant Fowl, Scots Greys, Dutch Bantams, Campines, Dorkings, Croad Langshans, Marans and Sumatras.

Buoyed by their success in 2014, further importations were successfully undertaken with an expanded range of breeds in both 2015 and 2016.

Collectively, these breeds are often referred to within the poultry fancy as 'the imported breeds'.

These importations saw the re-introduction of purebred lines of breeds such as the Brahma and the Cochin, both of which had been popular breeds at the turn of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, but which had died out in Australia before the embargo was put in place.

And, some breeds that had never previously been introduced to Australia, such as the Appenzeller Spitzhauben and the Dutch Owlbeard, made their appearance here.

Importantly, these importations also pro-

vided some much-needed new genetic material for some of the established exhibition breeds, such as the Croad Langshan and the Dorking.

However, it would be wrong to conclude that all of the breeds that were introduced have made a significant impact on the local poultry fancy.

Many of the breeds have garnered minimal support and anecdotal evidence suggests that at least one, the Nankin bantam, has in fact died out since its importation.

Others have struggled to keep fanciers' attention but still hold on, while some have attracted very strong support and can now be seen at most poultry shows in good numbers.

These include Dutch Bantams, Brahmas, Cochins and Vorwerks.

One of the aims of the importers was to secure a reserve population of some of the rarer breeds that were imported, so that in the event of a disease outbreak in the UK resulting in the loss of stocks there, there would be birds available with which to rebuild those stocks.

Given that Australia is now faced with the threat of H5N1 bird flu, it becomes even more important that the genetic material that remains from those importations is maintained in a secure environment and kept in as pure a state as possible, as it seems quite unlikely that any individuals will be able to repeat the successes realised by AvGen Poultry at any time in the near future.



The Dutch Bantam formed part of the successful 2013 importation and has become a very popular exhibition breed.



The Serama has required a lot of work to keep it going since its importation in 2016, though is attracting new admirers.

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The Cochin had died out in a pure form in Australia prior to its re-importation in 2015.

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A new design for a barn in which manure is tidied up as the chickens forage and a separate area is provided for the birds to take dust baths.



Wellness for chickens in barns

THE welfare of chickens is often still difficult to reconcile with environmental objectives.

Ellen van Weeghel and Dr Bram Bos of Wageningen UR Livestock Research in the Netherlands believe they can solve this.

They are working on a new design for a barn in which manure is tidied up as the chickens forage and a separate area is provided for the birds to take dust baths – “The bathhouse is incredibly popular with the chickens.”

The majority of chickens in the Netherlands are provided with a layer of bedding to forage in.

However, a lot of manure also ends up in that layer of bedding.

This is problematic because manure left on the ground releases ammonia.

Foraging also creates another problem – particulate matter, which is released into the air both inside and outside the barn.

Particulate matter is a health hazard for both chickens and humans.

Particulate matter emissions need to be reduced significantly by 2030, in line with agreements made between the government and the poultry sector and in accordance with European air quality guidelines.

Senior research associate in system innovations for sustainable livestock Dr Bos said, “Particulate matter is a difficult issue to deal with.”

“This especially goes for laying hens, whose manure stays in the barn for months.

“This inevitably leads to the release of particulate matter.”

Working on animal-focused design and humane livestock management, Ms van

Weeghel said, “We want chickens to be able to forage, but we don’t want particulate matter to be released when they do so.”

“Otherwise there will always be a trade-off between environmental and welfare objectives.”

More foraging less particulate matter

However, Dr Bos and Ms Van Weeghel think there’s another way to approach this, based on an innovative plan for happy chickens and a ‘clean’ environment.

They’re working in partnership with Sme-derij Geerts BV, Livestock Robotics and the Praktijkcentrum Emis-siereductie Veehou-derij, a research centre for reducing livestock emissions.

The plan consists of two parts – the manure sieve and the dust bathhouse.

The idea behind the sieve is that manure deposited into a thick layer of woodchips will dry out and then disintegrate as the chickens scratch about in it.

The small particles of manure then sink between the chips instead of being churned up into the air as particulate matter.

Meanwhile, a large shallow tray moves below the woodchips and catches the manure.

The tray acts like a sieve, with a mesh too fine for the rough woodchips to fall through, only the manure particles fall down into it.

The researchers came up with the idea during a design workshop in which farmers and other businesses also participated.

A colleague who worked with Dr Bos and Ms Van Weeghel then started putting something together using materials from a hardware store.

“A month later, we

had a tray that could collect the manure from the bedding,” Dr Bos said.

“It was a very make-shift system, with the tray being pulled along by strings under the bedding.”

A second larger version was tested with chickens at the MBO Aeres Poultry Innovation Lab in Barneveld.

The concept worked there too.

A manure sieve measuring 2.5m by 15m is now ready for the next round of technical tests.

Leveraging behaviour

“The manure sieve leverages the natural behaviour of the chickens, so their behaviour plays a positive role in the functioning of the whole system,” Ms Van Weeghel said.

That’s real progress as previously their foraging behaviour actually increased emissions.

This is because when fine manure particles become airborne, they don’t readily settle back down, creating particulate emissions as a result.

Meanwhile, manure on the ground would also be creating more ammonia.

“Thanks to this new approach, foraging will now actually improve manure disposal,” she said.

The heat generated by the chickens also accelerates the disintegration of the manure and the layer of bedding is so thick that any manure that remains in there is less likely to be kicked up into the air by the foraging chickens.

The trials have already shown how much manure the sieve captures – almost 100 percent.

The actual extent of the reduction of particulate matter by the manure sieve remains to be seen, but Dr Bos is cautiously optimistic.

“Manure is the source of about 90 percent of all the particulate matter in a chicken coop,” he said.

“We also know that this is almost exclusively the result of foraging behaviour.

“As soon as chickens go to sleep, emissions drop to zero.

“So, if you capture almost all the manure in the foraging zone, I would expect at least an 80 percent reduction in particulate matter.”

The researchers also expect to see a reduction in ammonia levels.

Proof of the environmental benefits is expected to emerge out of the next phase of research.

Dust baths

While the layer of coarse woodchip is perfect for foraging, it is actually inconvenient for the expression of other natural chicken behaviour.

Chickens enjoy taking a dust bath from time to time, but to do so they need a fine substance rather than rough woodchips.

They find a spot, scrape around with their beak and feet, then squat and lie down.

They then use their wings to cover all their feathers with sand or fine dust.

After about 20 minutes, they’ll stand up, shake off any excess dust and carry on with other activities.

A dust bath helps them deal with dirt, itching and parasites and keeps their feathers in good condition.

In the coops they have now, chickens often don’t complete their dust bath.

“They keep starting over because the layer of bedding is thin and they’re often disturbed,” Ms Van Weeghel said.

“But chickens really need to take a full dust bath every other day.”

Conditions were therefore already less than ideal for the chickens’ welfare, and the coarse woodchip required by the manure sieve made it even more difficult to have dust baths.

Combined approach

In 2011, Ms Van Weeghel had already worked with colleagues and others in the industry to design a separate area where chickens could take

continued P15



The manure particles have been collected.



A large shallow tray catches the manure by sliding below the substrate.



The natural behaviour of chickens positively affects the functionality of this entire system.

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Northern region

Joe Oliveira
0437 322 446

oliveira@bigdutchman.com

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Brad Tresidder
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2/74 Gheringhap Street
Geelong, VIC 3220

PO Box 1852, Geelong, 3220

Brad.Tresidder@ajg.com.au
D +61 3 9823 3754
M +61 488 282 424
ajg.com/au



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Clarissa Crothers-Stomps
Senior Account Manager

2/74 Gheringhap Street
Geelong, VIC 3220

PO Box 1852, Geelong, 3220

Clarissa.CrothersStomps@ajg.com.au
D +61 3 9823 3757
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Office: +61 2 9844 5700
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Greg Heeney
Sales Manager - Monogastric & Milling
Greg.Heeney@kemin.com
Mobile: +61 456 294 643

Dr. David Isaac
Technical Sales Manager (ANZ)
David.Isaac@kemin.com
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E: ben@collins.media M: 0439 708 602
PO Box 162, Wynnum QLD 4178

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THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY

Associate Professor Reza Barekatin BSc, MSc, PhD
Director

Poultry Research Foundation Level 2 Centre
Faculty of Science
JL Shute Building, 425 Werombi Road
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Wellness for chickens

from P13
dust baths to their heart's content – a dust bathhouse.

However, it proved difficult to get farmers interested because it wasn't something they needed.

The chickens could simply take dust baths in a thin layer of bedding with manure in it.

With the advent of the manure sieve however, Dr Bos and Ms Van Weeghel think a bathhouse – part two of their plan – will appeal.

That's because dust baths also send dust into the air, so if you have a dust bathhouse, this is all contained in one place.

In a barn with a manure sieve and a dust bathhouse, chickens will be able to forage in a rough substrate and bathe in a thick layer of fine substrate.

That's a win for farmers, chickens and the local area from an environmental and welfare perspective.

The two researchers therefore revisited their dust bathhouse concept in 2022.

They had a new version built with support from the Barth-Misset Fund and placed it in the Kipster chicken farm in Beuningen.

This trial version measured 3.5m by 1.5m.

The bathhouse consisted of a tray with a thick layer of sand or coconut grit for bathing and space for the chickens to shake out their feathers before they left the bathhouse.

The actual bath-

house will eventually be larger and farmers will be able to install it as a standalone unit within the barn or integrate it into the structure of an existing aviary.

"The needs of chicken and farmer meet, as the system should also be viable to the farmer," the researchers said.

Popularity of the bathhouse

An initial test showed that the bathhouse was an immediate hit, with throngs of chickens trying to get in.

"We have images where you can see how the whole bathhouse is full of chickens," Ms Van Weeghel said.

"They're exceptionally keen."

One of the next steps is to analyse the images using artificial intelligence.

This is expected to provide more detail on how often chickens take dust baths and how much time they spend on them.

"We want a really clear understanding of what chickens like to do and modify the system accordingly," she said.

"Meanwhile, we'll also be taking health and environmental considerations on board.

"For example, we have to prevent the dust escaping.

"That's why it's a separate contained structure."

The next step is to prepare the manure sieve and dust bathhouse for a one-year experiment at a poultry farm.

This experiment will consider the

needs of both farmers and chickens, because the system needs to work for farmers too.

As part of the experiment, researchers will scrutinise the behaviour of the chickens, monitor their health and measure the levels of particulate matter and ammonia.

Dignified lives for animals

Ms Van Weeghel and Dr Bos would eventually like all chickens to be housed in barns with separate areas for sleeping, dust bathing and foraging.

Such facilities would help the animals live more dignified lives, which is a policy objective of Mark Rutte's fourth (now demissionary) cabinet – based on the recommendation of the Council on Animal Affairs and inspired by a proposal from the political party Partij voor de Dieren (Party for the Animals).

Meanwhile, Ms Van Weeghel is already thinking about the further development of the manure sieve.

"For example, if you put a tray on it that left behind edible things under the substrate for the chickens, they'd really have something to forage for under the bedding," she said.

"That's the whole point of the behaviour, of course.

"The chickens don't merely want to search – they want to actually find something good to eat too."

Dr Bram Bos
Wageningen University & Research

Aussie power cleaning for poultry

AUSTRALIA'S poultry industry is recognised for its high standards of food safety, animal welfare and biosecurity.

With ongoing concerns around avian influenza, maintaining strict hygiene and disinfection practices has never been more important.

Regular cleaning of poultry sheds, equipment and surrounding facilities plays a vital role in reducing disease risks and protecting flock health.

Aussie Pumps has worked closely with poultry producers across the country to develop a range of high-pressure cleaning equipment specifically suited to live-stock applications.

Among the company's most popular solutions is the Aussie Sizzler hot-water pressure cleaner, designed to deliver powerful cleaning performance while helping producers maintain the highest hygiene standards.

Aussie Pumps chief engineer John Hales said, "We understand the importance of reliable cleaning equipment in modern poultry production."

"Our aim is to provide machines that make cleaning faster, safer and more effective, helping producers meet strict biosecurity requirements while reducing operating costs."

The Australian-designed Sizzler delivers 1800psi (130 bar) of cleaning pressure with a water flow of 10LPM.

Producing hot water at temperatures of up to 80C, the machine assists in removing grease, organic matter and contaminants,

supporting thorough cleaning before approved disinfectants are applied as part of a farm's biosecurity program.

Compact and easy to manoeuvre, the Sizzler features four flat-free wheels, an integrated handle and a durable stainless-steel cover designed to withstand harsh agricultural environments.

Power comes from a heavy-duty four-pole slow-speed 1450rpm single-phase 240V motor.

It drives a premium Italian triplex pump fitted with ceramic pistons for long service life.

Safety is a major feature of the machine.

Standard equipment includes Delayed Total Stop, which automatically shuts the machine down 30 seconds after the trigger is released, reducing fuel consumption and improving operator safety.

Micro-Leak Protec-

tion detects hydraulic leaks, while Clogged Nozzle Control prevents pressure build-up if the lance nozzle becomes blocked.

Additional features include Dry Running Protection, Intelligent Auto Shut Off and Ignition Boiler Delay, helping minimise emissions during start-up while protecting key components.

Optional accessories such as turbo lances, stainless-steel roll frames, rotary surface cleaners and foam application systems allow operators to tailor the machine for a wide variety of poultry cleaning tasks.

For larger operations, Aussie Pumps also offers hot-water pressure cleaners delivering up to 4000psi, suitable for high-volume processing plants and commercial wash-down applications.

The company also manufactures a comprehensive range of heavy-duty cold-water

pressure cleaners producing flows up to 28LPM and pressures up to 5000psi.

These are available in both single and three-phase configurations.

With biosecurity remaining a top priority for Australia's poultry sector, investing in reliable high-performance cleaning equipment is an important part of maintaining healthy flocks and reducing the risk of disease transmission.

While pressure cleaning is only one component of an effective biosecurity program, it helps producers thoroughly clean facilities before approved disinfectants are applied in accordance with industry and government guidelines.

For more information, contact Aussie Pumps on (02) 8865 3500 or visit www.aussiepumps.com.au

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