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NATIONAL Poultry

NEWSPAPER

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ACMF joins industry leaders at AgriFutures Rural Women's Award

RECENTLY representatives from the Australian Chicken Meat Federation attended the AgriFutures Levied and Emerging Industries Engagement Week in Canberra, providing an important opportunity to represent the priorities of the Australian chicken meat industry and contribute to discussions shaping the future direction of AgriFutures Australia.

Across two days, ACMF participated in a series of meetings and workshops with AgriFutures, other levied and emerging industries, government representatives and key agricultural



stakeholders.

The first day included the levied industries meeting, which brought together representatives from across Australia's agricultural industries to discuss shared priorities, emerging challenges and opportunities.

The meeting provided a valuable forum to exchange perspectives across industries and consider areas where greater collaboration

could support the continued growth and resilience of Australian agriculture.

On the second day, ACMF participated in a strategic consultation workshop with the AgriFutures chair and managing director as part of the development of the organisation's 2027-2032 strategic plan.

The workshop provided ACMF with an important opportunity to contribute directly to AgriFutures' future strategic direction and ensure the priorities, challenges and opportunities facing the Australian chicken meat industry are appropriately reflected in its longer-term planning.

continued P2



Michael Leahy from Aviagen, Nick Rodgers from Ingham's, Dr Mehdi Toghyani and Professor Mingan Choct.

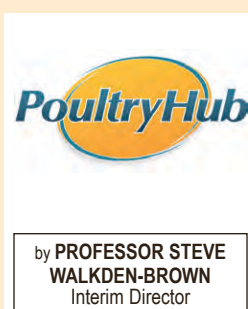
New director for Poultry Hub Australia

THERE is plenty happening at Poultry Hub Australia, but the most significant update this month is the appointment of our incoming director Professor Mehdi Toghyani.

We were delighted to recently welcome Mehdi to Armidale for a day-long familiarisation visit with the PHA team, UNE researchers and industry members.

Mehdi is well known across the poultry sector and brings extensive experience in poultry nutrition, science, production and industry collaboration.

He also has a strong connection with UNE, having completed his PhD in poultry nutrition here before continuing his academic



career at the University of Sydney.

Mehdi will formally commence as director in January 2027.

Over the coming months, I look forward to working closely with him and the PHA team to ensure a smooth transition and to introduce him further to our members, partners and wider industry.

His appointment represents an exciting next chapter for PHA,

and I am confident his experience and strong industry connections will be a great asset to the hub.

This positive news comes at an important time for the Australian poultry industry.

The detection of highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza in migratory seabirds in June, followed by detections in endemic bird species and mammals, presents a significant challenge.

To date, Australian poultry have remained unaffected, and we hope the industry's strong biosecurity measures continue to protect commercial flocks.

PHA's work also continues across research, education and industry engagement.

We are progressing projects from our previous fully funded research round, alongside industry-funded research, co-investment in grant proposals and our growing student industry placement program.

It is an exciting period of change for PHA, and I look forward to sharing further updates as we move towards the end of 2026 and prepare to welcome Mehdi formally in the new year.



Agriculture Minister Julie Collins opening address at the AgriFutures Australia Rural Women's Award Gala Dinner.



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Poultry Industry Calendar of Events

2026

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

OCT 9 – World Egg Day. <https://www.australianeggs.org.au/world-egg-day>

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>

2027

JAN 26-28 – International Production & Processing Expo (IPPE) 2027, Atlanta, USA. <https://www.ippexpo.org/>

FEB 1-3 – APSS 2027, Sydney, NSW. <https://apss.sydney.edu.au>

MAR 10-12 – VIV Asia 2027, Bangkok, Thailand. <https://asia.viv.net>

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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Dr Mary Wu, AgriFutures Chicken Meat Program team and industry representatives at the gala dinner.

ACMF joins industry leaders at AgriFutures Rural Women's Award

from P1

As the largest levy-paying industry represented by AgriFutures, it is particularly important that the chicken meat industry remains actively engaged in these discussions and continues to help shape how levy investment, research, development and extension can best support industry into the future.

The engagement week also included a tripartite meeting between ACMF, AgriFutures and the Federal Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. The meeting provided an opportunity to discuss AgriFutures' performance, provide industry feedback and consider how the relationship between industry, AgriFutures

and government can continue to deliver value for levy payers.

The week concluded with ACMF attending the 2026 AgriFutures Rural Women's Award Gala Dinner at Parliament House, which celebrated the leadership, innovation and contribution of women across rural and regional Australia.

The event also pro-

vided a valuable opportunity to connect informally with the Minister for Agriculture, parliamentarians, senior departmental representatives and agricultural industry leaders, helping to maintain relationships and ensure the chicken meat industry remains visible and engaged in broader agricultural conversations.

Overall, the week

provided an important opportunity for ACMF to strengthen relationships across government, AgriFutures and the broader agricultural sector, while ensuring the Australian chicken meat industry has a strong voice in discussions that will influence future research, investment and agricultural policy.

ACMF



Sunny Queen marketing manager Laura Phillips, Egg Farmers of Australia CEO Melinda Hashimoto and Federal Shadow Minister for Agriculture Darren Chester.



Federal Minister for Agriculture Julie Collins and Member for Capricornia Michelle Landry at Egg Farmers of Australia's World Egg Day breakfast at Parliament House.

Aussie egg farmers take World Egg Day to Canberra

AUSTRALIAN egg farmers took their products to Canberra to celebrate World Egg Day at Parliament House with a message that eggs are among the most sustainable and affordable sources of protein during the cost-of-living crisis.

Federal members of Parliament and senators attended a World Egg Day breakfast hosted by Egg Farmers of Australia – the voice of the nation's leading free range,

cage and barn laid producers – on Wednesday September 16.

EFA chief executive officer Melinda Hashimoto said 2026 had proven to be a challenging year for the egg sector but that egg farmers were valiant.

"We are seeing apprehensive times as we closely monitor the introduction via wild birds of H5 high pathogenicity avian influenza in some states," Mrs Hashimoto said.

"Though currently no egg farms are af-

fected, this issue is a serious one for the industry to watch.

"But Aussie egg farmers are well prepared and very resilient."

"Across the nation in 2026, consumer confidence in Australian egg production and demand for eggs continues to grow."

Australia's commercial farmers produce 6.8 billion eggs a year to satisfy the nation's growing appetite for eggs, most of which come from

family-run farms.

World Egg Day itself falls on Friday October 9.

This year's theme is 'Protein that powers and protects', which celebrates the role eggs play in nourishing people across the country.

"Many people may not realise that eggs have one of the lowest carbon footprints of any protein farmed in Australia," Mrs Hashimoto said.

"Aussie egg farmers continue to lead the

way in implementing many new technologies that will further reduce their agricultural carbon footprint and benefit the planet."

NSW is Australia's largest egg producer with 34.1 percent of the nation's commercial laying flock, followed by Victoria with 26 percent, Queensland with 24.8 percent, Western Australia 9.1 percent, South Australia 5 percent and Tasmania 1 percent.

Egg Farmers of Australia

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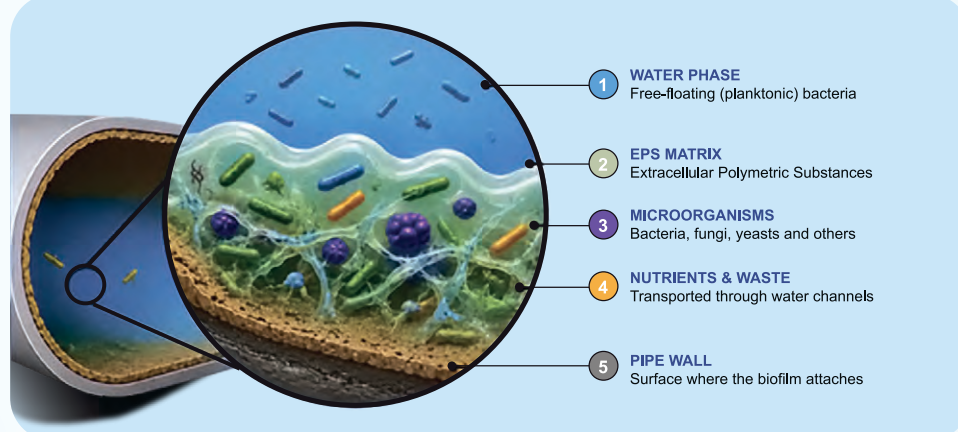
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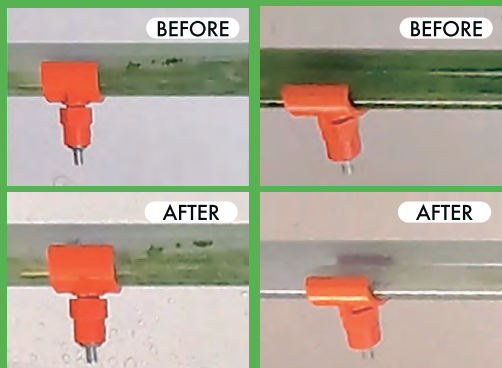
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Woolworths stocks an extensive range of eggs from different systems, a variety of suppliers and at different price points. All of these egg shelf images are from August 2018 at Woolworths in South Fremantle, Western Australia.

A first for supermarket nature reporting

WOOLWORTHS recently released its first stand-alone *Nature Report*.

Launching it, Woolworths public affairs chief Simon Lowden wrote that by reducing nature-based risks and building resilience in its supply chain Woolworths was supporting sustainable food systems and the future of its business.

He added that such resilience was important to continue providing affordable fresh food to its customers while protecting the long-term value of the business.

Woolworths rec-

Cant Comment by BRENDON CANT



ognised that healthy animals, biodiversity, soils, oceans and waterways all played critical roles in supporting the agricultural sector we all depend on.

As one part of a large and complex supply chain, Woolworths continued to work with suppliers, partners and government to have broader impact and support system-wide change.

Protecting nature today would allow it to secure the food supply needed for a better tomorrow.

On the egg front, the *Nature Report* revealed that Woolworths was committed to transitioning its supply chain away from conventional cage systems, having partnered with suppliers to increase availability of cage free eggs, providing customers with sourcing transparency for its own brand products and influencing broader industry change.

In 2015 in Australia and 2017 in New Zealand, Woolworths set a goal to source 100 percent cage free eggs. Together with its suppliers, it had made progress and achieved:

- Own brand shell eggs – 100 percent cage free in Australia and NZ since 2022
- Own brand ingredients – 94 percent

cage free egg ingredients in Australia and 96 percent in NZ

- Vendor branded shell eggs – 90 percent cage free in Australia and 100 percent in NZ.

Avian influenza outbreaks in 2024 caused major losses of cage free layer hens across the industry, resulting in long periods of egg supply shortages for our customers.

For this reason, Woolworths needed to secure contracted supply from alternative production systems for some of its ingredient and vendor branded shell eggs.

The company remains committed to sourcing cage free as an embedded sourcing standard, but also acknowledges the ongoing challenges caused by avian influenza that it will need to navigate with suppliers to support customer needs.

On the poultry front, to improve poultry welfare, Woolworths has partnered with suppliers and RSPCA Australia to implement the RSPCA Approved farming scheme standard across its entire own brand range.

This requires specific welfare criteria to be met, including strict stocking density limits, optimal lighting cycles for activity and rest and

environmental enrichments such as perches, pecking objects and high-quality litter.

In New Zealand, Woolworths requires that all own-brand fresh chicken be sourced from suppliers who are certified to the SPCA standards for meat chickens and meet the requirements for barn or free range systems.

These standards uphold similar criteria.

Actions Woolworths is taking include:

- RSPCA certification – 100 percent of Woolworths Australia own-brand fresh chicken and defined-ingredient chicken is now sourced from RSPCA Approved farms

• All products carry the official RSPCA Approved certification to help provide useful information to customers

- SPCA certification – 100 percent of Woolworths New Zealand own-brand fresh chicken is certified to the SPCA Certified Standards for Meat Chickens, meeting the requirements for barn systems

• All defined-ingredient chicken is sourced in line with the Ministry for Primary Industries Code of Welfare for Meat Chickens

• Actively engaged in a current review and updating of industry farming standards.

Unsurprisingly, with H5N1 avian influenza now landed on Australia's mainland, government biosecurity requirements require that some free range eggs and poultry are temporarily sourced from birds housed indoors.



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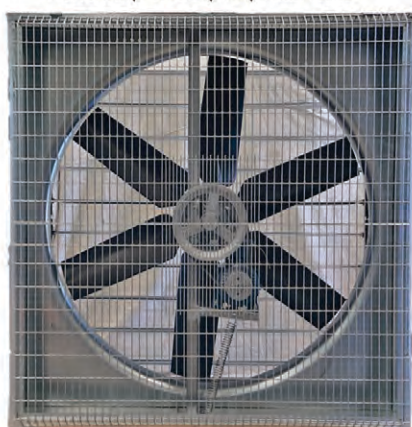
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Gorman-Rupp 'Super T Series' self-priming wastewater pumps are easily accessible for monitoring and maintenance.

Bulletproof pumps for wastewater at Bush's Proteins

BUSH'S Proteins is part of Australian family company group A J Bush & Sons.

The business has been operating since 1909 and operating in the rendering industry since 1950s in NSW and 1970s in Queensland.

The business provides the essential service of 'rendering' to the meat industry.

Bush's Proteins Bromelton collects organic animal material from butcher shops and abattoirs in and around the greater Brisbane metro area and nearby regional centres.

Rendering is the hygienic treatment of high moisture material from the meat industry that is not sold for human consumption.

From this material, Bush's Proteins manufactures nutrient-rich protein meals and tallows.

Rendering contributes to the circular economy by diverting putrescible material from landfills into an organic recycling process.

The options

The Bush's Proteins team has always looked for equipment that offers the best return on investment, in that the selected equipment should offer features and benefits commensurate or greater than the price they pay.

For wastewater pumps, the team choose Gorman-Rupp. According to plant engineering manager

Byron Boyers, "I have more than 10 Gorman-Rupp T3s and the T10 we got recently is doing a great job."

"They're pretty much bulletproof pumps."

The solution

Gorman-Rupp 'Super T Series' self-priming wastewater pumps are mounted at ground level, above the wastewater pits.

This makes them easily accessible for monitoring and maintenance.

Their internal clearances can be adjusted in minutes, allowing operators to keep pumps at their peak efficiency for the life of the pump.

They are also capable of pumping solid materials such as rags, ear tags, gloves and other debris that might block other pumps.

Their large removable cover-plates also allow a single operator to remove any larger blockage in minutes, without disturbing piping or having to employ lifting devices such as cranes.

Gorman-Rupp wastewater pumps can deliver flow rates from 5L/s through to 200L/s, with pressures to 90m.

They can also be provided in materials of construction to cater for abrasive and/or corrosive wastewater streams.

More information about these pumps may be obtained from the Hydro Innovations website or emailing info@hydroinnovations.com.au

Hydro Innovations

www.poultrynews.com.au

Latest H5 avian influenza developments

SINCE our last update, further detections of H5 bird flu have been confirmed in mammals in South Australia and Victoria.

South Australia has confirmed H5 bird flu in a common dolphin and an Australian sea lion.

Victoria has also reported its first mammal detections, with H5 bird flu confirmed in a red fox and two dolphins.

Genetic testing of samples from mammals to date has found no signs that the virus has adapted to infect mammals more easily.

There is currently no

evidence of mammal-to-mammal transmission associated with H5 bird flu in Australia.

No detections in poultry in Australia

There continue to be no detections in poultry anywhere in Australia, and no impacts on poultry production have been reported.

Victoria extends poultry housing requirements

The Victorian Government has extended mandatory poultry housing requirements until at least October 16, 2026 in designated coastal and southern regions of the state.

For details, visit Agriculture Victoria.

The ACCC's non-enforcement approach to free-range egg labelling continues to apply for up to 90 days while a housing requirement or voluntary housing recommendation remains in place.

If poultry are housed for longer than 90 days, producers may need to update their packaging to inform consumers that the eggs or meat were (or may have been) produced from housed poultry.

New safe handling resources available

The Australian Government has released new resources to help people safely handle

and dispose of dead birds and animals if needed, scan the QR code below for more information.

The preferred approach remains to avoid, record and report sick or dead birds and other animals to the EAD Hotline (1800 675 888) or relevant state or territory authority.

However, these resources provide guidance where handling or moving dead animals is necessary.

Members are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the guidance and share it with producers, staff and stakeholders as appropriate.

National confirmed cases

Australia has confirmed detections of H5 bird flu in South Australia, Western Australia, Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland and Tasmania.

For the latest detection numbers, visit birdflu.gov.au

Animal Health Australia



Scan for safe handling resources.

HYDRO INNOVATIONS

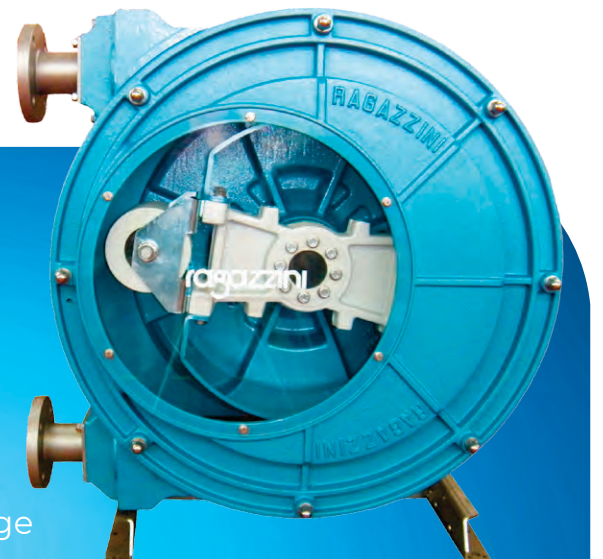
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Native bird species proposed for vaccination include orange-bellied parrots, swift parrots, regent honeyeaters and plains-wanderers. Pictured is the regent honeyeater.

H5 bird flu vaccination rolling out across Australia to protect vulnerable native birds

ALMOST 10,000 native birds across the country have been identified for vaccination against H5 bird flu as part of a globally significant effort to protect some of Australia's unique and much-loved wild birds.

Since 2024, the Albanese Labor Government has undertaken a significant amount of work to prepare for the use of vaccinations to protect some of Australia's most vulnerable native birds from H5 bird flu.

This work has been backed by an investment of almost \$2 million to procure vaccines and undertake trials and pilot studies in conjunction with the CSIRO and leading scientists to support the safe and effective use of vaccination.

This funding is part of the government's total bird flu investment of more than \$270 million.

Last month, the Commonwealth and

states and territories agreed to a national approach for the rollout of vaccines to priority native bird species.

Nationally, state and territory chief veterinary officer-endorsed vaccination plans currently include 162 unique species, with the proposed vaccination of 9916 native birds.

Native bird species proposed for vaccination include little penguins, orange-bellied parrots, swift parrots, regent honeyeaters and plains-wanderers.

Vaccinations will commence soon at the National Zoo and Aquarium in the ACT starting with little penguins and other captive birds in an approved vaccination plan.

States and territories are responsible for rolling out vaccination activities in their jurisdictions, including determining which species to vaccinate.

Vaccination activities are guided by ex-

pert scientific advice and build on the work states and territories have been undertaking on the ground to manage the impact of H5 bird flu.

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Julie Collins said, "Australia is home to some of the world's most iconic and beautiful birdlife."

"Our government is taking the threat of H5 bird flu to this birdlife seriously, which is why we are undertaking this globally significant vaccination effort."

"We have invested almost \$2 million and have done a significant amount of work with the CSIRO and leading scientists to prepare for this vaccination effort."

"We will continue working closely with states and territories on this vaccination effort to protect our nation's unique and iconic birdlife from the threat of H5 bird flu."

DAFF

BeFarm broiler farm innovability platform

BROILER producers face increasing pressure to improve productivity, consistency and animal welfare while managing labour shortages, rising input costs and stricter market requirements.

Farm performance can vary significantly depending on operator experience, making it difficult to consistently achieve target outcomes such as feed conversion, flock uniformity, low mortality rates and antibiotic-free production.

Environmental management plays a critical role in both production outcomes and animal welfare.

However, monitoring and adjusting conditions such as temperature, humidity, airflow and air quality can be labour-intensive and often relies on manual intervention.

This can lead to increased operating costs, reduced flock performance and welfare concerns.

Opportunity description

Industry challenge

BeFarm addresses these challenges through an automated farm management platform that combines external environmental forecasting technology with granular monitoring of internal conditions – including consumption, weight gain and animal stress indicators – gathered via custom-built patented smart computer vision sensors.

Following an initial setup and mapping of the specific farm, an artificial intelligence-driven decision engine can be activated to continuously control the farm's management systems.

The platform constantly monitors conditions, automates environmental adjustments and provides farmers with hourly

feedback (via WhatsApp or Telegram) regarding actions taken and the rationale behind them, it offers clear guidance on key management tasks, helping to improve performance while simultaneously reducing labour and energy requirements.

Current opportunity

BeFarm is seeking partners to support its expansion into the Australian poultry industry.

The company is exploring opportunities to establish a local presence and build a market for the platform through pilot projects, commercial partnerships and strategic investment.

The team is looking to connect with poultry producers, integrators, agribusinesses and technology partners interested in evaluating advanced farm automation and data-driven flock management solutions.

The platform is currently deployed with leading poultry businesses in Italy.

Early collaboration opportunities include pilot programs, market validation activities, distribution partnerships and joint commercialisation initiatives.

A pilot across a small number of production cycles would allow prospective partners to assess the technology, its operational fit and potential return on investment in Australian conditions.

This is an opportunity for:

- Broiler producers, integrators, and poultry supply chain stakeholders looking to trial AI-powered farm automation that lifts production performance, animal welfare and cost efficiency

- Agribusinesses, technology partners and system integrators interested in evalu-

ating or delivering advanced farm automation and digital efficiency solutions for Australian broiler operations

- Local partners, financiers or investors interested in supporting Australian market entry – including marketing initiatives, pilot projects and sales support.

Opportunity background

BeFarm was developed using over seven years of operational data collected from commercial poultry farms in Italy.

This data served to establish performance benchmarks and train AI-driven decision-making models, thereby enabling automated farm management.

The platform integrates directly with farm control systems and continuously optimises key environmental parameters, including animal welfare, litter conditions, airflow, humidity and ammonia and carbon dioxide levels.

Decision-making processes rely on real-time sensor data, 12-hour weather forecasts, flock weight and growth data and behavioural indicators.

A suite of proprietary sensors collects environmental, growth and operational data throughout the production cycle.

The initial farm setup provides the platform with all applicable settings, capturing data on air speed and window openings at various ventilation stages.

By combining automation, data analytics, and predictive models, BeFarm aims to maximise production performance, animal welfare and resource efficiency, while simultaneously reducing energy consumption and environmental impact.

Potential other applications

The BeFarm platform has scope to expand beyond its current application in broiler production.

Future developments could include enhanced computer vision capabilities to provide deeper behavioural analysis and earlier identification of welfare or environmental management issues.

The technology could also be adapted for additional poultry genetics and species, including turkeys, broadening its application across the poultry sector.

Further opportunities include feed consumption management and automatic reordering, hatchery-to-farm logistics tracking and production and collection planning.

As the platform evolves, it could support a broader range of stakeholders across the poultry value chain, including growers, feed manufacturers, hatcheries, processors and integrators seeking improved visibility, operational efficiency and data-driven decision-making.

For more information, scan either of the QR codes below.

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EFA CEO Melinda Hashimoto with Peacefield Egg Farm CEO Rav Singh.

Two upcoming EFA events to strengthen industry leadership and youth development

EGG Farmers of Australia will host a series of key events this November in the lead up to the annual Australian Eggs forum, with a strong focus on celebrating emerging leaders and recognising excellence across the egg industry.

These gatherings continue to highlight EFA's commitment to fostering the next generation of producers and strengthening the sector's long-term resilience.

The centrepiece of the November program is the Gen Egg luncheon, an initiative designed to support and elevate participants aged 40 and under who are forging meaningful careers in egg production.

EFA has expressed deep appreciation for the commitment of its 2026 sponsors – Specialised Breeders Australia, Elanco, Fremantle Egg Company, Hatch House, Gallagher, DSM Firmenich and Scolexia – whose support ensures the luncheon remains a flagship development event for young industry professionals.

Their ongoing investment reflects a shared belief in nurturing future leaders and strengthening the talent pipeline across Australian egg farming.

A highlight of the luncheon will be the announcement of the SBA sponsored 2026 Young Egg Industry Achiever of the Year Award, recognising outstanding contribution, initiative and leadership among



by MELINDA HASHIMOTO
CEO



emerging professionals.

This year's nominees – Brad Scott Power, Brianna (Bree) Wilson and Tom Moore – represent the calibre of young talent driving innovation and commitment across the industry.

Their achievements will be celebrated as part of the luncheon's program, reinforcing the importance of recognising early career excellence.

Following the Gen Egg event, EFA will convene its annual general meeting, where members will receive organisational updates, review strategic priorities and participate in governance discussions shaping the year ahead.

The AGM also includes the announcement of the SBA sponsored John Cow-

ard Memorial Industry Leader Excellence Award, honouring an individual who has demonstrated exceptional leadership, advocacy and service to the egg sector.

This award continues the legacy of John Coward, whose contribution to Australian agriculture remains widely respected.

This year's nominees are Franswa Venter, Ian Wilson and Rob Pepper.

Together, these November events provide a valuable platform for connection, recognition and forward planning.

They celebrate both emerging and established leaders while reinforcing EFA's commitment to a strong, united and future-focused egg industry.



Two egg industry awards to be announced at concurrent events in November.

Philippines chicken demand tipped to surge in 2027

CHICKEN consumption in the Philippines is forecast to surge by almost 9 percent next year as population growth, affordability and expanding fast-food and retail networks drive demand.

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service forecasts Philippine chicken meat consumption will reach 2.704 million tonnes ready-to-cook weight in 2027, up 8.6 percent from an estimated 2.491 million tonnes this year.

The growth is expected to be underpinned by a combination of population growth, competitive pricing and chicken's versatility across a wide range of consumer preferences.

The country's population is projected to reach 114.6 mil-

lion people in 2027, representing annual growth of 0.7 percent. **Chicken keeps price edge over pork**

Chicken has maintained its position as the Philippines' most affordable major animal protein, with prices running about 35 to 40 percent below pork between January and August this year.

The price gap continues to reflect the impact of African swine fever on the country's domestic pork sector.

Chicken's broad availability across different price points and retail formats was also helping drive consumption.

Major poultry integrators are expanding meat-shop franchises, with one multinational poultry company offering franchise

opportunities from the equivalent of about A\$19,638.

Rotisserie chicken and fast-food chains are also rapidly expanding their footprints.

One leading poultry integrator's rotisserie chain opened at least 45 new outlets during July and August alone, while a major international fast-food chicken brand has grown to more than 1200 branches nationwide.

The country's limited-service chicken restaurant sector is forecast to grow by 7 percent in 2027, with the number of outlets expected to pass 8500.

Online food delivery platforms are also making fresh and cooked chicken more accessible, particularly in major cities.

Economic recovery to support demand

Improving economic conditions are expected to provide another boost to chicken consumption.

The Philippine economy is forecast to grow by 5 to 6 percent in 2027, compared with projected growth of 3.5 to 4.5 percent this year.

Easing inflation is also expected to support household purchasing power and food demand.

For poultry producers and exporters, the outlook points to continued growth in one of Asia's major emerging chicken markets, with consumption being supported by population growth, competitive pricing and the rapid expansion of food-service and retail channels.



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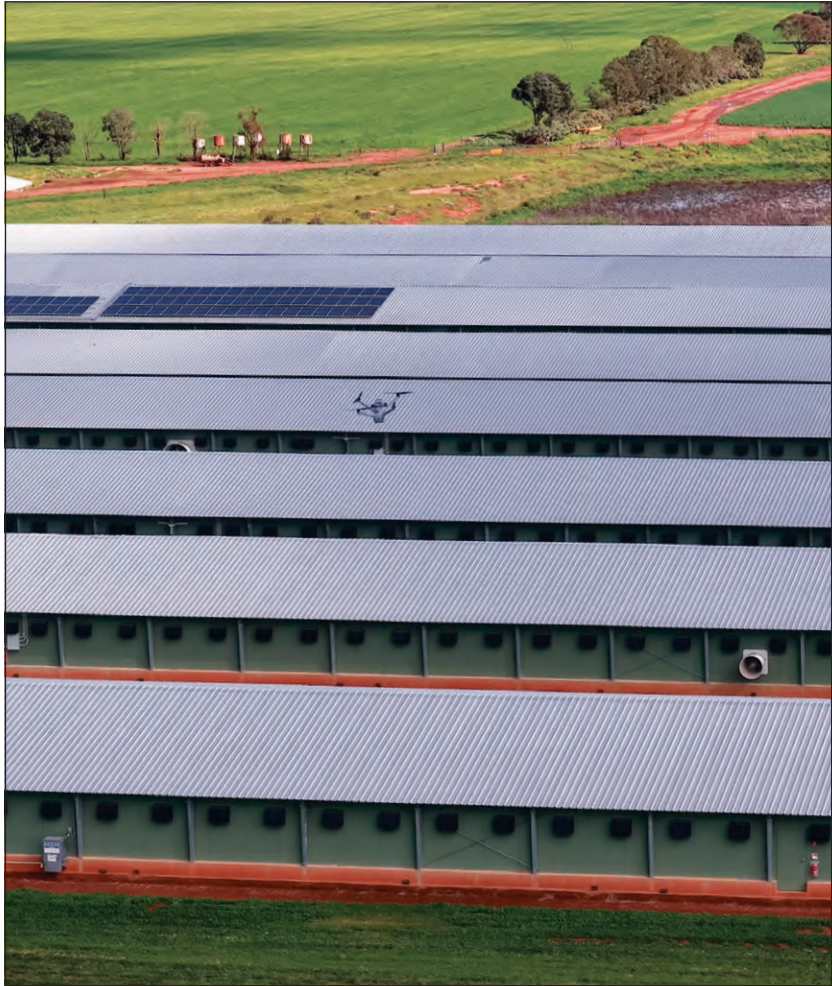
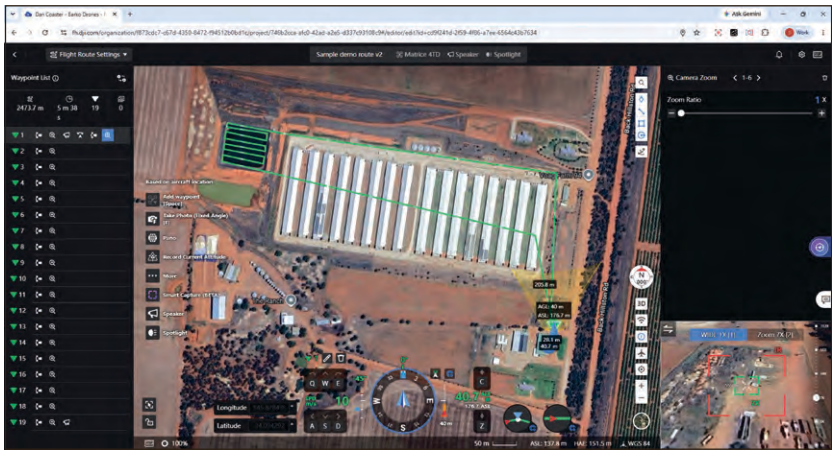
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The Barko Raptor can be programmed to patrol predetermined areas of a property. Producers can nominate particular areas of concern and establish a regular aerial patrol without having an employee continuously operate the drone.



Use a Barko Raptor drone to keep all wild birds away from poultry facilities

Autonomous drone adds vital layer to poultry farm biosecurity

FOR Australian poultry producers, keeping disease out of the shed has always depended on layers of biosecurity.

But when one of the potential disease vectors is a wild bird flying across the farm, conventional measures become considerably harder to apply.

That is the challenge emerging with H5N1 avian influenza, and it is prompting interest in technologies that can actively discourage wild birds from entering poultry production areas.

One such technology

is the Barko Raptor drone, an autonomous aerial system being introduced to Australian livestock producers by Coffs Harbour-based Barko Drones.

Managing director Tye Atkinson believes the threat posed by H5N1 requires producers to think beyond traditional entry-point biosecurity.

“The H5N1 avian influenza strain poses one of the greatest threats to the Australian poultry industry in recent times,” Mr Atkinson said.

And the concern is not confined to commercial poultry.

Since its detection in Australia, the virus has been identified in wild birds and mammals, increasing the potential pathways by which the virus could eventually reach poultry operations.

“Biosecurity controls and strategies for the Australian poultry sector are now super critical in keeping the virus out of commercial poultry production,” he said.

And, when it comes to federal support for impacted producers, it could be that before the government assists financially, it will need to confirm the poultry business took all available biosecurity measures.

The wild-bird problem

Poultry farms have become increasingly sophisticated in managing people, vehicles, equipment and other potential sources of contamination.

Measures such as vehicle and personnel disinfection, personal protective equipment, controlled access and restrictions on the movement of equipment and livestock are now familiar components of commercial poultry biosafety.

Government and biosecurity authorities have also highlighted the importance of preventing wild birds from accessing poultry houses, feed and water.

The difficulty is that wild birds cannot be managed through a biosecurity gate.

“Biosecurity measures can be easily applied on the ground but the carrier of any virus or other diseases, such as wild and migratory birds, presents clear difficulties in managing as recommended by these agencies,” Mr Atkinson said.

For producers with open water, feed stor-

age or other areas that attract birds, the question becomes how to actively discourage those birds from settling on or around the property.

Mr Atkinson believes autonomous drone technology could provide an additional line of defence.

“The Barko Raptor drone is a perfect solution to help in solving the challenging biosecurity dilemma for poultry producers,” he said.

An automated patrol

Unlike a conventional drone that requires an operator to fly it, the Barko Raptor can be programmed to patrol predetermined areas of a property.

A flight mission is loaded into the charging dock, transferred to the drone and then automatically flown.

Once the programmed route has been completed, the drone returns to the dock, recharges and can launch again.

The system is designed to repeat the cycle around the clock.

That means a producer can nominate particular areas of concern – such as the perimeter of poultry sheds, dams or other water sources – and establish a regular aerial patrol without having an employee continuously operating the drone.

The system includes the charging dock, drone, handheld controller and additional batteries.

Installation requires a suitable flat solid surface, 240V AC power and an internet connection.

Detering birds from the air

The Raptor uses a combination of deterrent technologies.

“The drone is fitted with speakers which emit loud shotgun and open water, feed stor-

continued P9

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Autonomous drone adds vital layer to poultry farm biosecurity

from P8

predator sound mimics, also laser beams, which birds see as a solid object,” Mr Atkinson said.

The intention is to make the protected area unattractive to wild birds, encouraging them to move away rather than land or congregate in areas where they could pose a biosecurity risk.

Mr Atkinson said recent Australian farm testing demonstrated the potential of the approach.

“We achieved amazing results by not only deterring wild birds but also hunting duck species off open water storage sites.”

The latter application could be particularly relevant for poultry farms where dams or other open water sources provide an attraction for waterfowl.

Beyond biosafety

The technology also has another potential application on poultry farms – security.

The drone incorporates thermal imaging and high-resolution cameras, allowing it to capture footage while undertaking its programmed patrols.

“Another significant benefit of using a Barko Raptor drone system is better on-farm security,” Mr Atkinson said.

The camera system can provide continuous surveillance around poultry sheds and other areas of the property, with live footage capable of being transmitted to a storage device.

“The live stream can be transmitted to an information storage device and retained for as long as the farm’s management requires,” he said.

For producers, this potentially means the same automated patrol providing both a wild-bird deterrent and an additional surveillance capability.

Looking at the economics

The cost of maintaining a permanent bird-deterrence operation is another consideration.

Mr Atkinson has compared the cost of several approaches, including employing shooters to patrol sheds at an estimated \$70 an hour and manually operating drones at about \$100 an hour.

Neither approach is particularly attractive as a permanent around-the-clock solution.

By comparison, Mr Atkinson estimates the operating cost of the Barko Raptor at approximately \$1.50 an hour.

“Deploy a Barko Raptor drone at \$1.50 per hour delivering exceptional levels of protection from wild and pest species, and also improved security,” he said.

“Compare this to the \$10s or even \$100s of millions the virus could cost you and the poultry industry if an outbreak occurs, which is almost certain according to experts.”

The technology is not presented as a replacement for established biosecurity procedures. Rather, it is another layer that can be deployed against a part of the biosecurity challenge that is particularly difficult to control.

A changing biosecurity landscape

In the US, poultry industry financial losses from H5N1 run into the billions. From first detection, it took only one month for this strain to enter American commercial poultry, with the virus now in 50 states.

The US Department of Agriculture stated: “With H5N1, even when biosecurity precautions are in place, the majority of farm introductions are from contact with wild birds.”

In Japan, drones with lasers are used to deter possible H5N1 carrying birds. And, to encourage farmer uptake, local authorities there are reportedly designing

subsidy or cost-sharing schemes to reduce the financial burden of adopting laser-drone systems.

Scan the relevant QR code below to read this article.

The Barko Raptor Drone is the only sustainable and cost-effective technology available to deter wild or migratory birds, the main carriers of H5N1, away from your poultry farms.

The arrival and spread of H5N1 in Australia has highlighted the need for poultry producers to continually reassess their biosecurity plans.

Physical barriers, controlled access, hygiene procedures, clean feed and water and strict movement protocols remain fundamental.

But where wild birds are able to fly directly into or over a production site, producers have limited conventional options for actively managing that risk.

Mr Atkinson sees the choice facing producers as relatively straightforward.

“Implement biosecurity on the ground and use a Barko Raptor drone to keep all ‘birds on the wing’ away from your facilities.”

Autonomous drone technology is already being used for biosecurity, security and

animal-management applications in other Australian livestock sectors.

For poultry producers facing an increasingly complex disease environment, the potential value lies in adding an active aerial deterrent to the biosecurity toolbox – particularly around those parts of a farm where wild birds are most difficult to control.

And remember, it could mean the difference for receiving financial aid if the biosecurity technology was available and the choice was made not to utilise it.

Barko Drones



Scan to view the Precision Poultry trial video.



Scan to read how Japan is using drone technology to deter birds.



With H5N1, combining existing on-ground biosafety strategies with new drone technology from above is the comprehensive option.



The system includes the charging dock, drone, handheld controller and additional batteries.



Installation requires a suitable flat solid surface, 240V AC power and an internet connection.



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ABARES forecasts ag production to ease slightly

THE Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences is forecasting the value of agricultural production to fall by 5 percent to \$99.4 billion in 2026-27 – or \$105.6 when fisheries and forestry are included – a reflection of lower crop and livestock production and a decline in livestock prices.

Agricultural export value is also expected to fall 5 percent to \$76.3 billion, or \$80.8 billion including fisheries and forestry.

ABARES acting executive director David Galeano said while the value of agricultural production was down from the record of \$104.6 billion in 2025-26, there had been improvements to this year's outlook over winter.

"Production in 2026-27 is expected to be supported by a wetter than expected winter in south-east Australia and a smaller than anticipated impact on area planted and yields from high fertiliser prices," Mr Galeano said.

"While the rainfall outlook for spring 2026 indicates large

areas of eastern and southern Australia are expected to be drier than average, the advanced state of winter crops in the southeast and current stored soil moisture mean that crops will be less reliant on spring rainfall this year."

Total crop production value is forecast to fall by 6 percent to \$51.9 billion in 2026-27, reflecting an expected fall in winter crop production more than offsetting expected higher prices.

National winter crop production volume is expected to drop 12 percent in 2026-27 to 61 million tonnes, still the fourth largest crop on record.

Meanwhile, national summer crop production is forecast to fall by 25 percent to 3.4 million tonnes in 2026-27, 11 percent below the 10-year average.

"Cropping conditions in winter have been very favourable in South Australia, Victoria and southern NSW," Mr Galeano said.

"This is expected to be more than offset by a return to longer-term average yields in Western Australia and poor sea-

sonal conditions in northern NSW and Queensland."

Livestock and livestock product gross value is forecast to fall by 3 percent to \$47.5 billion in 2026-27.

"A lower value of cattle, sheep and pig slaughter is expected to outweigh increases in the value of milk, wool and poultry," Mr Galeano said.

Falling revenue and continued high costs are expected to impact profits.

Average broad-acre farm business profit is expected to fall by 39 percent to \$133,000 per farm in 2026-27, which is 6 percent above the 10-year average.

The ABARES September 2026 quarter Agricultural Commodities and Australian Crop reports can be viewed via the QR code below.

DAFF



Scan for the ABARES September 2026 quarter Agricultural Commodities and Australian Crop reports.



Aussie has trouble keeping up with jetter demand for the season.

Aussie Pumps big move to stainless steel

AUSSIE Pumps has been a major supporter of the pork industry and the poultry sector in Australia for a number of years.

Our team keeps up to date with the challenges of these mighty industries.

The growing need for protein for south-east Asian countries indicates that growth and investment are justified.

It seems pork and poultry will be star exports for Australian produce.

The fact that the industries are highly efficient already is undeniable.

Our job as we see it is to provide the best range of pump products suitable for replacing the old-style long-shaft sump pumps.

Aussie's surface-mounted 316 stainless-steel self-priming

centrifugal pumps are available from 2.2kW all the way through to big 15kW pumps that will handle over 2000LPM flow.

The fascination with stainless steel isn't only about the cosmetics.

A 316 mix of stainless steel means 18 percent of the product is chromium, 8 percent is nickel and the rest is pure iron ore.

Aussie observed that cast-iron pumps simply don't last compared to 316 stainless.

Aussie Pumps chief engineer John Hales said, "We found out the hard way."

"Our cast-iron pumps were heavy-duty self-priming centrifugal design.

"It was a great hit at first in the industry because of its efficiency, ease of priming and the added benefit of a clean out port.

"That clean out port is a big advantage as you can just hose out any blockages that may occur without having to drag the pump out of the sump. "That's the advantage of surface-mounted pumps," he said.

At first, Aussie started putting only 316 stainless-steel impellers in those cast-iron pumps to avoid the premature wear that the cast-iron impellers were facing, not realising just how aggressive and abrasive pig-gery or abattoirs waste material could be.

Aussie's stainless-steel pumps have had a great reception from many in the processing industry, recognising that stainless steel will last almost forever.

Those stainless-steel motor pumps, close coupled, are highly efficient.

They have flows of up to 2100LPM and even heads as high as 55m.

Big 6" pumps are on the way, though are already available in the cast-iron configuration.

These large pumps feature big 316 stainless steel open impellers, capable of passing solids in suspension.

Portable trash pumps, a versatile option

Even Aussie's portable waste pumps are built into stainless-steel frames, mounted on a stainless-steel base supported with anti-vibration mounts.

The pumps can often be Honda petrol or Yanmar diesel engine powered and are compact.

The front opening port can be cleaned in a matter of minutes in the event of a choke.

They can draft water through a vertical lift up to 7.6m, making the traditional submersibles obsolete in many applications.

Keeping drains clear, Aussie's Cobra jetter

Aussie Pumps product line also includes a top-quality range of Australian designed and built drain-cleaning jettters.

These machines are capable of clearing up to 9" diameter drains. They have the ability to clear lines up to 60m.

A complete range of drain-cleaning jetting nozzles are available to suit any particular application, including clearing tree roots.

The range begins with 4000psi, 20LPM combination with Big Bert Bertolini pumps.

They are suitable for up to 6" diameter drains.

A 5000psi model is the King Cobra, also available in Class A and Class B category.

Clearing block drains up to 6"

(150mm) diameter is simple and easy with the Aussie Cobra, available either in 'cube configuration' where it can be easily mounted on the back of a ute or trailer, or in 'trolley configuration' for ease of movement around the farm.

The machine's frame design is an elegant stainless steel that makes it easy for servicing both the engine and the pump.

A free safety plate, heavy-duty wash down gun and 60m of top-quality high-pressure sewer hose are supplied with each machine.

Sewer hoses have to be flexible to be able to do the job and Aussie has mastered that with a top-quality product range.

The Aussie Python is recommended for big operations.

The Python will handle up to 9" (230mm) pipes and has an extremely efficient combination of flow and pressure.

This 4200psi machine will pump 31LPM, providing enough power to clear any block drain, especially combined with the right nozzle.

Aussie's turbo root mulcher nozzle will clear drains of up to 6" diameter, while the big 5000psi jettters using the double turbo root mulcher is good for drains of up to 24".

Big piggeries and abattoirs are aware of our jetter range, and we back the product range up with a free safety training program, together with detailed information about maintenance, repairs, troubleshooting and similar after-market support.

Further information is available from aussie pumps.com.au Aussie Pumps

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Poultry insurance gaps exposed

AUSTRALIAN poultry producers are facing a new insurance headache – events capable of shutting down a farm or processing operation may not cause a single broken building, machine or piece of equipment.

A cyberattack, an avian influenza outbreak, movement restrictions or a regulatory shutdown can stop production and wipe out revenue while leaving the physical assets of a business completely intact.

That is putting the spotlight on whether traditional business interruption insurance is keeping pace with the risks facing Australia's poultry industry.

The issue was brought sharply into focus in February when Victorian chicken processor Hazeldenes was hit by a cyberattack that disrupted operations at its Lockwood South facility.

The attack forced the company to shut down its wi-fi system and temporarily disrupted chicken supplies to butchers, pubs and wholesalers.

External cybersecurity specialists were brought in before the business could progressively restore operations.

For poultry producers, the incident demonstrated that a cyber event is no longer simply an IT problem.

A farm or processing business can rely on digital systems for feeding, environmental controls, production records, inventory, ordering, freight, payroll, traceability and communications.

If those systems are compromised, the impact can move rap-

idly from a computer screen to the production floor or poultry shed.

And the financial damage can continue long after the original IT problem has been contained.

H5 creates another potential insurance gap

The arrival of H5 high pathogenicity avian influenza in Australian wildlife has added another layer of uncertainty.

Australia's first confirmed H5 detection was recorded in a wild migratory seabird in Western Australia in June 2026.

Since then, further detections have been recorded in wild birds.

Importantly for poultry producers, at the time of writing, there have been no detections of H5 bird flu in Australian poultry or the agricultural production system.

Australia also continues to maintain its HPAI freedom status for poultry under international standards. However, the presence of H5 in wild birds means biosecurity risk has moved into a new phase.

For a commercial poultry business, the financial consequences of an outbreak could extend well beyond the value of birds that might have to be destroyed.

A disease response could mean prolonged downtime, restocking delays, additional labour and cleaning costs, disruption to contracts, lost production, market disruption and potentially significant cash-flow pressure.

That is where producers need to understand exactly what their insurance does

and does not cover.

Government compensation isn't designed to replace lost income

Australia's Emergency Animal Disease Response Agreement provides the framework for governments and industry to share eligible costs associated with emergency animal disease responses.

Eligible costs can include response activities and compensation for livestock or property destroyed because of disease, subject to the relevant legislation and response arrangements.

But lost income, loss of market access, contract breaches and business continuity or recovery costs are generally outside the cost-sharing framework.

Animal Health Australia specifically identifies consequential losses and post-response recovery and business continuity expenses as ineligible costs under EADRA.

That distinction is critical.

Government compensation may help deal with the direct consequences of an emergency disease response, but it should not be assumed to replace the revenue a poultry business could lose while it is unable to operate normally.

Insurance becomes harder once the outbreak arrives

The timing of insurance decisions could also be crucial.

Specialist insurance markets for poultry disease and business interruption are limited, with the availability and extent of cover potentially affected by the severity of losses associated with an outbreak.

Once a disease event has occurred in a region, obtaining new cover or increasing existing protection may become considerably more difficult.

For producers, that means insurance should be reviewed before an outbreak or major disruption occurs, rather than when the threat is already at the farm gate.

Cyber risk is now a production risk

The Hazeldenes incident is a warning for every poultry business that has become increasingly dependent on connected technology.

Modern poultry production can involve automated feeding and watering systems, ventilation controls, environmental monitoring, cameras, farm management software, cloud-based records, electronic ordering, financial systems and supply-chain communications.

A cyberattack that takes those systems offline can quickly become a production interruption.

Traditional property insurance generally focuses on physical damage, while cyber policies are designed to address risks arising from malicious digital activity.

Producers therefore need to establish whether their cyber policy actually covers loss of production and business interruption, rather than simply the cost of restoring computer systems or dealing with a data breach.

The Federal Government has also introduced mandatory ransomware payment reporting for businesses meeting the relevant turnover

continued P12



The presence of H5 in wild birds means biosecurity risk has moved into a new phase.



Check the existing cyber policy actually covers loss of production and business interruption.



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For a commercial poultry business, the financial consequences of an outbreak could extend well beyond the value of birds that might have to be destroyed.

Poultry insurance gaps exposed

from P11 threshold, adding another compliance consideration for affected businesses. **Don't overlook equipment failure**

The same insurance question applies to more familiar risks.

A major breakdown of refrigeration, processing or other specialist equipment can result in a repair bill, but that may be the smallest part of the financial damage.

For a poultry operation, the bigger costs can include lost production, spoiled product, overtime, alternative processing arrangements, cancelled orders and penalties.

The length of time required to obtain replacement equipment is another consideration.

Specialised machinery may have long international lead times or need to be custom-built.

A BI policy with an indemnity period that looks adequate on paper may therefore run out before a business has genuinely returned to normal operations.

Producers need to look beyond the standard BI policy

The lesson from the disruptions already experienced in 2026 is that poultry businesses need to examine how they would be paid if production stopped without a fire, storm or other obvious physical loss.

Insurance reviews should consider:

- Does the business interruption policy respond to a shutdown caused by biosecurity or disease-control measures

- Is livestock mortality cover in place, and what are its limits and exclusions

- Does cyber insurance cover operational interruption as well as data and IT recovery

- What happens if a key processor, feed supplier, hatchery, transport company or other contractor is disrupted

- Does contingent BI cover critical suppliers and customers

- Are government-imposed closures or movement restrictions covered

- Is the indemnity

period long enough to reflect realistic equipment replacement and recovery times

- What happens to cash flow if production stops for several weeks or months

- Are exclusions and sub-limits understood before an outbreak or cyber incident occurs?

For poultry producers, the important point is that business interruption no longer necessarily starts with a damaged building.

The biggest financial threat could come from a computer system being locked, a disease-control order stopping production, a supplier going offline or a market suddenly becoming inaccessible.

With H5 bird flu now established in Australian wild birds and cyberattacks already demonstrating their ability to stop poultry production, the gap between the risks facing a modern poultry business and the protection provided by a traditional BI policy deserves a much closer look. 🐔

Simply sensational Sicilians

THERE are two breeds of fowl that have been imported into Australia reputed to have their origin in Sicily – one made its appearance here as long ago as 1914, while the other was imported as recently as 2016.

The former, the Sicilian Buttercup, has a small following here in Australia, while the latter, the so-called Siciliana, remains in very few hands.

Ironically, both sport a comb that is termed a 'cup comb', an unusually shaped comb found in no other breeds in Australia.

Though the Sicilian Buttercup is reputed to have originally come from the Mediterranean island of Sicily, it was in the US that the breed was bred to conform to a set standard.

Around the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, there was something of a boom in this breed in both the US and England, where it had recently been imported from America.

Claims were made that the Buttercup could match and out-

perform the Leghorn as a layer of large white eggs, with some promoters of the breed also claiming that it did not display the nervous nature so often seen in the Leghorn.

Clubs supporting the breed were established in the US in 1912 and in England in 1913, and a standard for the breed was drawn up in 1914.

The Buttercup was admitted to the American Standard of Perfection in 1918.

According to *The Australasian* newspaper of October 12, 1914, the first Sicilian Buttercups to arrive in Australia had landed the previous week, having been imported by the Misses Rouse and Sands of the Bowness Farm, Wilbertree Flat, NSW.



The cup comb is a feature of the Siciliana, which was introduced into Australia as recently as 2016.



The gold variety of the Sicilian Buttercup is the one most frequently encountered in Australia.

Rare Breeds

by GRANT ANDREWS



These birds had been imported directly from leading American breeders.

Newspaper reports from that era indicate that the breed was taken up by breeders in most states of Australia, with many importations being made directly from the US.

Apparently, the Buttercup didn't live up to the hype about its utility properties, and it failed to replace the Leghorn as the leading light breed layer in Australia.

In fact, some early writers suggested that its promising egg laying capacity was due to a cross with the Brown Leghorn.

Today, the breed is occasionally met on the show scene, yet very few breeders seem to specialise in it.

While the Sicilian Buttercup is recognised in a variety of colours in the Australian standard, the golden variety is the one most frequently encountered.

A peculiarity of the markings of the female of this variety are the elongated black spangles on a light golden buff ground colour.

The most notable feature of the breed is its cup comb, which begins at the base of the beak with a single leader and is joined to a cup-shaped crown set firmly on the centre of the skull and surmounted with well-defined and regular points.

Another peculiarity

of the breed is its willow-coloured legs.

The Siciliana has an altogether different history.

In its country of origin, it is recognised as a native rare breed and it appears to be only distantly related to the Sicilian Buttercup.

Over the course of the twentieth century, it declined in popularity and by the 1980s it was thought to have become extinct.

In 1986, some examples of the breed were shown in Italy and renewed interest was generated in the breed.

In 2004, the Siciliana was included in the Italian national standards.

Four colour varieties are recognised in that standard, golden duckwing, black, white and blue.

As well as sporting the distinctive cup comb, the Siciliana is notable for its eggs, which have a characteristic tapered shape.

The Siciliana was among the breeds imported into Australia from the United Kingdom by AvGen Poultry in 2016.

The breed is included in the Addendum 2 to the *Australian Poultry Standards 2nd Edition* and is recognised in Australia in one colour only – white.

The Siciliana has not attracted a large following since its importation, yet the few specimens exhibited have created a lot of interest due to their unique appearance.

Another unique Sicilian breed of fowl that has no history of importation into Australia is the Cornuta di Sicilia.

Unlike the other two breeds, the comb on the Cornuta di Sicilia has the appearance of two symmetrical conical horns.

An Australian breeder has been working on producing a replica breed, which he has named the Sicilian Hornet.

As with the Cornuta di Sicilia, this fowl sports a comb that has the appearance of two horns, though not quite as well-developed as those of the Sicilian breed.

At the time of writing, the Sicilian Hornet had not been accepted into the Australian Poultry Standards.

Breeders wishing to exhibit this breed must do so in developmental classes in order to meet the requirements of the Australian Poultry Standards Committee to have it recognised in the future. 🐔

In ovo vaccination myths could be costing hatchery performance

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 second instalment in the series.

In ovo vaccination is being more widely used in hatcheries around the world.

As a valuable technology, it offers early protection against prominent disease challenges and helps address labour shortages and workforce turnover issues.

However, in ovo vaccination misconceptions can lead hatcheries to focus on the wrong problems or overlook the real problems altogether.

Drawing on experiences from hatcheries around the world, members of the Zoetis Hatchery Health Team say many of the challenges they investigate are not caused by the technology itself but by small process breakdowns that accumulate over time.

Zoetis technical service device lead Dr Joshua Deines said, “Our job is to get to the root cause.”

“Many of the situations we encounter are remarkably similar regardless of where the hatchery is located.”

Myth 1 – Stopping in ovo vaccination will improve hatchability

Anytime hatchability declines, hatchery managers want to identify the source of the issue – in ovo vaccination often is an area of heightened interest.

In one example Dr Deines shared, a US hatchery experiencing significant staff turnover temporarily stopped vaccinating after hatch rates declined.

Hatchability initially improved, reinforcing the perception that vaccination had been the problem.

But a deeper investigation told a different story.

Process evaluations revealed inconsistent practices around equipment maintenance, sanitation practices, vaccine handling and operator training.

The evaluation demonstrated that in ovo delivery was not the cause of the issue.

After retraining personnel, improving process controls and strengthening routine maintenance, the hatchery restored hatch rates and ultimately became one of the company’s top-performing facilities.

This experience is not uncommon and reinforces an important lesson that poor execution can compromise any hatchery process.

Rather than removing in ovo vaccination, experts recommend identifying the operational factors that may be affecting consistency.

Myth 2 – Every crack originates during vaccination

Transfer cracks are another frequent concern.

But in ovo vaccination is only one piece of a much larger egg handling picture.

Dr Deines pointed to case studies that found cracks can originate well before eggs ever reach the vaccination equipment.

Microcracks from breeder farms, worn transport buggies, damaged flats, bent transfer spoons and rough handling all contributed to shell damage.

“Once an egg already has a compromised shell, it becomes more susceptible to additional cracking throughout incubation and transfer,” he said.

By evaluating egg quality, equipment condition and handling practices across the entire hatchery and not only during vaccination, one hatchery reduced transfer cracks from more than 9 percent to below its company target within weeks.

The takeaway is that successful troubleshooting requires looking beyond a single piece of equipment and understanding how each step in the process influences the next.

Myth 3 – Similar PFU concentrations equal similar protection

Another misconception centres on vaccine dosing.

According to Zoetis global hatchery veterinarian and technical services manager Dr Nicky Love, some hatcheries assume vaccines with higher plaque-forming unit values can simply be diluted further to increase the number of doses.

In reality, PFU values cannot be compared directly across manufacturers and deviating from manufacturer recommendations can result in underdosing and reduced protection.

Proper vaccine storage, thawing, mixing and timely administration are equally important to maintaining vaccine integrity after reconstitution.

Following validated protocols helps ensure hatcheries receive the protection they expect from their vaccine investment.

Myth 4 – Skipping cleaning steps saves time without consequences

Hygiene practices and sanitation cannot be overstated in the hatchery, especially not in the spirit of saving time.

To expand on this misperception, Dr Love recalled a European case study.

To save time, hatchery personnel began running two morning cleaning cycles rather than completing both the recommended morning and afternoon cleaning sequences.

The afternoon cycle includes detergent designed to remove organic material that sanitisers alone cannot penetrate.

Without it, biological debris accumulated on equipment, increasing contamination risks and contributing to higher late-embryo mortality.

Retraining employees, restoring proper cleaning procedures and reducing the use of floor eggs returned hatchability and chick quality to expected levels.

Looking beyond the equipment

These examples point to a common takeaway... reliable

in ovo vaccination outcomes depend on reliable processes surrounding it.

Routine process evaluations, employee certification, equipment maintenance and quality control provide hatcheries with opportunities to identify risks before they affect flock performance.

These activities also become increasingly valuable as labour shortages and workforce turnover create knowledge gaps within hatchery operations.

Separating fact from fiction is ultimately about helping hatcheries maximise one of their largest bird health investments.

When vaccines are supported by disciplined processes, trained personnel and continuous technical guidance, hatchery managers are setting a solid foundation for flock health and hatchery performance.

Note, the case studies presented are for illustrative purposes only – they are based on generalised scenarios and do not necessarily reflect the experiences of actual customers.  Zoetis



A Zoetis Hatchery Health Team member prepares sanitation solution for an Embrex BioDevice system.

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Inghams and Amcor work together on innovative eco packaging

EVERY week, Inghams supplies more than 7000 tonnes of fresh and frozen chicken to supermarkets, quick-service restaurants and foodservice operators across Australia and New Zealand.

Every product that arrives fresh and safe – whether it's a whole chicken wrapped for our retail customers or chicken pieces for our quick-service restaurant customers – they all depend on one critical factor... the right packaging.

That's where Amcor comes in.

For more than a decade, Amcor has been Inghams' primary supplier of plastic packaging.

What started as a straightforward supplier relationship has evolved into a partnership that's central to how we win with our customers.

Amcor is a global leader in developing and producing responsible consumer packaging

and dispensing solutions across a variety of materials for nutrition, health, beauty and wellness categories.

Inghams chief customer officer Clair Stevenson said, "Amcor understands that packaging isn't just about wrapping a product."

"It's about enabling us to deliver on our purpose to customers and consumers – providing deliciously good food in the best way."

The scale of this partnership tells its own story.

We have 13 processing sites across Australia and New Zealand, each receiving weekly deliveries from Amcor – that's over 2300 deliveries per year.

More than 96 percent of our plastic packaging is recycle-ready, and this 10-plus year relationship is built on far more than volume.

It's about reliability, consistency and shared problem-solving.

What distinguishes this partnership is its focus on innovation.

Inghams and Amcor work closely through Amcor's catalyst program to develop next-generation packaging solutions for new products we're creating together.

Inghams general manager procurement Blake Bebbler said, "Every new product we develop requires packaging that's not only safe and fresh-keeping but aligned with our sustainability commitments."

"Amcor brings expertise and creativity to that challenge."

"They're not just delivering packages – they're helping us innovate."

Sustainability is at the centre of this work.

As Australia's largest integrated poultry producer, Inghams has committed to ambitious sustainability targets, and packaging is a key lever.

Working with Amcor, we've achieved more than 90 percent recyclability across our plastic packaging range and we're con-

tinuously exploring ways to use less material while maintaining product integrity.

"It's a conversation that happens every week," Mr Bebbler said.

"How can we make this pack lighter?"

"How can we source recycled content?"

"How can we ensure consumers know how to recycle it?"

"Amcor is a genuine partner in that work."

In the food industry, winning with customers means delivering products that are fresh, safe, affordable and sustainable.

That requires coordination across dozens of functions – farming, processing, logistics, quality, planning and more.

And it requires suppliers who share your values and your commitment to continuous improvement.

Amcor represents that kind of partnership.

They're invested in Inghams' success – not only as a volume customer, but as a collaborator in solving the

complex challenge of delivering deliciously good food to millions of Australians and New Zealanders every day.

"When you've worked with a partner for over 10 years, you stop thinking in terms of supplier and customer," Mr Bebbler said.

"You start thinking in terms of shared goals."

"We both want to deliver value to the end consumer, in a way that's sustainable and responsible."

"That's the foundation of partnership."

As Inghams continues to innovate – developing new products, entering new markets and advancing its sustainability roadmap – Amcor will remain a key part of that journey.

The partnership speaks to a broader philosophy at Inghams – we win with customers by partnering with people and companies who share our values and our commitment to excellence.

Inghams



Inghams and Amcor work closely to develop next-generation packaging solutions for new products created together.

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