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NATIONAL Poultry

NEWSPAPER

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Industry completes national MANE training workshops

THE Australian chicken meat industry has successfully completed a nationwide series of modified atmosphere nitrogen euthanasia training workshops, bringing together industry and government stakeholders to strengthen Australia's preparedness for a major emergency animal disease response.

Held across key poultry-producing regions in Queensland, NSW, Victoria, Western Australia, Tasmania and South Australia, the workshops provided participants with practical hands-on training in the deployment of MANE technology for the humane depopulation



of poultry during a disease outbreak.

The field-based sessions covered all aspects of MANE implementation, including emergency response planning, standard operating procedures, workplace safety, site preparation, liquid nitrogen application, monitoring requirements and operational logistics.

Through live demonstrations and practical exercises, participants

gained valuable experience with the equipment and processes that would support a rapid and effective response during an emergency.

A major outcome of the program was the strong collaboration between industry, government agencies and technical experts.

The workshops created opportunities to share lessons learned, test procedures in real-world settings and identify improvements to strengthen national response arrangements.

Participant feedback will help ensure MANE procedures remain practical, consistent and fit for purpose within

continued P2



Growing demand reflects the contribution egg farmers make to our nation's food supply. Lachie Green of Green Eggs. Photo: Australian Eggs

A year for reflection with growing demand and ongoing challenges

AS 2026 draws towards its close, Australia's egg industry has positive news to celebrate, alongside challenges that continue to test the resilience of farmers and the communities supporting them.

Australians are now eating 282 eggs per person each year.

This increased consumption is an encouraging sign of the place eggs hold in Australian households.

Their versatility, nutritional value and affordability make them a reliable choice for families, and growing demand reflects the contribution egg farmers make to our nation's food supply.



by MELINDA HASHIMOTO
CEO



However, demand alone does not remove the pressures facing producers.

As for many other agricultural industries, egg farming has felt the impact of increased fuel prices.

Diesel is an essential input across the supply chain and higher costs affect far more than the journey from farm to supermarket.

In regional Australia, distance is part of everyday business.

Feed must reach farms, eggs must reach markets and staff often travel considerable distances between towns and farm centres.

Each trip carries a cost.

When fuel prices rise, these unavoidable expenses place further pressure on

businesses already balancing a range of operating demands.

We are also watching what sustained high diesel prices could mean for future planting decisions and the cost of producing and transporting grain.

Feed is central to egg production, so pressures on grain growers can flow through to layer farms.

These connections reinforce the importance of considering agriculture as an interconnected supply chain.

Biosecurity has remained another major focus throughout the year.

We began 2026 facing the threat of H5

continued P2



MANE workshop participants set up a shed.



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Poultry Industry Calendar of Events

2026

NOV 20 – Ag Day 2026, Australia. <https://agday.org.au>

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>

FEB 24-25 – RSPCA Animal Welfare Seminar 2027, online. <https://www.rspca.org.au/learn/animal-welfare-seminar/rspca-animal-welfare-seminar-2027/>

MAR 4 – 2027 Nebraska Poultry Industries Annual Conference, Nebraska, USA. TBA

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

AUG 10-12 – Livestock Malaysia 2027, Lumpur, Malaysia. <https://livestockmalaysia.merebo.com/>

SEP 15-17 – Ildex Indonesia 2027, Jakarta, Indonesia. <https://www.ildex-indonesia.com/>

How to supply event details:

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Workshop participants attending a MANE debrief.

Industry completes national MANE training workshops

from P1
Australia's emergency animal disease frameworks.

The training roadshow also showcased the remarkable journey behind the development of MANE technology.

What began as an ambitious concept evolved through 18 months of research, engineering innovation, testing and collabora-

tion into a world-leading response solution.

Delivered by a team of experts who helped design and develop the technology from the ground up, the project demonstrates the power of innovation, determination and partnership in addressing some of the poultry sector's most complex challenges.

Funded by AgriFutures Australia and

led by the Australian Chicken Meat Federation, the extension project has been supported by a broad network of industry, government and technical partners.

Their collective efforts have helped transform a pioneering idea into a practical capability that enhances animal welfare outcomes, strengthens food security and im-

proves Australia's preparedness.

While the roadshow marks the conclusion of a significant phase of the project, it also signals the beginning of ongoing preparedness efforts.

The foundations established through this program will support continued refinement, training and collaboration to ensure the poultry industry re-

mains resilient and ready to respond to future challenges.

The success of the MANE workshops serves as a powerful reminder that innovation, practical training and strong partnerships are critical to protecting the Australian poultry industry and maintaining a robust national biosecurity system.

ACMF



The NSW MANE workshop attendees learning about MANE technology and systems.

A year for reflection with growing demand and ongoing challenges

from P1
high pathogenicity avian influenza.

That threat has since become a reality in Australia's wild bird population, changing the environment in which our industry operates.

At the time of writing, no commercial poultry farm had been affected by H5, almost four months after the first detections in June.

That is a welcome outcome, but it cannot be taken for granted.

Continued vigilance, practical biosecurity measures and strong communication between farmers, veterinarians and governments remain essential.

For egg farmers, protecting flocks means protecting livelihoods, employees, animal

welfare and the continuity of food production.

Biosecurity requires daily attention, with every person entering a farm playing a role in managing risk.

Biosecurity, food safety and animal welfare will always be at the core of Egg Farmers of Australia's work. Our advocacy must support practical outcomes that recognise both community expectations and the realities of running a farming business.

As we move into the final months of 2026, we will complete the first year of our Strategic Plan 2026-2030. We will also close a significant chapter – 10 years of Egg Farmers of Australia.

These milestones provide an opportu-

nity to reflect on our progress and maintain a clear focus on the work ahead.

To every egg eater, industry supporter and EFA member, thank you.

Your support helps sustain an industry that contributes to communities across Australia.

We remain committed to representing egg farmers, strengthen-

ing partnerships and continuing the work needed to support the Australian layer industry into the future, with determination and a sense of shared purpose.



As the year draws to a close, so does a significant chapter... 10 years of EFA.

NATIONAL Poultry
NEWSPAPER

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Victoria lifts poultry lockdown as bird flu threat persists in wildlife

AFTER 10 weeks of restrictions, Victorian poultry producers can let their flocks outdoors again – yet industry leaders warn that vigilance and strong biosecurity remain critical as H5N1 continues to spread among Australian wildlife.

A 10-week poultry housing order in parts of Victoria has been lifted, giving producers greater flexibility to manage their flocks as the state balances disease prevention with bird welfare ahead of summer.

The restrictions, introduced in early August, required poultry flocks of 50 or more birds across metropolitan Melbourne and southern parts of Victoria to be housed indoors or kept in suitable enclosures to reduce contact with wild birds.

While highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza continues to spread among wildlife in Australia, the disease has not been detected in Australian poultry or livestock.

Agriculture Victoria said the decision to lift the order took into ac-

count animal welfare considerations and forecasts for “hotter than average” summer temperatures.

Chief veterinary officer Graeme Cooke said poultry producers had supported the protective measures but stressed that reducing exposure to wild birds remained essential.

“Reducing contact between poultry and wild birds remains one of the most effective ways to lower the risk of disease,” he said.

“We strongly encourage poultry owners to continue taking practical steps to separate birds wherever possible.”

For poultry businesses across Australia, the change is a reminder that even when mandatory restrictions ease, effective biosecurity remains a frontline defence against avian influenza.

Biosecurity remains the industry’s best defence

The lifting of the order marks the end of 10 weeks of restrictions for poultry producers in southern Victoria, following a concerted effort to keep H5N1 out of the state’s commercial poultry sector.

Victorian Farmers Federation president Ryan Milgate said the industry’s cooperation had been crucial in maintaining protection for commercial flocks.

“It’s been a huge joint effort to keep bird flu out of our commercial poultry industry,” he said.

“Strong biosecurity practices remain our best defence to reducing the risk of disease outbreaks, such as H5.” Mr Milgate urged producers to remain alert for signs of illness in their birds, warning against complacency as restrictions ease.

“We must not rest on our laurels and become complacent,” he said.

What poultry producers should take away

Though Victorian producers are no longer required to comply with the housing order, the ongoing spread of H5N1 in wildlife reinforces the importance of maintaining robust on-farm biosecurity.

Producers should continue to minimise contact between domestic poultry and wild birds, maintain appropriate separation and monitor flocks

closely for signs of disease.

The lifting of restrictions in Victoria does not mean the wider avian influenza threat has passed.

For poultry producers throughout Australia, continued vigilance and strong biosecurity practices remain essential to protecting flock health and safeguarding the industry.



The 10-week poultry housing order in parts of Victoria has been lifted.

H5 Avian Influenza - 2026
Control Area – Housing Order

18 September 2026



The control order applied in Melbourne and across southern parts of Victoria. Photo: Agriculture Victoria

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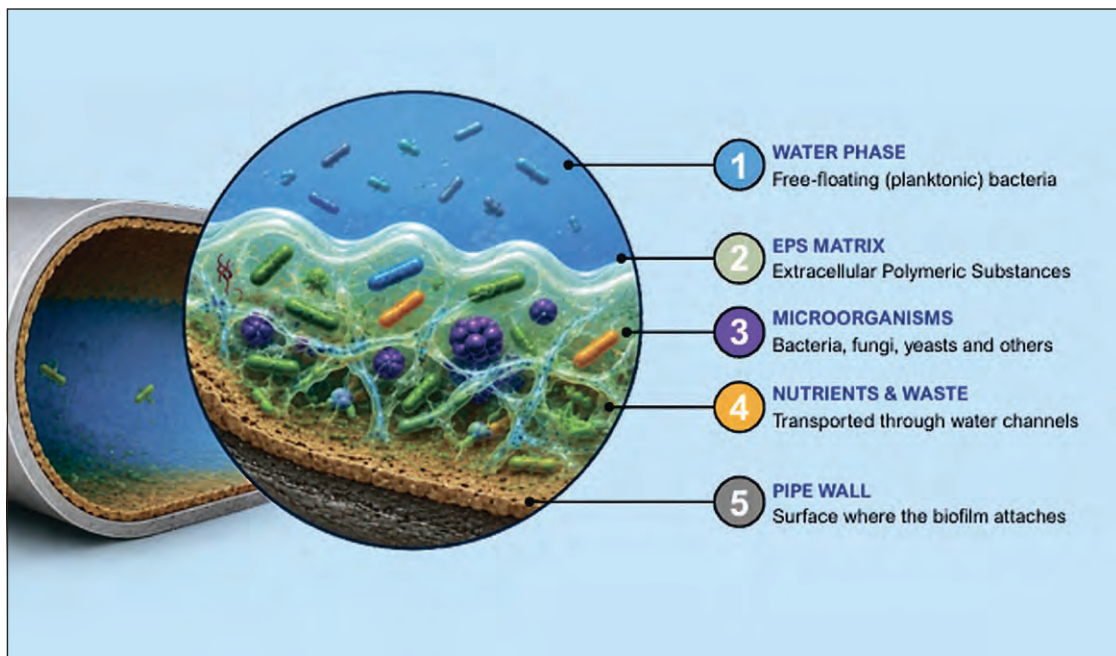
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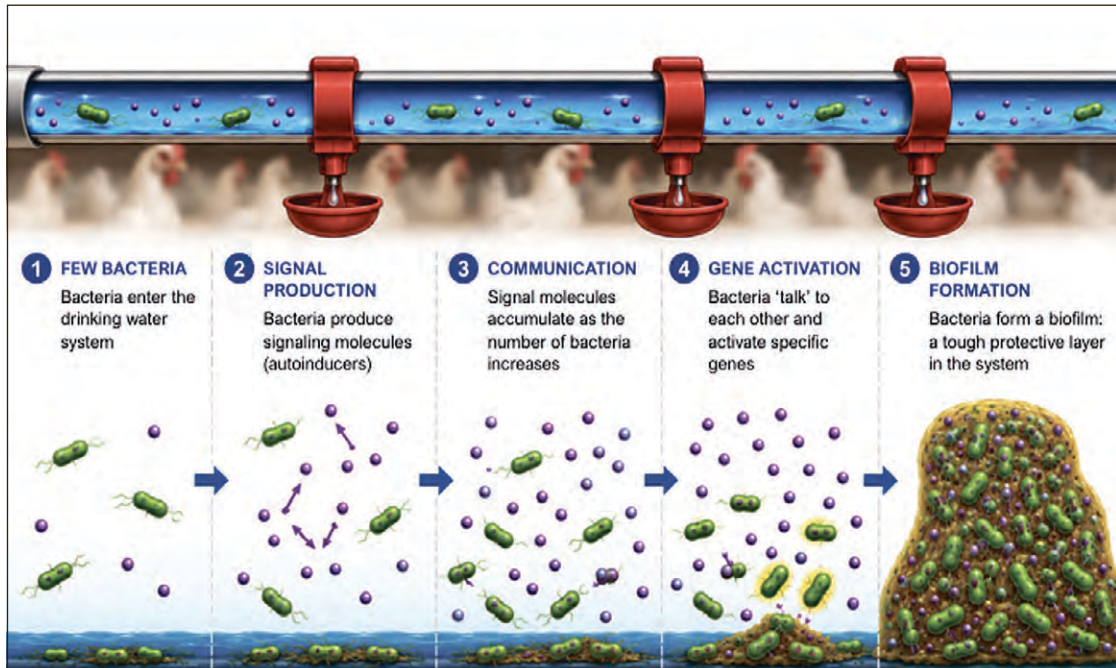
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Biofilm formation often begins within hours after a clean surface comes into contact with water.



In addition to the microbiological risks, biofilm can also affect the effectiveness of on-farm health management programs.

No effective water hygiene without biofilm removal

BIOFILM is not just slime, it is a microbial fortress where bacteria survive, co-operate and protect themselves.

A drinking water system completely free of biofilm seems virtually impossible in practice.

Unmanaged biofilm forms a permanent microbiological reservoir that can negatively affect water quality, animal health and technical performance.

Despite the growing awareness of water hygiene, the role of biofilm is still underestimated on many poultry and swine farms.

One of the biggest misconceptions is that clear water automatically means clean water.

In reality, the majority of the microbial population is often not found in the water itself, but on the inner surfaces of the drinking water lines.

Various studies have shown that more than 95 percent of the microorganisms present in a drinking water system may reside within the biofilm rather than in the water phase.

To address the root cause of microbial contamination, an approach specifically designed to remove biofilm is needed.

The formation of biofilm

Biofilm is a complex microbial community consisting of bacteria, fungi, yeasts, organic matter and mineral deposits.

These microorganisms are embedded in a self-produced matrix of extracellular polymeric substances.

This EPS matrix forms a protective structure that shields microorganisms from external influences such as disinfectants, temperature fluctuations and dehydration.

Within a biofilm, microorganisms do not function as individual cells but as an organised community.

Through a process known as quorum sensing, bacteria communicate with each other using chemical signalling molecules.

This allows them to coordinate their metabolism, growth rates and production

of protective slime layers.

In addition, horizontal gene transfer frequently occurs within biofilms, enabling bacteria to exchange genetic material.

As a result, traits such as increased tolerance to disinfectants and antibiotics can spread more rapidly throughout the microbial community.

Biofilm formation often begins within hours after a clean surface comes into contact with water.

Pioneer organisms such as pseudomonas spp attach themselves to the pipe wall and start producing EPS, creating a foundation for other bacterial species to colonise.

Under the microscope, a mature biofilm reveals a complex three-dimensional architecture containing microscopic water channels that transport oxygen, nutrients and metabolites throughout the structure.

This sophisticated organisation explains why bacteria embedded in a biofilm are significantly better protected than free-floating bacteria in the water.

Depending on the bacterial species and the composition of the biofilm, microorganisms can be tens to thousands of times more resistant to disinfectants than the same bacteria in their planktonic state.

Reduced efficacy of medications and vaccines

In addition to the microbiological risks, biofilm can also affect the effectiveness of on-farm health management programs.

The EPS matrix behaves like a sponge and can absorb active compounds from the drinking water.

As a result, antibiotics, organic acids, vaccines and other additives may become partially trapped or used within the biofilm before reaching the animals.

This can lead to less predictable uptake and reduced efficacy of treatments or vaccinations administered through the drinking water system.

Water analysis

Though most water analyses focus on the

water itself, the bulk of the microbial load is typically found in the biofilm lining the inside of the water line.

Under favourable conditions, more than 95 percent of the microorganisms present in a drinking water system may reside within the biofilm, while less than 5 percent remain free-floating in the water.

This also explains why water samples can sometimes show acceptable microbiological results while health problems persist on the farm.

At the moment of sampling, the analysis primarily measures the bacteria present in the water phase, whereas a much larger microbial population may remain hidden within the biofilm.

Chlorine-based disinfectants versus Intra Hydrocare

For this reason, disinfection alone is insufficient.

Products such as chlorine and chlorine dioxide are effective at reducing free-floating bacteria in the water, but they have a limited effect on the underlying biofilm structure.

As a result, the microbial load in the water may decrease while the primary source of contamination remains present inside the drinking system.

Intra Hydrocare is specifically for use in drinking water and designed to break down and remove biofilm.

Due to the high stability of its active components, the product remains effective throughout the entire drinking water system, constantly targeting the biofilm where pathogens hide.

A biofilm reduction focused approach targets the source of microbial contamination itself.

This is why biofilm control forms the foundation of a sustainable water hygiene program and provides optimal support for animal health, technical performance and farm profitability.

Reproduced from an article written by Arjan van de Vondervoort, Intracare, Netherlands.

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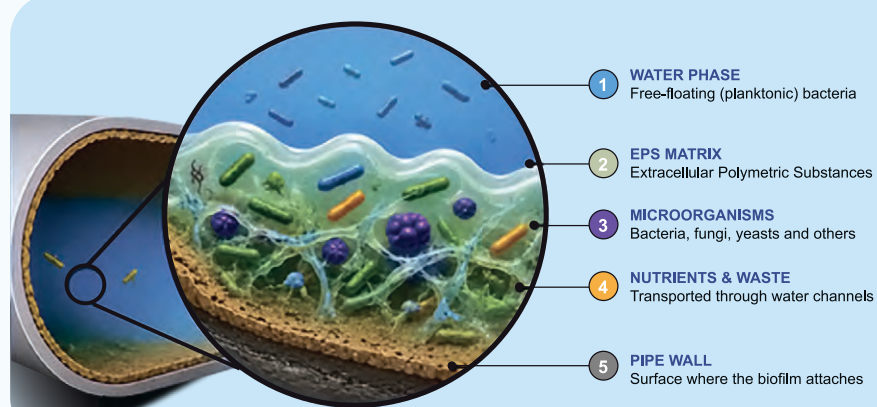
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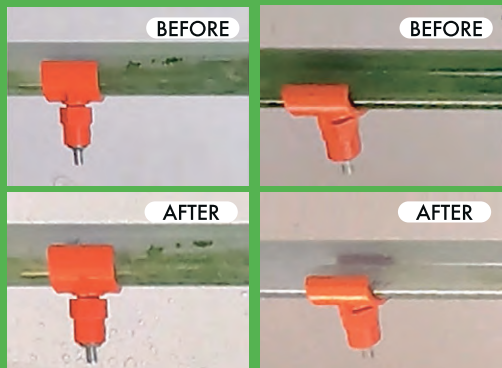


Contaminated drinking water directly impacts animal health, welfare and performance. Biofilm present in the pipelines is the breeding ground for pathogenic microorganisms and thereby continuously pollutes the drinking water.



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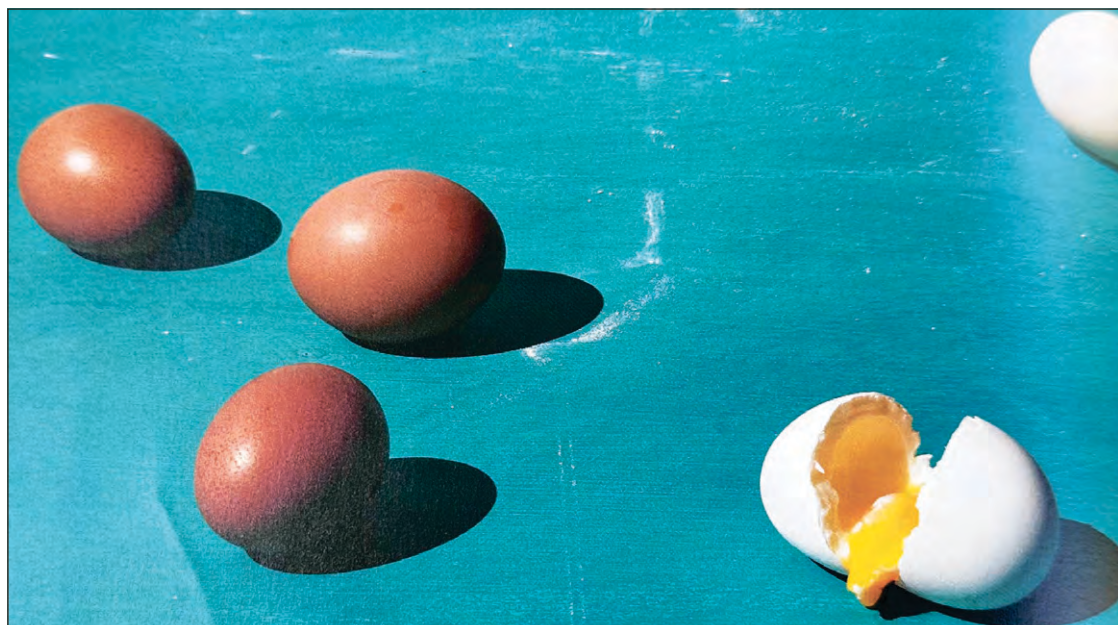
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Eggs All Day Every Way by Tove Nilsson.



Scrambled eggs on sourdough toast. A regular go to for the author at home or out.



Eggs come in all shapes, colour and sizes.

Eggs all day every way

BOOKSTORES that double as cafes and cafes that double as bookstores make my day.

Well, they very often make my breakfast and my coffee, truth be known.

When discovering a good one, as I did recently in suburban Mt Hawthorn, I simply had to make the most of it.

I also had to make the most of the overly long wait for my long macchiato by perusing the well-stocked bookshelves.

Being table-bound with my partner's 97-year-old mother Shirley – a good soul, and a smart entertaining one at that – I did need a break and had to politely up and leave, excusing and explaining myself as a dedicated bookworm and food forager.

This simply reinforced what good ol' Shirl knew already.

So, no problem, she was happy waiting for her flat white while toying with a delicious date cake with fresh cream.

Alas, on a shelf well stocked with wellness, lifestyle and foodie flavoured books, I quickly came across the colourful and revelatory *Eggs All Day Every Way* by Tove Nilsson, a popular Swedish chef, cook-book author and food stylist.

This little 2022 published hard (boiled) cover is stacked with ideas for cooking with eggs – a humble but workhorse ingredient packed with protein – compiling many tips and techniques for perfecting fried, boiled, poached and scrambled eggs, and even suggesting many unheard-of ways to cook them.

Besides classic omelettes and eggs Benedict, there's shakshuka, variations on Scotch eggs and many desserts, including my all-time egg-infused favourite, crème brûlée.

Cant
Comment
by BRENDON CANT



As Nilsson provides readers with the knowledge to cook eggs in every way possible, step-by-step photos in each recipe show what to expect during the process.

Another useful feature is an explanation of how to properly make meringue, including the different preparations, such as Italian meringue.

The book is a great resource for cooks of all ages and levels, including kitchen culinary-challenged egg-lovers like me.

Standout recipes, for me at least, included chorizo Scotch eggs, Spanish tortilla and miso and sesame ramen.

Lots of age-old egg questions were incubated then hatched in the book too, including how you boil an egg so that the yolk stays perfectly creamy, and what causes it to coagulate.

An ode to the egg in all its forms, this cook-book cracks open the techniques and recipes that make the humble

egg the most versatile ingredient in kitchens, including mine.

Eggs play a starring role in some of the world's tastiest dishes – egg noodles, shakshuka, huevos rancheros, Scotch eggs, eggs Benedict, tea eggs, egg custard and the classic French omelette (when well made, perfectly smooth and firm on the outside, creamy and tender within).

In this book you'll find the techniques and know-how to master multiple recipes, from boiled and poached eggs to soufflés, ramens and tartares.

With dishes like these, you can if you want, eat eggs with every meal.

And why not? The health benefits are there too.

Nilsson effectively takes readers on a world tour of egg-centric recipes, opening with in-depth how-tos, accompanied by helpful step-by-step photos on frying, scrambling, boiling and making meringues and emulsions.

For brunch, there's classic eggs Benedict (on home-made brioche), followed by riffs featuring mushroom, fennel and salmon with dill-horseradish hollandaise.

Other recipes span the globe, including Chinese tea eggs, Korean bibimbap, Spanish tortilla, salade nicoise, various types of ramen and huevos rancheros.

Oto, a Ghanaian dish of sweet potato, red onion and soft-boiled eggs, is often served at celebrations, while chawanmushi, a Japanese steamed-egg custard, is reminiscent of a savoury crème brûlée.

Nilsson also nods to her native Sweden with the decadent pelle janzon, or toast topped with raw beef tenderloin, roe and raw quail egg.

Fun tips prevail throughout, including spinning an egg to determine if it's been hard boiled.

Go figure. Desserts and drinks, including raspberry marshmallows and egg-nog, round things out.

Colourful design, appetising photography, a friendly tone and clear instructions support this surprisingly wide-ranging collection.

It's sure to inspire home cooks and all those who simply love eggs.

What's not to love? 🐣



A balanced eggs and beans brekky.

Fanciers prepare for H5N1

THE arrival of H5N1 avian influenza on the Australian mainland in June and then in Tasmania in August sounded alarm bells not only for the commercial poultry industries but also for fanciers who keep a large range of breeds and varieties of fowls, ducks, geese, turkeys and guinea fowl.

Each state where detection has occurred, mainly in migratory sub-Antarctic species, has adopted its own response from within an agreed national framework.

While fanciers in those parts of Victoria where a housing order was in place were required to house their birds if their flock numbers more than 50 birds, so far fanciers in the other states have not had any restrictions placed on their birds.

This does not mean that fanciers in general have been blasé in their approach to the future prospect of such restrictions.

The poultry sections of Melbourne, Perth, Adelaide and Hobart Royal shows have already been cancelled for 2026, as a precautionary measure since the confirmation of cases of bird flu in the relevant state.

Many poultry club shows and the poultry section of many agricultural shows across the country have also been cancelled in the period since the first detection.

In NSW, the Exhibition Poultry Association of NSW arranged for its members and representatives of its member clubs to participate in an online

Rare Breeds

by GRANT ANDREWS



presentation by the deputy chief veterinary officer, who outlined the national response to the emergency and advised fanciers on the steps they need to take to mitigate the risk of their birds becoming infected in the event of a more widespread incursion into native birds and mammals.

Poultry clubs were also advised of the protocols that will need to be observed if they are to continue to hold shows into the future.

Similarly, the Agricultural Societies Council of NSW has convened a meeting with the deputy chief veterinary officer to take advice on the precautions that agricultural shows should take to lessen the risk of birds that are exhibited at such shows becoming infected or spreading infection.

Similar information sessions for backyarders and fanciers have been organised by the chief veterinary officer in South Australia.

One of the biggest challenges facing fanciers of rare breeds is to ensure that stocks that are already low are not wiped out in the event of an H5N1 outbreak.

With this in mind, many rare breed enthusiasts have already taken measures to limit

the future impact on their birds.

Some fanciers have taken the step of ensuring they have a backup flock set up with a breeder in another locality.

This may only be a small breeding group that a fellow fancier has agreed to take on, but at least it provides a small degree of genetic security.

Many fanciers have put into place the means to stop wild birds and their droppings from accessing their fowl pens, usually by enclosing the roof of runs and reducing the size of wire mesh on the walls of their enclosures.

As well, some have followed the advice of the deputy chief veterinary officer by installing extra filtration systems where the fancier has to rely on water from an untreated source.

Many of the breeds of fowl which are recognised in the Australian standards are in grave danger of being eliminated from the Australian scene if H5N1 takes hold.

Most of these come from the breeds that were imported into Australia in the period 2014-2016, due to the limited number of imported birds of some breeds and the even more limited number of fanciers that took on

some of those breeds.

Nevertheless, some of the older breeds that are also in very few hands face an equally bleak outlook, an example of this is the white-faced black Spanish breed, which is already suffering from limited genetic variability.

If only a few flocks are wiped out, the future of that breed is indeed uncertain.

Ironically, many of the breeds imported in the 2014-2016 period were touted as providing a backup stock in the event that they were annihilated in an outbreak of bird flu in the United Kingdom.

Breeds such as the Scots Dumpy, the Old English Pheasant Fowl and the La Flèche are now rarely seen and have attracted very few supporters, so the keepers of those breeds have an extra obligation to take every step they can to keep their birds safe. 🐔



The white-faced black Spanish is an old breed with a very narrow genetic base. Loss of flocks due to H5N1 bird flu would see its future in Australia seriously endangered.



Introduced in 2016, the Scots Dumpy has attracted few breeders and as a consequence could easily be wiped out by an outbreak of avian influenza.



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Investigation puts egg supply controls under scrutiny

AUTHORITIES are investigating animal welfare concerns at a Central Coast egg operation, with separate checks under way into potential food safety and biosecurity risks.

Regulatory action at a poultry farm on the NSW Central Coast has brought animal welfare, egg traceability and supply-chain controls into focus, following allegations involving conditions at the property.

Mountain Pride Farms, based at Peats Ridge, is the subject of an investigation by NSW authorities.

Live chickens at the site are being euthanised as part of the response, according to statements made by NSW Agriculture Minister Tara Moriarty in Parliament on October 15, 2026.

Ms Moriarty told the upper house that the Department of Primary Industries was aware of the concerns and that an enforcement agency was investigating.

She described the situation as an emergency and said the department was assessing whether the property presented food safety or biosecurity risks.

The Minister said the measures being taken were intended to prevent further animal suffering while the situation was addressed.

Animal welfare allegations prompt investigation

The matter came to wider attention after animal advocacy organisation Animal Liberation released footage that it alleged showed dead and dying chickens at the farm.

The footage and the claims surround-

ing it form part of the broader scrutiny of the operation.

The allegations should not be taken as established findings and the investigation's outcome had not been announced in the information available on October 15.

Mountain Pride Farms declined to comment when approached about the investigation.

Restrictions intended to protect the egg supply

Alongside the animal welfare response, the department has taken steps to prevent eggs from the property entering the food supply chain while inquiries continue.

Ms Moriarty said authorities would continue monitoring compliance with biosecurity controls.

The investigation is also examining whether food safety concerns exist at the site.

The action highlights the role of regulatory oversight when questions arise about the condition of livestock and the suitability of products originating from a farm under investigation.

Traceability and controls on the movement of eggs can be important in managing potential risks while authorities establish the relevant facts.

Questions about the timing of the response

Greens MLC Abigail Boyd told Parliament that concerns about Mountain Pride Farms had been raised in September 2025.

She alleged that the matter had been brought to the attention of several bodies, including the RSPCA, NSW Department of

Primary Industries, NSW Police and Central Coast Council.

Ms Boyd questioned why, in her view, the response had not occurred sooner and raised concerns about the oversight of animal welfare and production claims.

She also referred to the farm's eggs being marketed on the basis of high welfare standards, arguing that consumers had a legitimate interest in understanding how food products are produced and monitored.

Her comments represent her assessment of the handling of the matter – the circumstances surrounding earlier reports and the agencies' responses remain distinct questions from the allegations currently being investigated.

Lessons for egg producers

For poultry businesses, the case illustrates how concerns at an individual property can extend beyond livestock management to affect product movements, commercial operations and consumer confidence.

Producers can reduce operational and compliance risks by maintaining reliable records of flock health, mortality, egg production and product distribution.

Prompt investigation of animal welfare concerns, documented corrective action and adherence to applicable food safety and biosecurity requirements are also important parts of farm management.

Where eggs are marketed using specific production or welfare claims, businesses need to ensure those claims accurately reflect their farming practices and can be substantiated.

The Mountain Pride Farms investigation remains unresolved in the reporting available as at October 15, 2026.

Authorities are examining the concerns raised, and no conclusion on the allegations should be drawn until the relevant findings are established.



The deputy mayor of Tamworth Regional Council said the facility's unusual design creates a gem for the city and will attract the skilled workers it needs. Photos: Baiada

Tamworth's \$600m poultry plant spotlights processing innovation

BAIADA'S new Oakburn facility is set to process up to three million chickens a week, delivering a major investment in regional NSW while raising questions about the role of processing infrastructure in improving bird welfare.

Australia's poultry industry has reached a new milestone in processing infrastructure, with Baiada opening its \$600 million Oakburn poultry processing facility at Tamworth, in northern NSW.

Designed with a distinctive modern architectural exterior, the plant represents a significant investment in the region and is expected to support more than 1000 jobs once fully operational.

Behind the build-

ing's striking design is a highly automated processing operation capable of handling up to three million chickens a week, positioning the facility among the most significant developments in Australia's poultry supply chain.

Baiada, one of Australia's two largest chicken producers and the owner of the Steggle's and Lilydale Free Range brands, has operated in the Tamworth region since the 1960s.

At full capacity, two processing lines will handle 15,000 birds an hour, with automated chilling and packing systems designed to move product efficiently through the plant and on to retail markets.

Tamworth Regional Council deputy mayor Jeff Budd said the

facility would deliver substantial economic benefits while helping attract the skilled workforce needed to operate its advanced processing systems.

"I think it's massive for the entire region," he said.

"Once you're inside that main building at the front, it's like a five-star hotel."

The project comes as demand for chicken meat continues to underpin growth across Australia's poultry industry.

Australians consume an average of 55kg of chicken meat per person each year, with consumption doubling over the past three decades.

More than 800 million chickens are expected to be processed nationally during the current financial year.

Once fully operational, Oakburn is expected to account for almost 20 percent of that volume.

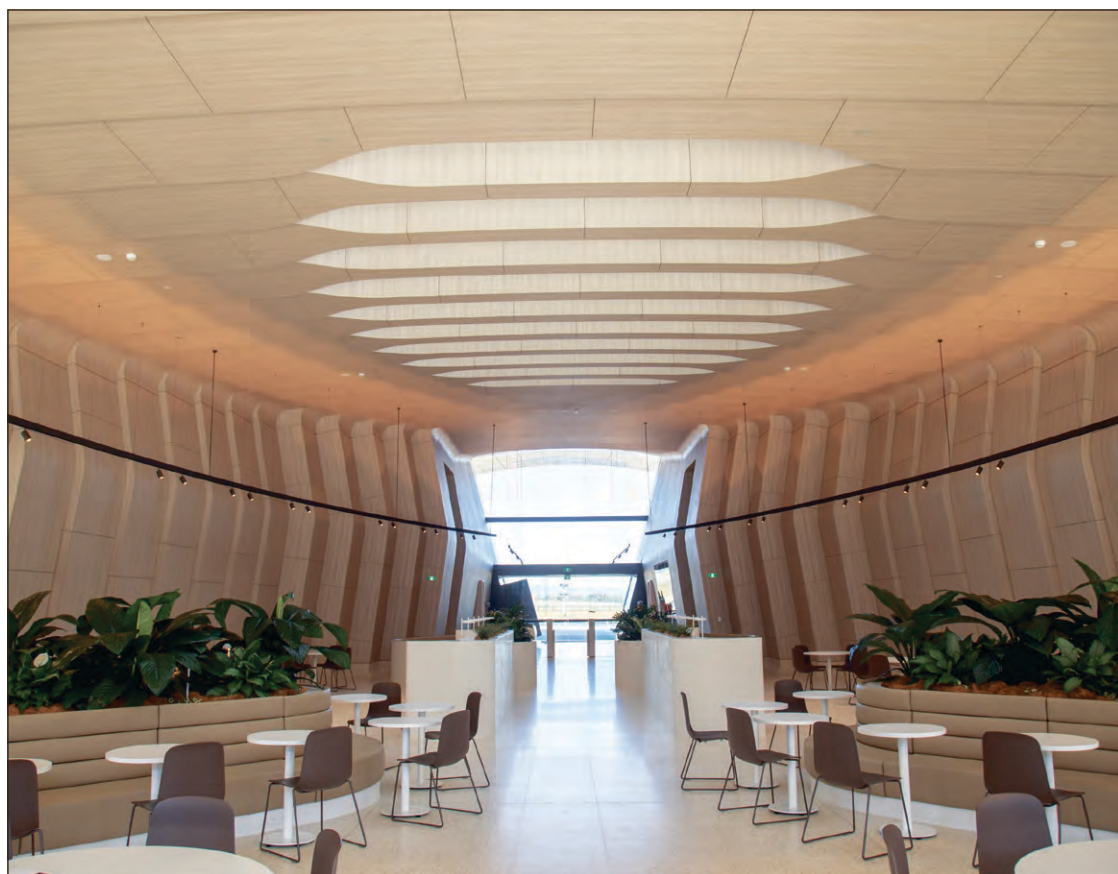
Poultry Hub Australia interim director Professor Stephen Walkden-Brown said the development demonstrated the scale of investment being directed towards regional poultry production.

"We're happy to see a commitment from a Sydney-based company to one of their regional hubs," he said.

"It's a pretty big development, one of the most modern plants in the world."

In a media release, Baiada said it had "grown alongside" the Tamworth community for six decades, describing Oakburn as a long-term commitment to the region

continued P9



Staff at the new plant can spend their lunch breaks at an on-site cafeteria, at a gym or in landscaped gardens.



Mountain Pride Farms promotes its eggs as free range and high welfare.

Tamworth's \$600m poultry plant spotlights processing innovation

from P8

and its workforce.

Baiada managing director Simon Camilleri said, "This is a long-term investment in Tamworth and the people who have supported Baiada for generations."

"Our history in this region stretches back to the 1960s, when Charlie Baiada first established operations here, and this facility reflects our confidence in the future of Tamworth."

However, the opening has also brought renewed attention to a broader industry question – whether advances in processing technology will be accompanied by further improvements in meat chicken welfare.

Growth rates remain a key welfare issue

While modern processing infrastructure can improve operational efficiency, animal welfare advocates argue that outcomes for birds are also shaped by production systems and genetics.

Australian Alliance for Animals director of policy and government relations Jed Goodfellow said the industry's focus on processing innovation needed to be considered alongside the welfare implications of fast-growing meat chicken breeds.

"Chickens are still being selectively bred to grow at extraordinary speeds, with their bodies paying the price for ever greater efficiency," he said.

Mr Goodfellow said slower-growing breeds were being adopted at commercial scale in several overseas markets, including parts of Europe.

"Healthier slower-growing breeds are now being used in many parts of the world, particularly Europe, with Norway, the Netherlands and France producing higher welfare breeds at scale.

"It may cost slightly more but, as their experience shows, the increase is not prohibitive, as Euro-

pean consumers increasingly opt for the healthier option."

Most Australian commercial meat chickens are currently drawn from two fast-growing breeds, the Ross 308 and Cobb 500, which typically reach slaughter weight at four to six weeks of age.

The debate over alternative genetics centres on the relationship between growth rate, bird health, production costs and the practical requirements of supplying affordable chicken meat to consumers.

For producers, any transition to slower-growing breeds would require consideration of additional growing time, feed consumption, shed utilisation and overall production efficiency, alongside potential welfare benefits and market returns.

RSPCA standards raise the bar

RSPCA senior scientific officer for farm animals Melina Tensen said about 97 percent of chicken meat sold in Australia complied with the organisation's welfare standards.

"It's a pretty big deal to have most of industry achieving standards to go well above the legal minimum," Ms Tensen said.

"Wherever animals are farmed for food – and they're going to be farmed for food for a long time to come – we want to be in there making sure that animals are raised, handled, transported and slaughtered in ways we find acceptable."

Updated RSPCA standards are intended to strengthen welfare requirements in several areas, including stocking density, lighting and slaughter practices.

The changes promote lower stocking densities and variable light intensity in poultry sheds, allowing birds to move between brighter and darker areas.

They also provide for the phase-out of electrical water bath stunning.

Businesses must implement the changes

by January 1, 2031 to retain their RSPCA certification.

The RSPCA has also introduced a separate category of 'enhanced' welfare standards, primarily aimed at encouraging the adoption of slower-growing meat chicken breeds.

Ms Tensen said a broader industry transition would ultimately depend on both producer decisions and consumer demand.

"The longer it takes to grow, the greater cost," she said.

"We definitely encourage consumers to be vocal about supporting this transition.

"Every dollar you spend is a message to the retailer."

Balancing efficiency, welfare and market demand

The Oakburn development highlights two parallel challenges facing the sector – investing in efficient modern infrastructure while responding to evolving expectations around animal welfare.

Baiada's new plant is a major addition to the country's processing capacity, with automation and scale expected to support high-volume production for the domestic market.

However, the facility's opening does not in itself establish whether welfare outcomes will improve.

That assessment also depends on on-farm management, bird genetics, stocking density, handling, transport and slaughter practices.

As welfare standards continue to evolve, producers and processors will need to weigh the implications of potential changes against productivity, operating costs and the need to maintain a reliable supply of affordable chicken meat.

The industry's challenge will be to ensure that investment in processing technology is matched by practical commercially sustainable approaches to bird welfare across the entire production chain.

Aussie Sizzler a winner

A GREAT Australian innovation, the Sizzler Hot Wash from Aussie Pumps, is a real winner.

The machine – running off a 240V 10 amp plug electric motor – produces 1800psi pressure, matched with a 10LPM flow.

It has an infinitely variable temperature range right up to 80C, to sterilise, sanitise and clean at the same time.

Aussie Pumps chief engineer John Hales said: "That 80C, matched to the pressure and flow of the pump, is ideal for cleaning and sanitising poultry sheds, stock yards, vehicles and all livestock applications."

The Sizzler comes mounted on a heavy-duty steel chassis with four wheels and flat-free tyres.

A stainless-steel cover over the machine encloses a heavy duty four-pole

motor, driving a slow speed triplex pump.

"The pump and motor combo is a real winner," Mr Hales said.

"The hardware store specials you see at low prices from developing countries are normally two poles running at twice the speed of the Sizzler.

"We all know that means half the life and is really about the cost to manufac-

ture, not the advantage to the user," he said.

Aussie Pumps is known for its attention to detail and the research done to perfect the application of its product to the customers' requirements.

"Farmers tell us their problems," Mr Hales said.

"We work out how to solve hygiene problems with a product that is what

we'd want if we were doing the job."

The machine has an optional stainless-steel frame with integrated lift bar.

This attachment is normally specified by Australian rental companies who are finding the Sizzler a winner when it comes to hot wash applications.

Further information is available from aussiepumps.com.au

Aussie Pumps



Aussie Sizzler Hot Wash is ideal for cleaning and sanitising poultry sheds, yards, vehicles and even livestock applications.



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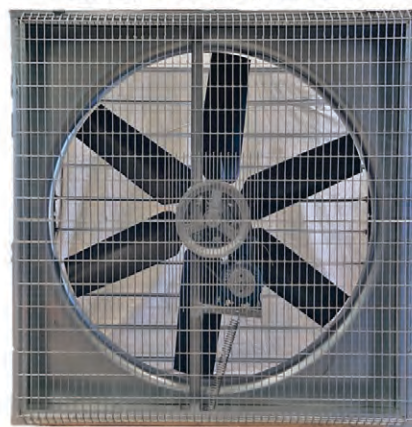
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Poultry disease prevention includes strong immune health

FROM scrambled eggs and tandoori chicken to barbecue wings and turkey stews, poultry is a popular choice for meals around the world, thanks to the affordability and accessibility of poultry meat and eggs.

As the global population grows, so does the demand for protein.

How can poultry farmers prepare for that challenge?

Disease prevention through vaccination is key.

By 2033, poultry meat consumption is projected to increase by 16 percent and account for 43 percent of all protein meats.

To provide high-quality poultry today and into the future, poultry farmers pay careful attention to the health and well-being of birds.

This complex work starts before chicks

even hatch, at a poultry hatchery where eggs are kept under controlled conditions to favour chick development.

Day old chicks, turkeys and ducklings are then transferred from the hatchery to rearing farms.

Natural and acquired immunity in poultry

Before a chick's first breath, its immune system is central to its health.

Birds have both natural and acquired immunity, and the stronger immunity a bird develops, the better it can recognise and resist common harmful diseases that can quickly spread through a flock.

Chicks receive natural immunity from their mother through the egg yolk, but this protection is temporary and fades after a few weeks.

Acquired immunity comes from

external sources, either through vaccination or infection.

With acquired immunity, the body remembers specific invaders and can respond more intensely if stimulated by those invaders later.

By vaccinating birds, poultry farmers help flocks build stronger immunity, increasing their disease resistance, which also enhances their egg-laying capacity or meat quality and helps reduce the need for emergency treatments and antibiotics.

Vaccinating flocks also helps prevent disease spread to nearby farms.

New vaccine technologies support poultry immune health

Poultry vaccination is administered using a variety of methods, depending on the target pathogen and vaccine, region, poultry breed and poultry type (that is broilers for meat or layers for eggs).

Early vaccination – either ‘in ovo’ into the embryo or at one day old – puts less stress on chicks and allows efficient vaccination of a large number of eggs or newly hatched birds.

Other vaccination methods include bird injection, spray vaccination for res-

piratory diseases, oral vaccination through drinking water, as well as eye drops and nasal sprays.

In addition, vaccine technology formulations have evolved, from live-attenuated vaccines and inactivated vaccines to the more advanced recombinant vector vaccines.

Vector vaccines induce a strong protective immune response without impacting the organ that produces cells for immune health.

They also can enhance the bird's immune response to all other vaccines and improve their efficacy.

Comprehensive poultry health solutions

Vaccination is a powerful tool, but it's not an isolated measure to protect poultry health.

Beyond vaccination, poultry producers also need to implement robust surveillance programs to monitor for and rapidly detect infectious diseases.

Strong biosecurity, nutrition and welfare practices also help prevent and control the spread of diseases and reduce the potential for immunosuppression due to stress.

Boehringer Ingelheim



Early vaccination puts less stress on chicks.



It is alleged that key egg suppliers and producers coordinated on a range of business decisions in a way that likely substantially reduced competition for many years.

ACCC brings case against major egg producers

AUSTRALIA'S biggest egg supplier Sunny Queen and 11 other egg producers and suppliers are alleged to have breached competition laws by coordinating on production and supply of eggs in Australia, in civil proceedings filed in the Federal Court by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission on October 13.

It is alleged that since at least October 2020, key egg suppliers and producers coordinated on a range of business decisions including production volumes, distribution, expansion plans and culling to manage perceived oversupply, in a way that likely substantially reduced competition for many years.

The case includes concerted practice allegations.

This is the first case brought by the ACCC to include concerted practice allegations since the prohibition was introduced in 2017.

A concerted practice involves cooperation between businesses that goes beyond them acting independently in response to market conditions.

The proceedings involve allegations against entities including Sunny Queen Pty Ltd, Doug Hall Poultry Pty Ltd, Al-pair Pty Ltd trading as McLean Farms, Ellerslie Free Range Farms Pty Ltd and Kinross Farm Pty Ltd.

Each of these entities is alleged to have engaged in cartel conduct and are also alleged to have engaged

in a concerted practice with the purpose, effect or likely effect of substantially reducing competition.

A full list of company names for the 12 entities the subject of the proceedings is available in the ACCC's concise statement.

ACCC chair Gina Cass-Gottlieb said, "Our investigation has uncovered alleged widespread anti-competitive conduct in the egg industry that we allege has impacted the supply of eggs to Australian consumers since at least 2020."

"This alleged conduct is extremely serious, which is why we have commenced this Federal Court action."

"Fair competition in the supply of fresh food such as eggs is extremely important."

"Anti-competitive conduct disadvantages Australian consumers, who can face reduced choice and higher prices, as well as those businesses seeking to compete

fairly or who are seeking to enter markets to provide competing supply."

The ACCC alleges that the egg industry is highly concentrated, with a small number of large suppliers and significant barriers to entry and expansion.

Eggs are an important consumer staple, with Australians consuming an annual average of over 250 eggs per person.

The alleged conduct related to the production and supply of eggs including free-range, cage and organic eggs.

"These companies are alleged to have coordinated in a range of decisions about their business operations, including the retailers each business could supply, what volumes they could produce and when to cull birds to manage periods of perceived over-supply," Ms Cass-Gottlieb said.

"We allege this coordination between

continued P11



ACCC chair Gina Cass-Gottlieb.

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ACCC brings case against major egg producers

from P10

Sunny Queen, Hall and McLean Farms extended to purchasing a property in Pittsworth Queensland for the purpose of preventing its acquisition by rival egg suppliers.

"We also allege this had the effect of substantially lessening competition.

"We also allege that Sunny Queen restricted how many eggs its rival Kinross could sell to customers, and prevented Kinross from selling its eggs to Coles, Woolworths, Aldi, Metcash or Costco.

"We are committed to protecting competition in fresh food supply chains so Australian consumers receive the benefits of businesses competing on price," she said.

"These proceedings are a reminder that businesses must make their production, supply and pricing decisions independently."

The ACCC is seeking declarations, penalties, injunctions, costs and other orders.

Anti-competitive conduct

Contracts, arrangements, understandings and concerted practices that have the purpose, effect or likely effect of substantially lessening competition in a market are prohibited under the Competition and Consumer Act.

A concerted practice involves communication or co-operation between businesses that does not require all the elements of what is considered an 'un-

derstanding' under the Act, but that involves more than businesses independently responding to market conditions.

More information about anti-competitive behaviour is available on the ACCC website.

The ACCC works to detect alleged cartels including through education programs, proactive intelligence gathering and data assessment and working with overseas counterparts to identify alleged cartels that operate on a global level.

Anyone who thinks they may be involved in alleged cartel conduct is urged to call the ACCC Cartel Immunity Hotline on (02) 9230 3894.

More information about the immunity process is available on the ACCC website at Cartels.

They can also report alleged cartel conduct by using the anonymous cartel portal.

Background

Sunny Queen is the largest egg supplier in Australia, holding approximately a third of the market for the supply of eggs to retailers nationally.

Sunny Queen acquires, markets and distributes eggs throughout Australia.

Sunny Queen is currently jointly owned by Ellerslie and McLean Farms.

Sunny Queen has warehouse and distribution facilities in Queensland, NSW, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia.

During the relevant

period, Hall, and companies sharing common ownership with that company, was a large egg producer headquartered in Queensland.

DHP Consolidated Pty Ltd was the parent company of several companies that produced eggs, which included Ellerslie.

In 2024, following a restructuring, Ellerslie became the holding company for the production subsidiaries.

Hall held 50 percent of the shares in Sunny Queen, which were subsequently acquired by Ellerslie.

These entities operate farms in Queensland including in Yandilla, Turalin and Punchs Creek.

McLean Farms is a large egg producer headquartered in Queensland.

McLean Farms operates farms in Queensland and Victoria, including at Pittsworth, Felton and Pinerow.

Kinross is a large egg producer headquartered in Victoria, operating farms in locations including Euroa and Carisbrook.

The details of the ACCC's allegations and the respondents are set out in the concise statement, scan the QR code below to view.

ACCC



Scan to view the concise statement.



The risk for salmonella seems to be less related to the type of system and highly related to management.

Managing salmonella in layers

MANAGING salmonella in poultry is about more than preserving bird health but also, and importantly, it's a public health issue.

Salmonella in egg products are closely monitored, and detections can lead to public health investigations, product recalls, strict facility sanitation protocols and even flock depopulation.

Salmonella naturally occurs in the intestines and reproductive organs of chickens, generally without causing disease.

However, salmonella has been implicated in human salmonellosis cases.

While industry initiatives have led to a reduced incidence of salmonella in poultry, there hasn't been a reduction in the prevalence of foodborne illness associated with poultry products.

Food safety agencies have implemented regulations to reduce salmonella contamination of meat and eggs in an effort to reduce foodborne illness.

Vaccinating layers against salmonella is a critical component of a control program

that can help reduce the bacterial load in the birds, reducing the risk of environmental contamination, breaking the transmission cycle and lowering the potential for contamination of eggs.

Which practice methods help with salmonella management?

Holistic salmonella management in egg production seeks to address areas of vulnerability.

Those include preventing salmonella from entering the farm, stopping its spread within the flock and minimising its presence on or in eggs.

Salmonella management should start at the breeder farms that produce the pullets and continue through egg processing and packaging.

In addition to vaccination, a holistic management plan should include the following considerations:

- Source control – know where farm inputs, including pullets and feed, come from and what salmonella management protocols are in place at those sources as well as dur-

ing transit to your operation

- Access control – an adequate perimeter with a single entry point for vehicles and personnel can help prevent entry of salmonella onto your operation

- On-site biosecurity – enforce vehicle hygiene practices for entering vehicles and provide farm-specific coveralls and boots/ boot covers for personnel

- Rodent control – implement a robust rodent control plan, including regularly inspecting facilities for signs of rodent activity, keeping the farm clean of debris and inspecting rodent bait stations and traps regularly

- Thorough cleaning

and disinfection – regularly clean and sanitise equipment that comes into contact with eggs and monitor the effectiveness of these practices by testing swab samples

- Monitor flocks – routinely test environmental samples and birds for salmonella.

What steps should be taken to get the most out of salmonella vaccination?

When investing in salmonella vaccines, the goal should always be to optimise effectiveness.

There are many ways to look at that.

Beyond following proper administration protocols, diagnostics, monitoring and employee training contribute to vaccine success.

continued P12



Zoetis senior technical services veterinarian John Brown.

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Managing salmonella in layers

from P11

From my experience, layer-focused veterinarians assist in building customised vaccination protocols that are informed by monitoring salmonella prevalence through diagnostics and supported by employee training on bird health and vaccination.

Through the use of pullet vaccination evaluations, we also have the ability to monitor vaccine administration success to truly understand what's working.

The predominant salmonella serotype in layers that's of concern is salmonella enteritidis, while salmonella typhimurium can also occur to a lesser extent.

When it comes to which vaccine to use, inactivated and live vaccines play different roles.

Inactivated salmonella vaccines help elicit a high and long-lasting level of antibodies in layer hens.

Live salmonella vaccines are thought to elicit a broad host-immune response.

The use of live and inactivated vaccines brings the right combination of salmonella products to reduce colonisation of key serotypes.

For veterinarians,

a robust vaccination protocol for a farm with more than 3000 birds producing table eggs may include applying two doses of a live salmonella vaccine, followed by one dose of an inactivated salmonella vaccine prior to lay.

Protection from live vaccines however may be short lived, so an inactivated vaccine is often given around 12 to 14 weeks of age to extend protection through more of the layer's lifespan.

Inactivated vaccines generally require injection and may help protect against multiple strains of salmonella, while a live salmonella vaccine has been shown to provide cross-protection.

Care must be taken to ensure that 100 percent of the birds get the vaccines administered.

Directions for proper administration of vaccines must be followed carefully, and vaccination crews should be monitored.

A PVE can provide an objective way to measure the overall performance of vaccination crews in multiple areas, including crew safety, vaccine storage and preparation, bird presentation and welfare, equipment use

and maintenance and vaccine placement evaluation.

In addition, vaccine 'takes' and serology can be conducted to monitor vaccine program success.

Taken together, the combination of proper vaccination and other management protocols provides a comprehensive solution for salmonella control over the life of a flock.

Are there special considerations for cage-free systems?

Cage-free egg production systems may present unique challenges for salmonella management compared to conventional systems.

Increased bird movement along with increased contact with litter and faeces, creates more of a complex environment for pathogen control.

Cage-free systems require greater emphasis on biosecurity and environmental hygiene as part of a holistic vaccination strategy.

In my experience working with hens in cage-free systems, there is more potential for horizontal transmission of salmonella simply because birds have more access to each other.

Studies comparing

the prevalence of salmonella among different types of production systems for layers have yielded different results.

The risk for salmonella seems to be less related to the type of system and highly related to management, and the best control of salmonella I've witnessed is achieved when good management is coupled with vaccination.

Though there are pens within cage-free systems that separate different groups of birds, the birds within each section have access to each other's manure and to dust, which are reservoirs for salmonella.

Cage-free production also raises the risk of birds coming into contact with rodents.

What may happen when management chores are neglected?

Having a salmonella plan in place is one thing.

Making sure it is properly implemented, monitored and adjusted as needed will go a long way to protecting flock health while also contributing to a safe food supply.

John Brown
Zoetis Senior
Technical Services
Veterinarian



Get Ready Week is an important reminder for producers to act before severe weather events occur.

Producers urged to prepare for high-risk weather season

QUEENSLAND primary producers, fishing and aquaculture operators are being urged to prepare for a potentially challenging summer weather, with active El Niño conditions increasing the likelihood of bushfires and severe storms across the state.

Early preparation remains one of the most effective ways to reduce impacts of natural disasters on farms and fishing operations by helping businesses respond quickly and recover faster when disaster strikes.

The Queensland Government has a range of resources available to help producers 'get ready' and is encouraging producers to review emergency plans, assess on-farm risks and ensure all resources are on-hand ahead of summer.

Key preparation measures include:

- Reviewing emergency plans for bushfires, floods, cyclones and severe storms, including a

livestock severe weather emergency plan

- Ensuring livestock can be moved quickly and have access to food and water

- Securing fodder supplies and protecting critical infrastructure

- Maintaining fire-breaks and reducing fuel loads around properties

- Keeping important records, emergency contacts and asset photographs up-to-date

- Working with local industry recovery and resilience officers to strengthen preparedness.

Department of Primary Industries deputy director general agriculture Peter Donaghy said 'Get Ready Week' is an important reminder for producers to act before severe weather events occur.

"Summer is the season for floods, bushfires, cyclones and storms," Mr Donaghy said.

"Taking action now – whether that's re-

viewing emergency plans, securing fodder supplies, preparing livestock movement arrangements or protecting critical infrastructure – can make a significant difference when disaster strikes.

"Producers are also encouraged to contact their local industry recovery and resilience officers, who provide tailored support to help producers manage climate risks, strengthen resilience, develop recovery plans and improve business preparedness."

Industry recovery and resilience officers are jointly funded by the Australian and Queensland governments under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements, and the program offers face-to-face assistance across primary industries and provides access to information on recovery grants, concessional loans and wellbeing support.

DPI Queensland

Latest bird flu update

TESTING at CSIRO's Australian Centre for Disease Preparedness has confirmed H5 high pathogenicity avian influenza in samples collected from an elephant seal and a kelp gull on Macquarie Island, marking the first H5 event on this island.

Macquarie Island is administered as

part of Tasmania and these results will be recorded as part of Tasmania's H5 bird flu reporting.

There is currently no evidence of mammal-to-mammal transmission associated with H5 bird flu in Australia and the risk to human health remains low.

There remain no detections in Australian poultry or in our ag-

ricultural production system.

If you notice sick or dead birds or other animals, do not touch them or get too close.

Take photos if safe to do so, note your location and report it.

Call the 24-hour Emergency Animal Disease Hotline on 1800 675 888.

Dr Beth Cookson
Australian Chief
Veterinary Officer



Confirmed H5 from Macquarie Island elephant seal sample.

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RSPCA Australia chicken standards under scrutiny as senior figure resigns

DEBATE over fast-growing broiler breeds puts welfare certification, production costs and consumer expectations in the spotlight.

Australia's meat chicken industry faces renewed scrutiny over welfare certification following the resignation of a senior RSPCA NSW figure who has challenged the organisation's approach to broiler production.

Mark Steele, who served as the organisation's vice-president and previously held a non-executive director position with RSPCA Australia, stepped down from the NSW branch in September.

His departure centres on concerns that existing certification arrangements do not adequately address welfare issues associated with rapidly growing chicken breeds.

The dispute comes as Australia's poultry sector continues to meet strong consumer demand.

Australians eat about 55kg of chicken per person annually, while approximately 800 million meat chickens are processed nationally each year.

Most production relies on fast-growing genetic lines that reach market weight within four to six weeks.

Animal welfare advocates argue that rapid growth can contribute to leg and skeletal disorders, cardiovascular problems and skin damage.

They are increas-

ingly calling for wider adoption of slower-growing breeds, which are used in some overseas markets.

For producers however any transition raises practical questions around growth rates, feed conversion, processing weights, housing requirements and the economics of production.

Changes to genetics may also require adjustments across breeding, farm management, processing and retail supply chains.

The RSPCA has recently revised its meat chicken welfare standards, introducing measures that include lower stocking densities, more flexible lighting conditions and the phase-out of electrical water-bath stunning by 2031.

Producers will need to meet the updated requirements to retain certification under the revised scheme.

However, the standard does not mandate a complete replacement of fast-growing breeds.

Instead, a separate enhanced welfare category provides a pathway for producers using higher-welfare genetic lines, leaving the broader transition voluntary.

That distinction has become a central point of contention.

Critics argue that consumers may interpret RSPCA certification as evidence of comprehensive welfare safeguards, while the continued use of fast-growing birds remains permissible under the

principal standard.

The organisation meanwhile maintains that its revised requirements represent meaningful progress and that further improvements will require ongoing work across genetics, housing, handling and slaughter practices.

For Australian poultry businesses, the debate highlights the growing importance of demonstrating welfare outcomes alongside productivity and affordability.

Retailer purchasing policies, certification requirements and changing community expectations could all influence future production decisions.

A shift towards slower-growing birds would need to be assessed against measurable welfare benefits, supply-chain capacity and the potential impact on production costs.

Maintaining public confidence will also depend on clear communication about what certification schemes require and how compliance is verified.

With implementation of the revised standards approaching, producers and industry bodies have an opportunity to engage in the discussion before further changes reshape market expectations.

The challenge will be balancing scientifically supported welfare improvements with the efficiency and competitiveness required to supply affordable chicken to Australian consumers.

Why hatchery vaccination is key to protecting flocks early

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 third instalment in the series.

Vaccines represent one of the poultry industry's most significant investments in flock health and performance.

As technology evolves and research expands understanding around disease dynamics, poultry veterinarians are building hatchery health programs to strengthen early immunity development and position birds for success through grow out.

According to Zoetis Spain's national poultry technical manager Alberto Giner, the hatchery has become the ideal place to focus on disease protection because it provides an environment producers cannot achieve as consistently in the field.

"The hatchery is a controlled environment supported by specialised equipment and trained personnel," Dr Giner said.

"When we move more interventions from the field to the hatchery, hatchery managers and veterinarians have greater control over the process and can minimise many of the challenges associated with field vaccination."

Closing the immunity gap

Hatchery vaccination helps close the gap between when maternal

antibodies wane from the breeder program and a chick's immunity is stimulated through vaccination.

For broiler producers in particular, shorter production cycles leave less time for birds to develop immunity after placement.

Every day gained through earlier protection can contribute to stronger flock health.

"When we vaccinate embryos before hatch, or in ovo, we're gaining two or three days of early immune response," Dr Giner said.

"And for vaccines administered at day of age, hatchery vaccination offers more reliable routes of administration to protect against disease threats."

The hatchery environment also allows producers to take advantage of evolving vaccine technologies, including vector and immune-complex vaccines that can protect against multiple diseases through a single intervention.

Dr Giner also encourages decision makers to review field studies and data when selecting a vaccine.

Measures of efficacy, onset and duration of immunity and bird performance under disease challenges can help provide assurance on how a vaccine will perform in real-world production environments.

Protecting vaccine investment at every step

"From the handling of the egg to vaccine administration, following best practices throughout the hatchery is of paramount importance," Dr Giner said.

"We cannot improve what we receive from the breeder farms, but we can certainly make it worse at the hatchery."

That philosophy re-

flects a growing recognition across the poultry industry that vaccination should be viewed as a complete system.

Successful programs depend on:

- Proper egg handling
- Accurate vaccine preparation
- Precise administration
- Equipment maintenance
- Sanitation practices
- Quality control
- Trained personnel.

Even small deviations can compromise vaccine performance and flock outcomes.

"We can have the best equipment and the best vaccines," Dr Giner said.

"But if we are not preparing and delivering them correctly, we are jeopardising the entire vaccination process."

Proper vaccination is everyone's job

Dr Giner believes today's hatchery managers recognise the importance of treating vaccination with the same level of attention as other critical processes.

In the field, he sees that commitment extend beyond management.

Every employee – from hatchery leadership to vaccine crews to hatchery staff working directly with eggs and chicks – plays a role in protecting vaccine performance.

"In the end, every step is important," Dr Giner said.

"If you do something wrong, everything can be compromised."

According to Dr Giner, Zoetis poultry veterinarians and technical specialists regularly work alongside hatchery personnel to provide coaching, training and process support that reinforce best practices.

In person or over the phone, they help cus-

tomers investigate concerns, identify opportunities for improvement and respond quickly when operational questions arise.

Sometimes those opportunities appear in unexpected places.

During a routine hatchery visit to evaluate one vaccination system, Dr Giner noticed that spray vaccination nozzles in another area of the hatchery had been reinstalled incorrectly following maintenance.

As a result, part of the vaccine was being sprayed outside the chick baskets rather than onto the birds receiving vaccination.

The issue had gone unnoticed by hatchery personnel, but correcting the nozzle alignment restored proper vaccine coverage.

"Our goal is to be an extra set of eyes and pay attention to the details," Dr Giner said.

"We want to see our customers succeed and we do that by providing service and support that extends beyond simply selling a vaccine."

Building protection that lasts

The goal for customers and Zoetis is to raise field-ready birds with a strong immune foundation every single time.

When supported by trained people, science-backed processes and ongoing monitoring and technical expertise, hatcheries are better positioned to support flock health early.

"All of this contributes to helping customers realise the full value of their vaccine investment," Dr Giner said.

"And always be sure to monitor your vaccination program to understand if it is delivering the desired results."

Zoetis



A Zoetis Hatchery Health Team member reviews best practices for in ovo vaccine administration.

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NSW poultry producers urged to strengthen bird flu preparedness

FREE workshops and webinars will help NSW poultry and egg businesses review biosecurity measures and prepare for the threat of H5 bird flu.

Poultry and egg producers are being encouraged to strengthen their on-farm biosecurity and review emergency plans as the NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development rolls out a series of free workshops and online webinars focused on H5 bird flu preparedness.

The practical sessions are designed to help businesses identify potential risks, improve biosecurity practices and ensure they have

plans in place to respond if bird flu threatens their operation.

The program is open to poultry and egg producers, farm employees, contractors and businesses supporting the poultry industry.

Both face-to-face workshops and online sessions will be available, with content tailored to different production systems.

Registration is essential for all sessions.

Practical steps to protect poultry businesses

Strong biosecurity is a key part of protecting poultry flocks from infectious diseases.

Reviewing procedures before a disease threat emerges can help producers identify weak-

nesses, prepare staff and establish clear processes for managing potential risks.

The workshops will focus on strengthening on-farm biosecurity and helping businesses develop or update their biosecurity plans.

For producers, this provides an opportunity to assess existing arrangements, ensure staff and contractors understand their responsibilities, and consider what additional measures may be needed to protect birds and maintain business continuity.

Some poultry and egg producers may also receive invitations to closed sessions organised through their integrated producer.

Face-to-face workshops across NSW

Four face-to-face workshops are scheduled across regional NSW, providing producers with opportunities to participate in practical training closer to home.

- Lismore on November 2 at 9.30am–4pm
- Stroud on November 4 at 9.30am–4pm
- Tamworth on November 10 at 9.30am–4pm
- Cowra on December 8 at 9.30am–4pm.

Producers can register through the relevant QR code below.

Producers who would prefer a workshop in another location can complete the department's online expression of interest

form, scan the relevant QR code below.

Additional sessions may be scheduled depending on demand.

Online sessions tailored to production systems

Two online sessions will cater to different poultry production systems, allowing producers to access relevant biosecurity information without travelling.

- Pastured poultry on November 6 at 1pm–3pm
- Sheddied poultry on November 13 at 1pm–3pm.

Registration details are available through the relevant QR code below.

These workshops and webinars are provided

through the NSW Farm Business Resilience Program.

This program is jointly funded by the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund and the NSW Government.

Preparation starts on the farm

While disease preparedness requires industry-wide coordination, individual businesses play an important role in reducing the risk of disease entering and spreading through their flocks.

Producers can use the opportunity to review their current biosecurity plans, check that staff and contractors understand farm entry requirements, and ensure procedures are clearly

documented and regularly reviewed.

Having an up-to-date plan can also help businesses respond more effectively if a suspected disease incident occurs, including knowing who to contact and what immediate steps to take.

The NSW department's training program offers poultry businesses an opportunity to review their preparedness before a disease threat becomes an on-farm emergency.

For Australia's poultry industry, investing time in biosecurity planning is an important step towards protecting flock health, business operations and the wider supply chain.

DPIRD NSW



Scan for the Lismore workshop.



Scan for the Stroud workshop.



Scan for the Tamworth workshop.



Scan for the Cowra workshop.



Scan for the online expression of interest form.



Scan for the pastured poultry online workshop.



Scan for the sheddied poultry online workshop.

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