

EGGSTRA!

EGG INDUSTRY MATTERS SEPTEMBER 2023



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FOND FAREWELL TO SMALLS TRADING COMPANY

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EGGSTRA!

EGG INDUSTRY MATTERS SEPTEMBER 2023

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MD's report

In a year characterised by rapid and regular change we've had a significant development with the welfare standards and guidelines having recently been approved by agriculture ministers. This is an informal process with legislation in each state still to come but it's a huge step in a saga that has taken a decade and has felt endless for most of that time. With the decision finally made, the question becomes – what does it mean for our industry? Five impacts come to mind at first instance.

Firstly, it means that we have closure on a point of focus that has dominated the last decade.

After millions of words, an epic contest of ideas and a national expression of values around what constitutes good welfare, it is finally done. The industry should accept this. Not necessarily because we may agree with the outcome but because there is no point in putting energy into a fight that has ended. While our representative bodies will continue to work hard on timeframes for a cage phase out, the reality is that there is no way back from the S&G, no new process in which to get a second hearing, and our energies should move to how we will implement the standard.

It also means a process of welfare debate and improvement has continued through another cycle. Many farmers will have real concerns about the impact of this process on their investments and industry capacity going forward but we must observe the pattern through which welfare regulations are constantly under scrutiny and change is inevitable. The current rate of change seems to be around 20 years and it is highly likely that this will be repeated going forward. For an industry that thinks in decades not years it would be worth reflecting on what can be done to prepare egg farming businesses for the next phase of this process.


There is also a hidden silver lining in the S&G process in the positive impact it will have on industry sustainability through a national, legally enforceable standard for welfare. Enforceable welfare standards will help drive consistent welfare outcomes and protect the industry from rogue operators that have popped up from time to time demonstrating little regard for the welfare of hens. These incidents may have nothing to do with how eggs are really farmed but they still impact the commercial industry significantly, putting at public risk the confidence in our commitment to hen welfare. The move to a standard should be welcomed in this context as creating a more level playing field for compliance and complementary to the industry objective of building community trust.

The S&G decision also means that the starting gun has gone off in the race to preparing the industry for implementation. The standard is not a revolution but the devil is always in the detail and we must get it right. There are numerous small changes from the model code and early enforcement activity is likely, so every farm will need to embrace the standard and test their operations to ensure they can comply without exception. Ignorance will be no excuse and peak bodies cannot be sent in to argue the toss with the regulator.



Rowan McMonnies

For those accredited under ESA this will require early attention as the S&G will need to be incorporated into ESA and will result in many changes. Even minor changes to ESA can be controversial and plans are underway for a thorough consultation process to be conducted across 2024 which we encourage all ESA members to play close attention to.

Finally, and most importantly, the adoption of the S&G means greater certainty for the next phase of industry investment. While the industry operating environment is a long way from certain, confirmation that the S&G will be implemented will remove one key variable from the model. There will be no new conventional cages and there is limited confidence around demand for eggs from furnished cage systems so the industry will have to assess where barn eggs will be positioned and the business case for substantial new capacity to meet current strong demand, future growth and the replacement of cage capacity. Forty-three per cent of current industry production is in cage systems and while some states may permit current conventional cages to operate into the future, they will become a smaller part of the future. In a year where the whole industry seems up in the air, the S&G has landed and is likely to be a trigger for decision making as to the way forward. 



Register now!

Australian Egg Industry Forum

Following the success of the Mini Forum in May, plans are well underway for the Australian Egg Industry Forum, which is set to take place 14-15 November at PARKROYAL, Darling Harbour, Sydney. The 2023 Australian Eggs AGM will also be held at 4pm on Wednesday, 15 November, at the same venue.

The Australian Eggs team are working hard on delivering an informative and insightful program of content that addresses ongoing and emerging challenges facing the industry, as well as the latest research and resources for supporting sustainable growth.

Session topics are set to include production, labour force technology and tools, sustainability, and standards and guidelines.

The program will also provide plenty of opportunities to catch up and network with fellow industry members across the two days.

Key activities on the program include:

Tuesday 14 November

12pm-1.30pm – Egg Farmers of Australia GenEgg Lunch
1pm-5pm – Trade area open
5.30pm-7.30pm – Welcome Drinks

Wednesday 15 November

8.30-9am – Tea and coffee and registration opens
9am-3pm – Australian Egg Industry Forum
4pm-5pm – Australian Eggs AGM
5pm-6pm – Pre-dinner drinks
6pm-Late – Australian Egg Industry Forum Dinner at L'Aqua, Darling Harbour

Further program details will be published in the *Aus Eggs Update* newsletter and For Farmers portal as they become available in the coming months.

The event is open for all egg farming businesses and farm staff to attend. Egg farmers are encouraged to scan the QR code to register their interest in attending.



For any questions about this event, please contact Kelly Seagrave at kelly.seagrave@australianeggs.org.au or call 0401 769 051.





Behind the scenes at the filming of the new Bring the Bright marketing campaign.

Bring the Bright to family moments by adding an egg

Australians love eggs, considering them healthy and versatile, and on average, consume 262 eggs per year.

However, outside of the breakfast occasion, eggs aren't front of mind when it comes to snacks, lunch, and dinner. This prompted the thinking to develop a new marketing campaign to help promote the versatility of adding eggs for all meal occasions.

After a competitive tender process, Connecting Plots was appointed to create a new marketing campaign for the egg industry titled Bring the Bright. They were given the challenge of getting main grocery buyers with families that already consume eggs, who want to nourish and care for themselves and their family through food, to view

eggs as an easy and effective way of making any meal more satisfying.

It became clear that one way to do this was by showing how adding an egg takes a meal from humble to special.

This challenge led Connecting Plots to the insight that eggs bring more than just nutrients. They have the power to brighten not only your meal, but your entire family's demeanour.

The resulting creative idea 'Bring the Bright' encourages Aussie grocery buyers to 'Bring the bright' to their families meals, and lives, by adding an egg.

The advertising material celebrates little family moments in which we see

eggs as the object in a kind of homespun game. Be it a salad-based version of hide and seek or a noodle-y take on indoor soccer, the new campaign shows how the humble egg is at the centre of how these memorable family moments are made bringing brightness to the moment and the meals.

To view the two television commercials created for the campaign, scan the QR code



**BRING THE
BRIGHT**

Australian
eggs



CLOSING THE LOOP

Black soldier fly technology revolutionises agricultural waste management

Australian Eggs is pleased to announce that the Black Soldier Fly (BSF) research project has come to a close and has identified strong opportunities for the egg industry.

With the aim of investigating the use of BSF technology as a sustainable and profitable solution for managing livestock waste, the project focused on converting low-value agricultural waste into high-quality fertilisers and soil improvers that are safe to handle, store, transport and apply.

Findings are relevant not only to the egg industry but to other agricultural sectors too, with research jointly funded by Australian Eggs, Australian Pork Ltd, Future Green Solutions, University of Western Australia, Agrifutures, Dairy Australia Ltd, Australian Meat and Processing Corporation, and the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

The power of BSF technology

BSF technology involves using the larvae of the black soldier fly, a non-biting and non-invasive species, to consume organic waste such as animal manure, abattoir, and food waste. As the larvae feed, they produce a nutrient-rich waste product known as frass – a mixture of their excrement, exoskeletons, and remains of their food source. Frass is high in mineral nitrogen and organic carbon and can be used as an effective soil improver or fertiliser.

Why is it needed?

The need for BSF technology arises from the significant amounts of manure and other organic waste produced by the livestock industry in Australia. Not only does it contribute to pest outbreaks, nutrient leaching and runoff into waterways, but it also releases significant amounts of greenhouse gases.

Manure management is also a substantial financial burden to the Australian agricultural industry, with estimated costs amounting to \$100-\$200 million annually, impacting productivity, profitability and the sustainability of businesses.

BSF technology offers a solution by converting waste into valuable products, reducing waste volume, transportation and handling costs, and improving environmental impacts.

Key findings

Research demonstrated that BSF larvae have the unique ability to reproduce rapidly, consume a range of waste streams, and have a high feed conversion ratio. Therefore, once commercialised, BSF technology has the potential to process hundreds of tonnes of waste per day. Researchers found that using BSF larvae can reduce the volume of poultry layer waste by up to 80% over a 19-day period.

The reduction in waste volume also comes with a 31% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions and a 53% reduction in nitrous oxide, thus decreasing climate impacts.

BSF-derived frass and larvae can also effectively reduce pathogen levels in livestock waste. For example, faecal coliform counts were reduced by 95% in chicken manure. Additionally, the application of frass has demonstrated a significant reduction in stable fly emergence, a common pest in agricultural settings.


BSF farming produces 200kg of frass for every tonne of animal manure or other organic waste processed,



meaning that if upscaled, frass has the potential to be used as fertiliser on a large commercial scale. Frass has been demonstrated to improve soil health, increase organic carbon and mineral nitrogen retention, enhance plant growth, raise soil pH and improve drought tolerance.

Overall, farmers expressed a positive attitude towards using BSF technology for waste management and were interested in using BSF-derived fertilisers. Investigations also revealed that the preferred characteristics for BSF-derived fertilisers include a granular form and high organic carbon and NPK content.

With the potential to revolutionise livestock waste management and enhance the circularity of agricultural systems, the black soldier fly research project is paving the way for a more sustainable and profitable future.

BSF technology offers the opportunity for increased productivity and profitability via reduced input costs and the generation of alternative revenue streams for a wide range of agricultural enterprises. 

To learn more about the project, please scan the QR code.



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1. Rodriguez-Gonzal E et al. Anthelmintic Benzimidazoles in Eggs. Chapter 44 in Egg Innovations and Strategies for Improvements (ed. P. Hester). Elsevier. 2017. 2. Lacey E. et al. The role of the cytoskeletal protein, tubulin, in the mode of action and mechanism of drug resistance to benzimidazoles. Int J Parasit. 18 (7):885-936. 1988. 3. Chassaing C. et al. Highly Water-Soluble Prodrugs of Anthelmintic Benzimidazole Carbamates: Synthesis, Pharmacodynamics, and Pharmacokinetics. J Med Chem. 52:1111-1114. 2008. 4. Committee for Medicinal Products for Veterinary Use. Flubendazole (extrapolation to poultry). Summary Report (4). European Medicines Agency. July 2006. 5. Froyman R. & De Keyser H. Flubendazole: safety regarding egg production and reproductive performance of breeder chickens. Av Dis 27:1 (43-48). 1983.

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Nadine Davis (right) on-farm at Pace Farm.

The Journey to Egg-cellence

Farms share their ESA experience

In the dynamic world of egg production, maintaining high-quality standards and ensuring animal welfare is paramount.



Egg Standards of Australia (ESA) is a comprehensive quality assurance program that aims to establish a credible and robust standard for the egg industry.

With the goal of ensuring consistency and compliance, ESA provides a framework for farms of all sizes to improve their processes and meet the needs of regulators and retailers.

ESA consists of two components: *ESA for Rearing and Laying Farms*, and *ESA for Grading and Packing Floors*. These components are further divided into three levels: basic (1), core (2), and comprehensive (3), allowing farm businesses to choose the level that suits their size, needs and customer requirements.

In March 2023, ESA guidelines were updated to include additional information and a more user-friendly guide, to better assist and support farmers in achieving compliance. The *ESA for Rearing and Laying Farms* was updated to ensure the documentation remains up to date with current regulation and best practices. Duplications within the standard have also been removed to improve clarity.

Egg producers Pace Farm and S&A Farms are both ESA accredited businesses and we recently caught up with them to understand their experience with the program, and the positive impact it has had on their farms.

Pace Farm, one of the largest egg producers in Australia, has been ESA certified across 35 sites since 2005. With a diverse range of production systems including free range, barn, cage and organic, Pace Farm understands the importance of maintaining high industry standards and recognises the value of ESA in setting an industry benchmark of what is acceptable.

The company emphasises that ESA has been instrumental in helping Pace Farm identify areas for improvement. By adhering to ESA, they have been able to enhance bird welfare and make positive changes to their business overall.

ESA has also provided them with a framework to demonstrate their commitment to quality and welfare throughout their operations to consumers, fostering trust throughout the entire supply chain.

Nestled in South Australia, S&A Farms' commitment to ESA is as equally

remarkable. Specialising in free-range egg production, S&A has been ESA compliant since their establishment a decade ago. For owner Nasir Zia, ESA accreditation has been a valuable tool for ongoing improvement within their business.

Adhering to ESA standards has enabled S&A farms to consistently deliver high-quality and safe eggs to their loyal customers. The comprehensive guidelines and resources provided by ESA have empowered them to streamline their processes, ensuring strict compliance with industry standards. The farm has witnessed the positive impact of ESA on their operations, as well as the satisfaction it brings to their customers.

Inspired to get ESA certified?

Scan the QR code below to learn more about ESA, use the ESA internal audit checklist to do a check on your current systems or access our wide range of helpful resources.





Nadine Davis from Australian Eggs with the Egg Farmers or Australia team on farm with Nasir Zia, owner of S&A Farms in South Australia.



Nadine Davis with Daniel and Nasir Zia on their farm in South Australia.



Jade Hoare and Jodie Payne from Pace Farms.

Egg Industry Careers: a spotlight on Quality Assurance (QA) roles in the Australian Egg Industry

One career pathway opportunity within the egg industry that is often overlooked is Quality Assurance (QA). Essential for not only maintaining high food safety standards at farms, QA also plays a critical role in fostering consumer trust in the industry and managing its reputation.

Jade Hoare, Compliance Manager at Pace Farm, has been working in Quality Assurance for the past 13 years. Initially starting out in high care food manufacturing, Jade made the switch to the agricultural sector, where she has found her long-term career pathway. Australian Eggs recently caught up with her to find out more about her role.

AE – What attracted you to a quality assurance role?

JH – After completing a Food and Nutrition degree, I realised Food Safety is an important industry sector. With my love of food and its preparation, it seemed like a perfect fit. It is also satisfying knowing I can help supply

a safe and affordable food source for all Australians.

What are three things you most enjoy about your job?

1. Being involved in implementing changes and system improvements at Pace Farm and for the industry.
2. Visiting different sites and interacting with a range of people, from farmers to production staff, external suppliers, and government agencies, to affect change within our industry.
3. Knowing every day will bring something different, no two days are ever the same in quality assurance.

What do you find the most challenging?

Coming from a non-farming background was a big learning curve on how farming works. The smallest of things can occasionally have a big impact on the birds and consequently have a flow down our supply line. I have also found it challenging to change mindsets – to explain and educate people

on the changes within the industry and the reasonings behind them.

Where would you like your career to go in the next five years?

I see myself progressing within the farming agricultural sector, continuing to improve and implement compliance with industry standards in a practical way which suits both the farmers and regulatory compliance.

What advice would you give someone looking to enter the field of quality assurance?

Attention to detail is key, along with a friendly personality, as you interact with so many different people.



To learn more about careers within the egg industry, and to explore training opportunities, please visit the industry training and capacity building page of our website at: www.australianeggs.org.au/form-farmers/industry-training-capacity-building

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WORLD EGG DAY 2023

What's coming! Get egg-cited! We're elevating the humble egg as part of this year's World Egg Day celebrations.

The Australian Eggs World Egg Day campaign will begin with a multi-channel partnership with Mamamia, Australia's largest women's media network fronted by their Executive Editor, Holly Wainwright.

The content will showcase how eggs make meal prep that bit brighter, even for a busy mum with a demanding job.

Australians' love for eggs will be highlighted with the release of new consumption stats which showcase that Aussies are enjoying more eggs than ever before. Alongside this, we'll entice consumers with a selection of tasty recipes where eggs take centre stage. Both the stats and recipes will help drive widespread media coverage across news and lifestyle outlets.

We'll be asking people to again try out the 10-second video challenge that will call on egg consumers and influencers to name as many egg dishes as possible to showcase eggs' versatility. You'll be able to find the best video submissions Australian Eggs' social channels.

We'd love for egg farmers to join in the celebrations with your own activities repost and reshare Australian Eggs posts. 

Australian Eggs at EKKA

Australian Eggs made a proud return to The Royal Queensland Show (EKKA) in August with the Get Cracking Get Cooking activation.

The hands-on cooking class allowed children to unleash their creativity and create funny egg face sandwiches and learn more about the health benefits of eggs.

From 'Egg-Sheeran' to 'M-egg-han Markle,' 'Eggs-tein' and 'Eggy-Azalea,' the sandwiches were a sight to behold and sparked giggles throughout the showground!

The activation was not only about having fun; it also provided an

educational experience for the young participants. While the kids were busy crafting their edible masterpieces, each session was filled with interesting egg facts about the nutritional benefits of eggs and the versatility of their preparation.

Australian Eggs also proudly sponsored the show's annual Raising Hy-Line Hens competition.

This competition, now aligned with the Australian Curriculum from Foundation to Grade 10, saw participating schools

raise their own chooks, giving students an insight into where eggs come from. The three best hens from each school were then judged at EKKA by commercial poultry industry experts.

As a sponsor of the event, Aus Eggs would like to congratulate the Royal National Agricultural and Industrial Association of Queensland (RNA) for their continuous efforts in celebrating and championing the essential role of agriculture in the everyday lives of Australians.





Cost effective and practical ways to regenerate layer hen ranges

The forging behaviour of free-range layer hens can damage ranges and diminish their functionality. Scratching and pecking behaviour damages tree roots and groundcover plants, and nutrients from hen manure (e.g., nitrates and phosphorus) build up in soils in areas where hens congregate. Cost-effective and practical strategies are needed to mitigate these impacts.

Dr Caryolyn de Koning, Poultry Research Scientist at South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI), recently led a research project into cost-effective and practical ways to regenerate layer hen ranges. The research aims to develop a guideline package that outlines regenerative and maintenance strategies.

The research process began with a literature review where results were gathered from around the world on strategies used to maintain range areas. Secondly, an online survey was undertaken to gain insight from Australian free-range egg farmers as to what range regeneration strategies worked for them. Thirdly, targeted interviews were conducted with free-range farmers of different production systems, flock sizes, and outdoor stocking densities. This enabled the research team to gather information from across Australia's diverse climatic zones and soil types. Finally, soil and plant tissue samples were collected from

three case study farms to measure the impact of high nutrient loads on trees planted on the range.

Key results and findings

- The mobile caravan provided shade and shelter.
- Mobile caravan farmers moved caravans often to maintain range ground cover and prevent excess manure build-up.
- Managing the inner range was a major focus on fixed shed farms, with many options being used (e.g., rocks, mesh, bark chips and verandas).
- Nitrate and phosphorus levels were highest in soils closest to the shed and under nearby trees.
- Excess nitrate and phosphorus levels were not found in plant tissues of saltbush, olive trees, eucalypts, and grapevines grown closest to the shed.

Recommendations to farmers


- Planting trees in certain configurations (e.g., rows and groves) may encourage hens away from the shed.
- A variety of enrichments (e.g., hay bales, dust bath areas, pecking objects) can help disperse hens across the range.
- Vegetative ground cover is good but needs to be managed (e.g., mowing) as excess grass growth can impact hen production.
- Soil test frequently (at least every two years) on both fixed shed and mobile caravan farms to monitor soil nitrate and phosphorus levels.
- Plant trees at least 25m from the shed – *Figure 1*.
- Moveable shade structures (living and constructed) are useful in the 0–25m zone from a fixed shed, move often to reduce nutrient build-up under shade structures, as shown in *Figure 2*. 



Figure 1. At least 40m from the shed, hens are attracted into a circular grove planting of wattles and eucalypts.



Figure 2. A simply constructed moveable shade structure placed on the edge of the rock aggregate 10m from the shed. This can be moved progressively further from the shed to encourage hens away from the shed.



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ARLF program provides egg industry professionals with important lessons in leadership

Designed to build leadership capacity within the agriculture industry, the Australian Rural Leadership Foundation (ARLF) Australian Agribusiness Leadership Program (AALP) Training Course provides the opportunity for people working in agriculture to learn adaptive leadership skills, learn from influential agribusiness leaders and examine the complexity, challenges and opportunities in Australian agriculture.

As part of our commitment to support training opportunities in the industry, Aus Eggs recently sponsored Tamsyn Murray, CEO of Josh's Rainbow Eggs, to participate in the course. We caught up with her to gain an insight into her experience.

Reflecting on her time spent on the course, Tamsyn remarked: "I am a different human, having spent 11 days with some of the best and brightest in the Ag industry, challenging deeply my assumptions of what it means to be a great leader, and learning from experts in the field of ag and leadership".

The program combines new skills development and mindset coaching with networking and the initiation of structured pathways, teaching participants to:

- Be advocates for change
- Bring innovative ideas and leadership values back to their organisations and the overall sector
- Gain self-awareness and understanding
- Collaborate at a cross-sectoral level
- Foster an adaptive leadership style
- Respond to complex, real-life scenarios that face the sector

Key highlights for Tamsyn included learning how to prepare and deliver a great speech or media interview and negotiation skills. She noted that skills learnt during AALP would help her



Tamsyn Murray (centre) at the ARLF AALP graduation.

manage relationships with supermarkets and gain feedback within her leadership team at Josh's Rainbow Eggs.

Tamsyn is passionate about educating customers, especially young people, about egg farming and hopes that in the future, the farm can develop an on-farm education centre with regular school tours and visits from Ag students.

To learn more about the industry training and capacity building opportunities on offer through Australian Eggs, visit www.australianeggs.org.au/for-farmers/industry-training-capacity-building
To find out more about the ARLF Australian Agribusiness Leadership Program, and to register for next year's course, please visit: www.rural-leaders.org.au/australian-agribusiness-leadership-program





Teisha Brebner and Doreen Anene at the Australian Egg Industry May Forum.

Student of the Year Award Winner announced at Australian Egg Industry May Forum

At the Australian Egg Industry May Forum in Brisbane, the Poultry Student of the Year Award was proudly presented to Teisha Brebner, a farm supervisor at Versteden's Egg Farm, Victoria, and recent graduate of the Certificate III in Poultry Production course.

Teisha began working in the egg industry in June 2016 after finishing school and, ever since, has had a keen interest in egg production processes – particularly rearing chickens for layer sheds and egg grading.

In February 2023, she participated in the Poultry Production Training Program to further her knowledge and found the course highly informative. Key highlights for Teisha include learning about poultry diseases, rules, regulations, and welfare codes impacting poultry production and

egg problems caused by stress/sickness in chickens. She reports that she has taken her knowledge into the workplace and is more attentive to biosecurity threats and monitoring flock health.

Teisha plans to remain in the industry for the foreseeable future and aspires to manage a layer or rearing farm. She advises anyone wanting to start out in the egg industry to persevere through the sometimes tough beginning and keep an open mind. “You would be surprised how rewarding it is to look after chickens. There are so many

different aspects of the industry – it is so interesting.”

At the forum, Teisha also participated in the panel discussion in the Capacity Building session, where she responded to audience questions surrounding career development in the egg industry. 

If you would like to find out more about the training programs we have on offer at Australian Eggs, please visit the industry training and capacity building page of our website: www.australianeggs.org.au/for-farmers/industry-training-capacity-building

PULLET REARING

‘A good start for good production’

The rearing period constitutes a fifth of a laying hen’s commercial lifespan and includes the period from hatch to 16 weeks of age.

BY MINI SINGH – PROJECT MANAGER, INNOVATION & PRODUCTION, AUSTRALIAN EGGS – INSIGHTS SHARED FROM EGGNET DISCUSSIONS AND INDUSTRY INPUT

It should be noted that majority of the body development of the hen occurs in this period. Typically, the organs of the digestive tract and the immune system develop up to 6 weeks of age.

From 6 to 12 weeks there is a spurt of growth, when hens develop most of their adult body, i.e. muscular growth, bone and feather development, with 95% of the skeleton developing at the end 12 weeks. During this time much of the hen’s brain development and learning also takes place.

It has been well documented that good rearing is the key to a uniform, healthy, and well-adjusted flock being delivered to production facilities, which is a precursor for good production later in life.

Some of the factors that need to be considered for optimum rearing include:

Like-for-like housing

There is consensus that hens should be reared in an environment similar to that in which they will live as adults. Matching the rearing environment to the production environment results in easing the transition and reduces behavioural problems.

It is important to train pullets appropriately for the production system they will be transferred to. Rearing pullets on floor to be transferred to cage or aviary systems is not suitable. Whereas training pullets intended for aviaries with perches or with jump start systems is more appropriate and

demonstrates greater use of the elevated levels of the system, higher accuracy of long flights and jumps, lower pullet mortality, and a higher proportion of eggs laid in nest boxes during production.

Floor type, drinker and feeder type and feeding schedules in rearing sheds should match with the production shed. Feed formulation should be similar between rearing and production. The pullets should also be fed a form of feed (e.g., mash) that will be consistent with the form of the ration on the production farm.

Building an appetite

The main objective is to develop a good body frame during the first few weeks of rearing, and then to encourage the pullets to consume larger amounts of feed.

Building an appetite to consume large amounts of feed during rearing is crucial after moving to the laying house, when feed intake has to increase sharply, especially as production increases.

Development of the pullet’s crop capacity during rearing is the main key to a good appetite in the production phase.

Feeding a ration with a lower density, complex structure and a slightly higher crude fibre content ensures that a good appetite is established during the growing phase. The pullets should also learn to empty the feeders preferably once a day, but at least several times a week.

Provision of grit stimulates the development of crop and gizzard, which in turn has a positive effect on feed intake capacity.

The use of an intermittent lighting programme until the age of 3-4 weeks also stimulates the birds’ activity and therefore their feed intake.

Body weight and uniformity

Body weight at transfer is critical. Getting pullets to the correct weight and obtaining the best body frame and composition by the end of rearing is fundamental in achieving good peak production, better persistency, and better shell quality during lay.

Monitoring and keeping records of pullet weights is essential to successfully achieving the right bodyweight. This allows to compare the flock’s weights to the advised standards and to previous flocks and helps to identify and find solutions in time if birds are not developing as required.

Records should also be kept for mortality, growth and feed/water intake, as well as any occurrence of disease, repairs, vaccinations, treatments and response to treatments.

Management, in particular of nutrition and lighting programs, can help to control body weight.

Monitoring the body weight progression of the birds during rearing also helps to obtain good uniformity. The goal is to meet the target body weight and achieve high flock uniformity (~90%) at that age.

The number of feeders and drinkers, feeding regimens, and feed presentation are strong contributors to ensure uniformity.

Lighting

There is a slow step-down of lighting from 0-8 weeks, until lights are on for 10 hours of the day, after which there are gradual increases in light from 16 to 30 weeks of age.

Stepping up light based on body weight instead of age can maximize pullet growth and prevent early sexual maturity.

Ideally, the time of day for start of the light period (lights on) during rearing should be matched to the start of the light period in the laying barn.

Vaccination and health

Vaccination should be based on endemic challenges in production facilities. Vaccine programs should be reviewed regularly and tailored specifically for the region. Vaccine programs can be varied and modified by consulting a poultry veterinarian.

Flock should be vaccinated efficaciously, and this needs to be confirmed by Point of Lay (POL) serology.

Regular environmental swabs should also be tested to indicate freedom from significant food safety or avian health *Salmonella*. Birds need to be managed for any internal and external parasites.

Anticipating developmental changes and applying an integrated approach including feed, farm and health management and tailoring interventions to the specific challenge can support optimal rearing of pullets and enhance performance and persistence of laying flocks.



Vaccine programs should be reviewed regularly and tailored specifically for the region.





Gary Small and Nadine Goody with family at the Smalls Trading Company farm.

After 64 years of egg farming, the last egg rolls off the line at Smalls Trading Company

With 64 years of producing quality eggs for customers across Central Queensland and beyond, owners of Mount Morgan-based Smalls Trading Company, Gary Small and Nadine Goody, have made the difficult decision to sell the family business and cease production of much-loved Country Fresh Eggs.

The decision came after ongoing uncertainty in the industry over the past ten years and the absence of the next generation to take over the family business.

Production began with just a few backyard hens in 1959, purchased by Nadine and Gary's parents, Kevin and Doreen Small, to combat nut grass. By 1963, the business expanded through its conversion to a caged system, and in 1976, Nadine, Gary, and siblings Robert Small and Leanne Hinchcliffe entered into a business partnership with their parents, and Smalls Trading Company was born. When fully operational, the farm employed up to 16 people and housed 65,000 hens.


Smalls Trading Co has been an active member of Australian Eggs since its establishment in 2002 and has continually collaborated to share extensive industry knowledge and lessons learnt after years of experience, contributing to overall industry-wide improvement. In their long-standing association with Australian Eggs, they have forged many valuable connections with employees and members, both old and new, and reflect, "We have met some great people in our very close-knit industry".

Nadine and Gary recognise that through Australian Eggs, they were able to update procedures

necessary to keep up with today's information and problems both on farms and in society.

Country Fresh Eggs may have disappeared from the shelves, but Central Queensland will not be without eggs. Peacefield Farm has purchased the Small's property and will continue to supply the local market with eggs.

Nadine and Gary are thankful for their loyal customers for supporting them over the years and are very much looking forward to their retirement and beginning the next chapter of their lives.

Australian Eggs would like to thank Nadine, Gary and family for their tireless and valuable contributions to the Australian egg industry across the years. 



EFA board of directors and management.

Egg Farmers of Australia



MELINDA HASHIMOTO
CEO, EGG FARMERS OF AUSTRALIA

It has been another busy quarter for EFA as we continue to work between industry and decision makers on a range of important issues, firstly, thanks to Greg Quinn for stepping up to become the Director for Queensland and also Andy Crocker for coming on board to assist with the Alternative Director role.

Thanks also to Ian Wilson, WA EFA Director who has been appointed as Deputy Chair of EFA and Company Secretary.

EFA is looking forward to seeing members at the EFA AGM and Awards Presentation in conjunction with the Australian Eggs Forum in Sydney this year.

Egg Farmers of Australia is tracking well against our Strategic Plan (2022-2026) assisting Egg Farmers of Australia members to advance their business through support with biosecurity, food safety and national regulation matters.

Advocacy is possible through the research support of Australian Eggs.

Policy

Policy is developed and considered from a range of feedback provided through members, stake farming organisations and recommendations are put forward for consideration at Egg Farmers of Australia board meetings for passing.

Policy is outlined on the Egg Farmers of Australia website and information is provided to members through the membership booklet provided on payment of membership each financial year.

Advertising

Recently EFA commenced Facebook advertising for businesses in conjunction with the paid advertising in our Quarterly newsletter. Thanks to those who have continued to advertise with EFA. Also don't forget if you are an EFA member and have a job to advertise or some machinery for sale that would be suitable to go on our website under the classified section feel free to touch base with Kylie about this.

I can therefore only encourage EFA members to get involved with your state representative body and have your voice heard so that this can be provided to EFA.

Biosecurity

Egg Farmers of Australia continues to work to progress poultry industry EADRA arrangements in conjunction with other poultry EADRA signatories being the Australian Chicken Meat Federation (ACMF) and Australian Duck Meat Association (ADMA).

As many of you are aware, Egg Farmers of Australia have been advocating for a more co-ordinated approach to AI resources and information and after being focused on a number of solutions, we are getting closer to this aim becoming a reality.

Food Safety

At the time of writing this article, discussions with Food Standards Australia and New Zealand (FSANZ)

pertaining to the risk assessment outcomes and proposed risk management measures for the review of the egg standard continue.

Regulation

Regulation will continue to be a challenging space both at a national level and particularly for state farming organisations who are assisting government in their progress on the standards and guidelines implementation.

Advancement of the egg industry

Egg Farmers of Australia will continue to inform people through opportunities made available in this publication *Eggstra!*, *National Poultry News* and *Poultry Digest*.

Thank you from EFA

From Egg Farmers of Australia's initial commencement in 2016, the organisation in 2024 is now going into its 9th year. The long term sustainability of our organisation is only possible through corporate sponsors, EFA egg farming supply chain members who pay membership and voluntary levies and business and personal memberships. Thank you for your ongoing support.

EFA Phone number

As a final note, for your reference the EFA phone number is 07 4977 4337.

See you at the EFA AGM & Awards Presentation in conjunction with the Australian Eggs Forum!





Australian Eggs Nominated Director Process


As required by Australian Eggs Constitution, elected Directors completing their term will resign at the AGM held each year, and their positions will become vacant.

This year, one elected director position will become vacant and may be filled by nominated candidates. If you are an Egg farmer member of Australian Eggs or a member of the Board, you will be able to nominate a person to stand for election. The formal nomination process for this commences in September 2023 and

concludes in October 2023.

Australian Eggs funding contract provides that the Board should be able to demonstrate the following skills and experience:

- governance, risk and compliance;
- finance, accounting and audit;
- R&D, innovation, technology and technology transfer, commercialisation and adoption of R&D;

- product promotion and marketing (including communications);
- egg industry knowledge, including farming and/or production experience; and
- public policy and administration. 

For further information regarding the nominated director process, please contact Australian Eggs at contacts@australianeggs.org.au or on 02 9409 6999.



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Rod Jenner, Allison Crook, Ron Glanville, Jodi Courtice and Rowan McMonnies discussing biosecurity risk management and emergency response.

Australian Egg Industry May Forum in Brisbane

In May, over 80 egg industry personnel gathered in Brisbane for the May Forum, where they were joined by a range of guest speakers and panellists, including specialist researchers, veterinarians, food safety experts, farmers, agricultural consultants, and biosecurity specialists.

With its program developed to stimulate conversations about addressing challenges facing the industry, the forum provided a chance to share insights on solutions across all levels of the supply chain.

Sessions focused on a range of topics, including optimising the performance of layers, SMART farming, capacity building and egg industry sustainability with panel discussions and presentations demonstrating the latest research, innovations and updates in these areas.

A highlight of the day was a session focusing on risk management and emergency response, where panellists, consisting of Allison Crook, Chief Veterinary Officer, QLD Department of Agriculture and Fisheries; Rowan McMonnies, Managing Director, Australian Eggs; Ron Glanville, Principal Consultant, Biosecurity Advisory Service; Rod Jenner Veterinarian, Rosetta Management Consulting Pty Ltd and Jodi Courtice, Veterinarian, McLeans Farms, discussed how the Australian egg industry is preparing for

an Avian Influenza outbreak. The panel discussion between Rick Jacobson from Safe Food Production Queensland and Rod Jenner and facilitated by Rowan McMonnies on public health and food safety was also a key highlight, covering ongoing concerns such as *Salmonella*.

Thank you to all our egg farmers, industry representatives, speakers and panellists who contributed to and attended this year's event. We hope you can join us in Sydney on 14–15 November for the Australian Egg Industry Forum.





EGG INDUSTRY SNAPSHOT SURVEY

Tell us what you think

In the coming weeks, all egg farming businesses will be contacted by Intuitive Solutions to invite them to participate in the Egg Industry Snapshot Survey.

The survey invites all egg farming businesses to provide anonymous feedback on the performance of Australian Eggs and share suggestions on areas for improvement.

The survey also calls for feedback on focus areas for where farmers would like to see their investments go to.

Australian Eggs relies on this process to record feedback to help make

informed decisions on the investment of farmer levies and to identify areas of improvement for service delivery.

Egg farming businesses will receive a personalised invite to participate in an online survey to capture information about the egg industry, on-farm practices and priority areas for research and development.

The survey will take around

15 minutes to complete. Any survey responses provided are completely confidential.



If you would like to discuss the Snapshot Survey or any other area of interest, please contact us at any stage on (02) 9409 6999 or email contacts@australianeggs.org.au

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Competition Law in agricultural industries

With covid behind us and in-person events in full swing, it is important that all egg farmers remain mindful of their competition compliance responsibilities. For competition to stay healthy, businesses must behave in an acceptable way towards competitors and suppliers.

The *Competition and Consumer Act 2010* sets rules for business behaviour so that all businesses can compete on their merits.

As a business operator it's important to be familiar with rights and obligations under the *Competition and Consumer Act 2010* (CCA).

The *Competition and Consumer Act 2010* (CCA) is a national law. It sets out how businesses must deal with suppliers, competitors and customers.

The CCA also covers aspects of business such as advertising and price setting.

In November 2017, the *Competition and Consumer Act 2010* was amended to introduce a new prohibition on 'concerted practices' that have the purpose, effect or likely effect of substantially lessening competition in the market.

A concerted practice involves forms of cooperation between two or more businesses (or people) that act as a substitute for the uncertainty of competition.

Concerted practices are intended to capture communication or conduct that falls short of a contract, arrangement or understanding, however, it may exist in addition to a contract, arrangement or understanding. A concerted practice may exist even if none of the parties is obliged, either legally or morally, to act in any particular way.

If a business receives communication from another party that it believes constitutes a concerted practice, the EM suggests the receiving party should expressly reject the approach and not communicate any further information of this nature.

For more information, please see the Explanatory Memorandum accompanying the *Competition and Consumer Amendment (Competition Policy Review) Bill 2017*, the Interim Guidelines on Concerted Practices published by the ACCC, or contact your lawyer.



www.accc.gov.au/business/competition-and-exemptions/competition-and-anti-competitive-behaviour

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Annual Operating Plan 2023/2024



Australian Eggs Annual Operating Plan

Well on our way into the new financial year, Australian Eggs is pleased to present our *Annual Operating Plan (AOP)*, which outlines proposed activities and seeks to build upon strategies that will help grow the market; build community trust in the industry; lower productions costs; and manage industry risks.

Importantly, the AOP has been developed to help the industry respond to changes to the operating environment and support egg farming businesses in reaching their growth objectives.

The AOP also considers the industry’s role in the community as Australians manage cost of living pressures.



For more information on the AOP process and objectives, view the video here:



To view the AOP and to learn how you can get involved please contact us on 02 9409 6999 or visit www.australianeggs.org.au/who-we-are



Preparation time: 15 mins

Serves: 6

Ingredients

1 small or ½ large head cauliflower
(about 3 cups)

2 eggs 1 cup self-raising flour

¼ tsp baking powder

Salt and pepper, to taste

½ cup parmesan cheese, grated

1 cup milk

Cauliflower Cheese Fritters

Method

1. Remove the leaves and stem from your cauliflower and cut into roughly 1cm square pieces. A mix of small and large pieces is fine, some will end up as crumbs just make sure the stem parts are not too big so they cook through.
2. Add all the ingredients to a large bowl except for the milk, then gradually add the milk until you end up with batter about the thickness of pancake mix evenly coating all the cauliflower. You might not need all the milk.
3. In a large frypan over medium heat add about 1cm of neutral oil and heat for a few minutes. Working in batches, drop the batter into palmsized rounds and cook til about ¾ done before flipping. It should take about 2-3 minutes on the first side and 1 minute on the next, and end up golden and crispy. Drain in a sieve placed over a bowl or on some paper towel.
4. Repeat until all fritters are cooked, adjusting the flame for temperature as you go if it gets too hot or if they take too long.



Prep Time: 10 mins

Cook time: 15 mins

Serves: 24

150g almond meal

100g pistachio kernels,
finely ground

200g caster sugar

1 egg

Icing sugar, for dusting

Pistachio and almond amaretti

Method

Preheat oven to 160°C fan-forced.

1. Place the nuts, sugar, and egg in a large bowl. Mix well until a crumbly dough forms. You can tell it's ready if it holds together when you squeeze it in your hands.
2. Prepare a large lined baking tray and using a tablespoon, roll into 24 balls. They'll be about the size of a Ferrero Rocher chocolate.
3. Dust the balls in icing sugar then place one at a time onto your baking tray. Press down in the middle to flatten slightly.
4. Bake for 15 minutes, or until golden and slightly cracked. Allow to cool completely before you handle them or they will just fall apart.
5. Keep in an airtight container at room temperature. They're best eaten within the week to maintain the chewy centre.

2023 2024

SEPTEMBER

September 1
Australian Eggs Membership
Renewals Due

September 15
Australian Eggs Rodent
Control Webinar
(Contact Mini Singh for details)



OCTOBER

October 2
Labour Day public holiday –
ACT, NSW & SA

October 11
Deadline to submit
nominations for Australian
Eggs board of directors

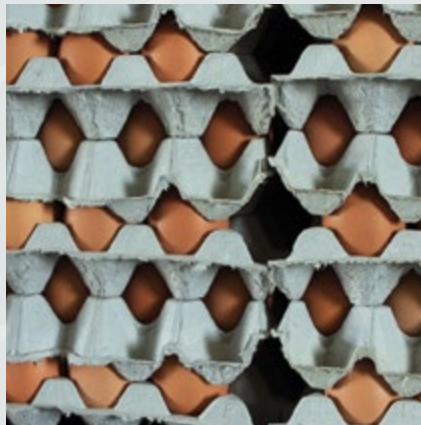
October 13
World Egg Day



NOVEMBER

November 7
Melbourne Cup

November 14-15`
Australian Egg Industry Forum
and Australian Eggs AGM



DECEMBER

December 25 (Monday)
Christmas Day

December 26 (Tuesday)
Boxing Day public holiday



JANUARY

January 2 (Monday)
New Year's Day public holiday

January 26 (Friday)
Australia Day public holiday



Facco with over 65 years of worldwide poultry system experience, is glad to announce a new partnership with EggTech.



This new collaboration has the aim to offer the best poultry farming solutions in the Australian market, thanks to Facco's cage free and animal welfare systems including ventilation, feeding and drinking, manure treatment, egg collection and control systems, with the support and highly experienced team of specialists of EggTech.

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