

# Venkateshwara's BV-300 dominates the evolving Indian marketplace

Venkateshwara Hatcheries Pvt Ltd was set up 40 years ago by Dr B. V. Rao who had, ahead of his time, realised the great untapped potential for poultry production in India – a country where very little beef and pork is eaten because of religious taboos and where seafood is an expensive luxury that the masses can not afford. However, there is a large urban middle class developing that is seeking more animal protein in its diets.

Poultry, in the form of meat and eggs, is the way to meet this demand and, with a per capita consumption significantly under 3kg, the potential is enormous!

## Asia's largest integrator

Today, the VH Group is a \$US one billion conglomerate and the largest Asian integrator with interests in breeding (Vencobb broiler and BV-300 table egg layer), hatching, growing, processing, feed production, vaccine manufacture, SPF egg production, animal health products, human health foods, pet products, egg powder, poultry equipment and fast food outlets, as well as owning the English Premiership football club Blackburn Rovers.

Recently, International Hatchery Practice spent some time with the VH Group and this included a day with their BV-300 layer breeder operation near Pune on the west coast of India.

This was the original, and is therefore the



**A laying house and, left, the hatchery.**

and Venkateshwara have their own pure lines which over the years have become adapted to Indian conditions.

The company has its own breeding operations and a series of franchisees across India. The one we visited has some 100,000 parent stock layers and it supplies a hatchery that sets just short of a million eggs per month.

All the resulting day old table egg layer chicks are sold on the open market with

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oldest, breeder farm/hatchery complex. The BV-300 accounts for some 85% of modern hybrid table egg layers in India and typically produces some 335 eggs per cycle with the parent stock standard of 287 eggs per cycle and 300 often being achieved.

The BV-300 is based on Babcock genetics

**Inside a breeder laying house – left, the hens and, right, the cockerels.**





**Egg grading on farm and, right, inside one of the multi-stage setters.**

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customers ranging from large professional table egg farms to small farmers. This farm has some 18 houses which typically hold 6,200 hens with 10% cockerels (all caged).

The day old chicks come from Venkateshwara Hatcheries Pvt Ltd's own grandparent farm which, in turn, is supplied by their BV300 elite and great grandparents.

Interestingly, the whole of the parent stock farm – rearing and laying – is cage based and artificial insemination is practised.

A comprehensive vaccination programme is followed that starts in the hatchery with a double Marek's disease vaccination (HVT + SBI). The Newcastle vaccination is based on La sota vaccine in rear and this is boosted by a killed Newcastle vaccination just prior to lay. The in lay programme is reinforced by giving La sota vaccine every 8-10 weeks via the water. As the houses are open sided, all live vaccines are given via the water.

A similar regimen is used for Gumboro disease with a live standard or plus vaccine being followed up with a killed one.

Vaccinations are also given against fowl cholera, coryza and normal infectious bronchitis. Vaccinal titres are checked every month and the vaccination programme is then topped up as required depending upon the blood test results.

Fortunately, salmonella is not an issue and

#### **Sexing the chicks.**





**Left, the setters and, right, the vaccination team.**

the breeder flocks regularly test negative for *Salmonella enteritidis* and *Salmonella typhimurium* and coccidiosis control is via in feed coccidiostats.

In rear the birds are brooded on a 20% crude protein crumble and then go on to an 18% crude protein mash feed and mash is then continued throughout lay. In lay the crude protein content is season dependent.

As was previously noted artificial insemination is used across the farm. Hens are inseminated every four days with a quarter of the flock being processed every day. Semen is used neat although the use of dilu-

ents is a possibility in the future. With the use of artificial insemination fertilities well over 98% are the norm.

Eggs are collected seven or eight times a day and are cleaned and disinfected on farm where they are also subjected to an initial grading.

They are then transferred to the on-site hatchery where they are fumigated on receipt before they are graded again.

Prior to setting, eggs are stored at 16°C and at a relative humidity of 75%.

The hatchery uses Jamesway type multi-stage setters which are manufactured in

India by Bala Industries and Entertainment Pvt Ltd (formerly known as VJ Equipments Pvt Ltd). Each machine holds some 90,720 eggs. At peak, hatch of set figures over 95% are achieved and flocks average out at 91% or so. The cull figure is typically 0.6-0.7% and customers receive a very generous four chicks per 100 free of charge to cover transportation, placement and brooding losses.

Chicks are vaccinated against Marek's disease at the hatchery using an HVT and SBI combination. All other vaccinations are the customers' responsibility and are applied after the chicks have been delivered. ■