

Zimbabwean poultry sector looks forward to better times

Following dollarisation in September 2009, when the US dollar replaced the Zimbabwean dollar as that country's currency, financial well being has improved considerably and the demand for poultry products has increased.

International Hatchery Practice visited Lunar Chickens, owned by Dr Gideon Gono and his family, which has the franchise to distribute Hubbard F15 and Novogen Brown stock into most of the SADC countries.

They have some 100,000 parent stock on the ground, who will produce some 400,000 broilers a week, as well as owning about half a million table egg layers.

Their parent stock comes from a grandparent operation, which receives some 2,000 day-old grandparent females and accompanying males three times a year from Hubbard's operations in France.

On the way to the commercial hatchery we visited the grandparent hatchery but, for biosecurity reasons, we did not go inside.

This hatchery uses Emka incubators and is located in a biosecure, secluded location. Everyone is happy with how these machines are performing.

We then went to the commercial hatchery which was built in the second half of 2011 and pulled its first hatch in March 2012. The hatchery is using half of its 24 Emka VH5765 setters and 12 Emka VH192H hatchers.

Here again, there is satisfaction with machine performance.



The grandparent farm is sited in a secluded and biosecure location.

About 3% of eggs are rejected at the breeder farm and settable eggs are shipped daily on plastics to the hatchery where they are fumigated with formalin before being set.

Eggs not required for setting on their day of receipt are stored at 18°C and at a relative humidity of 65%. At the time of our visit, fertility was around 92% and hatchability of set was running at 86%.

The commercial breeder farm we visited

contains traditional open sided houses and is located close to the commercial hatchery. Each house has two workers with a foreman responsible for every three houses.

The Hubbard F15 breeder package is used. This package is the result of the improved selection programme developed.

The F15 produces high chick numbers at the lowest cost. Mated with the different Hubbard males (either white or yellow

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The commercial hatchery is a purpose built facility. Right, inside the setter room with the Emka incubators.





The Emka hatchers and, right, the latest hatch is about to be pulled (note Emka's uniquely coiled cooler pipes).

This locally sculpted cockerel (and its mate opposite) guards the entrance to the commercial hatchery.



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skin), the F15 allows for the production of broilers that meet the requirements of modern poultry production.

Its final generation product has a low live cost, good carcass yield, and breast yield across the liveweight range of 1.5-2.8kg.

The broiler farm that we visited was built in 2009-2010 and has seven 40,000 bird houses.

At the time of our visit it was being filled over a three week period, which means fewer production cycles per year.

Hubbard broilers are being used and they are reared on a maize based diet. They are processed at 38 days at 1.4-1.5kg.

A typical broiler vaccination programme comprises of infectious bronchitis H120 and Newcastle spray vaccinations in the hatchery, followed by a LaSota vaccination at 21 days.

Between these a Gumboro disease vaccination is administered at 14 days.

The processing plant was processing 1,500 birds per hour at the time of our visit but has the potential to process 4,000 per hour.

On the table egg layer front there are two hatcheries with the ability to produce

250,000 Novogen Brown chicks a week, thereby providing Zimbabwe with the latest layer genetics. Here again, Emka incubators are used and the company is happy with their performance. ■



A broiler farm with, left, the entry point for staff and, right, one of the modern broiler houses.

