

Zambian broiler growing success story

Poultry production is steadily evolving in Sub-Saharan Africa and its rate of progress in any particular country is very much dependent on that country's development and economic strength.

One of the most politically stable and economically sound countries in the region is Zambia and recently International Poultry Production visited John Sangwa's farm near the country's capital, Lusaka, to see Zambian poultry production first hand.

Strong economy

Zambia is an agricultural country and in recent times has been a net exporter of maize. This has been helped by the country's central position, its good quality soil and a recent influx of Zimbabwean maize farmers who are looking for an opportunity to farm in a strong economy.

John is a successful lawyer in Lusaka where he also lectures at the local university. He went into poultry as a means of avoiding the stress of everyday legal practice and, if the truth be known, to return to his first love. John was involved with poultry some 20 or so years ago on a small scale, when he raised broilers to four weeks of age before selling them to a local free range producer.

His Mattaniah Farm is some 15km west of Lusaka and his broiler growing started in 1998 with just 250 birds.

That soon doubled to 500 and then



Another good crop of broilers. Note the uniformity.

increased to 2,500 and then increased to 5,000. At the time of our visit he was growing 35,000 broilers a cycle and soon expects his production to be further increased to 65,000.

He rears the Cobb bird which is sourced locally from Hybrid Poultry who run a

grandparent and parent breeding operation in Zambia and are likely to move some of their production to the Cobb Avian.

John operates three houses and the latest is a state of the art tunnel ventilated house with cooler pads that achieves a pleasant

Continued on page 12

The newest house at Mattaniah Farm.





Far left, a 31 day old crop in one older house and, left, outside the newest house. Near right, a house after thinning and far right, the generator house – note the security.

internal temperature of just 22°C.

This latest house is semi-automated and utilises Big Dutchman feeders and Ziggity drinkers. On placement, he full house broods using Hired Hand heaters and circulating fans.

Exceptional livability

He stocks his birds at 22 birds to the m² and typically achieves 1.6kg at 32 days with a mortality of just 3-4%. Typically each house is left empty after clean down for three or four days. This equates to a farm downtime of some two weeks.

One of the issues in Zambia is finding adequate amounts of suitable bedding material.

The preferred material is sawdust, but to

maintain a regular supply of this necessitates stockpiling the material in times of plenty.

Water is supplied from the farm's own borehole, which currently provides some 20,000 litres of water a day.

The low mortality reflects a generally good health picture but this was not always the case. Historically, bacterial infections in chicks and Gumboro disease were major issues.

The former has been addressed by the supplying hatchery and by improved on farm hygiene.

The latter was addressed by a Gumboro disease vaccination programme that is based on an intermediate vaccine followed some days later by a hot Gumboro disease vaccination at 16 days using Bursine products from Fort Dodge. ■

The Hybrid hatchery that supplies the day old chicks to John's farm.



