



# Zambian processor caters for changing market

When it comes to poultry processing, Zambia is not a country that one would think we could learn much from. But that is not the case, as can be seen from this photographic review of Verino Country Choice – one of Zambia’s leading processors.

They process some 10,000 birds a day, six days a week with approximately half destined for whole birds and the remainder for portioning and sausage production.

Interestingly, not so long ago this ratio was 80:20 and the swing to portioning reflects the rapid development of fast food outlets in the country, especially in the capital, Lusaka, and an increasing demand for catering packs.

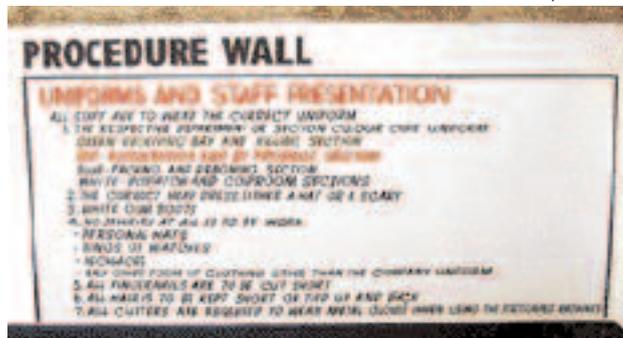
Whole birds are weighed off by 100g bands, but the market is traditionally wanting small, medium or large birds.

Some 70% of the birds come from contract growers and 30% from the company’s own broiler growing operation which is close to the processing plant.

In addition, the company ships a lot of product up to the Copper

Belt and is also exporting some product to neighbouring countries. Obviously with this throughput the operation tends to be labour intensive and, as can be seen in the photographs, this is dedicated and hygiene conscious.

An interesting management strategy (see photograph below centre) is an area on the canteen wall on which the company’s procedures and rules are all painted for staff reinforcement.



In addition, all production is government inspected and, at the time of our visit, the quality of the product being processed was very good and the workforce was happy, focused and dedicated.

The photographs depict the various stages from arrival of live birds to the plant (top left) to finished product – whole birds and portion (bottom right) and include hanging on, eviscerating, spin chilling, portioning and packing.

Even though this processing plant is in the middle of Africa samples are regularly tested in a nearby laboratory. Water and environmental samples are also routinely tested for bacteria. ■



