

UK poultry exports to South Africa restart after eight years

British poultry is once again going to reach South African tables after an 8-year ban, the move is estimated to generate up to £160 million for the UK poultry industry over the next five years.

“The development will allow UK traders to export poultry to South Africa for the first time in eight years, after restrictions were placed on UK imports following outbreaks of avian influenza in the UK. The UK was declared free from avian influenza earlier this year,” says www.gov.uk

Avian influenza in South Africa, 2023, took its toll on the poultry industry. The outbreak led to the culling of millions of birds in the country, resulting in a 30% reduction in the production of hatching eggs. Poultry farmers are already battling with loadshedding and high costs.

South Africa’s biggest poultry producer, Astral Foods, recorded a loss of almost US\$4 million as the ongoing electricity crisis, coupled with the bird flu outbreak, cost the company R2 billion (just over US\$100 million), reported Reuters.

“At the beginning of 2024, The Department of Trade and Industry announced import rebates on poultry. One side of the debate said that this was an important move to bring down the cost of living, and that it would be good for the poor as they depended the most heavily on affordable chicken,” ChickenFacts points out.



Although the progress made in overcoming HPAI is commendable, the sector is currently faced with soaring input expenses. Feed prices, accounting for a considerable portion of production costs, have been highly unstable. There has been an increase in energy costs and other operational expenditures, adding to the burden on producers.

A strategic and balanced approach is needed to address these ongoing challenges.

Chicken is by far the most accessible animal protein for all South Africans

Importing

Lowering the trade barrier has been one of the UK’s priorities for agricultural trade, and its resolution marks a significant step forward, benefiting South African consumers with access to high-quality and securely supplied poultry meat.



Daniel Zeichner

Britain’s Food Security Minister Daniel Zeichner met South African ministers, Deputy Minister Rosemary Capa (Agriculture) and Deputy Minister Andrew Whitfield (Trade), last week to finalise the deal. This access will

provide further opportunities to grow the UK economy and strengthen the trading relationship between both countries.

South Africa has historically been an important market for UK poultry, with exports of poultry worth over £37 million to South Africa in 2016. Teams from across government have worked in combination with their counterparts in South Africa for many years to regain market access.



From Coop to Kitchen

The purpose of quality inspections on Poultry Meat

The Agricultural Product Standards Act, 1990 (Act 119 of 1990), states that certain agricultural products:

- ❖ Must be sold by the correct class and grade
- ❖ Must meet prescribed quality standards

The Regulations regarding Control over the Sale of Poultry Meat makes provision for: Consolidated Document(R.946 of 27 March 1992, R.988 of 25 July 1997 and R. of 22 April 2016)

- ❖ Classes and Grades of Poultry Meat: REG.3
- ❖ Standards for carcasses (incl Brine): REG.4
- ❖ Standards for portions: REG.5
- ❖ Marking of Containers: REG.8



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Katie Doherty

International Meat Trade Association CEO Katie Doherty said, "the reopening of South Africa for UK poultry meat exports is fantastic news for UK producers and exporters – prior to the ban, it was a vital market for UK exporters."



Richard Griffiths

British Poultry Council Chief Executive Richard Griffiths said, "they provide half the meat the nation eats every year, plus the breeding stock of 70% of all

poultry consumed globally, British Poultry Council members actively contribute to both domestic and global food security."

That trade of British poultry can resume with South Africa following the lifting of the avian influenza ban is a great example of government and industry working together to overcome technical trade barriers. **SR**

Fun facts about chickens

Chickens are living descendants of dinosaurs

Chickens are the closest living relatives of dinosaurs! Scientific evidence has proven the shared common ancestry between chickens and the Tyrannosaurus rex.

Chickens aren't completely flightless

Chickens were domesticated about 8000 years ago, and evolved from the Red junglefowl, which are tropical birds that live in the jungle. These wild birds fly to escape predators and to roost high up in trees. Today's domestic chickens still have the ability to fly, although not as effectively. Chickens can fly for short distances – enough to clear obstacles or reach a perch.

Chickens can dream

Research has shown that chickens experience REM (rapid eye movement) while sleeping, meaning they can dream just like us! They also have a sleep phase that humans don't experience called unihemispheric slow-wave sleep, where one half of the brain is asleep and the other is awake. This means that chickens can sleep with one eye open, which is especially useful for looking out for predators.

Chickens have better colour vision than humans

Like humans, chickens have colour vision, and are able to see red, green and blue light. However, what makes chicken vision unique from ours is that they are also able to see ultraviolet light, which are the colours you see when using a black light!

Chickens have complex communication

Chickens have over 30 unique vocalisations that they use to communicate a wide variety of messages to other chickens, including mating calls, stress signals, warnings of danger, how they are feeling and food discovery.

Chickens have great memories

Chickens are able to recognise over 100 different faces, even after being separated for extended periods of time, highlighting their long-term memory capabilities. These faces don't just include chickens, they can recognise the faces of humans too!

Chickens bathe by covering themselves in dirt

While this may seem contradictory, the dirt is essential to helping chickens stay clean! Chickens have an oil gland on their back that is used to spread oil over their feathers to



make them waterproof. Over time, the oil goes stale, and chickens need to wash the old oil off through dust bathing. Dust bathing is when chickens crouch on the ground and spread dirt or another dusty material over their body. The stale oil sticks onto the particles of dirt, and gets shaken off. Chickens can then spread fresh oil onto their feathers.

Chickens have a pecking order

Chickens live in groups called flocks. The social structure of these flocks depends on a hierarchy called a pecking order, which is an order of dominance. All chickens know their place in this order, and it helps to maintain a stable, cohesive group.

Egg shell colour can be determined by the hen's earlobe

Ever wondered what causes the difference between brown and white eggs? It depends on the breed of the hen, but it's not feather colour that tells you what colour the egg shell will be. It's the colour of the hen's earlobes! Generally, hens with red earlobes will lay brown eggs, and hens with white earlobes lay white eggs (with a few exceptions of course). Although the colour of the eggs may differ, the nutritional content or flavour does not.

Chickens are very intelligent animals

Studies have shown that chickens are self-aware and can distinguish themselves from others. They learn from one another, such as a chick learning from her mother which foods are good to eat. Chickens can also demonstrate complex problem-solving skills. **SR**

<https://spca.bc.ca/news/fun-facts-about-chickens/>



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