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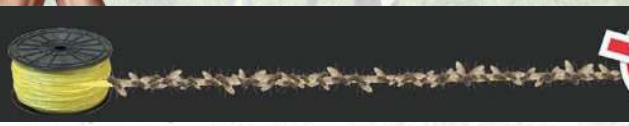
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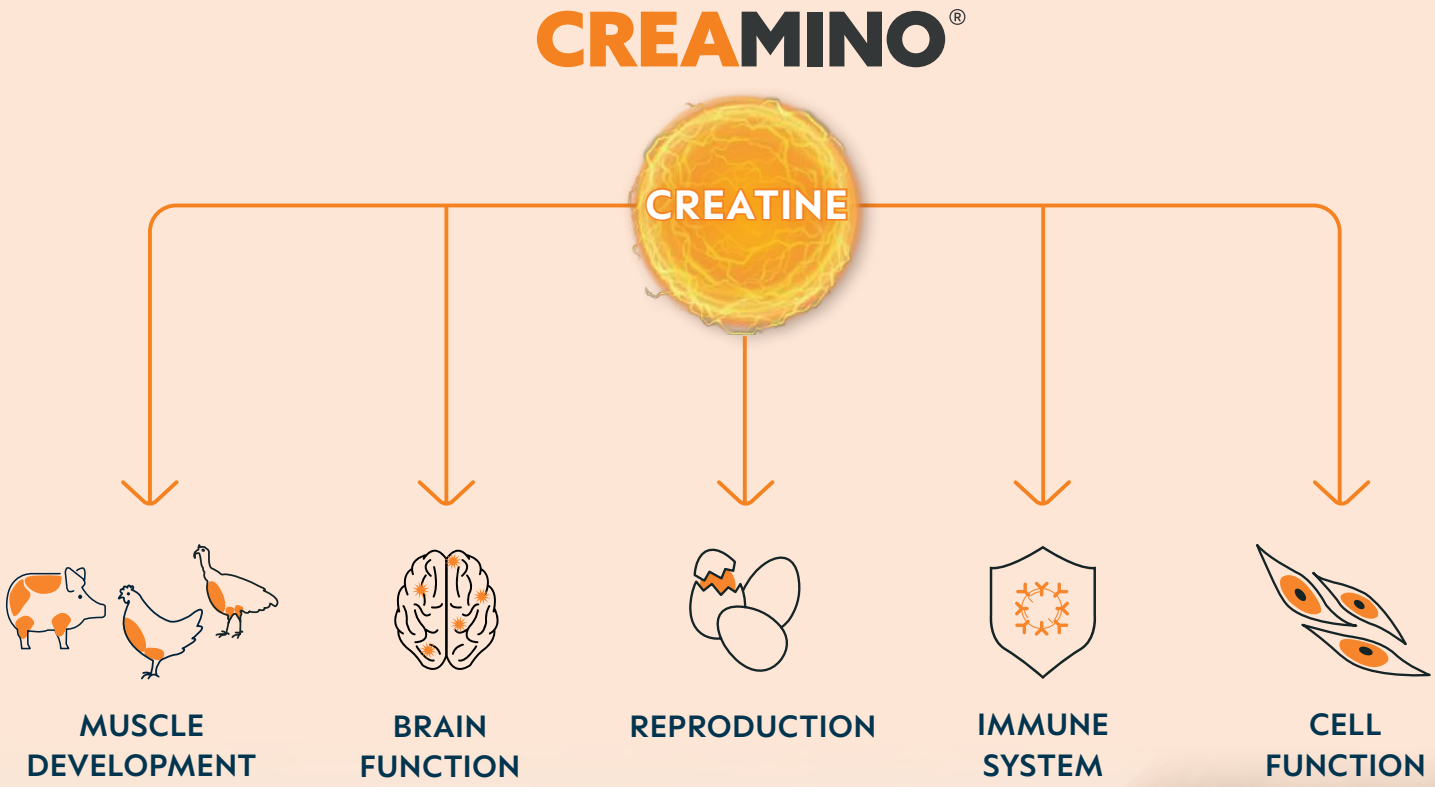
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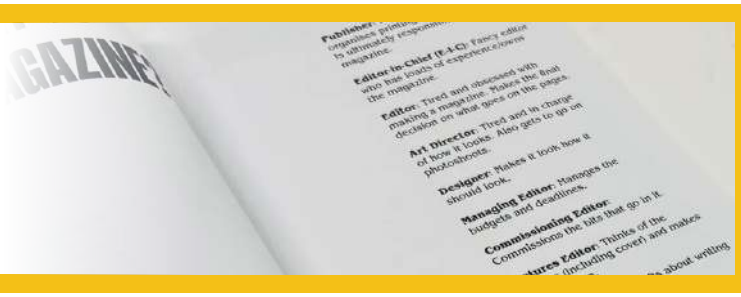
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Editor's Note



Dear Readers,

The January–March edition of Poultry & Livestock Review Africa opens the year with a sharp focus on productivity, resilience, and sustainable growth across Africa's poultry and livestock sectors. As demand for quality protein continues to rise, the industry is being called to produce more—efficiently, responsibly, and profitably.

In this issue, we explore key developments shaping the sector, from improved breeding and animal health solutions to feed innovation, biosecurity, and modern production systems. We also highlight practical strategies and technologies that help producers strengthen operations while responding to changing market and regulatory environments.

Poultry and livestock farming remain critical to food security, employment, and rural development across the continent. Through this publication, we aim to deliver relevant insights, industry perspectives, and solutions that support farmers, integrators, veterinarians, and agribusiness leaders at every stage of the value chain.

We thank our readers, contributors, and industry partners for their continued engagement and trust. As the year unfolds, we remain committed to supporting a stronger, more competitive poultry and livestock industry in Africa.

We wish you a productive and successful season ahead.

Sincerely,
Brena Shumbamhini
Editor-in-Chief, Poultry and Livestock Review Africa

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The Catch Pen:

Second Roundup



A look at the stories shaping rural America and the nation's cattle business.

Meatpacking Politics: "All Bets Are Off"
In case you missed it, Oklahoma State University agricultural economist Derrell Peel recently warned in BEEF magazine that "all bets are off" when it comes to current political proposals targeting the U.S. meatpacking sector. Peel argues that the investigations and rhetoric surrounding packer behavior could harm cattle producers, beef consumers, and the entire beef supply chain for years to come.

According to Peel, policymakers are using "logic that only works in the office of a politician," alleging packers have too much market power even as they pay record-high cattle prices—while simultaneously losing hundreds of dollars per head processed.

"If beef packers had any significant ability to exercise market power, I am certain we would not have record-high cattle prices and packers would not be losing money," he wrote.

Peel also noted the Trump administration appears eager to find a scapegoat, especially as tight cattle supplies will likely keep beef prices elevated for the next two to four years. He cautioned that any attempt to dismantle or heavily regulate the packing industry could jeopardize current record-high cattle prices and undermine the best margins many producers have ever seen.

The Sierra Club's Fall from Grace
A recent New York Times investigation highlights what it calls the "implosion" of the once-influential Sierra Club—long regarded as a leading anti-agriculture environmental organization. Surprisingly, the reporters suggest the group's decline has less to do with environmental priorities and more to do with internal turmoil stemming from cultural and political debates.

The shift reportedly began as leadership began emphasizing racial equity, labor rights, LGBTQ+ issues, and immigrant rights. At one point the club issued an "equity language guide" warning staff not to use words such as vibrant or hardworking, deeming them racially insensitive.

The Sierra Club also supported calls to defund the police and began pushing for slavery reparations. It even condemned its own founder, John Muir, for racist language used in his 1860s writings.

As a result, long-time donors and conservation-minded supporters are walking away, concerned that the organization has drifted far from its original mission of protecting the environment. Some longtime volunteers say they were reprimanded for championing traditional causes such as wolf recovery, only to be told, "Wolves have little to do with DEI."

According to the NYT, there is little evidence the Sierra Club will return to its ecological roots anytime soon.

Brazil, Deforestation, and JBS Under Scrutiny

Environmental watchdog groups continue to target Brazil's cattle sector for alleged links between beef production and Amazon deforestation—and JBS SA is at the center of the debate.

Though the connection between deforestation and cattle production is widely cited, concrete proof across the supply chain remains hard to pin down. JBS is attempting to improve traceability by distributing millions of electronic identification (EID) tags designed to verify that cattle are not coming from prohibited areas.

However, Marcel Gomes of Repórter Brasil argues that "cattle laundering"—moving animals through multiple farms across several states—makes traceability extremely difficult and, in many cases, "practically impossible."

Even as scrutiny intensifies, JBS continues to expand globally. Following Brazilian President Lula's visit to Vietnam, the company announced a US$100 million investment for two new meat-processing facilities there, using imports from Brazil. This comes after earlier plans to invest US$2.5 billion in six new meatpacking plants in Nigeria, plus major expansions in Saudi Arabia's poultry sector.

Crossbreeding Still Counts

The late cattle industry voice Jim Leachman used to hold up a rail worker's oil can and declare, "Crossbreeding is the oil that drives the cattle business."

New research from the North American Limousin Research Foundation (NALRF), conducted with South Dakota State University, reinforces that message. The study evaluated growth performance, feed efficiency, and carcass traits under three harvest endpoints.

Key findings include:

- Crossbreeding remains one of the most effective strategies for boosting production efficiency through heterosis and breed complementarity.
- Feeding-sector profitability hinges on balancing input costs with carcass value.
- Retail yield improves by selecting more muscular animals—including Limousin-influenced genetics.
- As cattle mature physiologically, deposition shifts from lean tissue to fat.
- Longer days on feed—and higher proportions of Limousin genetics—tended to increase profit potential.

Market Uncertainty and Political Influence

BEEF contributor Trey Freeman of Ever.Ag warns that President Trump's involvement in high beef prices and supply issues is beginning to distort cattle market psychology. While fundamental supply-and-demand factors will drive long-term trends, short-term markets—particularly futures—are highly sensitive to uncertainty.

Freeman points to several factors fueling volatility:

- Potential Argentine beef imports
- The possibility of relaxed tariffs on Brazilian beef
- Prospects for reopening the U.S.–Mexico cattle border

He argues that while analysts can estimate how these factors will affect supply, the deeper issue is that "managed money doesn't want any part of the uncertainty driven by politics."

The result? Few traders are willing to go long until the dust settles. In the near term, money flow and technical patterns may overshadow fundamentals—but fundamentals will ultimately prevail.



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African Ministers Commit to Livestock Transformation as Key to Food Security and Economic Growth



African ministers of livestock and agriculture are taking bold steps to reshape the continent's food systems. At the African Food Systems Forum in Dakar, Senegal, thirteen countries participated in the first-ever ministerial deep dive on livestock, co-hosted by the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), AU-IBAR, and GIZ. The session marked a historic shift, placing livestock and animal-sourced foods at the heart of Africa's food systems agenda.

Africa is home to 85% of the world's livestock keepers yet produces just 2.6% of global milk, revealing a stark mismatch between potential and output. This low productivity forces the continent to rely on $50 billion in annual food imports, despite its vast livestock resources. Ministers agreed that this must change—not only to meet rising demand but also to secure livelihoods, reduce poverty, and address nutrition gaps. Projections indicate that meat demand could triple and milk demand double by 2050, making urgent transformation unavoidable.

Dr. Mabouba Diagne, Senegal's Minister of Agriculture and Animal Resources, highlighted the challenge: "We produce only 400 million liters of milk, compared to countries like Kenya and Uganda producing over 2 billion liters annually. We rely too much on imports and need to increase productivity to address this gap."

Appolinaire Djikeng, Director General of ILRI, emphasized that solutions already exist in Africa: "We must scale what works regionally, bridging science, policy, and practice. These solutions offer a triple win: meet rising demand for livestock products, improve livelihoods for more than 200 million African livestock farmers, and do so in an environmentally sustainable way."

Youth employment was a key focus during discussions. Across Africa, young farmers are already leveraging technology—using digital ear tags for traceability, building poultry businesses, and managing forage enterprises. Ministers stressed the importance of transforming livestock from subsistence farming into viable business opportunities that attract youth and create careers. In Tanzania, for example, 235,000 young livestock entrepreneurs have been trained, with 150,000 now running their own enterprises.

Addressing productivity gaps remains critical. Uganda produces 3.4 billion liters of milk annually compared to Senegal's 400 million, largely due to differences in cattle genetics. Ministers committed to scaling up genetic improvement programs to deliver higher-yield breeds. For farmers, the impact is immediate: when a cow produces 8 liters of milk instead of 2, household incomes rise, children can attend school, and nutrition improves. Genetic gains were identified as a priority pathway to boost farmer incomes within just two to three years.

The dialogue also highlighted the need to stop treating livestock separately from agriculture. Mali called for stronger crop-livestock-fisheries integration, while Somalia showcased its model of vaccinating 20 million animals and empowering women in value chains. Tanzania presented digital monitoring systems for herders. Across these examples, common themes emerged: integrated, resilient, and locally adapted approaches are essential for Africa's livestock future.

Ministers concluded with a set of commitments aimed at bridging the gap between Africa's current livestock efficiency (10–20% of global standards) and its potential:

- Establishing feed banks to reduce seasonal shortages
- Promoting regional cooperation to overcome fragmented markets
- Scaling youth entrepreneurship to drive local production
- Expanding genetic improvement programs to raise productivity
- Holding annual livestock ministerial sessions at the Africa Food Systems Forum to ensure accountability

For Africa's farmers, these commitments translate into practical, scalable solutions that can be adopted across borders, transforming livestock into a driver of economic growth and food security.

Dr. Huyam Salih, Director of AU-IBAR, emphasized the stakes: "Africa cannot achieve sustainable food security and agricultural transformation without placing livestock at the center of our development agenda. For millions of farmers, this is the difference between poverty and prosperity, between subsistence and thriving agribusiness."

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ILRI Launches Groundbreaking Initiative to Breed Climate-Smart, Low-Methane Cattle in Africa

The International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), supported by the Bezos Earth Fund and the Global Methane Hub, has launched a three-year, US$3.35 million initiative to reduce methane emissions from African cattle. Part of the Global Methane Genetics Initiative, the project combines cutting-edge science with indigenous livestock knowledge to breed cattle that produce less methane (CH_4) while enhancing productivity, food security, and climate resilience for millions of smallholder farmers across the continent.

"Reducing methane from cattle is one of the most elegant solutions we have to slow climate change," said Andy Jarvis, Director of the Future of Food at the Bezos Earth Fund. "Thanks to collaboration with the Global Methane Hub, we're backing an effort that uses age-old selection practices to identify naturally low-emitting cattle—locking in climate benefits for generations to come."

Livestock in Africa contribute 18% of global livestock methane emissions, with cattle alone responsible for 70% of emissions in Sub-Saharan Africa. Without intervention, these emissions could triple by 2050. By leveraging the genetic diversity of indigenous breeds and applying advanced scientific tools, the initiative aims to help African countries contribute to global climate goals, including the 1.5°C warming target.

"This initiative represents an important step toward a more sustainable and productive livestock sector in Africa," said Raphael Mrode, Principal Investigator at ILRI. "By integrating advanced genetics with Africa's indigenous breeds and farmer knowledge, we can reduce methane emissions while strengthening rural livelihoods through improved productivity."

Key Components of the Initiative

The project will focus on several scientific and practical interventions:

Measuring methane emissions from 3,000 cows across five countries using advanced laser detectors and mobile apps, linked to existing data on 9,000 cows.

Profiling microbial communities in over 1,000 tropical cows to understand the link between rumen microbes, productivity, and methane emissions.

Breeding climate-smart cattle that withstand heat, require fewer resources, and produce lower greenhouse gas emissions, which will be integrated into national breeding programs in Kenya, Ethiopia, South Africa, Burkina Faso, and Benin.

Capacity building, including recruitment and training of technicians, strengthening national breeding centers, and publishing bull and cow rankings accessible to farmers.

Regional Collaboration

ILRI will coordinate this Africa-wide initiative from Nairobi, Kenya, and Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in partnership with leading research organizations including the Agricultural Research Council (South Africa), CIRAD (France), CIRDES (Burkina Faso), and Université d'Abomey-Calavi (Benin). Additional partnerships with organizations such as URUS and GENUS will support dissemination through breeding centers and farmer networks.

"This work brings together the best of science, industry, and the global breeding community to accelerate genetic improvement for methane efficiency worldwide," said Roel Veerkamp, Professor and leader of the initiative at Wageningen University & Research. "It fits nicely with our mission at WUR to explore the potential of nature to improve quality of life."

Expected Impact

The initiative aims to deliver measurable benefits over time:

- Achieving a 12% reduction in livestock methane over 20 years through annual 0.6% reductions at the population level.
- Improving productivity to reduce methane produced per kilogram of milk by 20–25% within five years.
- Making genomic data publicly available to support widespread, low-cost breeding improvements.
- Expanding access to productive, climate-resilient livestock for smallholders, particularly women and youth.

This initiative represents a major step in aligning livestock research with climate action, offering a permanent, cost-effective pathway to methane mitigation while securing the future of Africa's smallholder farming communities.



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Scientists Use AI to Turn Livestock Waste into Sustainable Fertilizer



Researchers are increasingly turning to artificial intelligence to tackle the challenges of livestock waste management, transforming what was once an environmental problem into a sustainable agricultural resource. A team at China Agricultural University, led by Xiaofei Ge, has applied machine learning to predict the behavior of phosphorus — a critical but potentially polluting nutrient — during the hydrothermal treatment of swine manure. Hydrothermal treatment involves heating wet biomass under pressure to produce two outputs: a nutrient-rich solid called hydrochar and a liquid byproduct. Unlike traditional composting or drying, this method can concentrate valuable nutrients and reduce harmful runoff, but predicting phosphorus recovery has historically been difficult. By using AI models such as XGBoost, Decision Tree, and Random Forest, the researchers were able to forecast phosphorus distribution between the solid and liquid phases under varying conditions of temperature, reaction time, pH, and metal ion concentrations.

Among the models tested, XGBoost proved the most accurate, particularly in predicting inorganic phosphorus levels in the liquid, allowing researchers to optimize treatment conditions without endless trial-and-error experiments. The study revealed that the composition of the manure, particularly its oxygen content, had a greater influence on phosphorus outcomes than temperature alone. Reaction time and pH were also important, with acidic conditions favoring phosphorus dissolution into the liquid and alkaline conditions promoting its retention in hydrochar. The addition of iron and calcium ions further enhanced phosphorus stabilization in the solid phase, making it easier to recycle as fertilizer. These findings suggest that AI can help design smarter waste treatment strategies that maximize nutrient recovery while minimizing environmental harm.

To validate their models, the team conducted field experiments using swine manure from a local pig farm near Beijing. Varying temperature, reaction time, and metal ion concentrations, they compared predicted phosphorus distribution to actual measurements. The results aligned closely with AI predictions, confirming the models' practical applicability. Advanced chemical analysis, including phosphorus nuclear magnetic resonance and X-ray diffraction, showed that under more intense conditions, phosphorus compounds became more stable and homogenous, and metal ions helped convert organic phosphorus into inorganic forms embedded in hydrochar. As reaction intensity increased, crystalline structures in hydrochar shifted to more amorphous forms, which are easier to recycle and less prone to leaching into the environment.

This integration of AI and hydrothermal treatment demonstrates a powerful approach to sustainable livestock waste management. Operators of farms and waste treatment facilities can now use machine learning to predict how adjustments in temperature, pH, reaction time, or metal ion concentrations will affect phosphorus recovery, allowing them to optimize processes for fertilizer production or to prevent nutrient runoff. While the models are highly effective, researchers note that local manure composition must be considered, and future studies will expand predictions to different waste types and conditions to improve accuracy further.

Overall, this research represents a significant step toward a circular agriculture model, where livestock waste is no longer a pollutant but a renewable source of nutrients. By combining AI and advanced treatment methods, farms can improve sustainability, recover valuable phosphorus, and reduce environmental impact, ultimately contributing to healthier soils, stronger crops, and more resilient agricultural systems.

A Five-Point Check System for Smart Parasite Control in Livestock



The Five Point Check system, an evolution of the FAMACHA chart developed in the 1990s by South African veterinarians Dr Faffa Malan, Prof Gareth Bath, and Prof Jan van Wyk, offers farmers a practical method to identify parasite issues in sheep and goats while reducing unnecessary treatments. FAMACHA initially helped farmers detect anemia caused by wireworm (barber's pole worm) by comparing the color of the animal's eye mucous membrane to a chart, allowing selective treatment only for animals that needed it. Building on this, the Five Point Check expands the evaluation to the eyes, nose, jaw, tail, and body condition, enabling farmers to spot a wider range of parasitic and health issues and apply treatments more precisely.

The system works by assessing visible signs of infestation: pale eye membranes indicate anemia, nasal discharge may signal lungworm or pneumonia, swelling in the jaw ("bottle jaw") can point to wireworm or liver fluke, tail soiling may reflect various intestinal parasites, and poor body condition signals general parasite burden. While primarily focused on internal parasites, farmers are reminded that other factors like nutritional deficiencies, diseases, or environmental stressors can also influence these signs, and veterinary consultation is recommended for accurate diagnosis.

Malan advises checking flocks regularly, particularly lambs, pregnant, or lactating ewes, every two to three weeks during high-risk periods and weekly at peak worm season. For larger flocks, sampling a smaller group of animals can provide an overview, but if several animals show signs of infestation, a whole-flock check or treatment may be necessary. Treated animals should be marked to track treatment frequency, highlighting individuals that require repeated interventions; removing persistently weak animals strengthens the flock over time.

A key principle in parasite management is refugia, which involves leaving a portion of the worm population untreated to dilute resistant worms. This slows the development of drug resistance, as only some worms are exposed to treatment. Maintaining refugia requires careful selective treatment, returning treated animals to already contaminated pastures, and avoiding unnecessary whole-flock dosing.

Grazing management also plays a vital role. Rotating animals between pastures, alternating species, resting camps, and considering pasture type and condition can reduce parasite exposure. Short or heavily grazed pastures and wet, marshy areas favor parasite survival, while herb-rich or rested pastures reduce risk. Farmers should also monitor nutrition, stress, and general health, take dung samples to assess pasture contamination, and quarantine new animals to prevent introducing drug-resistant parasites.

Malan emphasizes that smart parasite control combines monitoring, selective treatment, grazing management, and veterinary guidance. By using the Five Point Check system effectively, farmers can reduce costs, preserve the effectiveness of anthelmintics, protect animal health, and build more resilient flocks over time.





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Ten Tips to Establish Profitable Grazing Pastures

Healthy pastures are the foundation of a successful livestock farm. They reduce feed costs, improve animal health, increase reproductive success, and boost overall farm profitability. Well-managed pastures support sustainable grazing, maintain soil health, and enhance livestock performance. For South African livestock farmers, understanding soil, climate, species selection, and pasture management is essential. Agricultural Research Council (ARC) researcher Patrick Rakau shares science-backed advice to help farmers establish productive pastures.

Well-established pastures provide multiple benefits. They reduce the need for herbicides by suppressing weeds naturally, produce high-quality forage for livestock or sale, support higher growth and milk yields, and improve reproductive outcomes such as kidding, lambing, and calving rates. Whether managing a dairy, beef, or mixed livestock farm, establishing pastures with the right approach is crucial for long-term success.

1. Assess environmental conditions. Before planting, it is important to evaluate the environmental conditions of your land, including temperature, rainfall patterns, and soil type, as these factors directly influence which pasture species or cultivars will thrive. Planting the wrong species can lead to poor growth and wasted resources.

2. Comply with legal requirements. Follow South African legislation, including the CARA Act of 1983, which governs the use of virgin soils. Ensure that your site is not a wetland and avoid introducing invasive species. Compliance protects natural resources and your investment.

3. Understand your soil. Healthy soil underpins successful pasture growth, and investing time in soil testing helps identify soil type and fertility. Planting seeds unsuited to the soil can result in poor germination and pasture failure, wasting time and money.

4. Prepare the seedbed. Proper seedbed preparation is vital for germination. Clear weeds and cultivate the soil using a disc plough, reaper, and roller to create a firm, even surface. This allows seeds to germinate and emerge before weeds take hold.

5. Use certified quality seeds. Certified seeds from accredited companies guarantee tested germination rates and consistent growth, reducing the risk of pasture failure.

6. Select species based on livestock needs. Choose pasture species according to your farm's objectives. Dairy farmers should focus on high-quality, carbohydrate-rich grasses that perform well under irrigation, while beef farmers benefit from natural pastures such as Cenchrus ciliaris, Trichloris crinita, and Smuts finger grass (Digitaria eriantha), which provide high protein content with lower management requirements.

7. Plant at the right time. Timing is crucial for successful germination. Summer rainfall areas are best planted between October and November, while winter rainfall regions like the Western Cape are ideally planted in March. Planting too early or in dry soil can compromise pasture establishment.

8. Protect soil moisture with cover crops. Cover crops conserve moisture, prevent soil degradation, and improve fertility. After harvesting cash crops, avoid leaving soil bare, as uncovered soil loses moisture rapidly.

9. Manage pests, diseases, and weeds naturally. Mixed cropping and cover crops reduce pest and disease cycles without relying heavily on chemicals. Introducing legumes, broadleaf plants, and grasses between crops enhances soil health while allowing farmers to specialize in high-performing species.

10. Know when to graze. Pastures are generally ready for grazing about two months after planting, once roots are fully established. Grazing too early can uproot plants and reduce productivity. Using a 30 cm ruler helps determine optimal grazing height, and observing rest periods between grazing ensures healthy regrowth. Implementing rotational grazing, moving livestock when pasture is grazed down to approximately 10 cm, protects the pasture, prolongs its lifespan, and ensures consistent forage availability.

Farmers should avoid common mistakes such as ignoring soil science, planting crops at the wrong time, and poor grazing management. Sandy soils, for example, hold little water, so species selection should match soil characteristics. Planting summer crops in winter limits growth, and neglecting proper grazing practices can lead to overgrazing and pasture degradation. By carefully following these ten steps, farmers can establish pastures that are productive, sustainable, and profitable, supporting healthier livestock and ensuring long-term farm success.

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Zambia Calls for Greater Investment to Transform Its Agriculture Sector

Zambia has renewed its call for increased private sector and foreign investment in agriculture, as it works toward becoming a regional food production and export hub in Southern Africa.

Speaking at the Hand in Hand Initiative Investment Forum 2025 hosted by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in Rome, Minister of Fisheries and Livestock, Eng. Peter Kapala, said Zambia is ready to collaborate with global investors to unlock the full potential of its agriculture sector.

"Zambia is open for business," Kapala affirmed. "We are eager to partner with private investors and development organizations to expand irrigation, mechanization, and agro-processing—key enablers for sustainable food production and trade."

He highlighted that Zambia's strategic geographic position, sharing borders with eight countries and accessing a regional market of over 400 million people, makes it an ideal base for agribusiness and regional food trade.

Ambitious Targets and Enabling Reforms

Under President Hakainde Hichilema's vision for 2030, Zambia aims to produce 10 million metric tonnes of maize, one million tonnes of soya beans, and one million tonnes of wheat annually.

To achieve these targets, the government has rolled out multiple sector reforms – from seed and livestock regulation updates to mechanization hubs and expanded access to agricultural financing. These measures are designed to enhance productivity and strengthen competitiveness across the crop and livestock value chains.

Empowering Farmers and Promoting Climate-Smart Agriculture

Kapala emphasized the importance of sustainable practices through initiatives like the Sustainable Agriculture Financing Facility (SAFF), which helps farmers – especially smallholders – access affordable loans for solar-powered irrigation systems.

Such programs are critical to enabling year-round farming, reducing dependence on rainfall, and promoting climate-smart, resource-efficient agriculture.

In addition, the government is investing in rural road infrastructure, modern storage facilities, and digital market platforms to improve farmers' connectivity to local and regional markets.

International Confidence in Zambia's Agricultural Potential

Marija Milivojevic, Swedish Minister Counsellor and Deputy Permanent Representative to the FAO, commended Zambia for fostering an investor-friendly environment. She highlighted Bayer's €32 million maize seed facility in Kabwe as a prime example of successful international collaboration.

The facility, which triples Bayer's seed production capacity, will support maize consumption for an estimated 30 million people in the region and forms part of Bayer's Itaba Project – an initiative targeting 6.4 million smallholder farmers across Zambia and Sub-Saharan Africa this year, with plans to reach 10 million by 2030.

Zambia's Vision: A Regional Food Powerhouse

Kapala reaffirmed Zambia's commitment to large-scale, high-impact investments that create jobs, boost exports, and ensure national and regional food security.

"We want to see more investments like Bayer's—projects that transfer technology, empower farmers, and build resilient agricultural systems," he said.

He urged donor agencies and international financial institutions (IFIs) to direct more funding into irrigation, mechanization, and agricultural research, citing Zambia's rich natural resources and favorable climate as strong foundations for long-term investment success.

With these strategic efforts, Zambia is positioning itself not just as a food-secure nation, but as a driving force for sustainable agriculture in Africa.





Kenya Marks 76 Years of Boran Excellence with a Landmark Cattle Show

Kenya's proud tradition of Boran cattle breeding took centre stage in September as the Boran Cattle Breeders' Society (BCBS) marked its 76th anniversary with a landmark show and record-breaking auction. Held over two days on 12 and 13 September at Woragus Farm in Laikipia, the event attracted an international audience of breeders, ranchers and investors from across Africa and Latin America, all eager to witness the resilience, functionality and performance that have made the Kenyan Boran world-renowned.

More than 200 Boran bulls, heifers and steers were presented before internationally respected show judge PJ Budler, who has officiated livestock events on almost every continent. He expressed strong admiration for the quality on display, noting that it is rare to see a show of such scale where cattle are so fundamentally functional, from feet and udders to fertility and fleshing ability. Budler attributed this consistency to more than a millennium of natural selection refined by generations of Kenyan breeders, describing the Boran as one of the most functional and enduring beef breeds in the world.

Top honours in the show ring went to Woragus 1697, bred by the Myatt-Taylor family, who also hosted the event. The outstanding bull dominated several classes and secured five trophies, including the Supreme Champion Bull title, Champion Junior Bull, the Harold White Memorial Trophy and the Almatix Trophy. Excellence was also evident among the females and younger animals, with Kifuku Estate 22-11 crowned Champion Female, Frontier Cattle 2328 named Reserve Champion Female, and Kifuku Estate 24-28 taking the Reserve Champion Junior Bull title.

Budler highlighted the Boran's growing global appeal, describing it as a tropically adapted solution to challenges such as fertility, longevity, udder quality and structural soundness. He stressed that the true value of the breed is best appreciated in Kenya itself, where Boran cattle graze alongside wildlife, thrive at altitude and prove their adaptability under some of the toughest production conditions. This reputation was reflected in the strong international turnout, with visitors attending from Brazil, Namibia, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, the United States and Zimbabwe.

High standards in the ring were echoed by veteran stockman Giles Prettejohn, who praised the overall quality of cattle presented, particularly the strong showing of masculine young bulls. He also commended the judges for penalising over-conditioned heifers that could face fertility challenges later in life. Both Prettejohn and Budler reinforced the principle that functionality must always take precedence over showmanship, a theme that resonated throughout the event.

Several studs stood out during the competition, with Woragus Boran Stud leading the field, followed closely by Suyian Ranch in second place for its consistent performance across classes. Ol Pejeta Conservancy, home to Kenya's largest Boran herd, secured five first prizes, while Sosian Boran Stud excelled in the younger heifer categories. New entrant Wachadima made a strong impression by winning both Best New Exhibitor and Fattest Steer trophies, while Stanley & Son Stud, one of Kenya's oldest Boran breeders, continued its long-standing legacy with multiple class wins.

Excitement carried over into the auction ring, where strong demand pushed prices to record levels under the hammer of South African auctioneer Andrew Miller. A single bull sold for KES 1.1 million (approximately R147,000), while a lot of three heifers set a new benchmark at KES 1.3 million (around R173,000). The sale also made history as Kenya's first live-streamed Boran auction, facilitated by Realtime Agri's Martinique Scott and her Meerkat platform, which connected bidders and viewers from across the continent.

BCBS Chairperson Mark Myatt-Taylor подчеркнул that the Boran's success lies in its natural adaptability, strong mothering ability, fertility and tick resistance. He noted that Boran cattle in Kenya are raised in their natural environment and managed using sound, traditional stockmanship. Although only a limited number of registered Boran studs remain in the country, strict breed standards ensure that Kenya continues to serve as the birthplace and global benchmark for Boran excellence.

As the 2025 Boran Show drew to a close, a clear message emerged: Kenya's Boran is not only a national treasure but also a global solution for sustainable and profitable beef production. In Budler's words, the Kenyan Boran represents both the heritage of the breed and the future of the world's beef industry.

African Cattle Producers Cautious Over Increased Beef Imports



African livestock producers are closely watching global beef trade developments, as plans to increase beef imports from countries like Argentina could have implications for local markets. Experts warn that sudden surges in imported beef might destabilize domestic pricing and raise concerns over animal health.

The National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) in the U.S. recently voiced strong opposition to importing Argentinian beef, citing potential disruptions to local cattle industries and risks of spreading livestock diseases such as foot-and-mouth disease. While these concerns are raised in the U.S., African cattle producers face similar challenges, especially given the continent's reliance on safe, high-quality beef for both domestic consumption and exports.

"Opening markets to large volumes of imported beef can create chaos for local producers, who are working hard to maintain high standards in quality and safety," said Colin Woodall, CEO of NCBA. "Foot-and-mouth disease remains a major threat globally, and its introduction could be catastrophic for domestic herds."

For African nations, this underscores the importance of strong livestock health protocols and sustainable market practices. As global beef prices fluctuate, producers are reminded of the delicate balance between maintaining affordable consumer prices and protecting the viability of local ranchers and farmers.

African policymakers and industry stakeholders are encouraged to monitor import policies carefully, ensure robust disease control measures, and support local cattle producers to strengthen food security and economic stability.

When Is the Best Time to Wean Calves? Experts Weigh In



For beef producers, deciding when to wean calves can have a big impact on herd health, cow fertility, and overall productivity. While most farmers stick to the traditional six- to eight-month window, experts from Kansas State University's Beef Cattle Institute (BCI) say the optimal timing can vary — depending on the cow's body condition, forage availability, and the calf's readiness to transition to independence.

In a recent episode of the BCI Cattle Chat podcast, Kansas State specialists, joined by University of Missouri researcher Jordan Thomas, discussed how flexibility and observation are key when determining the right weaning time.

Typically, calves are weaned at around 180 to 240 days of age, but when forage is scarce or cows begin to lose body condition, earlier weaning — as young as four or five months — may be the smarter move. This approach helps relieve the nutritional demand on the cow, improving her chances of maintaining body condition and conceiving again during the next breeding season.

"Timing really depends on the goals of the operation," Thomas said. "Producers need to consider the cow's body condition, available feed resources, and whether the calf is ready to thrive on its own."

The experts noted that calves should be eating solid feed and have a well-developed rumen before being weaned. Early-weaned calves require closer management and higher-quality nutrition to ensure steady growth and minimize stress.

On the other hand, traditional weaning ages still work best when forage is abundant and cow condition scores remain strong, allowing both cows and calves to perform well without additional input costs.

Ultimately, there's no universal formula for the perfect weaning age. As the experts emphasized, the "best" time to wean is the one that fits the specific needs of the herd and operation, rather than the calendar date.

Producers looking to improve reproductive performance, nutrition planning, and weaning strategies can explore these topics further in the latest K-State BCI Cattle Chat podcast episode.

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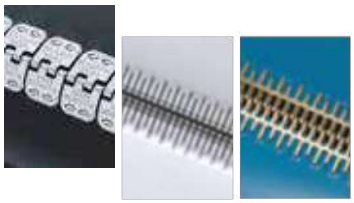
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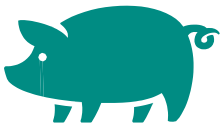
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GROWTH IN CHINA

The Chinese processed meat market is projected to grow from 2022–2027 by a **CAGR of 5.74%**



R350 000 Boost Helps Eastern Cape Cooperative Scale Up Livestock Business

The Nqabarha Cooperative in Willowvale, Eastern Cape, is set to expand its livestock operations after receiving R350 000 from the Eastern Cape Development Corporation's (ECDC) Imvaba Cooperative Fund. The funding includes 20 heifers, animal feed, and veterinary supplies, positioning the six-member cooperative for commercial market entry.

Established by subsistence farmers after 10 years of individual farming, the cooperative now manages 100 cattle and 60 goats on 10 hectares, with access to an additional 100 hectares of communal land. The new support will improve herd quality, boost productivity, and enhance animal care.

"The funding enables us to transition from community-based livestock management to commercially oriented production while supporting smallholder farmers across the region," said Sindisa Dunga, spokesperson for the cooperative. "We also invested R20 000 into fencing and infrastructure, hiring local laborers and stimulating the rural economy."

The cooperative aims to enter the agro-processing value chain by establishing a small-scale abattoir, a critical step toward year-round meat supply and improved market access for local producers. Currently, Nqabarha provides boarding services for emerging farmers and supplies cattle for cultural and ceremonial purposes, employing four locals.

Eastern Cape MEC for Economic Development, Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Nonkqubela Pieters, emphasized that the Imvaba Cooperative Fund strengthens cooperative capacity, creates jobs, and contributes to inclusive regional economic growth.

The fund offers non-repayable financial incentives of up to R600 000 for qualifying cooperatives, with an additional R150 000 for enterprising individuals within the cooperative. Beyond financing, it provides institutional and capacity-building support across sectors including agriculture, agro-processing, tourism, manufacturing, ICT, green economy, crafts, and the oceans economy.

Since its inception, the Imvaba Cooperative Fund has supported over 400 cooperatives in the Eastern Cape, creating more than 2 600 permanent and seasonal jobs and boosting local economic development.



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Mycoplasmas:

The Silent Threat Undermining Poultry Productivity



In poultry production, one of the most underestimated yet destructive pathogens is the Mycoplasma – a microscopic organism capable of inflicting serious health and economic damage. Although invisible to the naked eye, Mycoplasmas pose a substantial threat to flock performance, targeting both respiratory and reproductive systems in chickens, turkeys and other birds.

Unlike typical bacteria, Mycoplasmas lack a cell wall, making them naturally resistant to many antibiotics and exceptionally adaptable. This allows them to evade the immune system and persist in flocks for long periods. Once introduced, they spread easily through respiratory droplets, contaminated equipment, feed, water, or even vertically from infected breeder hens to their chicks.

The effects are costly and far-reaching. Young birds may fail to gain weight normally, while layers often experience sharp declines in egg production – sometimes by more than 20%. Egg quality may deteriorate, with thinner shells and poor hatchability, especially in breeder operations where embryonic mortality becomes a concern. Severe infections can lead to aerosacculitis and synovitis, causing breathing difficulties, joint pain, lameness, and increased mortality.

Economically, Mycoplasma infections raise veterinary expenses, worsen feed conversion ratios, and lower the market value of poultry products. Farms with positive cases risk losing access to premium or export markets that require strict disease-free certification. To make matters worse, these organisms can survive for days in dust, feathers, bedding, clothing, and equipment.

Mitigation requires strict biosecurity. Poultry houses must be routinely cleaned and disinfected, with staff following hygiene protocols such as dedicated clothing, sanitized footwear, and restricted movement between flocks. Visitors and vehicles should be carefully controlled to prevent accidental introduction of pathogens.

Sourcing chicks and hatching eggs from certified Mycoplasma-free farms is essential, along with routine surveillance and laboratory testing. In regions where vaccination is allowed, vaccines against the two most damaging species – Mycoplasma gallisepticum and Mycoplasma synoviae – can reduce disease severity, but vaccination must complement, not replace, strong biosecurity practices.

Optimal housing, proper nutrition, stable environmental conditions, and stress reduction also play vital roles in keeping flocks resilient. Stressors such as overcrowding, poor ventilation, or sudden temperature shifts weaken immunity and increase vulnerability to infection.

Mycoplasmas may be small, but their impact is substantial. Prevention, vigilance, and disciplined farm management remain the strongest defenses against this persistent and costly threat.

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U of I Study Shows Promise for Dual Cropping with



Research explores sustainable way to boost forage yield and soil health in Idaho's short growing season.

An innovative University of Idaho Extension study is offering new hope for farmers and ranchers looking to make the most of limited growing seasons by raising two forage crops from a single field.

Now in its second year at the Nancy M. Cummings Research, Extension and Education Center in Salmon, the project—led by Extension beef specialist John Hall—demonstrates that cover crops can successfully follow hay harvest and be grazed by cattle before winter.

The dual-crop system begins with fall triticale, harvested as hay in June. After baling, the field is treated to prevent regrowth, then planted with a multi-species cover crop mix. Unlike typical cover crops grown solely for soil health benefits such as nitrogen fixation and improved porosity, Hall's team opted to graze the crops, thereby capturing additional value while enhancing soil fertility through manure deposition.

"Our main objective was to prove we could use cover crops in this area, graze with cattle, and achieve good weight gains," Hall explained.

Two Crops, One Field

During the 2025 field day on September 9, Hall's team showcased their success. Despite Salmon's notoriously short season, the cover crops produced enough forage to graze 30 yearling heifers across a 29-acre field divided into 15 paddocks. Livestock were rotated every two days using a management-intensive grazing system, which promoted even forage use and nutrient distribution while reducing soil compaction.

The results are promising. Hall's team achieved 60 to 70 days of grazing before needing to replant triticale, proving the viability of double cropping in a region once thought too cold for such intensive rotations.

Improving Soil Health and Reducing Emissions

The study is part of a larger sustainability effort. Researchers are evaluating soil carbon levels and greenhouse gas emissions, exploring whether higher-quality forage reduces methane output from cattle.

Dr. Gwinyai Chibisa from the Department of Animal, Veterinary and Food Sciences is tracking livestock emissions, while soil scientists measure changes in carbon accumulation and soil respiration rates.

Although some initial challenges emerged—such as prussic acid toxicity from early frost in certain grass species—the current crop mix of peas, radishes, turnips, millet, oats, barley, and rye has been fine-tuned to ensure safety and performance.

Toward Climate-Smart Ranching

The first two years of research were funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities Program (award #NR2333A750004G038). The team is now seeking additional funding to continue for up to three more years.

Researchers hope this work will inspire more producers to integrate grazing cover crops into crop rotations, improving soil health, reducing input costs, and building resilience against Idaho's harsh climate.

"We've shown it's possible to raise and graze cover crops in a short season," Hall said. "The next step is to quantify the economic and environmental benefits for producers."

Governments Urged to End Harmful Factory Farm Subsidies and Support Sustainable Agriculture



Governments across the world, including those in China, the United States, India and the European Union, are being urged to end subsidies that support industrial-scale factory farming, after a new report warned that such funding is accelerating deforestation and climate change. The report, released by World Animal Protection ahead of COP30, argues that public money is being channelled into livestock systems that harm animals, degrade ecosystems and undermine smallholder farmers.

Titled *Subsidising Factory Farm Harm*, the report reveals the scale of government support flowing into industrial livestock production, despite its significant environmental and social costs. Agriculture already accounts for up to 34% of global greenhouse gas emissions, yet it remains one of the most heavily subsidised sectors worldwide, second only to fossil fuels. In Africa, a large share of agricultural spending is directed toward input subsidies that often favour large-scale producers, even though smallholder farmers supply the majority of the continent's food.

Kelly Dent, Director of External Engagement at World Animal Protection, said the current system is unsustainable. She warned that taxpayer money continues to prop up food systems that fuel climate change, destroy biodiversity and cause widespread animal suffering, arguing that the future of food lies in fair, sustainable farming models rather than factory farms.

The report's findings paint a stark picture of what lies ahead if current trends continue. By 2050, agriculture could be responsible for as much as 52% of global greenhouse gas emissions. Subsidised production of beef, soy for animal feed and palm oil is already linked to around 14% of global deforestation. In Brazil alone, subsidies to the beef sector average USD 3.1 billion per year, almost equalling the taxes paid by the industry. In the European Union, the report estimates that redirecting just half of the USD 88.5 billion spent annually on factory farm subsidies could save 25 million megalitres of water and free up 19 million hectares of land every year.

The report also highlights positive examples that demonstrate a different path forward. In Kenya, farms that integrate crops, bees, chickens, goats and cattle show how agroecological systems can deliver both profitability and sustainability. These diversified approaches reduce reliance on chemicals, improve animal welfare and strengthen resilience for farmers and ecosystems alike.

Against this backdrop, World Animal Protection is calling on African leaders attending COP30 to push for meaningful reform. The organisation urges governments to phase out subsidies that drive the expansion of industrial livestock production and to redirect public funds toward smallholder farmers, agroecology and humane, sustainable food systems. It also calls for subsidy reform to be embedded within national climate commitments and aligned with the Kunming-Montreal Biodiversity Framework, while ensuring farmers are supported through training, innovation and social protection as part of a just transition.

Sally Kahiu, External Affairs Lead at World Animal Protection, said factory farming is a major driver of deforestation, pollution and animal cruelty. She emphasised that African governments have an opportunity to stop funding environmental destruction and instead invest in agroecological solutions that empower smallholder farmers, protect ecosystems and improve food security. According to Kahiu, Africa can lead with home-grown solutions to global environmental and climate challenges.

As the world looks toward COP30 in Brazil, the report's message is unambiguous: reforming agricultural subsidies could be one of the most powerful tools available to tackle climate change, safeguard biodiversity and build fairer, more resilient food systems across Africa and the rest of the world.

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Tanzania Rolls Out Free Poultry Vaccines to Boost Farmers' Livelihoods and Export Potential



Tanzania is taking a decisive step to strengthen its poultry sector and support rural livelihoods through the rollout of a nationwide free poultry vaccination programme. President Samia Suluhu Hassan announced the initiative during her campaign tour across the Lake Zone, underscoring the government's commitment to protecting poultry flocks, improving productivity and expanding Tanzania's regional and international export potential.

The President highlighted the vital role the poultry industry plays in uplifting rural incomes, particularly for women and youth, who make up a large share of smallholder farmers. Poultry farming provides employment, nutrition and a steady source of income, yet the sector has long faced challenges such as recurring disease outbreaks, limited access to quality vaccines and gaps in technical knowledge. These constraints have restricted productivity and profitability for many farmers.

By offering free vaccines nationwide, the government aims to ensure that all poultry farmers, regardless of scale, can safeguard their flocks and improve output. The vaccination programme is being supported by the deployment of 700 agricultural extension officers across the country. These officers will guide farmers on vaccination procedures, promote biosecurity measures, and provide training on feed formulation, breeding techniques and disease prevention, helping to build long-term resilience within the sector.

The poultry initiative forms part of a broader strategy to strengthen Tanzania's agricultural value chain and rural economy. President Samia outlined plans to expand irrigation infrastructure, including the use of water from Lake Victoria, to enable year-round farming and reduce reliance on rainfall. Investments in the national water grid are also underway to ensure communities and farms have reliable access to clean water, supporting both agricultural and household needs.

Beyond agriculture, the Lake Zone has benefited from extensive infrastructure and social investments valued at more than Tsh 5.6 trillion. These include major transport projects such as the rehabilitation of MV Umoja, with a capacity of 1,200 tonnes, and the construction of MV Mwanza to improve cargo and passenger movement across Lake Victoria. Significant healthcare investments include a five-storey maternal and child health centre at Sekou Toure Regional Hospital, expansions at Bugando Medical Centre, and the upgrading of Nansio Hospital to specialist status. The region has also seen the establishment of three new vocational colleges to strengthen skills development, alongside expanded rural electrification and road upgrades to improve connectivity and stimulate local business growth.

By combining free poultry vaccination with farmer training and strategic infrastructure development, Tanzania aims to transform its poultry industry into a key driver of economic growth. Healthier flocks, improved production practices and stronger logistics networks are expected to enhance food security, increase export earnings and raise incomes for farmers across the country.

President Samia concluded by urging Tanzanians to uphold peace, unity and active participation in national development, stressing that sustained progress depends on collective effort and responsible civic engagement. Tanzania's integrated approach demonstrates how targeted agricultural interventions, supported by infrastructure and social investment, can empower farmers, boost exports and promote inclusive economic growth, positioning the country as a leading agricultural player in East Africa.

Poultry Industry Powers Nigeria's Agricultural Growth, Contributing 25% to the Sector's GDP



Nigeria's poultry industry has emerged as one of the most dynamic and profitable segments of the country's agricultural economy, contributing an estimated 25% to agricultural GDP. Beyond supplying affordable animal protein, the sector plays a critical role in employment creation, rural development and national food security, making it a key pillar of Nigeria's economic growth.

Over the past few decades, poultry farming in Nigeria has transitioned from small backyard ventures into a modern agribusiness industry supporting millions of livelihoods. Poultry enterprises now operate across both urban and rural areas, providing eggs and poultry meat while generating employment along the entire value chain. From hatcheries and feed mills to processing, marketing and distribution, the sector continues to stimulate broad-based economic activity.

The industry is a major employer, directly and indirectly supporting more than 25 million Nigerians—nearly 10% of the population. This expansion has positioned Nigeria as one of Africa's largest poultry producers and the continent's leading egg producer. Strong domestic demand, coupled with the resilience and adaptability of local farmers, has underpinned this growth.

In addition to food production, the poultry sector empowers women and youth, strengthens rural incomes and contributes to wider economic stability.

Despite its impressive performance, the industry faces persistent challenges that constrain growth and profitability. Chief among these is the high cost of poultry feed, which accounts for close to 70% of total production expenses. Price volatility in key inputs such as maize and soybeans frequently erodes profit margins, particularly for smallholder farmers who lack the capacity to produce feed independently or access price stabilisation mechanisms. Industry experts note that achieving profitability often requires a minimum of 8,000 laying hens, a scale that remains unattainable for many producers.

Limited access to affordable financing further restricts expansion and modernization. Many farmers struggle to secure low-interest loans needed to upgrade housing, equipment and biosecurity systems. Inadequate storage facilities, poor transport infrastructure and insufficient veterinary services also contribute to inefficiencies, disease risks and post-production losses.

Nevertheless, poultry products—especially eggs—remain central to Nigeria's food and nutrition security. Eggs are among the most affordable sources of high-quality protein and essential nutrients, including vitamins A, B12 and E. Nutrition specialists consistently highlight egg consumption as a practical tool for combating malnutrition, particularly among children and pregnant women, making poultry production both an economic and public health priority.

To fully unlock the sector's potential, coordinated policy support, innovation and collaboration are required. Key priorities include expanding access to affordable credit, encouraging cooperative feed production to reduce costs, integrating poultry products into school feeding and institutional programmes, and strengthening veterinary and biosecurity services to improve productivity and reduce losses.

With targeted reforms and sustained investment, Nigeria's poultry industry has the capacity to evolve into a regional powerhouse. As a driver of employment, income generation and food security, the sector stands out as a cornerstone of Nigeria's agricultural transformation and a growing force for national development.

NIGERIA'S POULTRY SECTOR IN PERIL:

Egg Consumption Declines Amid Economic Strain and Retail Price Disputes



Nigeria's poultry industry is facing an alarming setback as egg consumption drops sharply across the country. Farmers, processors, and industry leaders warn that economic hardship, waning consumer purchasing power, and excessive retail markups are pushing the sector toward crisis.

The Poultry Association of Nigeria (PAN), Lagos State Chapter, is raising the alarm over what it describes as an unsustainable situation. Mojeed Iyiola, Chairman of PAN Lagos, says urgent action is needed to stabilize prices, stimulate demand, and protect the livelihoods of thousands of poultry farmers nationwide.

Eggs: Affordable Protein Under Threat

"Eggs are the most accessible and affordable source of animal protein for the average Nigerian," Iyiola emphasized in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN). "Yet we're witnessing a troubling drop in demand—not because of supply issues, but because consumers simply can't afford them anymore."

According to Iyiola, farm gate prices for a crate of eggs currently stand at under ₦5,500. However, once they reach the market, retailers are charging between ₦6,000 and ₦6,500—a markup he considers excessive and harmful to both consumers and producers.

"A reasonable retail markup would be around ₦100 to ₦200 per crate," he said. "What we're seeing is unjustifiable price inflation that discourages buyers and gives the false impression that farmers are exploiting consumers."

This disconnect between farm and retail pricing, Iyiola argues, is distorting the poultry value chain. Meanwhile, producers are struggling under the weight of skyrocketing feed costs and energy prices, making the industry's sustainability increasingly uncertain.

Economic Hardship Shifts Consumption Patterns

Nigeria's broader economic struggles have only deepened the crisis. Inflation, job losses, and declining household incomes have made it difficult for many families to afford protein-rich foods, even relatively affordable ones like eggs.

"People are prioritizing survival," Iyiola said. "We're seeing a real shift in consumption habits. Eggs—once a staple in many homes—are now considered a luxury by some families."

Even with the resumption of schools—a period that usually boosts egg demand—sales have remained sluggish, especially in northern Nigeria where economic vulnerabilities are more pronounced.

Processors Feel the Squeeze

Joel Oduware, a poultry processor, confirmed that sales have not rebounded as expected, even with the seasonal uptick. He attributed this to both local economic conditions and global financial pressures.

"Many farmers are considering exiting the business entirely," he said. "There's talk about reducing prices slightly to encourage consumption, but we have to be careful—lowering prices without cutting production costs only leads to losses."

Fading Government Support

The situation is compounded by the discontinuation of a temporary government support program that had previously helped stabilize production costs. With input prices rising, farmers are now more vulnerable than ever.

Iyiola is calling on both state and federal governments to intervene decisively. Suggested measures include the reintroduction of subsidies, access to low-interest credit, and stronger enforcement of fair pricing practices across the value chain.

"If we don't act now, we risk losing not just a vital nutritional resource, but also thousands of jobs and small businesses," he warned. "Eggs play a crucial role in food security, especially for low-income families. The government has a responsibility to ensure they remain affordable and available."

Toward a Sustainable Solution

The crisis enveloping Nigeria's poultry industry highlights the fragile balance between production costs, retail pricing, and consumer affordability. With inflation biting and farm inputs becoming increasingly expensive, farmers are calling for a more equitable pricing structure—one that protects both producers and consumers.

Ultimately, safeguarding the nation's egg supply will require collaboration across the entire value chain: from policymakers and retailers to processors and farmers. Without such a coordinated effort, the country risks deeper nutritional insecurity and the collapse of one of its most vital agricultural sectors.



Soaring Feed Costs in African Poultry: Can Subsidies Save the Day?

Africa's poultry industry remains a cornerstone of food security, supplying affordable protein to millions of households across the continent. However, in 2025 the sector is under intense pressure as soaring feed costs erode farmers' profits, threaten livelihoods and push up prices for consumers. Shortages of maize and soya—the two main feed ingredients—have driven feed prices up by 20–30% across East and West Africa. In response, several governments have introduced feed subsidies, including Nigeria's 25% feed cost reduction in Lagos, offering a lifeline to struggling producers.

Feed is the single largest cost in poultry production, accounting for as much as 70% of total expenses. This makes farmers particularly vulnerable to price shocks. In 2025, erratic weather patterns, global trade disruptions and Africa's heavy reliance on imported feed ingredients have combined to create severe supply constraints. As feed prices rise, profit margins shrink, forcing many farmers to scale back production or pass higher costs on to consumers through increased egg and chicken prices.

The impact has been especially pronounced in East and West Africa, where feed prices have surged by up to 30%. Nigeria, which controls nearly a quarter of Africa's poultry market, has been among the hardest hit. At the same time, Africa's poultry feed market—valued at USD 14.5 billion—continues to grow at an annual rate of 3.8%, highlighting both strong demand and the urgency of addressing rising costs.

To cushion farmers against these pressures, governments are increasingly turning to subsidies. In Lagos State, Nigeria, a 25% feed subsidy introduced in January 2025 has helped stabilise production and prevent sharp increases in consumer prices. Ghana has gone a step further with its ambitious Nkoko Nkitinkiti initiative, which combines subsidised feed with the distribution of three million chicks and improved production practices. The programme aims to achieve full poultry self-sufficiency within three years while helping farmers optimise feed use for higher egg and meat yields.

These subsidy programmes also align with broader continental goals under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), which promotes local sourcing of feed ingredients to reduce dependence on costly imports. By strengthening domestic maize and soya production, governments hope to build more resilient poultry value chains.

However, subsidies alone cannot solve all the industry's challenges. Many farmers still struggle with limited access to quality feed ingredients, inadequate storage facilities and poor transport infrastructure, which force them to buy feed at peak-season prices. Cheap poultry imports from countries such as the United States and Argentina continue to undermine local producers, prompting calls in South Africa and Ghana for stricter anti-dumping measures. In addition, bureaucratic delays and uneven distribution of subsidies mean that many smallholder farmers—particularly in remote rural areas—are unable to benefit fully from government support.

Against this backdrop, innovation is emerging as a critical tool for managing feed costs. Farmers are increasingly adopting optimised feed formulations, supported by mobile applications in countries such as Ghana and Uganda that help balance nutrients and reduce waste. AfCFTA-backed initiatives are encouraging local feed production, while Nigeria's BirdPreneur programme is training thousands of farmers to source and formulate feed locally. Alternative protein sources, including black soldier fly larvae, are gaining traction in Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda as sustainable substitutes for conventional feed ingredients. Integrated farming systems that combine poultry, fish and vegetable production are also proving effective in recycling nutrients and cutting input costs.

Looking beyond short-term relief, feed subsidies are becoming part of Africa's broader strategy for poultry self-sufficiency. Ghana's Nkoko Nkitinkiti programme aims to eliminate a USD 300 million annual poultry import bill, while Zimbabwe's Rural Development 8.0 initiative supports rural farmers with indigenous breeds and targeted feed assistance. With Africa's urban population growing at around 4.5% per year, demand for affordable protein is rising rapidly, and poultry remains the most accessible source.

Feed costs are unlikely to stabilise in the near term, but the growing momentum around subsidies, innovation and local feed production offers hope. Governments will need to improve access to subsidy programmes, strengthen domestic feed supply chains and invest in climate-resilient agriculture to reduce vulnerability to shocks such as droughts linked to La Niña. Industry platforms such as VIV MEA 2025 in Morocco are expected to play a key role in sharing solutions and fostering collaboration between farmers, policymakers and innovators.

Africa's poultry sector now stands at a critical crossroads. While soaring feed costs threaten to slow growth, well-designed subsidies, technological innovation and investment in local feed systems can secure long-term resilience. If policy, innovation and production efficiency are aligned, the continent's poultry industry will not only weather the current feed crisis but emerge stronger, more competitive and better positioned on the global stage.

Young Women in Malawi Transform Lives Through Poultry Agribusiness and Education



In rural Malawi, a quiet but powerful revolution is unfolding—led by the clucking of chickens and the determination of young women rewriting their futures. Teen mothers, many of whom once dropped out of school due to early pregnancies and poverty, are now finding renewed hope and independence through poultry farming.

This transformation stems from a partnership between the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and the Government of Malawi, with support from the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA).

The initiative, Action for Teen Mothers and Adolescent Girls and Boys (2021–2024), equips young women with practical agricultural and business skills while promoting reproductive health education. Its holistic design tackles three key challenges facing Malawian youth: early motherhood, unemployment, and school dropout.

One remarkable success story is 18-year-old Kherena Medson from Katopola Village in Mchinji District. After becoming a young mother, Kherena believed her education was over—until she joined the Tinaliyani Junior Farmer Field and Life School (JFFLS), a programme supported by FAO under the project. There, she learned poultry management, business planning, and marketing.

With a group grant of about USD 4,482, Kherena and her peers launched a thriving egg production business. The income not only sustains their families but has also enabled several of them to return to school.

"We are now able to pay school fees and meet daily needs through selling eggs. Poultry farming gave us a new beginning," says Kherena.

FAO's contribution went beyond training—it disbursed over USD 170,000 in seed capital to 1,065 young beneficiaries, nearly 80% of them women. Many have since launched small poultry ventures, producing eggs and meat for local markets and inspiring other young people in their communities.

The impact extends beyond income. Poultry farming has improved household nutrition by providing affordable sources of protein, while UNFPA's involvement ensures participants gain knowledge in reproductive health and life skills. This integrated model strengthens both livelihoods and long-term wellbeing.

By merging agribusiness, education, and health, the project redefines agriculture as a modern, empowering career path rather than a fallback option. It restores dignity and opportunity to vulnerable youth—especially young mothers—proving that with the right support, rural agriculture can be a powerful driver of social change.

As Malawi's teen mothers turn poultry farming into a source of pride and progress, their story stands as a testament to resilience, innovation, and the power of community-driven empowerment—one egg at a time.

Obasanjo Farms Unveils Smart Poultry Innovations at the 2025 Nigeria Poultry Show

Obasanjo Farms Limited marked a major milestone in Nigeria's agricultural transformation at the 2025 Nigeria Poultry Show in Abeokuta, Ogun State, by introducing a suite of advanced technologies set to redefine poultry farming nationwide. Their showcase demonstrated how digital tools, automation, and precision management can boost productivity, strengthen sustainability, and improve animal welfare across farms of all sizes.

According to Idowu Ayodele, ICT and Utility Manager at Obasanjo Farms, the event created an ideal platform for industry players—from smallholder farmers to large-scale producers—to explore innovations shaping the future of poultry production. The company exhibited a blend of modern and traditional systems, including state-of-the-art feeders and drinkers sourced from India, now enhanced with artificial intelligence (AI) and Internet of Things (IoT) capabilities. These solutions are designed to streamline farm operations, improve monitoring, and support healthier, more productive flocks.

A standout feature of the company's presentation was its AI-driven monitoring systems, which track flock behavior in real time. These systems can detect early signs of disease, stress, or unusual feeding patterns, allowing farmers to respond quickly and prevent losses. By providing actionable insights into feed efficiency, flock performance, and environmental conditions, the technology empowers farmers to make informed decisions that boost production while reducing operational risks.

Sustainability also played a central role in Obasanjo Farms' demonstration. Through digital tracking of water, feed, and energy usage, farms can reduce waste, cut energy consumption, and lower their environmental impact. This approach comes at a critical time, as Nigeria's poultry sector rapidly expands to meet growing consumer demand while balancing ecological responsibilities.

Smart technologies are also helping producers maintain higher standards of biosecurity and product quality. Real-time data allows farms to ensure birds are raised in optimal conditions, resulting in better meat and egg quality. By minimizing disease spread and improving overall flock health, these innovations enhance consumer confidence in locally sourced poultry products.

Beyond the technology itself, Obasanjo Farms used the event as an opportunity to educate the wider poultry community. Farmers interacted directly with experts, learning how AI and IoT tools can be adapted to farms of varying capacities. This knowledge-sharing element is essential for driving widespread adoption of smart poultry practices across the country.

The company's leadership reflects a broader shift within Nigerian agriculture—one that blends traditional farming with digital innovation to build more resilient, efficient, and profitable poultry enterprises. Obasanjo Farms is helping set a new benchmark for the industry, proving that technology-driven poultry management is not only the future but an increasingly necessary step toward securing Nigeria's food systems.

The 2025 Nigeria Poultry Show ultimately highlighted how innovation can transform the poultry sector. With the introduction of advanced monitoring tools and intelligent farm equipment, Obasanjo Farms is ushering in a new era where Nigeria's poultry industry is more connected, data-driven, sustainable, and prepared to meet both today's and tomorrow's challenges.

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Chinese Approval Opens the Door for Calci-Liq in the Giant Poultry Market



The liquid calcium supplement Calci-Liq from Jorenku A/S is now officially registered in China. With this registration, the path is clear to launch the product on the China

Calci-Liq is a liquid feed supplement containing concentrated vitamin D3 (Hy-D), calcium, and magnesium. It supports joints and bone development in broilers and improves eggshell strength in layers. The product is added to drinking water, ensuring fast and efficient nutrient absorption.

An Important Milestone for Jorenku

The registration of Calci-Liq in China is the culmination of several years of dedicated work with documentation and regulatory approvals. For Jorenku, it marks a major breakthrough in one of the world's largest poultry production markets.

- – We are relieved that the approval process is now complete. This is an important step in our strategy to sell more of our products in Asian markets. China is huge, and so is the demand for effective, user-friendly products that support poultry health, says Sales Manager and Co-owner Jamil Kure Al-Shiekhly.

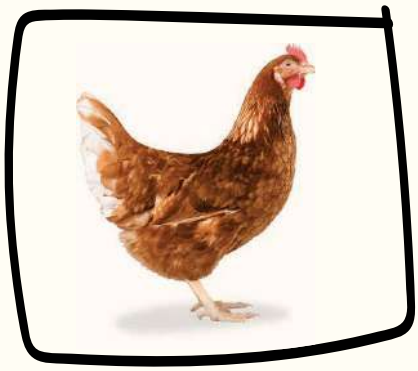
Ready for the Next Step
Now that the registration is in place, work begins on building the market.

- – We see great potential in the Asian market. At VIV Asia in March, we already experienced strong interest in Calci-Liq, and with this registration, we now have a solid foundation to take the next step, says Jamil Kure Al-Shiekhly.

Current uncertainty in some export markets has sharpened Jorenku's focus on China, where demand for poultry products is growing – and where the potential for Calci-Liq is substantial.

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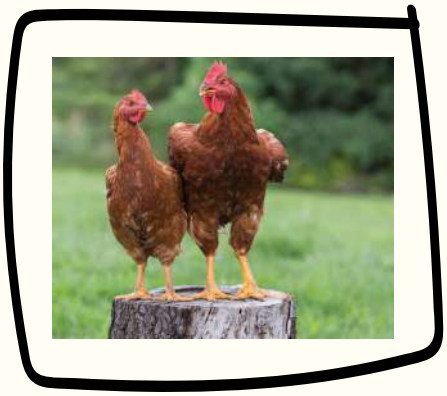


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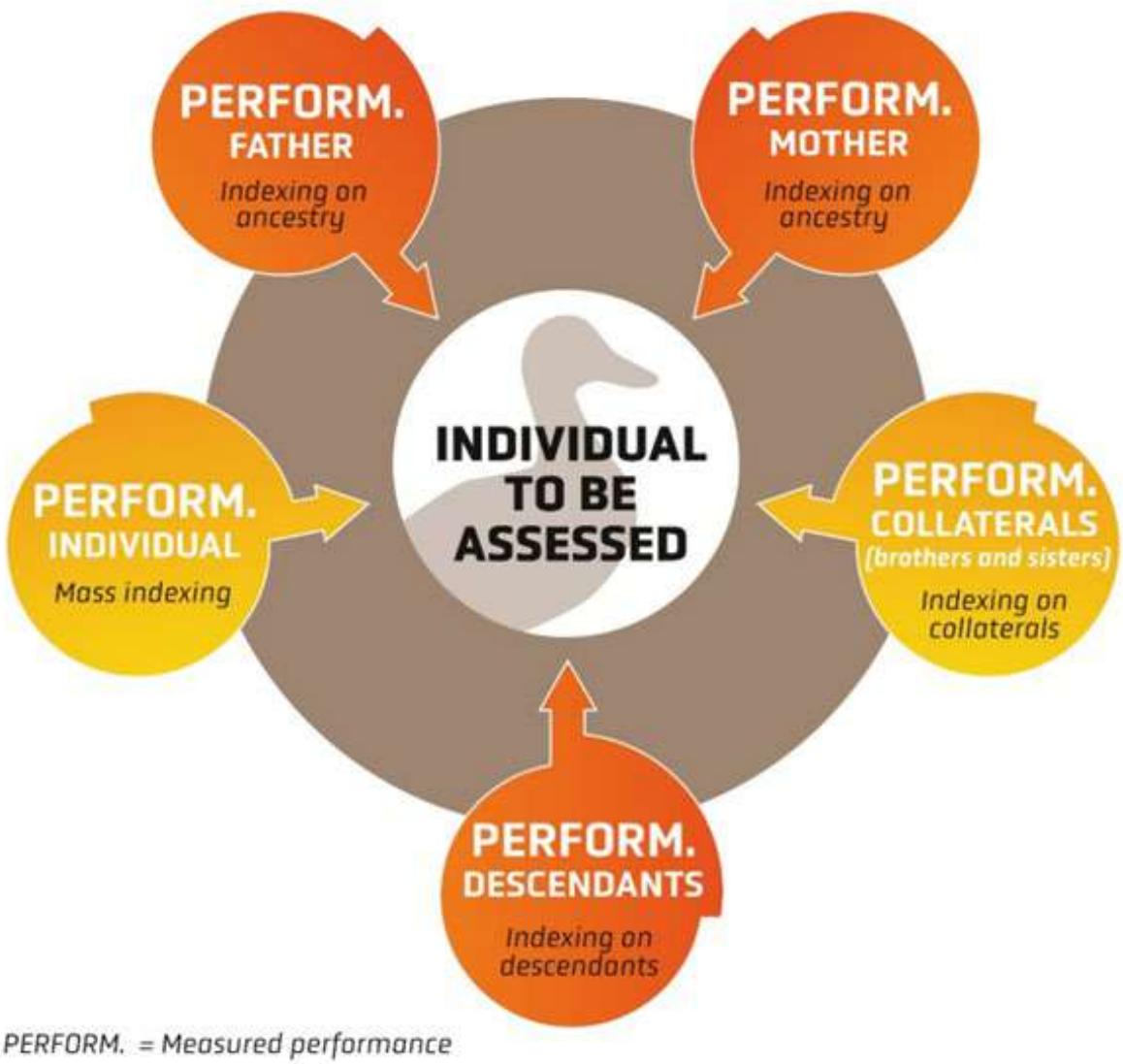
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GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF SELECTION



PERFORM. = Measured performance

How does animal selection work? What levers should be used to make selection effective? Is it possible to select for any trait?

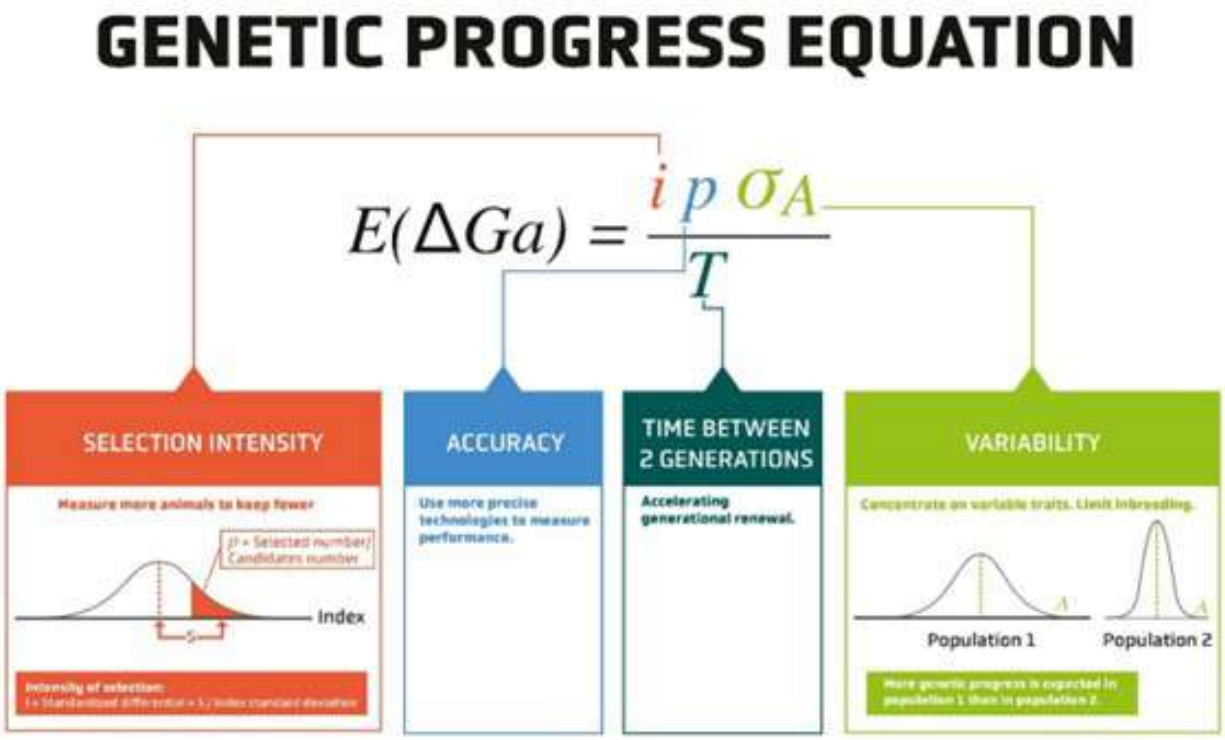
The aim of this article is to try and answer these questions in an accessible way, so that everyone can gain a better understanding of the principles of selection.

First of all, what is animal selection? More or less everyone has heard of Darwin and natural selection, which allows species to evolve by adapting to their environment. In the livestock sector, however, selection is geared towards adapting species to their rearing environment and to the performance expectations of the market. So it's not a question, as many people imagine, of intervening directly at DNA level through genetic manipulation, but simply of selecting, on the basis of their performance in given conditions, the best animals to produce the next generation.

What data is needed for selection? The classic model of optimised selection requires knowledge of both the genealogy of each individual and its performance. The breeder must therefore implement a precise traceability of the family origins of each animal, in other words know its parents and ancestors, as well as its brothers and sisters and descendants. All these animals must also be measured individually. Once all this data has been obtained, mathematical equations are used to calculate the genetic values of each individual. These genetic values are then used to classify the animals and select the best ones. Genetic values make it possible to take into account not only each animal's own performance but also that of its entire family, enabling a more accurate estimate to be made of its potential for improvement. This process is called indexing.

SET OF INDIVIDUALS ASSESSED = SELECTION BASE

Now that we know how selection works, let's look at the different ways of increasing its effectiveness. The best way to do this is to look at the equation for annual genetic progress and consider its various components:



The numerator includes :

- *Selection intensity (i):* this is directly linked to the proportion of improvers retained at each generation.
- *The accuracy of the estimate* (**ρ**): we will not be able to classify individuals correctly if the measurement of their performance is not accurate.
- *The variability of traits* (**σA**): this component of genetic progress depends very much on the trait measured (live weight, yield, other) and also on the populations considered. The more different the individuals, the easier it will be to select the best. On the other hand, it should be noted that this is the only criterion on which the breeder cannot intervene.

The denominator is the interval between two generations (T). The faster the selected populations reproduce, the faster progress will be made.

From this we can deduce that there are several levers that enable selection to be effective:

- Breed a large number of animals to keep a small number of breeding stock.
- Use equipment and technologies to measure performance as accurately as possible.
- Maintain good variability in the population, taking care to keep as many families as possible.
- Produce the next generation as soon as possible.

All these factors mean that selection will be more or less effective depending on each trait. The first point to consider is the ability to measure the trait of interest accurately. In the case of egg weight, for example, all you need to do is measure the weight of each egg to obtain a precise measurement of the trait. But in the case of disease resistance, there are a number of complex issues to consider:

how do you define resistance? What measurements need to be taken? How should these measurements be carried out? Once these questions have been answered, the variability of the trait needs to be studied. If all the individuals have exactly the same performance, it will be complicated to hope to make any genetic progress on this trait, as the offspring will have the same performance as their parents. Finally, the last point to study is the heritability of the trait.

This heritability corresponds, at a population level, to the proportion of variability in performance that is genetic in origin and that can be passed on to the next generation. Of course, some performances do not depend, or depend very little, on the genes carried by the individuals themselves, but rather on their environment and the conditions in which they are reared. The choice of traits to select for is therefore essential, and must also take into account the expectations of the industry and, more generally, the expectations of society. Selecting animals with good butchery qualities helps to produce quality meat, and plays a major role in improving the feed efficiency of animals, which in turn helps to reduce the area of cereals grown for animal feed, in favour of human food.

Magali BLANCHET – R&D director Grimaud Frères

Spray and Conquer:
Livestock Health Made Simple

How a Dullstroom Farmer Uses One Tool to Protect His Herd

In Dullstroom's rolling grasslands, farming isn't just about crops or forestry – it's about livestock. Cattle and sheep form the backbone of many operations, but with them comes one of farming's toughest battles: parasites. For local farmer Mathys Prinsloo, who runs livestock alongside grain and forestry, staying ahead of pests is critical to keeping his animals healthy and productive.

His go-to solution? The Husqvarna 321SP sprayer.
"I started with a Husqvarna chainsaw as a child," Mathys recalls. "So when I needed a sprayer, I trusted Husqvarna again. And it hasn't let me down."

Precision Parasite Control
Parasite management can make or break herd health. Uneven spraying risks underdosing or overdosing animals, both of which harm productivity and waste money.

The 321SP's adjustable lance and 15-metre hose allow Mathys to cover each animal thoroughly and consistently, making treatments faster, more accurate, and less stressful for both livestock and workers.

"This precision matters," he explains. "It's not just about spraying – it's about the right dose, every time. That's how you protect animals properly."

Built to Handle the Demands of Farming
Livestock farmers work in tough conditions, with equipment constantly exposed to chemicals, dust, and weather. Many pumps simply don't last.

"Old pumps couldn't handle the chemicals," says Mathys. "But this one's built farm tough. I know it will start, run, and keep working day after day."

Durability is more than convenience – it's peace of mind that animals won't be left vulnerable because of equipment failure.

Time-Saving Integration
The 321SP doesn't just stand alone – it integrates seamlessly with the rest of Mathys's Husqvarna equipment. From filling his bakkie sakkie for quick livestock spraying runs to powering blowers for general farm use, the sprayer adapts to the needs of a mixed operation without requiring extra trailers or costly support gear.

"One pull and it starts," he says. "Setup is simple, and it just works with everything else I have."

Healthier Herds, Stronger Farms
For farmers like Mathys, investing in livestock health means investing in the future of the farm. By delivering accurate parasite control and proving its reliability across seasons, the Husqvarna 321SP sprayer has become a cornerstone of his livestock management.

Modern farming demands tools that save time, reduce stress on animals, and provide lasting results. For Mathys Prinsloo, one sprayer does it all – turning a constant challenge into a routine task.

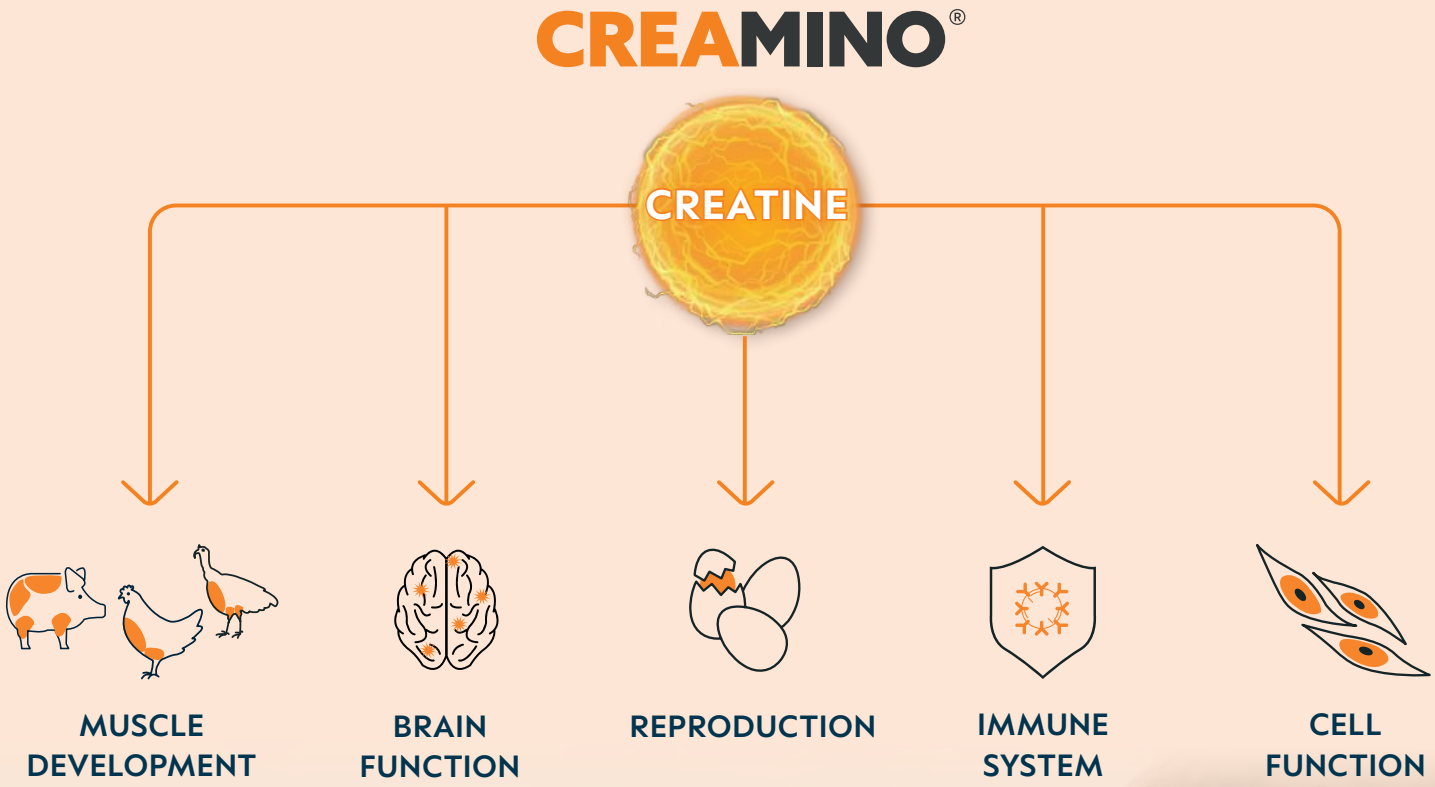


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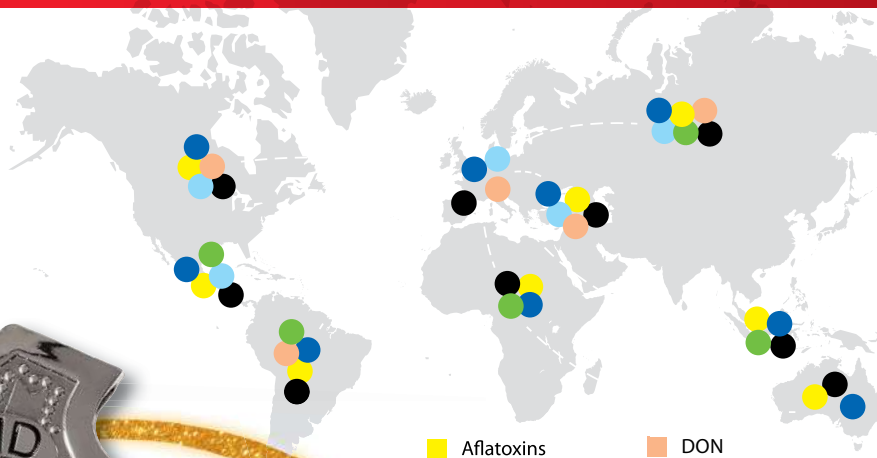
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