A non-profit initiative to end predatory trade practices worldwide.

The FairPlay movement has exposed the sale of unsafe, repackaged, frozen and unfrozen imported meat at retail shops around the country. It is a situation that overwhelms the ability of South Africa’s understaffed health inspectors to prevent unsafe meat getting to consumers. It is reported that a R1.4 million fine was imposed on one of the country’s largest meat wholesalers, Durban-based Chester Meat, because of the provision of "unsafe meat". The National Consumer Commission’s (NCC) latest annual report also details the urgent product safety recall of a consignment of chicken portions imported from Brazil by another large importer, Merlog Foods. The consignment tested positive for salmonella.

In an article published in Business Report FairPlay founder, Francois Baird points out FAIRPLAY: NEW POULTRY MASTER PLAN WILL STAND OR FALL BY IMPLEMENTATION

The FairPlay movement, job-seekers, trade unions and impoverished rural communities will be watching closely to see whether the new poultry industry master plan sets the industry on a growth path by cutting back the devastating flow of dumped and predatory imports.

The plan, developed by government, the industry, importers and unions, and announced by Minister of Trade Industry and Competition Ebrahim Patel aims to promote job creation in the chicken industry and its value chain, including maize and soya production.

"While FairPlay welcomes these developments, for which we have campaigned relentlessly over the past three years, everything now depends on implementation,"
that these are not isolated incidents. In fact it is a rampant scandalous state of affairs according to Baird; one that FairPlay has been working for some time to expose.

“We have recently been in touch with the authorities, and with Merlog, over chicken portions offered for sale which we believe do not meet local labelling requirements. Labelling is critical to trace contamination, more than 200 people died last year, because of the listeriosis outbreak. A similar tragedy must not be allowed to happen again.”

In the last month alone, FairPlay has exposed the sale of unsafe meat at prominent retailers such as Shoprite, Massmart and Spar. South African consumers are being continually exposed to chicken products distributed by importers that carry no expiry dates, batch numbers, abattoir details, or production dates. In some instances frozen imported chicken is being thawed and sold as fresh.

After the recent food safety tragedy that costs the lives of over 200 South Africans exposed to listeriosis it is appalling that nothing has been done to put a stop to unsafe poultry meat from being imported and distributed throughout the country.

said FairPlay founder Francois Baird.

“The key to success will be the effectiveness of government measures to restrict imports, firstly through a tariff announcement expected soon. The strength of government’s intent will be shown by the percentage tariff it is prepared to impose to restrict Brazilian chicken imports.”

The promised crackdown on “unfair forms of trade” is another vital initiative against unacceptable trade practices, Baird commented. These include practices that can compromise food safety, such as thawing and refreezing, selling previously frozen imports as fresh chicken, and inadequate labelling which would prevent effective traceability in the event of product contamination.

Many thousands of jobs have already been lost, and thousands more are at risk because government efforts to stem the flood of imports have largely been ineffective. The relentless assault by foreign chicken producers, mainly in Brazil and the European Union, has created an existential crisis in an industry that is a strategic asset to South Africa, not only in terms of jobs, but also food security and food safety.

The plan’s job creation targets are not as high, or as specific, as FairPlay had hoped, but the master plan, if properly implemented, will help address South Africa’s record 29.1% unemployment rate, firstly by halting years of devastating job losses through appropriate tariffs and other measures restricting imports, and secondly by promoting import replacement and new production.

The largest jobs gain is expected in the poultry industry, where several thousand jobs are anticipated from investment and expanded production. Further jobs are targeted through the creation of new commercial-scale contract farming operations. Increased demand for chicken feed should result in new jobs in the soya and maize industries.

These totals could have been substantially higher had government been willing to enforce a real cut in imports – halving them, say, instead of the relatively gentle curtailment that is foreseen. Most of the jobs growth will come not from import replacement, but from expansion to meet growing local demand.

“While we understand that compromises had to be made to secure agreement from all sides, including importers, an opportunity for aggressive job creation has been missed,” said Baird.

Justice Richard Goldstone, FairPlay’s patron, pointed out that the poultry industry master plan could well be a template for similar job-saving and job-creating plans in other industries. “In a country with one of the highest unemployment rates in the world, nothing can be more important. It will require compromise all round, and above all a steel will from government to implement what is necessary,” Judge Goldstone said.
OUR GOAL IS TO ENSURE THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE POULTRY INDUSTRY

FairPlay’s Lionel Adendorf took to the airwaves to explain why publishing the Poultry Master Plan is just the beginning of the work that needs to be done on building a vibrant, sustainable poultry industry in South Africa. In an interview with Tinashe Mpasiri on 1873 FM, Adendorf eloquently explained why FairPlay cannot stop its work with the adoption of the Poultry Industry Master Plan, but rather must double its efforts to ensure its implementation.

Adendorf explained that for two years the FairPlay movement has “fought tooth and nail to bring to the government table the importance of a comprehensive approach to developing and building a sustainable poultry industry. We have followed various instances of dumping by international traders and also the imports of cheaper chicken into our market. We have been concerned that the poultry sector potential has been compromised by imports.”

“In the process, many jobs were lost, many production houses were closed, many chicken farmers went out of business and that’s why the FairPlay movement took it upon itself to say that if we are looking at the sustainability of the poultry industry we should not only ensure that there are adequate jobs created but that there are adequate investment opportunities and production opportunities created.”

“Downstream, we also need to make sure that consumers have the option to get access to the best available protein. The most popular protein in South Africa, and across the continent, is poultry. That is why we are saying it is important that while we are building a sustainable poultry industry we are ensuring that the chicken coming into our country is safe for consumers.”

“The frozen chicken that currently comes into our country by the container-load is defrosted then brined elsewhere and repackaged. It is not safe for use by our consumers. Often you read on the package that the chicken has come from as many as eleven different countries and how then do you expect a consumer to make a reasonable choice? That is why we are saying you need to look at the implementation of the master plan.”

FairPlay has taken upon itself to monitor the implementation of the master plan, to build relationships with other stakeholders in the sector and to ensure that the master plan is implemented as intended.

“We cannot, after two years of hard work getting all stakeholders around one table and getting government involved and facilitating these conversations, suddenly say we have done our work and we are sitting back.”

“The victory for FairPlay is not just getting the Master Plan drafted. The victory for us is to ensure that all stakeholders are involved in this process, that implementation is done successfully. And that, at the end of the day, our consumers have access to the best affordable quality protein product. We will not stop. Our goal is to ensure a sustainable poultry industry up and down the value chain that creates jobs and ensures consumer access to quality poultry.”
BRAZIL AND EU CONTINUE THEIR ASSAULT ON SA AGRICULTURAL JOBS

South African poultry producers have been sounding the alarm for years. Despite submitting an application for import tariffs months ago, they are still waiting for the SA government to announce its decision.

While being the sixth most competitive poultry producer in the world, South Africa still imports the equivalent of eight million chickens every week. Since 2010, SA’s poultry industry lost 73% of its per capita growth to these imports.

2018 was a record year for poultry imports – 20% above the five-year average. EU imports increased by 163% year-on-year. Local producers remain under immense pressure: Profits at Astral Foods plummeted by 70%, and profits at RCL are down 75% – pushed into a loss by dumping.

Nearly half of South Africa's maize and more than 90% of its soya production is bought by chicken producers. If the chicken industry is destroyed, South Africa’s maize and grain sector will follow. As many as 20 000 jobs in these sectors would be at risk if the chicken industry collapses.

Ghana’s once-flourishing poultry industry, which met almost all local demand, now only produces 5% of the country’s chicken; 95% of all chicken in Ghana is now imported. As trade predators get a foothold, they increase their market share through predatory pricing until no local industries or competitors remain. They are using the same tactics here in South Africa.

The FairPlay movement, job-seekers, trade unions and impoverished rural communities will be watching closely to see whether the new poultry industry master plan sets the industry on a growth path by cutting back the devastating flow of dumped and predatory imports.
GLOBAL ACTIVISTS CALL OUT BRAZILIAN POULTRY AND MEAT PRODUCERS FOR RAZING AMAZON RAIN FORESTS

Recently Greenpeace and other environmental activists have drawn attention to the role of Brazilian poultry and meat producers in the destruction of the Amazon rainforest, which is often referred to as the “lungs of the world”.

Fires have been started deliberately by farmers to clear land in response to Brazil President Bolsonaro’s calls to open the Amazon up to expanded food production. Close to 2.5 million hectares of land – an area one and a half times larger than Swaziland – was burned in the Brazilian Amazon during August, according to data published by INEP, Brazil’s agency responsible for monitoring forest clearances.

Greenpeace is demanding that countries stop importing meat from Brazil as a constructive measure against climate change.

According to Greenpeace “the Amazon is on fire and global fast food companies can put a stop to it. They must stop buying meat, chicken and soya from Brazil until the Amazon and its people are protected.”

Although Greenpeace calls out global fast food chains it is worth noting that in South Africa major chains like KFC and Nando’s, to their credit, source their poultry locally.

FERN, a highly respected European NGO committed to saving the world’s forests, has produced a comprehensive paper on Agriculture and Deforestation laying out the issues.

The production and demand for animal products in the EU, as well as global trade developments, can result in a situation where forest clearing for soybean production for exports to the EU and elsewhere becomes a profitable activity, leading to increased deforestation.

Brazil is, by far, the biggest source for soya as feed for broilers. More soya is consumed in poultry production than in cattle production.

South Africa is no stranger to the devastating impacts of global warming so acting locally to address climate change includes ensuring that the chicken we consume is produced locally.
The FairPlay movement is a not-for-profit trade movement that fights for jobs. Its goal is to end predatory trade practices between countries so that big and small nations play by the same rules. It supports the principle that penalties for transgressing those rules apply equally to everybody.

FairPlay was founded in October 2016. In alliance with existing organisations and experts it formulates and promotes strategies to defend communities made vulnerable by predatory trade practices and promote sustainable livelihoods.

These alliance partners are international, currently from the USA, Canada, Ireland, UK, Ghana and South Africa.

FairPlay mission: To end the scourge of dumping as an immoral trade practice.

FairPlay vision: A world where dumping no longer exists, with free trade according to the rules.

http://fairplaymovement.org

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