



COVID-19 HEIGHTENS THE FRAGILITY OF FOOD SECURITY IN SOUTH AFRICA

When a country is reliant on food imports, hunger follows when supply chains are disrupted.

As the national Covid-19 Response Command Centre announces further extensions on the lockdown, evidence shows that the lockdown has been effective in limiting the spread of the virus and is thereby saving lives. The decision to impose a lockdown was taken to ensure the prevention of an utter and complete pandemic in South Africa.

However, this has also meant that many families are not able to make an income during this time. Those who are precariously employed or earn a living under the *no work no pay* structure are facing food insecurity as their incomes disappear and their food supply starts to run out.

Before the pandemic, chicken farming and the poultry industry were devastated from the impacts of opening the South African market to dumped chicken from the EU, Brazil and

The FairPlay movement is a non-profit initiative to end predatory trade practices worldwide.

FAIRPLAY

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the US. The disruption of supply chains during the pandemic has provided a stark revelation that the nation's food security cannot and must not rely on imported food.

But in the meantime it is our duty to ensure that our neighbours do not go hungry, and that we show solidarity to their cause, a cause being taken up by the *Nelson Mandela Foundation*.

Vulnerable households are struggling to put food on the table as government lockdowns has put their livelihoods on hold. Vouchers and food parcels help but they are not enough to prevent malnutrition.

Inspired by the Congress of South African Students mantra, *Each One Teach One*, the Nelson Mandela Foundation is calling on South Africa to take action and play their part in the COVID-19 *#Each1Feed1* campaign.

By collaborating with old and new partners, the initiative is seeking to bring relief to the plight of food insecurity during and after the crisis we are facing due to the pandemic and the lockdown. The idea is for all South Africans to contribute to a food distribution network by donating to the Foundation. With their partners, the Foundation will be distributing food hampers to support families for a minimum of three months.

The public is invited to contribute to the initiative by donating through this [link](#). The Nelson Mandela Foundation has kick-started the donations with R500 000.



BRAZIL IMPORTS BEING INVESTIGATED FOR CONTAMINATION

Joe Whitworth writing in Food Safety News [reports](#) that the International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN) has been involved since mid-March in investigating chicken meat from Brazil as the source of Salmonella illnesses in the Netherlands.

FairPlay has consistently raised concerns about food safety issues in imported chicken and last December [called for a ban](#) on chicken imports from Brazil.

Whitworth reports that between the end of 2019 and mid-February 2020, the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM) in the Netherlands identified a cluster of six Salmonella Virchow infections distributed across the country using whole genome sequencing (WGS) but no epidemiological link among them was reported.

An outbreak investigation by RIVM and the Netherlands Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority (NVWA) identified six food isolates as genetically closely related to cases and associated with the source of the infection.

These isolates came from poultry meat, including frozen poultry imported from Brazil. According to information on the INFOSAN portal, frozen chicken meat from Brazil came via Austria and was also distributed to Spain.

In 2018, the European Commission stopped certain plants of BRF S.A. and SHB S.A. in Brazil from importing poultry meat into Europe. This regulation is still in force. The issue of EU restrictions on poultry meat from Brazil due to Salmonella has been raised at least four times since 2017 at meetings of the World Trade Organization.

FairPlay has called for stronger labeling requirements for imported chicken in conjunction with inadequate inspections at ports. Without these measures, unsafe chicken meat can find its way onto our market and put the health of consumers at serious risk.



#ActionAgainstPoverty #Each1Feed1



SCHUSSLER: A PAN-AFRICAN APPROACH TO FIGHTING HUNGER AND POVERTY

In an opinion [article published by IOL](#) economist and *FairPlay* expert panel member Mike Schussler examines a Pan-African approach to fighting hunger and poverty.

South Africa entered the pandemic with 10.4 million unemployed. Since then 2.1 million more have joined that queue from the ranks of the employed, not counting the 600 000 or so new entrants to the job market that are expected each year.

We know that our farmers compete well without subsidies, and despite high interest rates, uncertainty and failing infrastructure. Considering the poultry sector as one example, the potential collaborations and the benefits for the economy are evident. This is an industry that directly employs around 110 000 people; and buys huge volumes from the maize and soya sectors as feed.

The industry has a master plan in place to create more employment in South Africa, yet some neighbouring export markets are not open to us. In this regard South Africa needs to find a common goal – to help Africa feed itself with quality, value-for-money poultry supplied by an organised value chain from crop farms all the way to cold storage and marketing.

Government focus is required to open neighbouring markets and to support the poultry sector in growing the industry across Africa. Only government can deploy diplomacy to open closed markets.

When it comes to exporting food to other continents, African countries are often blocked by quality measures, besides being unable to compete with subsidised producers elsewhere. As a result, the only way forward is to systematically develop an African-grown food market and industry that pulls together all participants in the value chain to build volume and efficiencies of scale.

If the poultry and crop industries were part of a bigger combined plan for an African export industry this would improve the lot of stakeholders all the way from crop producers through meat producers to transport and storage providers, wholesalers, retailers, and eventually, crucially, also consumers.

The coronavirus has resulted in a broken global supply chain, which proves the importance of domestic food security. South Africa must play a key role in creating a Pan-African food industry that offers quality, good value and dependability. Consider a scenario where South Africa exports chicken, pork, wine and milk, with all the sectors sharing the cold-storage costs, and the government providing the soft loans to build these facilities in the export countries.

We need to think out of the box – the whole value chain needs encouragement and support, not always only financial, to stimulate work and feed our people. What we need is unbridled creativity if South Africa is to pay off debt, create jobs and feed our people. We are teetering on the brink of a very deep hole exacerbated by Covid-19 and we cannot afford to stumble now.



AFTER YEARS OF EU CHICKEN DUMPING, THE LONG PROCESS OF REBUILDING GHANA'S CHICKEN INDUSTRY BEGINS

Ghana's Agricultural Development Bank has announced a GHC500 million (US\$ 87 million) loan facility in support of the government's Broiler Revitalisation Programme aimed at increasing the domestic production of chicken.

FairPlay founder Francois Baird reminds us how Ghana's chicken industry was destroyed. "EU producers did to Ghana what they're trying to do here in South Africa: they swamped the market with dumped chicken imports and sold below the cost of production and at prices Ghanaian producers could not match."

The result: imports took over and local chicken producers went out of business. A once-flourishing local industry that had provided 80% of Ghanaian chicken has been reduced to supplying only 5% of the country's chicken.

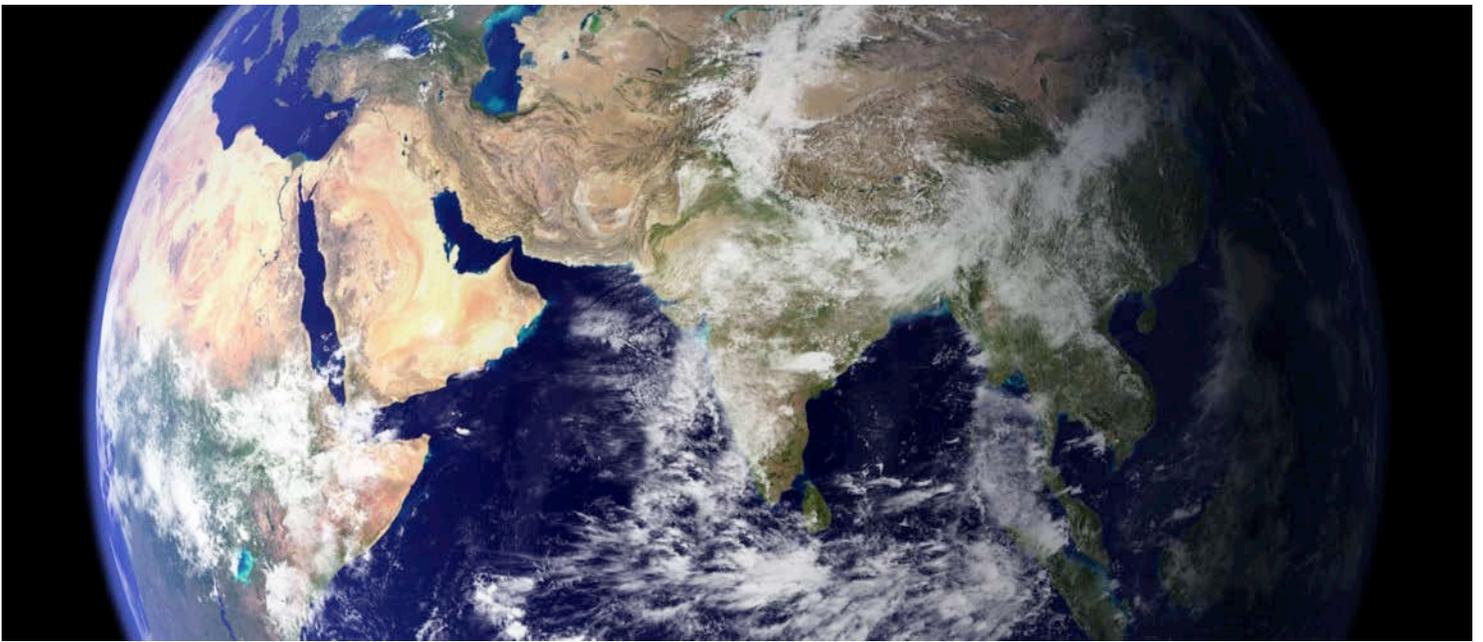
The effect of that assault is recorded in a touching video called "[Ghana's Last Poultry Farmers](#)" – a televised feature produced by Germany's public international broadcaster Deutsche Welle. Any South Africans who think imports are not a problem should take a look at it.

Over the years FairPlay has [called out](#) the disastrous experience of Ghana's chicken industry that has been devastated by the impacts of EU chicken dumping.

Two years ago Poultry producers and trade unions in South Africa and Ghana joined the FairPlay anti-dumping movement in opposing dumping of EU poultry parts on African markets.

Once a country loses an entire value chain, it's a real challenge to rebuild it. Ghana should be applauded for its leadership and commitment to agriculture and food security. *FairPlay* hopes that Ghana has the policies in place to protect this investment, and supports its reborn poultry industry from dumping and predatory trade in future.

Ghana currently imports over US\$ 300 million (about 180,000 mt) worth of chicken annually, or the equivalent of 5 million chickens each week. The country's own production equates to about 58,000 mt whereas national demand is about 400,000 mt, reports the Business Insider.



WORLD FACES WORST FOOD CRISIS FOR AT LEAST 50 YEARS, UN WARNS

As reported by *The Guardian*, the world stands on the brink of a food crisis worse than any seen for at least 50 years, the UN has warned as it urges governments to act swiftly to avoid disaster.

Better social protections for poor people are urgently needed as the looming recession following the coronavirus pandemic may put basic nutrition beyond their reach, the UN secretary general, António Guterres, has said.

"Unless immediate action is taken, it is increasingly clear that there is an impending global food emergency that could have long-term impacts on hundreds of millions of children and adults," he said. "We need to act now to avoid the worst impacts of our efforts to control the pandemic."

About 50 million people risk falling into extreme poverty this year owing to the pandemic, but the long-term effects will be even worse, as poor nutrition in childhood causes lifelong suffering. Already, one in five children around the world are stunted in their growth by the age of five, and millions more are likely to suffer the same fate if poverty rates soar.

Guterres laid out a plan to repair the world's ailing food systems and prevent further harm including urging governments to prioritise food supply chains and building a global recovery from the pandemic that prioritises healthy and environmentally sustainable food systems.

Increasing unemployment and the loss of income associated with lockdowns are putting food out of reach for many struggling people. Lockdowns are slowing harvests, while millions of seasonal labourers are unable to work. The additional impact of the coronavirus crisis and lockdowns, and the resulting recession, would compound the damage and tip millions into dire hunger, experts warned.

The pandemic risks reversing the progress that has been made in recent decades on lifting people out of poverty and improving their access to healthy food, the UN found.

Any remedies must also target the climate emergency, which is strongly linked to the world's food systems, said Elwyn Grainger-Jones, the executive director of the CGIAR System Organization, a global agricultural research body. "Solutions need to be science-based and coordinated across sectors to provide immediate response and assistance for those most in need, ongoing and inclusive support in recovery and – perhaps most importantly – future resilience to all shocks, including climate extremes."



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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