

# Chook Chat

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The Free Range Poultry  
Association of Qld Inc.  
and the Qld Egg  
Farmers Association  
Inc.

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## Special Interest Articles

Our Recipe today will blow  
your mind away

Zombie Hens

FarmBis Update

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## Report from the Chair

I attended a number of meetings in February all of which promoted the Industry. We are presently working with Russell Schultz of SafeFood Qld updating the Queensland Egg Safety and Quality Assurance Workbook.

Meeting with Simon Warner on the 9<sup>th</sup> with a follow up on the 20<sup>th</sup> of February was most satisfactory with finance for the next stage of the Environmental Management Systems program being approved.

Progress is being made with the FarmBis/CRC training project. A draft matrix matching training needs with existing education courses was received by the committee. It was noted the required technical skills established by the

consultative Industry committee was downgraded as not necessarily management skills.

After receiving feedback from the Association re the need for technical skills to be retained as a priority the project manager has had to re-think her recommendation that courses need to be generic and in keeping with the Government's Flexible Education policy. It may be that new modules need to be developed.

We will be carefully monitoring the outcomes of this feedback as other training and skills projects come on board such as the Rural Skills, Training and Labour Strategy Information night, hosted by DPI&F. that I will be attending in

Brisbane on behalf of the Industry on the 7<sup>th</sup> March.

I spoke with DPI&F; we will not hear anymore about the cage issue until after the NSW Election.

I will be away on holiday from late March to late May. Hopefully, we will have someone write this column while I'm away.

Until I return, I wish you lots of rain and hope the place will be a lot greener by the time I get back.



*J. Lumsden*

## Editorial: Zombie Hens! What next?



Duh! What's that?

Animal Liberation and other groups place a great deal of pressure on us as farmers to take into consideration the 'feelings' of our animals. Now, I know we don't have a problem with that because that's what most of us have been doing since Adam was a boy.

An article by Dr. Mike King, (lecturer and researcher at Otago's Bioethics Centre, NZ), where he discusses the concerns over animal welfare and the changes that have occurred in farmed animals through selective breeding over the past few thousand years, makes for interesting reading and promotes controversial ideas for discussion.

According to the minimum standards for the farming of egg laying hens, as determined by the 2005 Code of Welfare for Layer Hens, animals must be farmed

in a manner that allows them to display normal patterns of behaviour. What if we could breed hens that no longer wanted to sit on their eggs? Or, as in the case in the USA, where they have bred a hen that is genetically blind to make them more suited to the cage systems.

The aim in each case would be to reduce the animal suffering.

Dr. King goes on to report Bernard Rollin (American Ethicist) conceived the ultimate hypothetical scenario for welfare friendly hen farming was the creation of the **Zombie Hen**.

These hens would have only the brain activity necessary to live and produce eggs. They would have no behaviour patterns that

could be frustrated so they would not suffer in a battery system. In fact they would lack the ability to experience suffering at all.

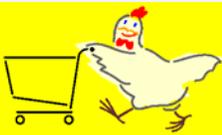
Surely this would be the perfect scenario for Animal Liberationists!

Now get over the 'Yuk' factor and think about it.

We have been successfully selectively breeding since man first farmed animals. Indeed from many ethical perspectives and an animal welfare viewpoint 'to reduce the suffering of farmed animals' is difficult to challenge.

But to what lengths are we prepared to go to satisfy the whim of a minority group who are never satisfied anyway?

All I can say is – thank God I'm not a hen.



## Snippets

Poultry CRC is exploring the potential of using camera/computer technology in cage egg production. The thinking behind this being when the computer detects a risk issue then the stock person would go in, investigate and resolve the problem. Thus the stockperson's time could be spent in more productive activities, with low-risk, mundane activities completed automatically by the computer. I can see the Liberationists having a ball with this one as one of their major concerns is the lack of inter-action with the farmer. Still, it certainly is a time and motion sensible use of technology.



# Scrambled egg and spinach baked potatoes

## Ingredients

4 lg baking potatoes  
Cooking Oil Spray  
Salt, to taste  
6 eggs  
2 spring onions,  
chopped  
100g baby spinach leaves  
½ cup cream  
Pepper, to taste  
½ cup grated tasty cheese  
40 g butter, chopped  
Extra sliced spring onions and  
Fresh herbs, to garnish



*‘not only  
scrumptious but  
attractive too.’*

## Method

1. Wash potatoes and pierce all over with a fork. Place on outside edge of microwave turntable. Cook on high for 8 mins or until almost tender. Remove and allow to cool slightly
2. Cut potatoes in half lengthways and scoop out flesh, leaving a 1 cm-thick shell (you can reserve flesh

for another use). Spray the inside and outside of potatoes with cooking oil. Place on an oven tray and season with salt.

3. Cook potatoes in a hot oven (200C) for about 30 minutes or until golden brown.

4. Meanwhile, whisk eggs, cream and pepper in a medium bowl until well combined.

5. Melt butter in a large non-stick frying pan. Add spring onions and cook, stirring, until soft. Add egg mixture and cook, stirring gently, until mixture starts to set. Add spinach and cheese and stir.

6. Spoon scrambled egg mixture into potatoes. Serve garnished with extra sliced spring onions and fresh herbs and serve.

# F A R M B I S

## FarmBis News

From the FarmBis Team

Have you ever spent a lot of your time shaping an employee to fit your business and then had them leave? In the current climate of skills shortages and competition from other industries, attracting good staff, retaining them in the long term and meeting your legislative requirements are issues faced by employers across all industries. However being a good employer is not just about labour management and industrial relations. Communication, team work and leadership are also part of a suite of skills a good employer

needs to have.

FarmBis has a number of eligible courses in communication, leadership, Labour management, industrial relations and recruitment. Eligible producers can receive a 50% subsidy towards the cost of these courses.

So why not take the next step in becoming a better boss? Undertake training to assist you to better understand your workers, communicate more effectively and reduce the amount of time and money spent looking for new workers.

FarmBis Networkers are happy to discuss your needs and put you in touch with trainers who can assist you and can be contacted on 13 25 23 or you can search the training database at [www.farmis.gov.au](http://www.farmis.gov.au).





## Laughter – the best medicine

Noise proves nothing - often a hen who has merely laid an egg cackles as if she had laid an asteroid.

*Mark Twain*



## A thoroughly modern Chick

**Psychiatrist:** What's your problem?

**Patient:** I think that I'm a chicken.

**Psychiatrist:** How long has this been going on?

**Patient:** Ever since I was an egg!



It is better to keep your mouth closed and let people think you are a fool than to open it and remove all doubt.

*Mark Twain*

*Easter Greeting to all of our members*



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**Report from FRPAQ Inc meeting on  
5<sup>th</sup> February 2007**

- The committee discussed the final trials for ND
- Update on the EMS
- FR Victoria pushing for conformity agreement
- SafeFood Qld –
  1. growers haven't received new stickers,
  2. some prosecutions and may be more to come
  3. Committee to get more info on Inking Stamps
- Not much response for Peter Scott survey trial of Cholera
- A need for more chemicals to be registered
- Chairperson gave report on CRC Poultry and FarmBis Training Needs research

