

Mpact to help cut logistics costs in poultry industry

JOHANNESBURG, 14 April 2014 -More than a billion live chickens are transported across South Africa every year as they move along the production chain from broiler house to supermarket. In the process, hard-pressed producers face significant logistics costs on top of the challenging price of core inputs such as maize feed.

Mpact Plastic Containers, a division of JSE-listed paper and plastics packaging company, Mpact Limited, believes that the Group's experience in providing high-quality and well-priced packaging across a variety of industries can support the continuing drive of poultry producers to wring every cent possible out of their cost base.

Says Loutjie De Jongh, Managing Director of Mpact Plastic Containers: "South Africa's poultry producers continue to face major challenges in combating the flood of imported poultry from countries where farmers receive subsidies and other special treatment.

"In this environment, we appreciate that it's vital for the local industry to reduce costs at every possible point in the value chain. This is therefore a good time for producers to look at a more efficient and cost-effective way of transporting live birds."

De Jongh says Mpact has developed a new generation plastic chicken coop that is more rigid and can be used alongside the traditional crates. In addition, the Mpact chicken coop conforms to the standards of returnable transport packaging (RTP), which makes it reusable over an extended period.

"Reusing a robust and sturdy container means the birds travel more comfortably. RTP reduces environmental impact as containers are reused numerous times and are fully recyclable. Another advantage is that plastic is lighter than many alternatives, reducing transport costs. Further, many chicken farmers have their own vehicles so empty trucks returning can carry a return load.," says De Jongh.

He says the overall effect for poultry producers is improved efficiency.

With a capacity of 12 live birds per crate, the Mpact chicken coop conforms to the standards for transporting live birds that are set out the Code of Practice of the South African Poultry Association.

"Unlike wood or carton, plastic does not absorb water and micro-organisms. This reduces the likelihood of disease because plastic crates can be easily washed. The birds are transported safely and stress levels are minimised, improving the quality of the meat," says De Jongh.

The chicken coops are manufactured at the Mpact Plastic Containers plant in Brits. The company also has ability to manufacture large volumes in the Western Cape.

De Jongh says the Mpact product has far fewer moving parts than its traditional rivals with only three large parts: the base, top lid and gate. Coops made according to the older process are held together with rivets. De Jongh notes that this not only creates a risk of contamination if these rivets break off, but the product is also less durable as it is not a one-piece moulding.

The Mpact product is made from UV-stabilised polypropylene while the traditional crates are made from high-density polyethylene. De Jongh says polypropylene is not prone to stress cracking, meaning that it is less likely to break as a result of continuous washing with hot water and detergents.

“This coop is the product of Mpact’s approach to innovation which looks beyond inventions to how we actually do things. We think very hard about how to improve processes in our own business and so we are able to understand how our products can play a supportive role in the processes of our customers. We believe that our customers ultimately share the benefits of this approach,” says De Jongh.