

Chicken sales continue to rise as world demand grows

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Demand for chicken meat is showing no signs of declining, as poultry overtakes red meat consumption in markets around the world - including the United States and South Africa.



In a statement issued ahead of U.S. National Poultry Day on 19 March, the USA Poultry & Egg Export Council (USAPEEC) notes that U.S. chicken imports to South Africa resumed two years ago, under the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) agreement, which brought limited annual imports of top quality U.S. chicken pieces back into the country for the first time since 2000. South African consumers have proven very receptive to the high quality frozen bone-in portions.

South Africans and Americans alike are eating more poultry than ever before. In fact, in both countries, consumers eat [far more chicken meat than any other meat products](#). South Africans consume an average of around 33kg of chicken, 10.9kg of beef and veal, 3.4kg of pork and 3kg of sheep meat per person, per year; while Americans consume an average of around 48.3kg of chicken, 25.6kg of beef and

veal, 22.8kg of pork and 0.4kg of sheep meat per person, per year.

Chicken's rapid rise in popularity around the world started with growing health consciousness in the 1970s, says USAPEEC, and consumption has continued to grow as advances in breeding, feed selection, farming and processing methods have made this protein source one of the most cost effective in the world today; alongside higher protein turkey meat, which is described as The Perfect Protein®.

Industrialised chicken production has reduced the time to market weight to only 48 days, driving down its production costs relative to beef, reports the U.S. National Chicken Council. The U.S. among the world's leaders in poultry production, is gearing up to meet growing global demand, and last year the country's global broiler meat export volume grew 2.9% to 3,263,675 metric tons, with export value rising 11.9% to \$3.421bn.

With a consumption exceeding 1.8 million metric tons per year, South African chicken demand outstrips local supply, making international imports an important step to meeting market demand for high quality, affordable protein, says USAPEEC.

Zelda Sharp, regional director of USAPEEC, which facilitates free market trade between U.S. producers and South African business partners, says that while U.S. imports represent only about 3% of South Africa's annual poultry production, they are bringing new choice to the market. "International trade ensures a broad supplier base, which supports a steady supply of stock and mitigates the risk of supplies being disrupted by climate change, drought or disease. It also controls spiraling food prices that could occur in a monopoly situation," she says.

U.S. poultry producers are working collaboratively with South African food producers, importers, distributors and retailers on a number of initiatives to boost the chicken sector through knowledge transfer and economic development, Sharp notes.

"Among the U.S. initiatives to strengthen the sector to the mutual benefit of stakeholders in SA and the U.S. was the recent sub-Saharan Africa Seminar on Avian Influenza, hosted by USAPEEC for SSA stakeholders. The seminar was a first step towards further U.S.-African collaboration to help ensure food security, health and safety in animals and humans," says Sharp. The U.S. has also hosted a delegation of HDI importers from South Africa, where they met with producers and exporters for talks of ways to improve their import businesses; and has also completed training programmes for small-scale

rural South African poultry and egg farmers through its World Poultry Foundation (WPF).

For nutritional information and FAQs, please visit the U.S. Chicken in South Africa website: <http://usapoultry-rsa.co.za/> or follow www.facebook.com/USpoultryRSA/ or <https://twitter.com/USpoultryRSA>

For trade enquiries, please contact Zelda Sharp at zelda.sharp@mweb.co.za

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