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novel multi species
agricultural enterprise**



**Australian Veterinary
Antimicrobial
Stewardship
Conference 2018**



**Changing attitudes in
Australia to food, health
and the environment**

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Tim McCarthy, BVP's General Manager, shows the 'Masterplan' for BVP.



Brisbane Valley Protein, a novel multi species agricultural enterprise



By **PETER BEDWELL**

During the holiday break *Poultry Digest* was on the hunt for a good farm report to kick off 2019; something different but inspiring and relevant to the changing needs of ever more demanding consumers.

Talking to Santrev's CEO, Luke Trevanion, I asked him if he could help with my quest.

"How about a company that is raising quail, operating state of the art broiler sheds, backgrounding cattle and growing forage crops?"

"Santrev is in the process of

completing their second set of broiler sheds," Luke told us.

A couple of phone calls to Tim McCarthy, the General Manager of Brisbane Valley Protein located near Coominya, and we were on our way to see this truly unique enterprise.

Brisbane Valley Protein (BVP) is the creation of siblings Duncan Brown and Selena Gomersall, fourth generation farmers who combine entrepreneurial talents with a love of the land operated with social purpose objectives.

The expanding enterprise has led to the engagement of a number of market leading welfare oriented producers as specialist advisors to the BVP directors.

South African-based Safika Holdings is a significant minority shareholder in BVP.

It is a leading investment organisation with interests ranging from industrial, financial services, mining and exploration, commodity marketing, transport and logistics, online education, health, property, communications and aerospace sectors.

The company's other Australian interests include Melbourne-based private investment and advisory

firm, the Wingate Group, online training provider, Learning Seat, and TrakkaCorp, a manufacturer of high powered searchlights for airborne, marine and land based companies.

"BVP is the first Australian agricultural investment for Safika," a BVP statement reveals.

Poultry Digest visited the BVP Coominya enterprise in late January and Tim McCarthy first explained the overall plan for the existing and future development of the 1100 plus hectare farmland and facilities.

"We are a dedicated protein production hub, with on-site training and R&D facilities in the Brisbane Valley Protein Precinct (BVPP) and hope to create significant employment in the Brisbane Valley as the various stages come to fruition over the next couple of decades.

"Further, it has the potential to generate indirect jobs in the region through extensive supply chain requirements," Tim explained.

The development and future growth of the BVPP is very much aligned with the objectives of the local Somerset Regional Council's Economic Development Plan 2015-2020 which



are to strengthen the region's significant farming sector and by increasing the value-add to agricultural output through processing and manufacturing.

The council plan is also concerned with leveraging the region's potential for tourism. Part of the BVPP plan is to establish a food-based tourist presence including accommodation and other features complementing the overall farming operations.

One of the first questions *Poultry Digest* asked was "How do you manage biosecurity between the different livestock operations?"

The simple answer Tim gave was "very stringently!"

"Our quail and broiler farms are separated by more than six kilometres and we use very strict processes to avoid disease risk.

"Our broiler chickens are grown for Darwalla at we are careful to ensure that our management and production practices pose absolutely minimal risk to their birds," Tim said.

As *Poultry Digest* was keen to see the new broiler sheds built by Santrev, that precluded visiting the quail housing.

Tim explained that their quail are not grown out in cages but on floor based litter in pens.

"We use open sided sheds which are easy to operate using natural ventilation.

"Our facilities are from hatch to dispatch with breeders hatching grow out and processing on site.

"Our growing process has a high commitment to welfare and by focusing on high levels of biosecurity we can grow without the use of antibiotics.

"The birds are given a vegetarian based diet supplied by Ridley. Our other point of difference is that we grow a larger bird.

"Typically the Japanese quail variety are less than 200 grams where our genetics derived from the Coturnix Quail variety grow to 350/400 grams (dressed weight).

"This suits the market requirement for a single bird being able to provide a main course meal and has become popular, not only with leading Australian restaurants like La Cache a Vin, Gerards, il Centro and many others, but in Asian export markets including Hong Kong.

"We are an AQIS export accredited farm and see a lot of potential for our quail in Asian markets," Tim said.

The processing facility is equipped to the highest standards and when explained to *Poultry Digest*, there is the realisation that quail meat processing is highly labour intensive which logically in part accounts for the higher cost of the product when compared to chicken.

Tim wanted to demonstrate the size of the BVP quail so a number of



1. The quail processing facility. 2. Coturnix Quail variety grows out to 350/400 grams dressed weight. 3. BVP Quail Manager, Justin Werner with the end product. 4. Highly efficient main Walter fan placement on new Santrev shed. 5. Demineralisation/sterilisation water treatment equipment from Waterform Technologies. 6. Completed and occupied 8 shed facility supplies Darwallah.

birds were bought in a crate from the sheds and sure enough they are a much heavier bird than *Poultry Digest* has seen on previous visits to quail farms.

The broiler sheds, situated a six kilometre drive from the quail processing plant, are stocked with birds from the new and state of the art Darwalla hatchery built at nearby Allora.

The sheds are all managed under RSPCA broiler code accreditation.

The combination of new Santrev sheds and top quality chicks from a new hatchery are delivering pleasing results for the BVP enterprise. Eight sheds are in operation and a further six well under way.

With high levels of prefabrication and a skilled building crew lead by Santrev's site manager Matt Fleming, the new sheds will soon be in operation.

Some interesting features of the sheds include the new Skov 539 controller combined with a Specialised Farm Services control board – impressive and works well.

Stig Vies Jørgensen, Marketing Manager at Skov, outlined the key features of the Skov 539 controller.

"It combines both climate and key production parameters in the one controller and monitors climate and production in real time.

"The extended use of icons and graphic layout means that the 539 is easy to operate and understand.

"With a great overview it is easy for staff to see why the controller acts as it does and the 10 inch touch display is very user friendly with a complete house overview on the front screen," Stig explained.

"There is a complete program overview to facilitate easy setup and adjustment with a continuous calculation of key performance criteria such as FOR and EPEF.

"The Dynamic Multistep feature allows for optimal energy saving."

Water quality is critical to efficient broiler growth and health and bore water supplies at the BVP sheds are demineralised and treated by a sophisticated Waterform Technologies system.

Apart from the quail and broiler production, BVP backgrounds cattle on pasture supplemented by corn and barley silage.

"Unlike most beef which shifts through multiple parties and traders to get to the consumers' tables, BVP offers a direct line to the paddock and the animal, being reared on a combination of pasture and locally sourced silage – an efficient process that utilises the whole corn or barley plant not just the grain," Tim explained.

Agriculture was worth \$84 billion in 2016/17 with exports accounting for over \$48 billion.

Drought and trade disputes and a potential slowing of the Chinese economy may be putting pressure on future growth but agriculture will remain a huge contributor to the Australian economy.

Though chicken meat consumption may have levelled out slightly, the industry is on track for 50 kg per person per annum in the not too distant future.

With health conscious high earning millennials (22-37) now the largest consumer group by percentage, eating patterns are changing.

Quail, perceived as a high end delicacy by both food industries and consumers, is also healthy being low in fat, high in protein value and it's tasty.

Quail, both meat and their eggs have been around as a preferred protein since the days of ancient Egypt

and today our celebrity chefs are rediscovering this great little bird.

With health experts recommending that people need to eat less meat by volume, an alternative like quail fulfils the 'eat less but eat well' criteria.

The Brisbane Valley Protein project provides top quality protein to both a domestic and local overseas market, it provides valuable jobs, training and impetus for growth in one of Australia's fastest growing regions.

New infrastructure, including better roads, a new rail link to ports and even a new airport capable of taking international cargo and passenger flights, all helps to boost agricultural expansion in the region.

The project has already attracted significant foreign investment and will almost certainly continue to do so.



1. High level of prefabrication means faster construction.
2. New SKOV 539 controller.
3. BVP Poultry Manager Steve Streicher with Tim McCarthy.
4. High efficiency "clean wall" design in new Santrev shed.

