

# poultrydigest

Volume 37, Number 1

August/September 2021



**Fourth generation broiler farmers upgrade to low energy output technology**

**Dr Bob Pym inducted into International Poultry Hall of Fame**

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Dan Coaster-Garton (centre) with his sons Chris (left) and Nic on the family farm in Beaudesert, Queensland. (Photos courtesy KTB Media, Caitlin Boland.)



## Fourth generation broiler farmers upgrade to low energy output technology



By **PETER BEDWELL**

Dan Coaster-Garton has been running his Beaudesert contract broiler farm for the past 21 years growing for Inghams.

On September 6, *Poultry Digest* interviewed Dan just after chicks had been placed in two new sheds recently built by Santrev.

"My son's great grandfather started in the poultry industry and our family represent the fourth generation of producers raising meat chickens," he told *Poultry Digest*.

The family first became contract growers for Inghams in 1964 and Dan's current farm is today, a solid performing grower for that same company; so they have grown together.

"We have always been early adapters of the latest innovations that help us enhance the efficiencies in running our farming operations.

"Santrev has worked with us as we have expanded and we have now moved to the latest SKOV technology to keep us competitive and profitable," Dan told us.

Today Dan's family operation has 8 sheds, four smaller units housing 112,000 birds and four larger sheds each housing up to 50,000 birds.

Luigi Di Clemente, FarmMark's Managing Director has worked with SKOV since FarmMark was established in 2003 and is proud to be the only Certified Partner in Australia.

*Poultry Digest* was provided with a SKOV 3D schematic of these new sheds and the technology is truly impressive.

Luke Trevanion, Santrev's Managing Director has worked with Dan for many years as he progressively upgraded his broiler growing operations.

"Energy costs have increased dramatically in the last 10 years. We built our larger capacity operation knowing that low energy consumption must be an essential aspect in our plan to ensure our operating costs are kept as low as possible.

"I liked the idea that the SKOV minimum ventilation system could deliver more precise management of air flows and wind speeds.

"Though our previous shed climate control system worked it relied on negative pressure, which apart from being energy hungry, did not deliver the more precise level of control that the SKOV system provides," Dan said.

The two new sheds (17.8m x 168m) on the main farm built by Santrev are divided into front and rear zones.

Four cool pads are housed in 16 m long 'dog boxes', two per side and the inlet doors are operated by a rack and





pinion system.

Coolpad pump sensors, a tunnel cooling sensor and temperature and relative humidity sensors are fitted in the front zone, and temp and RH sensors are placed in the rear zone.

Temperature and alarm sensors are fitted in the centre point of the sheds and two bird weighing scales combine with the range of sensors to provide significant amounts of data to the DOL 39 and its Farm Online software system.

Dan is particularly impressed with the two smart SKOV IBH 100kW indirect combustion heaters located in the front section of each shed. The new heaters ensure all CO2 and moisture is expelled through chimneys in the ceiling.

The SVOK DOL 539 climate/production computer with the DOL 278 emergency opening system are well proven products.

The DOL 539 shed controller was introduced ten years ago but since has been upgraded to improve its functionality.

The solar panels on Dan's sheds deliver 120kw across the three farms or 40 kw for each 100,000 birds. The last two years have seen the systems all but paid off, they have proven to be an invaluable part of our energy reduction strategy.

"Combined with the new SKOV BF50 fans we have installed on the new sheds and retro fitted to our old sheds, we are looking forward to significant energy savings in the coming summer," Dan said.

The advanced SKOV minimum ventilation system will play a pivotal role at the farm as the climate around Beaudesert can be highly variable, so while minimum ventilation works for much of the time during the cooler months, full tunnel capacity is needed for the remainder of the year. The variable speed BF 50 fans will ensure maximum air speeds in excess of 4m/s when needed.

Tunnel mode will utilise 14 x BF 50LPF fans, horizontally mounted with cones, then 4 x BF 50 LPC wall fans with cones which can deliver air speeds of 4m/sec. Cool pads on each sidewall are 32 x1.8 m.

Other critical control items include per shed, 4 x Skov DA 175 winch motors to actuate mini vents, 4 DA 75 winch motors to actuate rack and pinion operated shutter flaps behind the cool pads.

A DOL 90 water meter and two cool pump sensors (DOL12) complete the advanced specification of the climate control systems.

The Farm Online system (DOL 2400) ▷



1. Santrev 'clean' shed design showing mini vents installed in side walls – 82 per shed. Each shed houses 50,000 birds. 2. Smart SKOV IBH 100kW indirect combustion heater. 3. Dan Coaster-Garton with Luke Trevanion, Santrev's Managing Director, with the SKOV DOL 539 shed controller.

located in the farm's office, links the automated functions through a WLAN system.

Luke Trevanion, who built the sheds and Luigi Di Clemente, who supplied the extensive SKOV equipment choices, have worked with Dan and his family for many years.

"It is fantastic to have a customer like Dan who thinks not only of the present but also where contract grower farms like his will need to be in the future.

"By making the decision to invest in the best technology available in poultry shed design, he is contributing to the profitability and security of his integrator which given his family's long history with Inghams, is important to him.

"As the industry moves towards more automated data collection processes, it will become as vital as maintaining the correct conditions for his birds.

The Farm Online system protects as well as informs him and his team and of course, his integrator.

"As we move beyond consumer considerations such as animal welfare to sustainability and issues like GHG emissions, claims made by chicken meat producers and their retail outlets will need to have a verification component and Dan's farm has the capability to do that," Luke said.

Dan is not that keen to discuss grower pool ratings even though his performance over many years has always been of the highest standard, according to Luke.

"We believe Performance, sustainability and profitability are the key to our longevity in the industry, and recognised years ago that means investing in the best technology and sheds available," Dan said.

Both Dan's adult sons Chris and Nic have returned to the family farm to manage day to day operations with Dan and his wife Kym.

Four years ago, Dan and Kym bought out Kym's parents and embarked on their major expansion plans.

Dan is convinced that in the future larger 'family owned' contract grower operations will become more sort after by their integrators. Not only do they offer the desired economies of scale needed to remain profitable, but they allow for generations of poultry knowledge to grow, maximizing farm performance and most importantly, integrator peace of mind.

As is the requirement from Inghams, the entire farm has been RSPCA accredited for over six years.



1. Tunnel mode utilises 14 x SKOV BF 50 LPC fans. 2. SKOV mini vent – 164 installed in two sheds. 3. Side wall installed BF50 LPC fan – four per shed. 4. SKOV DA 175 mini vent winch motors.

Dan considers this to be a good industry practice as it gives growers and their integrators a welfare code to adhere to.

"It is my firm belief the RSPCA program has made us better farmers. If we are able to give the consumer the confidence that our birds are given the best possible care and they continue to buy our product then I'm all for it," Dan said.

Dan and his family have seen a lot of changes since starting their broiler rearing back in 1964 but the consistent adoption of the best available technologies of the day have paid off for them.

Good technology is vital but so is experience in knowing how to apply it.

The performance of the Dan Coaster-Garton and family's operations confirms that they have achieved this balance.