

Media Statement

For immediate release

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#Head

Disinformation campaign aimed at chicken importers hurts South Africa's consumers

#Begins

JOHANNESBURG – The continued distortion of the facts by US-based lobby group FairPlay and its attempts to sow disharmony among South Africa's poultry industry players are malicious, regrettable and harms South African consumers.

Furthermore, FairPlay's most recent allegations that the Association of Meat Producers and Importers (AMIE) is seeking to undermine Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition Ebrahim Patel and challenge government's decision to impose tariffs on chicken imports are completely without foundation.

AMIE, the acknowledged voice of meat and poultry importers and exporters in South Africa, is sympathetic to Minister Patel's difficult job in juggling the diverging needs of all within South Africa's poultry industry and is committed to supporting him to find solutions which benefit South Africa's economy, grow South African jobs and protect consumers.

We have also repeatedly reiterated our commitment to the South African Poultry Sector Masterplan – to which we contributed and are a signatory – as it resolves several structural and other problems within the industry as well as outlines efforts to grow South Africa's broiler industry.

AMIE is dismayed at the unrelenting misinformation campaign that is being waged by FairPlay, which goes against the cooperative spirit which Minister Patel and his counterpart in Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, Minister Thoko Didiza, have fostered and encouraged to facilitate a national poultry strategy and approach which best serves the needs of South Africa and its people.

While we support freedom of expression and the right of everyone to their opinion, we cannot allow FairPlay's recent public allegations about our alleged "war chest" to fight South Africa's poultry producers as well as our intention to battle government and Minister Patel to go unchallenged.

Executive Committee: S. Talpert (Chairman), M. Luff (Vice Chairman), A. van Rensburg, B. Smit, G. Austin, G. Chaplin, P. Matthew (Chief Executive Officer)

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The true facts of the case are as follows:

- AMIE established an online resource called ChickenFacts in September 2020 to provide South African industry players, citizens and consumers with proven facts on the poultry industry in South Africa to enable them to form informed opinions on the issue;
- AMIE has not assembled a “war chest” to fight South Africa’s poultry producers; and
- AMIE shares the South African government’s vision to grow the local broiler industry and is committed to engaging with it and other role players to make this a reality.

ChickenFacts is a resource for all groups in the poultry industry. It seeks to provide industry players with better insight into consumer needs through a consumer survey. It also delivers business insights, such as analysing the Poultry Master Plan, as well as providing information on the relationship South Africa has with its trading partners.

Most importantly, it publishes a monthly fact sheet which provides proven facts on chicken consumption, exports, imports and other relevant matters.

The information provided on the website is drawn from not only AMIE, but a range of reputable sources such as the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF), SARS, FTI consulting and the International Poultry Council and is intended to dispel the misinformation and untruths peddled in the industry.

Secondly, AMIE did call for contributions from its members in August 2019 to enable it to engage the government on the South African Poultry Sector Masterplan and lobby against excessive tariffs.

There was no call this August for contributions to a war chest to “battle” government, nor are we engaged in some nefarious, underhand or covert plot to discredit or undermine Minister Patel, the government or poultry sector players.

We have been open and above-board about our principled opposition to tariff protectionism and excessive import tariffs and will continue to engage government and other players where we can on the matter, while working with poultry sector players to grow South Africa’s broiler industry.

We are disappointed that despite our constant engagement with the South African Poultry Association (SAPA), FairPlay – which they sponsor – continues to mislead the public.

We, once again, call on them to desist from this behaviour and appeal to SAPA to work with us for the betterment of the South African economy, retailers and consumers.

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