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## Covid 19 Communication

Dear small and medium poultry farmers,

As you are aware the South African Government has placed the country on lockdown as from midnight 26 march 2020. This is in an effort to contain the spread of Covid 19.

### Essential services

As a poultry producer, processor and marketer of poultry and related products you are exempted from this lockdown because of specific exemptions. "In order to ensure that people remain well-nourished..., the following operations will continue:

- **Manufacturing of food** and essential products
- **Agricultural and food supply related operations**, including farming, veterinary and phyto-sanitary provider services
- **Food, beverages and essential products manufactruing and processing** facilities
- **Warehousing, transport and logistics for food and essential products**
- **The ports, road and rail networks will remain open in order to facilitiate transport of essential products**
- **Retail, wholesale, spaza shops and mall food outlets will remain open.**

From conversations with our customers it is clear that our farmers are willing to continue farming through the lockdown and that most of them see the benefit of having product to sell in a market that will have limited food supply due to the logistical issues surrounding the lockdown. Our farmers' main concern is that their movements will be limited by the government. Farmers are requested to refer any government employee who tries to prevent their movement to the essential services list which is widely availabel in the public domain and to remind such government employees that farming and all activities involved in the production and selling of food is still permitted throughout the lockdown. It is your right and responsibility to continue with activities which fall under essential services.

### Input supplies

I have spoken to various feed manufacturers and outlets and all will continue trading and supplying feed during the lockdown period. Some have indicated that they may alter their trading times but all will remain open to the public in line with their responsibilities to ensure the food production cycle can continue.

## Can humans become infected with the COVID-19 from an animal source?

“Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that are common in animals. Occasionally, people get infected with these viruses which may then spread to other people. For example, SARS-CoV was associated with civet cats and MERS-CoV is transmitted by dromedary camels. Possible animal sources of COVID-19 have not yet been confirmed. To protect yourself, such as when visiting live animal markets, avoid direct contact with animals and surfaces in contact with animals. Ensure good food safety practices at all times. Handle raw meat, milk or animal organs with care to avoid contamination of uncooked foods and avoid consuming raw or undercooked animal products.”

The live animal markets referred to above are really not prevalent in South Africa.

**The main risk in our industry is that people working in the supply chain get the virus** from other people and that this may cause a staff shortage in the supply chain thus having an impact on the supply of chicks from hatchery to farmer. We and our suppliers have implemented measures to reduce this risk.

## Your responsibilities

We would like to assure you that the entire chick supply chain is taking this threat seriously. As the poultry industry is always under threat from various bacteria and viruses many of the procedures that other businesses have put in place have always been standard practice in the poultry industry.

- Our farmers should already be practicing high hygiene standards and bio security.
- The additional steps that you should be taking now relate more to your personal contact and activity away from your farming operations as the disease prevention methods that you have in place on your farms should already be of a high standard and be more than adequate to prevent disease transmission on your farm.
- If not you need to look at your cleaning and disinfecting methods and ensure you sharpen up on these.
- You also need to continue with strict access control and not allow non-employees on the farm and employees that enter the farm should always wash before and after work and only use clothing that is specifically for the farm.
- Employees not be working in their travel clothes and shoes on the farm. This is nothing new to the serious poultry farmer regardless of their size.

## Economic effect – Opinions of Marcos Grassini manager at Alfa Chicks

- Regarding the effect on local producers it would appear as though Covid 19 is impacting massively on the European labour force and this will probably lead to a shortage of all food types in Europe (panic buying in Europe is also not helping). We have all seen the photos of their empty food shelves.
- In spite of our political and economic situation, South Africa remains a strong food producer and we can probably expect food exports to grow in light of recent events, this export growth will most likely be supported by the much weakened Rand.
- Our grain producing areas have also received good rains and this, combined with reduced fuel prices should cause downward pressure on the feed price in the short term.

- The increased import tariffs on poultry products and the weakened Rand should also reduce pressure from imported poultry products on our local producers.
- **Now is the South African Poultry Producers chance to shine and prove that we are in fact capable of meeting our countries chicken production requirements.**
- I also think that these factors are already reflected in the current high prices of chicken on our supermarket shelves.
- All in all I would say that things are really looking good for the South African Poultry Producer besides the poor state of our economy.
- Remember, chicken is still the cheapest form of animal protein and the people need to eat.

We, our suppliers and our farmers need to remember that we are part of the food supply chain and that we have a great responsibility to continue doing what we do to the best of our abilities. The people need to eat, and we need to feed them.

Happy farming,



Marcos Grassini  
Manager at Alfa Chicks