

## Enhanced hybrid vigor benefits breeder and broiler

by WINFRIDUS BAKKER, World Technical Support Breeder Specialist

When Cobb-Vantress bought Avian Farms in June 2000, an important part of the acquisition were new pure lines which were to become a valuable addition to the Cobb gene pool.

Several experimental crosses were tested by the Cobb research team and one of the new product lines from this evaluation is the Cobb Avian 48 female, a cross between Cobb and Avian blood lines. This product has quickly shown its advantages.

The parent stock produces more broiler chicks than the Cobb 500, yet the new cross still provides a very competitive broiler. It is the enhanced hybrid vigor, or heterosis, associated with crossing completely unrelated pure lines which has led to such a combination of qualities.



Winfridus Bakker

The Cobb Avian 48 has been introduced into selected markets in North and South America, Asia and in Europe, where the product has shown considerable success in parent and broiler performance. This balance is combined with excellent livability,

walking ability and disease resistance, especially against several viral infections.

### Parent stock performance

Over the last three years there is growing confidence that the parent female can produce 145 chicks/hen housed to 65 weeks of age. This confidence is based on the production persistency - up to 22 weeks over 70% production - good livability and high fertility/hatchability.

The female is easy to grow in the rearing period. However, it

has different bodyweight and feeding curves to the Cobb 500 - a very important factor for customers willing to look at the Cobb Avian 48. The female requires a higher feed intake at 12 weeks of age, based on a higher target bodyweight at 15 weeks, to prepare her properly for light stimulation at 20-21 weeks of age.



### Cobb Avian 48 broiler characteristics

- 100% white feathering.
- Excellent uniformity in variety of management conditions.
- Can be grown efficiently with low and high density feeds. Higher density feed increases carcass yield, and percentage of breast and leg meat.
- Best physical results obtained with pelleted feed and with a light program adapted to local conditions.

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## Cobb Sweden



James Bell (right), president of Cobb-Vantress Inc., was in Sweden for the 60th birthday of Jan Hakansson, whose Blenta Group has been the Cobb distributor in Scandinavia since 1985. This splendid presentation box of wine and glasses provided a personal 'thank you' for the Blenta Group's contribution to the world of Cobb.

# Brazilian forum points way ahead for industry

**C**obb-Vantress Brasil (CVB) brought together 140 delegates, including a large presence from all major Brazilian customers, for a three-day industry forum in Foz do Iguaçu, Parana, Brazil's largest broiler producing state.

The new-style business event, previously more technical in content, provided the opportunity to discuss general poultry industry issues, as well as to present Cobb's vision, structure and commitment to the future of the industry in Brazil and in the world.

The coordinator of the State Program for Poultry Health of the State of Sao Paulo, Dr Fernando Buchala, discussed the regionalization of the poultry industry. Another guest was the former Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Supply, Dr Pratini de Moraes, who spoke about the development of agribusiness in Brazil and globally.



Senior executives from Cobb-Vantress, Inc - including senior vice president, Jerry Moye and South America general manager Mark Barnes - also made important contributions. Regional vice president James Young took part in the meeting, taking the opportunity to meet personally Cobb customers and to become more familiar with the Brazilian poultry industry. CVB general manager, Dr Jairo Arenazio, described Cobb's vision in the poultry industry. He emphasized that national crises like the present Brazilian one, generate challenges and opportunities, and are part of the globalization process. "We are a highly professional, focused industry, which invests in continuous improvement," he said. "Cobb-Vantress Brazil maintains its confidence in the industry, investing and growing." He also explained that given the pending regionalization inside the Brazilian poultry industry, Cobb would maintain a presence and facilities in five separate states.


Product manager Rodrigo Terra, and world technical support assistant Gustavo Wasserman gave wide ranging talks which included broiler economic analyses and results showing that the average Cobb 500 performance in the country averaged 140 chicks per hen housed to 65 weeks. Cobb geneticist, Dr Danny Lubritz spoke about the new opportunities arising from genetic advances and

## Cobb Avian 48

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### Broiler performance

The superior breeder performance of the Cobb Avian 48 is not gained at the expense of broiler characteristics in the field. The broiler is well suited to achieve a wide range of bodyweights from 1.4 kg to 2.5 kg, with excellent livability and feed conversion at the higher bodyweights. This makes the broiler extremely versatile for different types of product in markets around the world.

The Cobb Avian 48 product line is an increasingly successful part of the Cobb portfolio, providing an excellent balance between breeder and broiler performance and giving customers the flexibility they require in meeting market demands. 

### Results from South America (average in yellow)

Birds	Mort %	Mort %	Feed kg	Feed kg	Total eggs	Hatching eggs	Hatch %	Chicks	Feed/chick g
	0-24 weeks	25-65 weeks	0-24 weeks	25-65 weeks		HH	HH		
282,000	7.2	8.5	13.9	44.5	171	163	84.9	138	423
247,432	6.1	6.5	14.1	46.1	182	175	83.4	146	412
466,867	4.3	8.5	13.4	47.6	182	174	84.8	147	415
996,299	5.9	7.8	13.8	46.1	178	171	84.4	144	417

### Cumulative results from South America

Lines	# Birds	BW	FCR	Age	Mort.	GPD	EEI
AVIAN 48	12,263,518	2405	1.839	44.3	4.15	54.3	283
B	25,695,649	2461	1.852	44.0	4.76	55.9	288
D	1,373,817	2446	1.942	44.9	4.12	54.5	269
C	33,783,388	2383	1.886	45.0	4.82	52.9	267

### Results from Holland

Breed	Cobb Avian 48	Cobb Avian 48	B
No of birds	17,500	17,500	17,300
Lighting program period	Standard	Extended dark	Standard
Bodyweight (g) at 33 days	1750	1700	1700
Bodyweight (g) at 46 days	2750	2635	2560
Mortality (%)	3.7	2.7	2.6
Feed conversion	1.66	1.69	1.78
EEI	347	330	304


importance of research and development. This was a message later repeated to CVB team members.

Jairo Arenazio said the forum was arranged to show customers the company's vision for poultry business and the poultry sector. "Meetings such as these will help to strengthen us and are an ideal way to discuss issues and present solutions to overcome industry crises that inevitably occur from time to time."

Cobb also has new ideas in technical assistance, holding the first cycle of Cobb Technical 'Mini-Seminar' throughout Brazil. Through its technical assistance and product departments, the company has been bringing together technical service personnel for its main customers to discuss issues relevant to each region.

During the first half year, 13 mini seminars were held involving the Cobb-Vantress team of technical specialists in ventilation, nutrition and incubation. "In the current context, with our customers' technical needs receiving special attention during the mini-seminars, we decided to



focus attention more directly on the industry's business issues, creating an exclusively business-oriented meeting", said CVB sales and technical manager Fausto Ferraz. "We feel that at all levels customers must receive the latest information, both from a technical and commercial standpoint," he added. 

## New Cobb 500 sales structure

**A**s Cobb continues to expand global sales, new appointments have been made in regional sales and technical service teams.

As the new \$4.5 million parent stock hatchery in Mato Grosso do Sul began production, Cobb-Vantress Brasil announced changes to the future distribution of the breed.

With the growth of Globoaves as a broiler integrator and chicken exporter as well as hatching egg producer, the company will no longer be the sales arm for the Cobb 500 from January 1 2007 but will obtain their Cobb parent stock through a new partnership with Agrogen Desenvolvimento Genetico.

Agrogen, Cobb's largest grandparent customer in the world, will provide Globoaves with their parent stock needs and Globoaves will maintain the Cobb breed within their organisation.

Globoaves' growth in the Brazilian industry has seen them develop from an independent chick producer to the largest hatching egg producer in Latin America, and subsequently expand into chicken production and exporter of chicken meat.

"Since 1995 Globoaves has been an integral part of the Cobb 500's growth in Brazil where sales of our stock have increased from one million to more than 25 million this year," says Mark Barnes, South American general manager for Cobb-Vantress.

Initially there was a three-party agreement between Frango Sertanejo, Cobb-Vantress Inc and Globoaves. In 1997 Cobb-Vantress acquired the shares of Frango Sertanejo to form the company Cobb-Vantress Brasil and in 2000 the shares of Globoaves were sold to the group, although the company remained the exclusive sales representative.

"The strength of Cobb in the Brazilian market has been due to the Globoaves' diligence in conjunction with the breed's adaptability to local conditions and the technical service provided," says Mr Barnes.

"While this is naturally a sad moment for the Cobb-Vantress group, we are delighted that the triumvirate will


continue to gain strength from the Globoaves association with Agrogen."

Agrogen was appointed as Cobb-Vantress parent stock producer for southern Brazil in 1997 and has since invested in farms, hatchery, laboratory and feed mill expansion. Their latest project is a state-of-the-art grandparent complex at Guarapuava, Parana, which will produce six million parents for the southern region.



"We are most grateful for the work undertaken in the market by Globoaves and the Kaefer family, and we look forward to a new chapter in the healthy relationship between Cobb-Vantress and Globoaves," says Mr Barnes.

As part of this, former Globoaves employee Oscar Toneto becomes Cobb-Vantress sales manager for Brasil. He has relocated to Sao Jose do Rio Preto to head the newly established sales arm of Cobb-Vantress Brasil, reporting to Fausto Ferraz.

"Oscar has been selling Cobb parent stock and is well respected by the Brazilian broiler industry, so the transition is easy," adds Mr Barnes. "He has worked in a number of roles within Globoaves with extensive knowledge of their broiler and transport departments, and we are delighted to have him within Cobb-Vantress Brasil." 

# Setting sights on wider horizons

One of Italy's best known poultry companies is looking to a new future in global as well as domestic markets. **ROGER RANSON** visited Longiano, just inland from Rimini, to meet the team in charge.

One of the longest established brands in Italian chicken production, Avizoo is now setting its sights on wider horizons as it builds a new future as a specialist hatchery business.

The company is not only targeting the Italian market with both broiler and layer chicks, but is looking to the global market for traditional and niche breeds.

The decision to give the company a new focus came with the sale of Avizoo's integrated chicken business including the processing plant and feed mill. The sale gave the family-owned company an independence and flexibility that has enabled it to set new goals.

Even as one of Italy's larger integrations, its power in the market place was seen as limited by the strength of its retail customers. Now its managing director Dr Stefano Pollarini believes that specialising in the hatchery business will open up fresh opportunities within Italy and significantly on the world scene.



The Avizoo management team, from left - Dr Stefano Mercuriali, Dr Stefano Pollarini and Giovanni Ferrara.

"We want to use our experience as an integrator to help develop our business as an independent hatchery, focusing on the quality of our day-old chicks and of our customer service," says Dr Pollarini. "We are seeking to differentiate ourselves in the market place in terms of our quality and product range."

Avizoo has invested in new Chickmaster hatchery equipment which now accounts for more than 70 per cent of production. The largest hatchery at Longiano - a few kilometres inland from the ancient Adriatic resort of Rimini - has a capacity of 800,000 broiler chicks a week. The second hatchery at Longiano for parent stock can produce another 200,000 chicks a week. The third at Chieti, east of Rome, hatches layer breeds with a 300,000 a week capacity.



Avizoo has invested heavily in new hatchery equipment.



Overall Avizoo has spent more than 2.5 million euro (\$3.2m) in the past three years on both the hatcheries and on improved biosecurity at farm level.

There are 35 parent stock farms - a total of 180,000 sq meters of which 80 per cent is owned by the Avizoo group. The farms are located across five regions - Emilia Romagna, Marche, Umbria, Abruzzo and Toscana - which provides enhanced security of supply. Many are in the green hills of central Italy where isolation and high biosecurity standards are the hallmark.

In the Italian broiler market the company is seeing the Cobb 500 meeting an increasing demand. It was Avizoo which introduced the first Cobb 500 broilers to Italy in the late 1980s.

With the current Cobb 500 the company is seeing a marked increase in breeder performance. Flocks placed in the past two years have seen production increase by 12 hatching eggs to an average 146 / hen housed to 60 weeks of age, with the best reaching 167 hatching eggs and peaking at 84.5 per cent.

Production director Dr Stefano Mercuriali says that currently Cobb is building a reputation as a broiler that's easy to manage - on the farm and at the processing plant - and one that has an advantage in feed conversion.

Almost 90 per cent of the Italian chicken industry is controlled by integrators and it is they who decide breed policy. It is a predominantly fresh market, with cut-up chickens and processed products making up a growing 15 per cent.

"The processors are increasingly recognising the value of the meat qualities," says Dr Mercuriali. "They want chickens that are uniform and easy to pluck, with a good skin quality and high meat yield. This is where the Cobb is gaining."

On the farm growers are seeing the benefit of using a lower nutrient density ration for Cobb during the early weeks, resulting in a significant saving in feed costs.

Although Avizoo is selling some broiler chicks to neighbouring countries for intensive production, it is with the Kabir breeds that the company is seeking wider opportunities in the global market for more traditional breeds.

The group's newest business, Kabir International, is a joint venture with the Israeli poultry breeding company Kabir. Avizoo has been supplying the market for traditional coloured breeds which accounts for about 20 per cent of all Italian poultry meat. It had become one of the largest customers of the Israeli breeding company with 80,000 Kabir parents in production.

With the demand for traditional, slower growing, niche breeds expanding in many parts of the world, there were political issues with some countries importing stock from Israel. In addition, Kabir wanted to expand commercial field trials in a market where coloured chickens are reared.



High standards of biosecurity - seen here at Eredità - are a prominent feature of the Avizoo farms.

This led last year to Avizoo and Kabir Chicks forming the new business and moving the pure lines and breeding program from Israel to Italy with a new marketing and sales structure headed by Dr Pollarini, co-chairman with Josef Katz of Kabir International.

Currently three of the Kabir 'country broiler chicks' are being marketed - the Kabir Red, the Kabir Grey and the Kabir Grey Naked Neck. Typically they are grown to 80 - 90 days of age to enhance meat quality and flavor.



The Avizoo booth at VIV Europe.



Stefano Ambrosini (second left) of Cobb Europe pictured with the Avizoo technical team - from left: Stefano Mercuriali, Paolo Decesari, Luisa Bagnolini, Pierpaolo Giorgetti and Raffaello Stacchini who have a combined 85 years' experience with poultry.

They have been bred to withstand harsh weather, making them well suited to outdoor and organic systems, antibiotic free industrial broilers, and to a wide range of more extensive environments across the world.


There are already established markets in a number of Far East nations including China, Malaysia and Thailand as well as southern European countries, and Dr Mercuriali believes the Kabir breeds have considerable potential in the Middle East, Africa and North and South America, with some customers already in the United States.

The breeds were featured for the first time at the VIV Europe show in Utrecht in May, and will be seen at other international exhibitions including VIV China and VIV Asia at Bangkok.

The third part of the Avizoo group is the partnership with German breeders Lohmann Tierzuch - ALLI, Avizoo Lohmann Italia - for exclusive distribution of the Lohmann brown and white egg layers in Italy. Until the agreement in 2003 Lohmann chicks were delivered to Italian egg producers from Germany.

The Lohmann layers are being promoted for their prolific performance and high egg quality, with the efficient production of egg mass for processing into egg products also contributing to the breed's success.

Over the last three years the Lohmann share of the market has more than doubled to around 20 per cent. The target is to attain a one third share not just through selling day-old chicks but also making inroads into the market for point-of-lay pullets.

"Our company has more than 45 years' experience of managing parent stock and hatching high quality chicks," adds Dr Pollarini. "We believe that by providing a consistently top quality product, and a level of customer support to match, our goals are well attainable." 



Avizoo hatchery manager Dr Gianpaolo Comandini with Stefano Ambrosini.

# Route to greater speed and accuracy in breed progress

The word 'genomics' has become part of the language of animal and plant breeders. But what does it mean for the poultry industry? The leading UK journal *Poultry World* asked Cobb to explain the word to its readers. **JOHN HARDIMAN** (right), vice president of research and development, compiled the answers to the magazine's questions with the help of **ALBERT PASZEK**, director of biotechnology, and **RON OKIMOTO**, molecular geneticist.



**Q** What is genomics?

**A** It is a science of the genome, the genetic make-up of all living beings. The overall aim of genomics is to discover more about the structure and organization of the genome, and how this relates to differences we see in birds, animals and plants - the phenotypic traits.

**Q** The mapping of the chicken genome is hailed as a major advance. What does this mean for you as a poultry breeder?

**A** The mapping of the chicken genome aims to identify specific elements of the genome that control individual phenotypic traits. Mapping projects identify specific sequences of DNA (genes) or DNA markers linked to individual genes or regions of genes that control aspects of phenotype.

Genetic mapping enables associations to be found between specific parts of the genome structure and how the bird or animal functions - and how gene variants lead to phenotypic differences. Knowledge of the chicken genome structure enables individual genes to be identified and associations with DNA markers discovered. Effective use of DNA markers in breeding depends on that knowledge.

This identification of specific genes and/or DNA markers provides new and unique information for poultry breeders. Breeders can determine the genetic make-up of single birds with particular gene/marker genotypes and include this information in existing selection methods based on assessing genetic potential with conventional quantitative tools and predicting breeding values by BLUP (best linear unbiased prediction) methods. This enables selections to be

made directly on genetic factors controlling variation of traits, achieving a greater accuracy and certainty.

**Q** Which parts of the genome are your particular targets at this time?

**A** Cobb is focused on improving quantitative traits with economic value for broiler producers and processors. Improvement targets include growth and conformation, performance traits and poultry health. Birds with superior growth rate, muscle yield, skeletal conformation, feed efficiency and health are selected as breeders for subsequent generations. We fund multiple projects aimed at discovering specific genes and genomic regions that control these phenotypic differences. The Biotech Program at Cobb is developing applied selection tools for chicken lines using SNP (Single Nucleotide Polymorphism) markers linked to selection traits. Biotech-based tools and methods are evaluated by us for improving genetic components of disease resistance.

**Q** How much easier is it now to make significant advances?

**A** The work is in progress and therefore, precise assessment of reaching significant advances with genomic methods is still to be done. We currently collect more phenotypic measurements for our lines than ever before. The data for new conformation traits is, for example, collected with help of x-ray scanning technology and used in BLUP-based selection system. Phenotypic data and DNA samples are collected for tailoring genomic tests to specific genetic lines. Application of genomic tests is expected to provide significant help with genetic improvement for traits difficult and costly to measure.

Sequencing of the chicken genome provides new tools for poultry breeders. Before the chicken genome was sequenced, there were about 2000 DNA markers on the chicken linkage map. The current map for the chicken genome includes about three million DNA markers and accelerates discovery.

**Q** How soon will these advances be seen in parent stock and at the commercial level?

**A** We expect to see new advances in Cobb parent stock within five years, with an additional two years to allow assessment at the commercial level.

**Q** How much emphasis do you place on welfare as well as performance traits?

**A** In short, equal. Only birds with adequate body conformation and physiology for healthy movement and life functions can achieve sustainable production performance. We are also studying environmental and nutritional factors affecting bird well-being and performance; this is essential with Cobb products increasingly used in countries with different nutrient sources and environmental conditions from those in North America. Full alignment of chicken genetics with production management and environment is the only guarantor of chicken well-being and sustainable production performance.

### How do new selection methods compare with traditional breeding methods?

Traditional breeding methods rely entirely on quantitative tools dominated by BLUP-based computation of data collected for phenotypic traits and predicting breeding values of birds in pedigreed populations as the basis for selection. Genetic improvement of pedigreed chicken lines produced by selection decisions is transferred via selected animals into non-pedigreed grandparent and parent populations and ultimately to the broilers.

Some limitations of traditional breeding methods include the following:

- Quality of selection decisions depends on quality of collected trait data.
- Routine and objective collection of data for some bird traits is not possible and/or it requires sacrificing of birds, eliminating them from the genetic improvement program.
- It is difficult or impossible to separate selection effects for tightly correlated traits, such as feed conversion and correct fat content.
- Predicting breeding values is limited to birds in pedigreed populations.
- Breeding values predict make-up of chicken genetic potential - but do not provide definitive and repeatable evidence of such make-up.

By contrast, genomic tools provide just this evidence from routine laboratory DNA analysis of a single drop of blood. In addition these tools:

- Permit selection for specific components of the chicken genome with greater accuracy, speed and uniformity.
- Provide ability to separate closely related traits.
- Achieve greater uniformity of non-pedigreed generations with objective measures based on actual bird genotypes.

A further significant benefit is in providing objective assessment of genetic make-up and potential for individual birds from multiple generations of the breeding and production - so enabling full traceability of all chicken generations.



## Positive message from the poultry industry

The progress we are making in using genomics to breed improved lines is quite distinct from the development of genetically modified (GM) food - yet the food industry and consumers are confused.

Consumer opposition to GM products has led to such food being shunned in Europe, and this summer in Asia for instance Japan suspended imports of American rice after it was discovered that a GM variety had been accidentally mixed with conventional rice.

In the poultry industry the focus is on using genetic markers to identify the presence of individual genes but still using traditional breeding methods. In this way we can take advantage of the genetic variation which exists naturally within pedigree lines in a more efficient and more accurate way.

Plant breeders are adopting GM techniques to introduce particular traits such as resistance to pests and disease, tolerance to specific herbicides or ability to fix nitrogen. These techniques can bring considerable environmental benefits such as the potential to reduce the need for crop spraying or the dependence on nitrogen fertiliser. But they do prompt opposition from traditionalists and raise consumer concerns, leading to retailers in some countries outlawing GM food.

The message from the poultry industry is all positive. Genomics will lead to improved products - not through any use of GM techniques but through being able to apply traditional selection methods with greater certainty of success.

# Tailoring feed to breed brings all-round gains

One of Holland's best known feed manufacturers, De Heus Voeders, is taking the lead in developing rations that are breed specific to benefit their broiler grower customers.

The company - market leader in broiler feeds in the Benelux countries - recognised the changing habits of the two main broiler breeds and has used its own test farm facilities to fine tune rations and feeding programmes to match today's requirements.

De Heus Voeders had seen the growth pattern and nutritional needs of the Cobb and the Ross broiler increasingly diverge in recent years. They met Cobb's internationally renowned nutritionist Dr John Halley and started work on developing a ration that provided for the Cobb 500's healthy appetite and ability to thrive on a lower nutrient density, low cost formula than that traditionally fed to broilers in the Netherlands.



Bulk truck of De Heus Voeders on a farm.

Product manager Dr Cees Rombouts began by producing a ration 8% lower in crude protein (see below) and 4% lower in energy, but this did not prove sufficient. However, by also switching from pellets to crumbles (= crushed pellets) and, crucially, adding 20% whole wheat he achieved a winning formula.

"Individually, the changes weren't enough but together they are paying off, not only in performance but in lowering production costs," says Dr Rombouts. "The birds

## *Koen de Heus explains about the company:*

De Heus Beheer is an international company actively involved in the animal feed industry. The company, which was founded in 1911, has its roots in the Netherlands.

Eight of the 15 animal feed plants are located in the Netherlands, where the company operates under the name De Heus Voeders. This is the largest family-run business in the Dutch feed industry, occupying a leading position in the pig, broiler, dairy, egg production and turkey sectors. De Heus International represents our activities outside the Netherlands.



In Poland, we operate under the name De Heus Koudijs Hima. Likewise, we are the largest family-run business here too, with a leading position in the same sectors.

Koudijs Feed in the Netherlands specialises in the export of concentrates, premixes, pre-starters, calf milk replacers, pellet feed for piglets and other special feeds.

Koudijs Kapo is our Egyptian-based company.

are more active, taking longer to eat up the crushed pellet, and with the whole wheat remaining in the crop longer they are digesting the nutrients better."

De Heus Voeders is now advocating a four phase feeding programme. With Cobb, under average Dutch farm conditions, there is no need for the use of a pre-starter diet. The Cobb starter is fed to around 10 days of age, then on to grower 1 which with additional vitamins and minerals allows 20% whole wheat to be included. Grower 2 follows at 20 days and then, depending on the target processing weight, the finisher is fed from day 30 onwards.

Many Dutch growers buy a concentrate to mix with their own whole wheat to finish their broilers, and some routinely use extra whole wheat on top of the standard advised levels to cheapen the ration - an approach that can pay dividends with Cobb. But, it is important to realise the dilution effect which the additional wheat has on vitamin and mineral levels.

"The lower protein requirement of the Cobb, plus the ability to feed an extra 4 -5% whole wheat over all, is reducing feed costs considerably," says Dr Rombouts. "This extra whole wheat contributes to a considerable saving. Combined with the lower protein compound, a total saving of €5,00/tonne (\$6.3)/tonne can be achieved."

### Four Phase feeding program - De Heus Voeders (complete feed)

	Days	Crude protein (%)	ME (MJ)	% of whole wheat added
Starter	0 - 10	21,5%	12,8	-
Grower 1 (Cobb)	11 - 20	18,9%	12,8	20
Grower 2	21 - 30	19,5%	13,3	25
Finisher	31 -	18,8%	13,3	30






*De Heus Voeders broiler feed mill in Meppel, Netherlands.*

This year De Heus Voeders is seeing an increasing demand for Cobb broilers among its customers, with around 50% opting for the breed. The structure of the Dutch chicken industry puts feed companies in a pivotal position, providing the link with hatcheries and also processors.

'Virtual integration' is the term which general manager Koen de Heus, chooses, seeing De Heus Voeders' role as an

intermediate planning bureau.

The family business has eight feed mills in the Netherlands, supplying the Dutch and also Belgian markets of which it has around a 25 per cent share and feeds 2.5 million broilers a week.

Within five years of its centenary, De Heus also looks beyond national borders for growth and has feed mills in Poland and Egypt. As in its home market, the policy is to work closely with the broiler industry to mutual benefit. 



*Dr Cees Rombouts (right) discussing broiler nutrition with Paul Welten (left), regional sales manager for Benelux and Tony Marangos, Cobb Nutrition consultant.*

## Wide support for Kiev technical school


Cobb's technical school in Kiev attracted more than 40 delegates from Belarus, Russia and Ukraine. The event was organised by Vasyl Babych, Cobb Germany market manager for Ukraine and Belarus, who is based in Ukraine, and was co-sponsored by Cobb Germany, Cobb Europe and Broiler Budushego.

"The technical school enabled delegates from poultry companies in this growing market to widen their views on Cobb's economic and genetic potential," says Mr Babych. "With discussions among participants lasting late into the evening, this meeting undoubtedly reflected the increasing interest in the new Cobb management practices and showed the need for regular events of this kind."

"This was an excellent event and we were pleased to see so many people some of whom travelled a very long way," said Pelayo Casanovas, Cobb Europe technical director.

"These technical schools are of immense value to all of us," commented James Truscott, director of Cobb Germany. "They show the economic benefits to be obtained from Cobb products by improving technical knowledge. Our customers have the opportunity to discuss and exchange ideas with each other and with the Cobb technical

team so that the desired progress is made."

The proceedings were held in Russian language, with translation for the speakers, including Pelayo Casanovas, Matthias Todte, James Truscott, Steve Tweed and Matthew Wilson, who discussed many aspects of breeder, broiler and hatchery management. 



*Delegates at the Cobb technical school at Kiev.*

## US flock awards now for six territories

The Cobb breeder performance awards, instigated for the US last year, have been extended to provide six regional winners as well as the overall top producer.

For the second year running the Obion County Complex of Tyson Foods, at Union City, TN, has gained one of the top awards. Following its success with the Cobb 700, the complex became the Cobb 500 Overall Top Producer for its latest results.

This year an award was also made for the first time for the South West Territory, being gained by Tyson Foods Waldron Complex. The results are based on the best hen-housed egg production from the Cobb 2005 Sold Flock Survey.

The full results are:

**Cobb 500 Overall Top Producer** - *Tyson Foods Inc, Obion County.*

**Cobb 500 Regional Awards:**

**South Territory** - *Tyson Foods Albertville Complex, Albertville, AL.*

**Southeast Territory** - *Mar-Jac Poultry, Gainesville, GA.*

**Mid-Atlantic Territory** - *Tyson Foods Temperanceville Complex, Temperanceville, MD.*

**Mid-South Territory** - *Tyson Foods C/F Complex, Forest, MS.*

**Southwest Territory** - *Tyson Foods Waldron Complex, Waldron, AR.*

**Mid-West Territory** - *Tyson Foods Sedalia Complex, Sedalia, MO.*

## UK flock wins Cobb Europe award

For the second year running the Cobb Europe Flock of the Year Award has been won by a UK flock - this time Corbett Farms which produces hatching eggs for Sun Valley.



Jonathan Cade (left) making the presentations.

The flock of 27,000 Cobb 500 parents at Kinnersley, near Hereford, achieved 141.5 chicks/breeder to 60 weeks of age - within two chicks of the 2005 award winning flock from Grampian Country Food Group.

## VIV China 2006



Cobb supported the Beijing Poultry Breeding Company at a successful VIV China 2006 exhibition in September.




There was stiff competition from a number of other flocks among more than 25 million parents placed in Europe, the Middle East and Africa, says Jonathan Cade, sales director of Cobb Europe. "Corbett Farms are consistently among the best performing flocks and this success is a tribute to their standard of management."

He presented the award, which included crystal decanters and glasses, to the rearing farm manager Darren Clarke, breeder farm manager Adrian Nicholas and Sun Valley hatchery manager Phil Harris.

The presentation was attended by Richard Corbett whose grandfather Lt Col Uvedale Corbett founded Sun Valley in the early years of the UK broiler industry in 1960. The company became one of the leading UK processors and was bought by Cargill in 1980.

Today Corbett Farms have 150,000 parent stock on seven production farms and supply PD Hook as well as Sun Valley with hatching eggs.

Mr Nicholas describes the Cobb flock as the best he has worked with: "The whole flock was the easiest I've managed in 12 years with chickens - very quiet and a pleasure to work with." 

## Asia

**Randy Vardeman** has been appointed general manager for Asia where he has been working as director of technical services for the past year.

Mr Vardeman joined Cobb in 2001. He served as managing director for Sui Ping, Cobb's initial entry into China. Following two years in China, he continued to work in Asia further expanding his responsibilities. He gained previous international experiences with positions in the North American industry including six years as production director for Tyson de Mexico and breeder manager for Lester Brothers in Texas.

"We are making great progress in the Asian region" says Stan Reid, Cobb's vice president of North America and Asia.

"Our customers are finding the value of Cobb's products, and with Randy's leadership, we will continue to demonstrate our commitment to growing our business and expanding our service and support to the region."

**Charles Calvert**, who has more than 20 years' experience in the Asian poultry industry, has been appointed technical services manager for the region.

For the past three years Mr Calvert



Randy Vardeman.



Charles Calvert.

has been providing technical assistance in Asia, and previously he worked seven years for Avian Farms.

Earlier experience includes periods with Sun Valley as Thailand director of live operations, and also with the CP Group of Companies, particularly involved with improving breeder productivity.

Mr Calvert, who gained a poultry science degree at Auburn University Alabama, is fluent in the Thai language.

## Export planning

Mexican poultry health expert, **Dr Alberto Torres-Rodriguez**, has joined Cobb as veterinary international export manager. He succeeds Kate Barger who moved from the export department to become responsible for sales in Mexico and Central America.

"We are excited to have Alberto as a part of our team", says Steve Iseler, Cobb director of planning. "He will be instrumental in working with customers and government officials to secure export channels."

Dr Torres-Rodriguez graduated in veterinary medicine at the National Autonomous University of Mexico in 1990 and then spent seven years in research and teaching posts in Mexico and in New Zealand.

He worked for two years in research and sales positions relating to feed additives and nutrition in Mexico, and was then with an animal health company in Mexico for three years.



Dr Alberto Torres-Rodriguez.

## Europe

**Steve Parsons**, who has held senior positions in the poultry industry in South Africa and UK over the past 14 years, is the new managing director of Cobb Europe.

He takes up his new responsibilities fully in November when the current general manager, Brian Cosgriff, returns to the United States.

"We are appreciative of Brian Cosgriff's role in leading our Cobb Europe team and developing our business across the region over the past three years," says James Young, regional vice-president of Cobb-Vantress.

"We are excited to have Steve Parsons with such a strong industry background joining our team. His proven leadership skills and extensive experience in the integrated poultry business will enable him to be a strong contributor to our success in Europe, the Middle East and Africa."

Mr Parsons worked for Rainbow Chicken Farms, South Africa's largest integrated poultry producer, from 1993 to 2003 in different roles from sales to operations management, most recently as group operations director. He was also an executive director of Rainbow Chicken Ltd, the Johannesburg Stock Exchange listed company.

Almost two years ago he joined Grampian Country Food Group, the UK's largest meat processor, as chief operating officer responsible for the primary chicken division with its eight manufacturing locations producing 8000 tonnes per



Steve Parsons.

week and employing more than 4000 people.

Mr Parsons was born in the UK, then grew up and was educated in South Africa where he graduated from Wits University, Johannesburg, with a degree in economics. He is married with an eight-year-old son and daughter aged four.

Within the UK and Ireland the new sales manager is **Antony Taylor** who is taking over responsibilities from Allan Meldrum, now working with Cobb Europe on a reduced basis.

Mr Taylor has 14 years' experience in the broiler industry, working on his family's farm and then in the poultry feed industry where he has been a key account manager with leading UK feed manufacturer BOCM Pauls for the past six years.

**Martijn Gruyters** is the new regional technical manager for the Netherlands covering the area 'north of the rivers.'

Mr Gruyters, who is 29, has been working for specialist animal feed manufacturer Provimi for the past seven years involved with both sales and technical support in a number of European and Middle East countries. Previously he studied at Wageningen Agricultural University specialising in animal husbandry, and also gained practical experience on broiler and layer farms. 



Antony Taylor.




Martijn Gruyters.

## Tradition heralds Cobb move to Colchester

The official opening of the new Cobb Europe regional office at Colchester, in the UK, brought together the world's oldest poultry breeding organisation with the country's oldest recorded town. The Cobb breed is this year 90 years old while Colchester has a proud history stretching back to Roman times.


The opening was performed by James Bell, president of Cobb-Vantress, Inc and Terry Sutton, Mayor of Colchester.

"We very much appreciate the support you've given us today and the support for this move we've had from our customers," said Mr Bell. 



## New distributor in Romania


The Fatrom company has been appointed distributor for Cobb Germany responsible for sales of Cobb broiler breeders and technical service in Romania.

Fatrom, established in 2002, has the most modern and largest factory in Romania producing premixes for animal feed and also distributes a large range of feed additives and veterinary products. The Fatrom team is led by Valentin Cornea on sales and veterinarian Ilinca Alexiu on technical service. 



James Truscott of Cobb Germany with the Fatrom Team.

## Momentous loss

The death of two highly respected UK poultry veterinarians - David Sainsbury and Howard Hellig - within a few weeks of each other is a momentous loss to the international poultry world. As consultants to Cobb over several decades, they could be relied on for sound, practical advice not just on poultry health but wider issues in the industry. We extend out sincere condolences to their families. 


## Award marks 50 years at Atlanta show



A commemorative award was presented to Cobb-Vantress at the US Poultry & Egg International Poultry Expo in Atlanta to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> year that Cobb has exhibited at the event.

A crystal bowl was presented to Cobb president James Bell by Dr Ron Prestage, chairman of the US Poultry & Egg Association.

Mr Bell said he was proud to receive the award on behalf of the Cobb team. "Commitment to customer care is what makes our company great and has allowed us to remain a vital part of this industry for the past 90 years," he stated.

Cobb is the world's oldest pedigree broiler breeder, founded in Massachusetts where the company was based for 70 years until the establishment of Siloam Springs, Arkansas, as the headquarters of Cobb-Vantress, Inc. in 1986. A special logo featuring 90 years of 'integrity, quality and progress' was introduced at the show. 



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