

MASSIVE FRAUD IN THE CHICKEN INDUSTRY

Written by Administrator

Tuesday, 09 December 2014 11:03 -

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The racket of selling salt water as chicken continues

40% OF CARRION CHICKENS CONSIST OF SALT WATER – DISEASE PILED ON DISEASE

The following article is a report by David Wolpert, Chief Executive of the Association of Meat Importers and Exporters

ALBERT Venter has attracted intense media scrutiny and public outcry over his now-defunct “Drive a new car for R699” scam. About 30 000 mostly low-income earning South Africans were ripped off in this scheme. The media have made a meal of his Ferrari, Porsche and Maserati – his luxury holidays and his personal butler. And rightly so. It was a terrible, alleged fraud meted out on unsuspecting people.

And yet millions of poor South Africans are conned every day by mega-wealthy, multimillion-rand companies. It surely must go down as the con of the decade: selling salt water as if it were chicken. To add salt water to the wounds as it were, the promised ministerial intervention that would seek to end this fraud has quietly disappeared without a trace. And I’m not talking about a minor glitch or accounting error here. South African poultry companies have sold 538 million litres of water as chicken in the last year alone.

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Brine is a salt solution often used to preserve vegetables, meat or fish and was moderately used in the past in the poultry industry to supposedly add succulence, a claim that has not, as yet, been proved. Today much of our local poultry is heavily injected with brine. In many cases this exceeds 40 percent of the chicken meat.

There is not a single country in the world that brines to a level anywhere near South African volumes. In fact, many countries have barred the process completely. They see the practice as consumer abuse and exploitative.

Earlier this year, when this fraud hit the headlines, the public outcry on this matter was understandably fierce: Customers were indignant at being sold water masquerading as chicken and concerned about the real health implications of brining.

Professor Schonfeldt, from the University of Pretoria, observed that brine dilutes the nutrients and adds hidden salt of which the consumer may not be aware.

Sodium from the brine will, over time, have devastating effects on consumers' health and even possibly consequences for the public health system with an assured increase in high blood pressure and hypertension caused by unnatural sodium concentrations. The poultry companies argue, however, that brining prevents the chicken from tasting dry and tough and that it makes it much more succulent.

They are quick to say that the customer prefers it this way. They seem to have taken a page from the playbook of the international fast food empires where chemicals, additives and who knows what else is added to food to make it "tastier".

Commendably at the time of this furore however, the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries stepped in and proposed regulations that would restrict the brine content in whole birds to 10 percent of the product's weight, and 15 percent for cuts. That would have been a good start in protecting consumers from this racket.

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But since then nothing has happened. Nothing at all. Promised regulations have disappeared into the ether. And so the mega-wealthy, multimillion-rand chicken companies have simply – and quietly – carried on churning out salt water and selling it as chicken.

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