

NEW DIMENSION IN GENOMICS RESEARCH

USDA in groundbreaking \$10m project with Cobb and Hendrix

The new alliance between Cobb-Vantress, Inc and Hendrix Genetics is to become the first in the world to implement genomic selection in poultry breeding.

The USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) is to provide \$US2.5 million towards a \$US10 million large-scale field evaluation of DNA selection technology in chicken breeding.

The use of this new technology is a breakthrough in animal breeding. The selection of pedigree stock through analysis of DNA from the whole genome will provide accurate and rapid results, enabling significant genetic improvement. Such progress - hard to achieve using traditional breeding methods - will now be feasible for disease resistance, animal health and welfare traits.

The field evaluation will run for four years, with Cobb evaluating the technology for broilers and Hendrix for egg layers. A consortium of leading universities and institutes in a number of countries is also involved in this milestone project.

This new field of research is based on previous in-house and collaborative DNA research performed at Cobb and Hendrix. The animals with the best traits will be selected based on 60,000 genetic markers (called Single Nucleotide Polymorphisms or SNP's) and with the assistance of DNA chip technology.

In the current breeding programs pedigree stock selection is based on the performance of individual birds, of their offspring and of extended family members relating to factors such as feed and management. The data are evaluated and the best birds chosen for the breeding program.

With the new DNA technology, a small drop of blood from a bird will yield data for predicting performance of the offspring. Besides the improvements in speed, accuracy, product quality



Cobb president Jerry Moye (right) talking with Dr Marc Cooper, chief scientific officer of the RSPCA, at the British Pig and Poultry Fair launch of the Cobb Sasso150, now accredited for products sold under the RSPCA's Freedom Foods label. See feature on the French breeder Sasso on page 7.



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and consistency, the new method will provide a much better understanding of health and welfare traits important to the future of the global poultry industry.

In this project a unique consortium of industry, universities, research institutes and government will work together towards the goal of genomic selection in poultry breeding. In collaboration with Cobb and Hendrix, leading scientific groups will assume responsibility for important parts of the project. Dr Hans Cheng, of the USDA, and Dr William Muir, of Purdue University, USA, will be the project directors. 

Cobb's early lessons in capitalism

by ROGER RANSON, BHR Communications

The VIV Europe 2008 exhibition in Moscow marked a new chapter for Cobb in Russia with the breed's newest distributor Broiler Budushego launching the Cobb Avian 48. But it is 44 years ago this year that Cobb was first introduced to the market in an historic encounter with Russian president Nikita Khrushchev.

The encounter - depicted in a photograph showing Khrushchev holding a Cobb cockerel - cast new light on the Soviet view of capitalism, as revealed in documents discovered this year.

They show that Khrushchev came to regard Cobb as a model for a Soviet poultry breeding institute and the British poultry industry as an example for their own poultry production.

The encounter took place in Moscow at the British Agricultural Exhibition in a pavilion in one corner of a vast showpiece for Soviet enterprise across the present Cosmos Hotel - then known as the Park of Economic Achievement of the People of the USSR from May 18 - 31 1964. It was the period of the Cold War when East - West relations went through a prolonged series of crises.

What initially caught Khrushchev's eye was the small collection of breeding males and females in small cages on the Cobb stand. The birds had been sent from Britain by sea to Russia, and then by rail to Moscow where they were placed in quarantine for one month before the exhibition.

Khrushchev, who was reputed to have a lifelong interest

in poultry dating back to his early life on a peasant farm near the Ukrainian border, went across to the birds and asked about one particular specimen. Dr John Knowles, one of the founders with Peter Beck of the former Cobb Breeding Company in 1961, explained that it was a Cobb male bird.

Khrushchev told him through his interpreter that he was a liar. He said: "Everyone should know that a male chicken has a large floppy comb. This chicken has a comb like a female."

Dr Knowles told the Soviet leader that it was a Cobb male bird, explaining that these particular males were pure-bred Cornish stock and had as a breed characteristic 'pea' combs - and not the large floppy straight single combs. At this point Khrushchev took hold of the male and turned it upside down. He pronounced that Dr Knowles was right and that it was a male.

Dr Knowles asked Khrushchev if he would like to receive a trio of Cobb breeders (one male and two females) to which he replied that he would like to raise these birds at his datscha (summer house).

Next day a little man arrived at the Cobb booth with some large cardboard boxes. He stated that he had come to

collect the chickens for Khrushchev and that the Soviet leader asked if Cobb could supply a diet plan for feeding the stock, which Dr Knowles provided.

In return the man presented Dr Knowles with a signed photograph of Khrushchev looking at the Cobb male. Dr Knowles, who later became famous for his Marwell Zoo devoted to the conservation of endangered wildlife such as the black rhinoceros, still has the original photograph signed by Khrushchev in fountain pen ink at his home in Hampshire, England.

Autographed photographs of Khrushchev are extremely

Forty four years on from historic Khrushchev accolade for Cobb and British poultry industry



This Cobb male bird caught the eye of Russian president Nikita Khrushchev when he visited the British Agricultural Exhibition in Moscow in 1964. One of the joint founders of the UK-based Cobb Breeding Company, Dr John Knowles, is pictured explaining that these Cornish males had 'pea' combs - not the floppy combs that the president had expected of a cockerel.

rare, with the only widely known ones showing him with Yuri Gagarin, the Soviet cosmonaut who became the first person in space.

However, the Cobb breeding trio never went to Khrushchev's summer house - but to the new primary poultry breeding farm opened four months earlier at Zagorsk, at present Sergiyev Posad, near Moscow. The trio (probably Cobb 100 stock) could well have been the first pedigree broiler breeding stock used in what was then a programme based only on dual-purpose breeds. Poultry were kept as a sideline with few large farms at the time.

This all came to light during some extensive research into the events surrounding the encounter by Wim Dekkers, of Cobb Germany, and Dr André Gerrits, a famous Dutch historian specialist in Cold War history at the University of Amsterdam. He contacted the Cold War Museum in Virginia, USA, where the director is Gary Powers junior, son of the famous American pilot Francis "Frank" Gary Powers whose U-2 spy plane was shot down while over the Soviet Union, causing the U-2 crisis of 1960.

Gary Powers Junior sent the picture to Professor Sergei Khrushchev, son of the Soviet leader, who is a friend and member of the advisory board of the Cold War Museum. Prof Khrushchev works at the Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, which has a large collection of Soviet archives including Nikita Khrushchev photographs that he donated.

Professor Khrushchev started painstakingly searching documents in the archives of his father held at the university's Watson Institute for International Studies. There was no picture of Khrushchev on the Cobb stand, but what he did find was a memorandum relating to the British exhibition, hidden in a dusty box file for 44 years. Professor Khrushchev immediately recognized its curiosity value for the 'poultry folk' and sent a photocopy of the memo to Cobb Europe.

Cobb broiler, year 1964		
Age (days)	Body weights (g)	Feed conversion
50	1308	1.78
60	1569	2.07
70	2146	2.19

The document, entitled 'On the management of agriculture in connection with the transition to the path of intensification' and dated July 18 1964, had been sent to members of the presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

In the memorandum the Soviet leader extolled the British poultry industry, and particularly Cobb, as examples to follow. He states: "We should learn a lesson from the capitalists. They have come a long way in organising their intensive agricultural production and have achieved great success."

He was impressed how much scientists were an integral part of the industry, whereas in the Soviet Union industry was isolated from scientific institutions. He mentioned twice the name of Dr George Clayton whom he met in Moscow.

Dr Clayton was a South African who graduated at the University of Edinburgh where his research on the inheritance in the fruit fly (*Drosophila melanogaster*) is



The Cobb stand at VIV Europe 2008, held in Moscow where new distributor Broiler Budushego was featuring the Cobb Avian48. It is planning to produce 2.5 million parents a year from its new hatchery officially opened in July.

recognised as classical work in the history of genetics. He took on consultancy work for several companies in the poultry industry including the Cobb Breeding Company where he would have worked through the 1960s on lines that were to form the basis of the original Cobb 500. When he retired in around 1980, he moved to Canada to help his brother in pig breeding; he died in 1998.

Khrushchev was impressed by the way in which Dr Clayton as an academic and a scientist was working closely with industry - a strategy that seemed alien to the Soviet Union at the time. The Khrushchev paper mentions the Cobb broiler weights and feed conversions shown opposite.

Khrushchev was impressed, too, by the detail of the Cobb approach, mentioning a ruler provided for farmers to calculate the quantity of feed which the bird needs depending on its bodyweight, the amount of calories in the feed and the temperature. He called this 'a sign of a high-minded approach to poultry husbandry'.

The Soviet leader also refers to quotations from the biologist Trofim Lysenko, head of the Academy of Agricultural Sciences, who refers to the relevance of science to solving practical issues: 'Science is a collective creation of the people, which can only flourish when it solves issues concerning the real life of people'.

Lysenko's theories were grounded in Lamarckism - the concept of the inheritability of acquired traits - and were subsequently discredited, but his ideas on the relevance of science struck a chord with Khrushchev.

It seems that the memorandum was also part of Khrushchev's campaign to show the rebellious scientists who was the boss. But he did not survive long afterwards. On October 15 1964 he was removed from power by his party colleagues and one of the main reasons for his fall was ironically his failing agricultural policy. He retired to rural Russia and died in 1971 aged 77. He had perhaps discovered too late the lessons from capitalism.

How the Cobb 500 changed the US market

by JESSICA CHESNUT, Cobb-Vantress, Inc

If breast meat is worth \$2 a pound and dark meat is worth \$1, which do you think I'd rather have?" This was the question Don Tyson posed some 30 years ago at the International Poultry Exhibition. His reasoning lies at the foundation of the US poultry industry's shift to a chicken with higher breast meat yield.

It was this quest for meat that brought the Cobb 500 broiler breeder to the United States and 2008 marks the 25th anniversary of its introduction. This breed was originally selected and developed in England during the 1970s when the more upmarket retailers were seeking a product that would look good on their fresh meat shelves.

With the frozen chicken still dominant, there was growing interest in a chicken with a superior conformation that would look good as a fresh, air chilled product - one that would not show the sharp keel bone when tray-packed under clear plastic.

In the early 1970s the research and development team led by Janey Barnard had begun selecting breeding stock with a less pronounced keel bone - largely done through the 'feel' of the breast meat. In doing so they were selecting for birds with more breast meat, creating a fuller appearance on the existing broiler frame, which, in turn, made the finished product more appealing to consumers.



Don Tyson and Leland Tollett who saw the potential of the Cobb 500 for Tyson Foods and for the US market generally

This was the start of the realization that broilers with the most breast meat offer the greatest return to the producer - and the beginning of the current Cobb success.

The name for the Cobb 500 actually came from a remark by Robert Cobb junior who felt the new bird would be five times better than the Cobb 100 that had been the company's mainstay for many years.

Cobb had begun as a family business - Cobb's Pedigreed Chicks - in Littleton, Massachusetts, during 1916. It was acquired by the pharmaceutical manufacturer The Upjohn Company in 1974 during an era when several major poultry breeders were bought by drug companies.

The Vantress Breeding Company originating in the 1950s had one of the leading male lines, and it was acquired - ironically also in 1974 - by Tyson Foods. However, the Vantress female line lacked the characteristics needed to be commercially viable.



The US team headed by Dr John Hardiman (left) and Dr Terry Wing who began work in the 1980s to develop the Cobb 500 into the broiler that today achieves the lowest cost chicken meat.

In the US, as in the UK, there was growing recognition that the market was changing. "Don Tyson saw further processing as the wave of the future," says Chet Hobart, now retired, who was Cobb vice president of international operations as well as being involved in international contracts in the early years of the Cobb 500. "Tyson said, 'We're not selling chicks; we're not selling eggs. We're selling meat.'" A remark reinforced in a company video soon afterwards where he said: "We want more meat and less bones."

In the search for a productive female that would fit this new direction, Tyson Foods sent three executives to England in 1980 - Aubrey Cuzick, Ed Rice and Leland Tollett who looked at both Cobb and Ross birds. The decision was made to go with the Cobb 500 over all other breeds, including the Cobb Breeder Pullet, a female line selected in the US.

A joint venture between Tyson Foods and Upjohn - known as Arkansas Breeders - was formed in 1982 to introduce the Cobb 500 to the US through the proper quarantine conditions and to register the breed. The next year a shipment of five cases (1800 eggs) was sent from England to the US. The eggs were landed in Honolulu for the initial inspection, then shipped to Houston on to Northwest Arkansas.

Once the eggs reached Highfill, Arkansas, the truck driver and Joel Truitt, a long-time employee of Cobb, met the USDA inspector to receive certification that the proper quarantine



New housing erected at Bates Mountain in the mid 1980s to provide for growing demand for the Cobb 500.

procedures had been followed. Interestingly, the inspector was a cotton inspector with limited knowledge of chickens, but he was qualified to sign the appropriate documents.

The eggs were set in two incubators placed in the end of a Northwest Arkansas chicken house on a farm leased by Tyson. After the eggs had hatched, all chicks were kept in quarantine at this location.

While Arkansas Breeders was importing eggs, Cobb also imported additional consignments of Cobb 500 pure line eggs from England to Massachusetts. Eggs arrived at Logan International Airport in Boston, received a numbered seal by an inspector and were then transferred by van to the Person Farm in Moultonborough, NH, where the seal was verified and opened by another inspector. The eggs were hatched and after quarantine on the farm were trucked to Arkansas.

“We were starting the pedigree pipeline, but it wasn’t a smooth start and we had problems with some of the initial shipments,” recalls Mark Glavey, who was involved in the quarantine process in New Hampshire and now manages sales for Cobb’s Asian division.

There were also acclimation issues, according to Dr Terry Wing, Cobb manager of product evaluation and genetic statistics. At first, the birds were not acclimatized to the Arkansas heat and the houses had not been equipped with evaporative cooling systems, resulting in high mortality.

After two years, enough birds had been accumulated to send to the Bear Hollow pedigree facility in Southwest Missouri to begin a breeding program with the Cobb 500.

‘We’re not selling chicks, we’re not selling eggs...we’re selling meat’

In 1986 Tyson bought out Upjohn’s 50 percent in the Cobb business, bringing an end to the Arkansas Breeders venture – a move announced at the International Poultry Exposition in Atlanta. The company became officially known as Cobb-Vantress, Inc, with the corporate headquarters moving from Littleton to Siloam Springs under the direction Tony Barnes who had moved from the UK to become Cobb president in 1983.

In the early years of the Cobb 500, Tyson was the key customer. According to former Cobb president James Bell, Tyson was the primary customer for the Cobb 500 for several years, until other integrators realized the value of the bird.

“The Cobb 500 first took off outside Tyson after a local customer, OK Foods, saw its potential,” Bell said. “They were the key. We worked hand-in-hand with their people to increase egg production from those early flocks. And by doing so, we got more and more business from the industry. This was invaluable to Cobb’s growth because they were an independent integrator.”

When Tyson Foods, then the largest US integrator, began showing a strong interest in the Cobb 500 for its advantage in breast meat, this also generated increased demand in international markets. The UK-based Cobb Breeding



New facilities for Cobb 500 grandparents in the mid 1980s as demand for the breed begins to expand in the US.

Company was making substantial inroads into the market in Europe, Africa and Australasia. Now, following the US model, countries like Japan, Indonesia, Argentina and Brazil began using the Cobb 500.

By the early 1990s the reciprocal cross, the fast feathering Cobb 500 was deemed the better product for US. Tyson trialed this product and took it on where the company had been sexing to obtain heavier birds for deboning. Also, it appeared to be better at coping with hotter temperature after it had been bred locally.

Today the Cobb 500 is the world’s most popular broiler breeder. Continued progress with the breed is maintained through the planned, systematic efforts of the Cobb research geneticists. Although originally selected for breast meat, the product has also been enhanced by improvements particularly in feed efficiency through a long term, balanced approach to selecting pedigree stock. With today’s high feed costs, efficient broiler feed conversion is a great advantage for any integrator.

“We are now in an era of trying to select birds based on far more than appearance,” said Dr John Hardiman, director of research and development at Cobb. “Today, we are increasingly augmenting classical selection techniques with the use of DNA technology so that we can make selections based on the actual genotype of as well as the physical appearance or phenotype.”

Cobb has demonstrated its commitment to long-term investment in research to continue development of the Cobb 500 and widen its product portfolio. “Progression, with products and as a company, is an ongoing thing,” says Jerry Moye, president of Cobb. “It never ends.”



The Cobb 500 - the world beater today.

East European potential fuelling future growth

The potential for growing the chicken market in new nation states across central and eastern Europe provides an exciting challenge for Cobb Germany as the company celebrates 10 years since the first Cobb 500 parents were hatched in its newly built hatchery at Leipzig.

From the initial concept of supplying 2.5 million Cobb parents a year for the German industry is a plan now to reach 10 million a year for the 21 countries within the company's franchise.

This year the hatchery will be producing more than 7 million parents, and with ongoing expansion and the commissioning of new grandparent farms the increase to 8.5 million in 2009 is already under way.

Cobb Germany is part of the Wimex organisation - an anagram devised in 1985 based on the idea of importing and exporting broiler hatching eggs and on the purchase of four parent stock farms for 260,000 birds.

The reunification of Germany in 1989 presented huge opportunities for entrepreneurs. Through the 1990s Wimex was able to acquire former state farms in East Germany, converting many of the livestock buildings for poultry and going into large-scale arable farming and vegetable production.



Gerhard Wagner.

A festival to celebrate the 10th anniversary at the Wimex headquarters at Baasdorf in July was attended by more than 40 Cobb Germany colleagues, sales and technical managers and veterinarians from 20 countries.

Now Wimex has a turnover of €160 million a year. The core business has 67 parent stock farms, producing 280 million hatching eggs a year, hatching 50 million broilers chicks a year and rearing 8 million broilers a year.

Cobb Germany has some 320,000 Cobb 500 grandparents on 29 farms, varying from 9000 to 24,000 female capacity and with an average of 1.8 units of labour / farm.

Gerhard Wagner, who has led the phenomenal growth as the owner of Wimex, explains why Cobb Germany has continued to expand: "I think it's mainly through our staff who have done a very good job and also the success that our customers have had with the Cobb bird. Our people have built close relationships with our customers and this has been part of the success, too."

In the near future he sees the greatest potential for growth in Ukraine, Poland and Romania, but is also optimistic about the domestic market in Germany with the trend from frozen to fresh chicken increasing demand.

The enormous agricultural potential in central and eastern Europe is the focus for Cobb Germany managing director Graf von Drechsel and his fellow director James Truscott who joined the business in 2005 after 14 years in sales and technical roles with Cobb Europe.

"Take the example of Ukraine," says James Truscott. "The country has many advantages for producing poultry meat. There are abundant raw materials - it's

now producing around 25 million tonnes of grain and has the potential to treble that. Energy and labour costs are lower than in the west, and there is large investment in some very modern farms. Ukraine could become a substantial exporter of poultry meat to western Europe."

Poland is a very different market, with a multitude of small flock farmers and broiler growers and independent hatcheries and processors. "This presents a very different type of challenge in being able to supply and service lots of small operators," he says. "But we are making significant progress and Cobb has more than 50 per cent of the market."

To supply these growing markets Cobb Germany is investing in ongoing hatchery and farm expansion. The new farms, like those on the former Köthen airfield, have been designed to state-of-the-art standards on landscaped sites. A far cry from



the first breeder farms at Radefeld, converted from former state-owned egg laying units built more than 30 years ago.

The new investment is a reflection of the progress that Cobb Germany has made in its first 10 years as part of the dynamic Wimex organisation.



The latest Cobb grandparent farm constructed on the former airfield site at Köthen.

Since the opening of the Cobb Germany hatchery at Wiesenena, on the outskirts of Leipzig airport, significant developments have included a new 40,000 tonne capacity feed mill to supply grandparent farms, acquisition of the Mecklenburger complex of parent and broiler farms, and this year a new €11 million biogas enterprise using poultry manure to generate energy.

 Cobb Focus will be featuring the new biogas plant at Köthen in the next edition. 

Sasso responding to shift in consumer buying habits

The launch of the Cobb Sasso150 is our first product specifically to supply the demand for slower growing chickens - a market that Sasso has been targeting for 30 years.

This year marks the anniversary of the organisation's beginning in south west France during a period when standard 2.1 to 2.2 kg chickens frequently took up to 60 days to reach this target weight.

It was a time when demand for Label Rouge chickens was fast expanding. The brand Label Rouge required slow growing birds reared on free range, to be grown to at least 84 days and weighing 2.1 kg or more at slaughter.

An association of Label Rouge producers came together to form SASSO, an anagram from the full name *Sélection Avicole de la Sarthe et du Sud Ouest*, reflecting the regional nature of the group at that time.

Writing in the leading French poultry journal of the day *L'Aviculture*, the editor Gerard Le Boucher described the aims of the founder Serge Perrault:

«M Perrault ne l'a pas sélectionné ensuite sur des critères de rapidité d'engraissement comme les autres souches américaines, mais plutôt sur des caractères organoleptiques et de croissance lente et homogène.»

In simple terms, Monsieur Perrault was breeding for slow growth and uniformity. This was often coupled with the gene for a bare neck, a trait still of many Sasso lines even today. This gene was associated with little difference between male and female weights - a maximum of 400 grams, according to the *L'Aviculture* article.

Today Serge Perrault is living in the Toulouse area at the age of 87, and it his son Louis who is executive director of Sasso.

"The specification for Label Rouge hasn't changed for more than 40 years," he says. "The big challenge for us now

Amid this flock of woodland chickens reared for the premium 'Liberté' brand of Label Rouge, executive director Louis Perrault is talking with former Sasso president Georges Berbille who was involved in creating the designation more than 40 years ago.



is to keep the weight down to the target at 84 days. We can select for improved yield and feed conversion - but not for growth."

Today Label Rouge has around 20 per cent of the French market with Sasso breeds the most widely used. A select proportion of this market termed *Liberté* grows chickens to an even older age - to 120 days providing total freedom for the birds to roam in woodland by day.

Yet rising feed prices and the higher cost of chicken in the shops is having an impact on the buying habits of French consumers. Label Rouge has been under pressure and a new market is opening up for chickens of 49 to 56 days of age retailing at least 30 per cent cheaper.

This is the sector into which the Cobb Sasso150 is being launched in the French market, with one of the leading producers rearing an increasing volume through the autumn.

It is not just in France and western Europe that Sasso has a reputation for slow growing and coloured chickens that suit niche markets. More than 50 per cent of its sales are for exports with the biggest markets in south Asia.

The organisation is based at Sabre in Les Landes, the vast expanse of pine forest between Bordeaux and Biarritz where the pedigree farms have complete isolation from other poultry enterprises. There is a second hatchery in the Sarthe region in northern France closer to the airports of Rennes and Paris for handling exports.

Within the Sasso breeding programme is a gene pool of traits that have benefited the demand for niche products in France and many other countries. They could well enjoy a new popularity in markets where a growing minority of more affluent consumers are looking for more traditional types of chicken and even in these difficult financial times prepared to pay extra for such qualities.



Cobb Sasso150 grandparents at the Sasso breeding farm in the splendid isolation of Les Landes pine forests near Sabre in south west France.

Cobb expands Asian franchise network



Pictured at the Cobb-Philippines grandparent farm office in Tanay, Rizal, Philippines: from left seated Rolando Sanchez, Cobb Philippines, and Mr Nesa, GP manager, PT Peternakan Ayam Manggis. Standing from left are Orly Fernandez, Cobb-Vantress, Dr Bambang, PS manager, Manggis, and Jun Balag, GP manager.

Eight new franchise distributors have been appointed by Cobb in the past year covering the Philippines, Indonesia, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

The two new distributors in the Philippines - Gama Foods of Cagayan de Oro City, and Bounty Fresh of Caloocan City - will strengthen further the breed's popularity in the country.

In Indonesia the new distributors are Wonokoyo Group, of Surabaya, and PT Peternakan Ayam Manggis,

of Jakarta; in Bangladesh - CP Bangladesh Co, of Dhaka, and both Sanowara Group and Kasila Farm, of Chittagong; and in Sri Lanka - Fortune GP Farm (Bairaha Group), of Katana.

"The exceptional feed conversion of the Cobb 500 has been the driving force behind the tremendous growth of our market share in the Asian region over the past year," says Mark Glavey, Asian sales director of Cobb.

"Record high prices for grain and soya have focused attention on the value of feed efficiency. There is wide variation in the ages and weights to which the Cobb 500 is being reared - from 1 to 3.5 kg - and across the whole range producers are benefiting greatly from its advantage in feed conversion."



Paul Brochard has joined Cobb Europe in a joint role as sales manager for Cobb products in France and Italy, and to manage sales of the future Cobb Sasso breeds worldwide. Mr Brochard has more than 20 years' experience in the poultry industry with Cargill, SFPA (subsidiary of ISA Poultry) and Hendrix Genetics. He is fluent in English, German and Italian as well as French.



Wout van Wolfswinkel, regional sales manager of Cobb Europe, joins the celebrations as Dutch flock farmer Harco Salomons and his family mark the opening of their fourth poultry house with a Cobb cake. His last flock of Cobb 500 achieved average fertility of more than 90 percent to 60 weeks. Joining the party, too, were Johan Kollenstart of the hatchery company Probroed, Hans Klein Woltering of the feed suppliers Forfarmers, Robin Kemper responsible for rearing and Martijn Gruyters, Cobb regional technical manager.

Sign of the increasing links between Cobb and Hendrix Genetics - Paul van de Ven (centre), Hendrix Genetics area manager for Africa, with Richard Keeley, managing director Hybrid Poultry, and Antony Taylor, Cobb Europe area manager, at the Hybrid



Poultry stand at the 82nd Agriculture and Commerce Show at Lusaka, Zambia. "We shall be cooperating in providing service for Cobb and ISA customers and exploring new markets for each other's products," said Mr van de Ven. "We both have a good market share in Africa." Hybrid Poultry, based in Lusaka, is an important customer selling both ISA layers and Cobb broiler chicks domestically and in the region.



Over 40 customer companies from 19 countries attended the Cobb-Vantress annual world technical school at Siloam Springs.

"This is one of the most important events we host for our customers each year," said Stan Reid, vice president of sales and marketing and world technical support.

"The topics we cover are important in helping our customers improve chicken management, but even greater value is gained through the relationships developed by customers from the various regions."

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