Cobb has become the first poultry breeding company in Brazil to achieve approval for its compartmentalization project in accordance with the Terrestrial Animal Health Code of the World Health Organization for Animal Health (OIE).

The project has been validated by the OIE and now approved by the Brazilian Agriculture Ministry (MAPA).

It was first discussed in 2000 and gained momentum in 2005 after the detection of large scale, highly pathogenic avian influenza in Southeast Asia. The aim was to create sub-populations through certifying the health of poultry at units with enhanced biosecurity.

Compartmentalization increases control over bird health through these stricter biosecurity standards, with periodic risk audits, a traceability system and surveillance of both the flocks and wild animals around the units. In Brazil, the project is a partnership between MAPA and Ubabef (the Brazilian Poultry Union), with the participation of the private sector.

“Cobb’s participation in the project is based on the need to protect our genetic base, minimizing the risk of avian influenza and maintaining productivity.”

Genomics to help meet future world food needs

More than two-thirds of the extra food needed to feed the world’s expanding population will need to come through advances in technology, Jerry Moyer, president of Cobb-Vantress, Inc., told leaders of the UK farming industry.

Speaking at the Oxford Farming Conference, he said to meet the doubling in food supply estimated to be required in 2050 improved efficiency would have to contribute some 70 percent along with additional farmland and increased cropping.
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Newcastle Disease,” said Cobb-Vantress Brasil technical manager Paulo Raffi (below).

“This will facilitate international trade, provided compartmentalization is officially recognized by the importing country as well as the Brazilian government.”

To develop its own compartment model covering the states of São Paulo, Minas Gerais and Mato Grosso do Sul, Cobb based the project strictly on OIE rules. The location and design of the farms, animal movement within and outside the compartment, control of pests, the flow of people and vehicles and water quality were evaluated. So, too, were equipment and facility disinfection, litter, feed and input quality, vaccines and medications, waste treatment, and movement of breeding stock, with recording of all procedures and monitoring flow of material and information.

“The OIE recognizes that breeding companies already work as a compartment due to the need to protect their flocks from disease through stricter biosecurity plans than on commercial units,” said Paulo Raffi. “The main challenge was to complement this work with risk analysis, a traceability system and a monitoring program covering the flocks within and outside the compartment.”

A plan was established providing the ability to respond quickly and efficiently to any health emergency. To put it into practice, Cobb is training all employees, so that ‘alert’ conditions can be minimized or, where appropriate, addressed.

“This is easier in Brazil due to the high levels of biosecurity already established. We are working now on diagnostic capability and emergency response, especially monitoring for low pathogenic viruses and of wild birds around the compartment units.”

Jairo Arenazio (right), Cobb’s general manager for South America, pointed out that Cobb is a pioneer in compartmentalization in Brazil: “This initiative is at the root of the success of our business in South America and of our exports of breeding stock from Brazil. Without it, we would have had to create an alternative officially recognized regime to ensure the high health status of product for both domestic and especially international markets.

“At the moment the global poultry industry is facing up to the threat of avian influenza. We couldn’t let Brazil, which exports poultry to more than 150 locations around the world, to be ‘held hostage’ to international regulations restricting bilateral trade. We had to create a new regime to ensure the high health status of our stock.”

To Jairo, compartmentalization is simply a set of hygiene measures with routine monitoring to ensure that ‘nothing outside comes in, and nothing inside gets out.’

In other words, if there is any health challenge from diseases featured on OIE’s A list in areas surrounding a poultry operation, there are risk mitigation measures to ensure that this challenge does not affect the birds. There are also control measures to avoid transmission outside the compartment.

“With the new OIE regime Brazilian poultry farming is taking another major step towards global recognition of the high health standards of our industry and our products,” he added. “Compartmentalization will bring us even greater assurance on biosecurity. And I’m sure it is here to stay.”

Genomics to help meet future world food needs

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The poultry industry has an important role to play through increasing the efficiency of broiler production. “Broiler genetics have made great strides and still have huge potential for improvement,” he said.

Mr Moye took the example of improved feed conversion. Over the 10 years to 2010 the improvement of 0.145 meant that 17.4 million tonnes less feed are now required to produce the 60 billion broilers consumed around the world each year.

With maize making up 55 percent of the diet, 9.57 million fewer tonnes are needed each year – equivalent to cropping 2.66 million fewer acres (1.08 fewer hectares) of maize.

“Everyone in agriculture has a responsibility to produce safe food,” said Mr Moye. “Animal breeding must develop animals that are fit for use in agriculture. Genetics and agriculture must develop products that meet the needs of all consumers.

“Consumer interest movements should be broadminded enough to understand their potential impact outside of their respective market places.”

Mr Moye said that use of a genomic strategy in continuing the advances in poultry breeding would help sustainable intensification through increasing food production from existing farmland while minimizing pressure on the environment.

“We are serving our customers through use of innovative research and technology to make protein healthy and affordable for everyone.”
Expansion for Brazilian laboratory facilities

With the continued growth of the Cobb business in Brazil, the company’s quality control laboratory has undergone major expansion which was completed in December.

The new investment of US$600,000 will double the capacity to 30,000 tests per month using serology, bacteriology and molecular assays. The laboratory is considered a benchmark facility for the Brazilian poultry industry, both for assay quality and for the range of its testing.

Located in Guapiaçu area in the São Paulo region, the laboratory was opened in 2008 and is responsible for assessing the biosecurity level of poultry farms, hatcheries and feed mill to help maintain the high health status throughout the Cobb operation in Brazil.

“In addition to expanding our testing capacity, the investment improves the working in each laboratory section and significantly speeds some of our procedures,” said Márcio Gereti, laboratory coordinator at Cobb-Vantress Brasil. “We’re also optimizing our database classification, increasing the information backup capacity to five years.”

In addition to the serological assays, flock samples are analyzed with microbiological and molecular testing using two different methods to ensure total reliability of the results.

“This combination of techniques for salmonella testing generates a final result within three days - two days sooner than with traditional laboratory techniques. Two days is a highly significant time in any case where intervention is needed,” explained Dr Leonardo Sestak, Cobb veterinarian responsible for avian health and laboratory management.

“What’s more, in the third day of testing it is now possible through molecular typing to identify which serogroup and sometimes which serotype. It’s possible to rule out two important serotypes for poultry, Salmonella enteritidis and Salmonella typhimurium, by running real-time PCR technology using specific primers.”

In addition to the entire Salmonella testing, the laboratory runs other bacteriological and molecular assays, antimicrobial susceptibility tests and mycological exams that help veterinarians to define the best procedure in the field.

The laboratory has the latest equipment such as a new ELISA plate washer machine that can rinse a whole batch of 96-well plates at a time and a mediavle that can rapidly and safely prepare large volumes of media broth at a specific temperature.

“As a breeding company at the top of the food chain, we need to adopt the best and latest procedures in testing and analysis to ensure our Cobb products always meet the highest health standards,” added Dr Sestak.

There is regular coordination with the other Cobb Laboratories in the United States and England, exchanging technical information about global poultry health issues as well as ongoing improvements to laboratory routine.
Kazi Farms catering for growing poultry appetite

In less than 20 years Kazi Farms has grown to become the largest poultry breeder in Bangladesh where the Cobb500 has a market share around 75 percent.

Founded by Kazi Zahedul Hasan in 1995, Kazi Farms began with a hatchery in Nayanpur, Gazipur, initially producing 25,000 chicks/week from imported hatching eggs. Soon capacity increased to 75,000 chicks/week.

Then two years later the first parent stock farm was built in Chawkpara, Gazipur, to begin producing chicks from its own hatching eggs.

In 1999 Kazi Farms started rearing commercial broilers in Bhaluka, Gazipur. Expansion continued apace with more parent stock farms in the northern districts of Thakurgaon and Panchagarh, as well as a feed mill in Thakurgaon to supply the new farms.

In the early years of the business, Kazi Farms produced a range of broiler breeds including the Cobb100 and later it became the first Cobb500 franchise in Bangladesh. Today the company produces 40 percent of the Cobb500 sold in the country with Sasso among the other breeds provided.

In 2001 Kazi Farms was selected to become an exclusive distributor of Hy-Line layer breeds and has had Hy-Line grandparent farm facilities in Thakurgaon for more than 10 years.

With the country’s population and demand for meat and eggs increasing, Kazi Farms has built three commercial layer farms with total capacity of 10 million eggs/day.

In 2006 the company expanded into commercial poultry feed manufacture, with its facility at Gajaria, Munshiganj, now one of the largest feed mills in South Asia with production capacity of 40 tonnes/hour and a 20 percent share of the Bangladeshi broiler feed market. The mill uses state-of-the-art sanitizing pellet milling machinery from Buhler of Switzerland. By eliminating any possible bacterial contamination from the feed, the process helps ensure that poultry farmers experience fewer disease outbreaks and achieve better results.

In all, there are now three grandparent farms, 12 breeder and commercial hatcheries, 31 farms and 21 sales centers. “Our aim is to produce high quality chicks and feed which sell at a premium,” said Kazi Zahedul Hasan, founder and managing director.

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Expansion set to go on

A bright future for the poultry industry in Bangladesh is forecast by Kazi Zahedul Hasan, Kazi farms managing director.

“Driven by rising per capita incomes, the poultry industry of Bangladesh is growing rapidly,” he said. “We expect this expansion to continue over the next ten years.

“Our expansion in the next decade will take place across the poultry industry.

“We are building new broiler farms, and are planning to reach 10 percent of the country’s total production within five years. In egg production we hope to take 15 percent share of the market in five years.

“We also expect major growth in this area in our chicken-based frozen foods and fast food restaurants in the next 10 years.”
Celebrating 50 years of Reproduktores Cobb

Leader in the broiler breeder market in Argentina, Reproduktores Cobb held a special event to mark the 50th anniversary of the partnership between Cobb-Vantress, Inc. and Granja Tres Arroyos.

“We cannot speak of poultry business in Argentina without talking about Joaquin De Grazia, chief executive officer of Granja Tres Arroyos,” said Gustavo Wassermann, operations manager for Cobb-Vantress Brasil (CVB).

“Our partnership with Granja Tres Arroyos assures us leadership in Argentina where Reproduktores Cobb holds an 80 percent share of the open market.”

More than 150 guests attended the celebration event at San Nicolas on the Parana River, organized by Reproduktores Cobb, which handles distribution of Cobb products throughout the country.

Standing left to right: Beatriz Hernandez, administrative manager Reproduktores Cobb; Gustavo Wassermann, operation manager CVB; Cesar Stofel, technical assistant Reproduktores Cobb; Frank Siewerdt, geneticist CVI; Rodrigo Terra, product manager CVB; Joaquin De Grazia, CEO Granja Tres Arroyos; Roberto Ricagni, technical assistant Reproduktores Cobb.

Sitting left to right: Jerry Moye, president CVI; Edmond El Jammal, production manager Reproduktores Cobb; Hugo Salomone, sales manager Reproduktores Cobb; Jairo Arenazio, general manager CVB.

Left: Jerry Moye presenting Joaquin De Grazia with a gift celebrating the 50-year partnership.

Among those taking part were Jerry Moye, president of Cobb-Vantress, Inc., Jairo Arenazio, director general of Cobb-Vantress Brasil, Rodrigo Terra, product manager for Cobb-Vantress Brasil, and Frank Siewerdt, Cobb-Vantress geneticist in the United States.

Speakers at the event included Carlos Paez, one of the survivors of the 1972 plane crash in the Andes, and the economist and journalist Thomas Bulat, who spoke about the positive outlook for the poultry industry and agribusiness in South America.

Kazi Farms - Bangladesh

“We’ve helped farmers in Bangladesh in other ways, too. They have difficulty getting reliable disease diagnosis, with government laboratories not well equipped. We’ve established four laboratories in different areas of our country to help our farmers get the accurate disease diagnosis they need.

“We have also implemented strong and effective biosecurity procedures at all our locations to prevent poultry diseases, particularly avian influenza.”

In 2005 Kazi Farms started exporting hatching eggs and broiler chicks to different countries, the first Bangladeshi poultry company to do this. Those countries now include Nepal, Saudi Arabia, Oman and UAE.

Recently the company launched ‘Ready to Cook’ meat products on to the market including sausage, nuggets, drumsticks and meat balls.

In 2004, Kazi Zahedul Hasan was named the ‘Business Person of the Year’ by the Daily Star and DHL Business Awards. Then in 2009 he received the award for ‘Most Improved Distributor’ by Cobb-Vantress, Inc.

“We are committed to be the best in all we set out to do creating value for our customers, our team members and our communities,” he said.

“Our company leadership and the dedication of our employees ensure that the superior quality of the products and services to our customers is recognized as second to none. We are continuously seeking to improve what is good through utilizing the quality of our people, processes and technological innovations.”
Breaking ground on new Kentucky feed mill

Cobb-Vantress, Inc. is constructing a new feed mill in Albany in south central Kentucky, United States, to supply its expanding operations in both Kentucky and Tennessee.

The mill, projected to cost US$15 million, is the latest investment in this region where Cobb has invested more than $36 million over the past three years including a new hatchery at Lafayette, Tennessee, and a new pedigree research and development complex at Deer Lodge, Tennessee. Its location is close to a major area of corn production from where Cobb plans to source most of its grain needs.

“We are excited to continue our investment in the state of Kentucky and we look forward to providing job opportunities to the people in this area,” said Randy Vardeman, vice president of production for Cobb. “The design of the new feed mill will give Cobb complete control over feed formulation and quality. In the end, it’s about providing a quality feed to our growers and company farms.”

Construction work in progress for the new feed mill.

The investment in Kentucky is one of many Cobb is making globally. Cobb is redeveloping a research farm at Herveld in the Netherlands, making farm expansions in Brazil and building a new grandparent farm and hatchery in China.

One special feature of the new feed mill will be a state-of-the-art pathogen control system affecting the equipment and processes. Use of specialized equipment, designated clean areas controlled by airflow and other quality measures will help ensure salmonella-free feed.

The construction began in November and is scheduled for completion in spring of 2014. The mill will employ an estimated 16 people including feed delivery drivers.

The Kentucky Economic Development Bureau has been instrumental in attracting this investment. Denton Childs, of Tyson Foods, worked on tax incentives with the state, and Greg Jones with the Southeast Kentucky Economic Development Corporation assisted in locating the property.

Saudis impressed by Cobb investment

A high-level delegation from Al Watania, a key player in the Middle East poultry industry, spent three days visiting the headquarters of Cobb-Vantress and facilities of Tyson Foods in Arkansas, USA.

The visitors, led by Al Watania sales vice president Jamal Turad Y Alsaadoun and marketing vice president Masaad Fahd Al-Dakheel, were impressed by the investment they saw Cobb making in research and product development.

“Cobb has shown us the great extent of time and resources that has been invested to develop such high quality products that make them a true leader among all their competitors,” said Masaad Al-Dakheel.

Pelayo Casanovas, sales and technical director of Cobb Europe, said he and his colleagues were excited to host the delegation from Al Watania.

“Meeting the marketing, sales and product development leadership from Al Watania was a unique opportunity for Cobb and helped us understand why Al Watania is the world leader that it is today,” he stated. “We are confident the relationship between us will continue to prosper for many years to come.”

• **Al Watania** has substantial breeding, production and processing activities in Saudi Arabia and Egypt, and is planning to start a Cobb grandparent programme next year and to improve and increase its further processing operations.

The visitors from Al Watania pictured with their Cobb hosts at the Siloam Springs headquarters of Cobb-Vantress.
Top GP awards for Hybrid Poultry in Zambia

Hybrid Poultry in Zambia won five top awards at the grandparent seminar for Cobb franchise distributors in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, organized by Cobb Europe for the Europe, Middle East and Africa region.

Richard Keeley (near right), Hybrid Poultry managing director, received the top company award from Jerry Mowe, Cobb president, while Aaron Banda (far right), production controller, won four awards – based on top female line and male line performance in 2013 and top GP female and male lines for the last four years.

He received the awards from Stan Reid (pictured), Cobb vice president, and Roy Mutimer, general manager for Cobb Europe.

Philippe Gouault, Cobb Europe GP specialist, stated: “The dedication and enthusiasm of the staff and management has paid dividends in obtaining this status which proudly recognizes Hybrid Poultry and Zambia in achieving outstanding performance on a global basis.”

Cobb Germany reviews market gains across Europe

The progress in genetic potential of the Cobb500 is paying dividends for broiler producers all over Europe, according to James Truscott, director of Cobb Germany which distributes the breed across 21 countries of central and eastern Europe.

“This growing success is based on the increasingly high reproductive potential combined with competitive broiler performance and the highest meat yield,” he told more than 40 participants from these countries at the annual Cobb Germany conference ahead of the Wimex Group Christmas party at Dessau in eastern Germany.

This has led to significant gains in market share, he said, not only within Europe but in countries all over the globe with major broiler producers switching to the breed, as recently seen in Egypt and Mexico.

Delegates heard about the latest technical developments including use of LED technology in the lightning program, as well as the situation in different European markets.
First poultry course in Thailand

Forty CPF employees in poultry production from 13 countries attended a 12-day intensive poultry management course organized by CPF Thailand and Cobb Asia at its newly opened Sikhiu learning center.

Specialists from the Cobb World Technical Support Team covered all aspects of production including parent rearing, breeder management, broiler management, hatchery management, environment control, nutrition and processing.

Even though most of attendees hold senior positions managing parent stock and broiler farms, they all advanced their knowledge of Cobb genetic improvements which continue to increase performance potential in all areas of production.

“The event showed us the great extent of time and resources invested in developing such high quality products and, more importantly, in Cobb technical expertise in production management in hot and cold climates,” said Jirapath Kitithanapat, course director.

“This was a great opportunity for our attendees to learn from the global leader in broiler breeding. We have expanded our business extensively throughout the world and each country has its own way of operating. Inevitably we face individual problems from farm to farm, and Cobb showed us many examples of how they had overcome such issues.”

Duncan Granshaw, Cobb general manager, added: “We were honored to be asked to lead this course and highly value the friendship we’ve developed with CPF over the past few years. It is evident from their investment in this learning center that they are committed to getting the most advantage from the genetics that Cobb provides.”

• Earlier last month Adirek Srirakrai, president and chief executive officer of Charoen Pokapan, officially opened the Sikhiu learning centre. He also visited the course and presented a plaque commemorating the close cooperation between Cobb and CPF.

Strengthens team in Asian region

Sandy Irawan, who has worked for a long-time Cobb distributor in Indonesia for over ten years, has joined the Cobb Asia team with responsibilities for sales in Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Brunei.

He has been general manager for Galur Prima Cobbindo where he has headed their new poultry processing division as well as managing the sale of four million broiler chicks and one million parent stock a year and overseeing production of GP and parent stock.

“I am really excited to have Sandy joining our team. His considerable experience as a manager with our Cobb distributor will be extremely valuable to both us and our customers,” said Mohammed Ismail, director of sales – Cobb Asia.

British industry award for Steve Tweed

One of the British Poultry Council’s distinguished service awards was presented to Steve Tweed at its annual awards ceremony at the House of Commons in London.

The award was given to Steve Tweed (left) by Food and Farming Minister George Eustice for his pivotal role within the poultry industry and at Cobb for over 20 years. Steve has provided technical hatchery support and expertise in all areas of modern incubation practices and has been dedicated to training hatchery managers and staff.

John Reed, BPC chairman, stated: “Steve Tweed joined the poultry industry in 1966 and has been with Cobb for over 20 years. He has travelled the world providing technical hatchery support and expertise in all areas of incubation, playing a pivotal role within both the UK and the global poultry industry with the development of modern incubation practices.

“Throughout his career, his enthusiasm and drive helped find new and innovated management practices to improve hatchery operation. He was also able to make complicated hatchery ventilation principals understandable at the operation level in the hatchery. His dedication and patience in training hatchery managers and staff are outstanding, and Steve is known for never saying no to a customer request regardless of where in the world that need was.”

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