

Chicken 'leftovers' being sold in SA

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South African Poultry Association's chief executive Kevin Lovell claims that 90% of the 370,000 tons of chicken imported from Brazil, Argentina, the US and European Union last year is considered waste by consumers in those nations



Lovell said 31,000 tons of last year's chicken imports were offal (livers, gizzards and hearts), 162,000 tons were leg quarters, 131,000 tons were leftovers of deboned meat and 12,000 tons were carcasses (thighs and legs).

But don't we have enough chicken capacity to produce for ourselves?

"We have enough, it is just that we have not had the chance to invest in the markets to grow the business enough. Because these [imports] are waste, they come in at low prices, much lower than it costs locally," Lovell said, adding that the low cost of the imports were the local poultry industry's biggest hurdle .

"In fact, our whole application [for import tariff hikes on chickens] is not designed to punish importers but to make imports cost as much as local products," he said.

The poultry association has launched a legal application to have the tariffs on chicken imports increased by as much as 82%.

White portions preferred

The chief commissioner of the International Trade Administration Commission, Siyabonga Tsengiwe, said consumers in western nations preferred the white portions of chicken meat for perceived health reasons.

"I would not go to the extent of using that language that [what is left and exported] is waste, it is just consumer preference," he said.

Lovell confirmed that Kentucky Fried Chicken, Nando's and Chicken Licken all use local chickens, and not "waste meat" imports.

The chief executive of the Association of Meat Importers and Exporters, David Wolpert, on Thursday (20 June) dismissed

the "waste" claims as "absolute nonsense" .

He believed the poultry association was trying to discredit the import industry.

On Tuesday (18 June), the Pretoria High Court granted the importers' association access to the information the poultry association has gathered for its case to hike tariffs.

The importers' association said it wanted to protect poorer people from paying too much for their chicken, which in many cases was their only source of protein.

Source: The Times via I-Net Bridge

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