

16 April 2025

Kind Attention:

**Mr Izaak Breitenbach**

CEO South African Poultry Association

Dear Mr Breitenbach,

I heard you on the radio yesterday morning and am interested to know that SAPA is negotiating a market for South Africa's chicken products in the EU and Middle East.

I write now in the hope that the **South African Poultry Association** will use this opportunity to bring an end to the cull depots all around South Africa where living end-of-lay chickens and spent broiler parent stock are made available to the poorest of the poor in the most inhumane of conditions, and at prices that are in no way cheaper than equivalent supermarket-bought chicken products.

Please may I explain one of the fundamental reasons why I ask you to consider this request: In cooperation with a school in our area, as well as our local animal welfare society, we are currently conducting research into why and how a child's innate empathy is eroded to the point where, in teenage years, atrocious acts of violence against animals become par for the course. One of the places we are looking at, for answers, is the inhumanity to animals that millions of children are exposed to from a very young age, at cull depots. We hope to have enough data to determine the impact of witnessing cruelty and violence such as at cull depots, by the end of the year.

Our concern is rooted in the recent addition to the UN Charter on Child Rights whereby, in terms of [GC26 Article 35](#), children may not be exposed to violence, including violence inflicted on animals. Science has proved that exposure to violence can lead to life-long mental health issues that follow this path:

- Progressive desensitization to violence
- Normalization of violence
- Erosion of empathy
- Disruption of fundamental human values
- Acceptance of violence as part of life
- Participation in acts of violence

The violence meted out to the chickens at cull depots, can leave children in no doubt that animals are not worthy of our consideration for their suffering. By eliminating cull depots, SAPA would demonstrate its support for the UN Rights of the Child which is an obligatory mandate for all member states.

Back in 1994, a UK envoy said 'no' to a trade deal with South Africa after witnessing ostriches being stripped naked before slaughter, to prevent their feathers being stained with blood. See [HERE](#). This practice was subsequently outlawed, and a trade deal followed.

The EU market, I believe, will appreciate trade with South Africa where such issues as the humane treatment of chickens at the end-of-life, is shown to matter.

Please let me know your thoughts.

Kind regards,

LOUISE VAN DER MERWE

**Managing Trustee** | The Humane Education Trust

**Director** | Nature-Based Education, Cape Town, South Africa

**Editor** | Animal Voice

**Mobile** | 082 457 9177

**Email** | [avoice@yebo.co.za](mailto:avoice@yebo.co.za)

**Website** | <https://www.naturebased.education/> | <https://www.animalvoice.org/>