

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND AND PROJECT OVERVIEW

On the 14 October 2019, an Environmental Authorisation was issued to Die Boeram Venter Trust by the Department of Economic Development, Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEDEAT), Sarah Baartman Region for the construction and operation of six Poultry Breeder houses, including associated infrastructure, on portions of Portion 6, 10 and 40 of Farm T'Zoetgeneugd No. 192, known as Middledrift, near Addo in the Sundays River Valley Municipality.

A breeder facility is primarily for the production of eggs over a 60 week period with an additional 6 weeks required for cleanout, disinfection and maintenance i.e. a 66 week cycle. The site is zoned Agriculture I and the farm portions measure ~204ha in combined extent.

The holder of the Authorisation is a contractor for Sovereign Foods, which is a poultry production company with various operational cycles, from egg layers/ breeders to broilers. Subsequent to the receipt of the Environmental Authorisation for the breeder facility, Sovereign Foods acquired an existing farm with existing facilities and infrastructure which could be readily utilised for breeder production (egg laying) versus the construction of a new farm. In terms of Sovereign Foods production cycle it was determined that Middledrift would be a more suitable site for broiler production (growing chickens for meat).

The project applicant is proposing to change the use of the 6 poultry houses authorised, but not yet constructed, to produce broilers. The size of the 6 breeder houses authorised will stay the same and it is proposed that 6 additional broiler houses including associated infrastructure are constructed. This is proposed adjacent to and west of the existing authorised footprint, to provide a total of 12 broiler houses in three separately fenced in areas.

This is considered a substantive amendment due to the change in project scope and in terms of the NEMA EIA Regulations, 2014 (as amended), regulation 31 to 32, a Part 2 Amendment must be applied to this application. The project applicant, Die Boeram Venter Trust, has appointed Sandy Wren of Public Process Consultants as the registered Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) to manage the Amendment Application Process including Public Participation.

As construction had commenced and to ensure the authorisation remained valid a Part 1 Amendment Application for the extension to the timeframes for the completion of construction was submitted to DEDEAT on the 22 May 2023 and acknowledgement of receipt was received on the 22 May 2023.

CHANGE IN PROJECT SCOPE

The project applicant proposes a change in project scope for the authorised use of the breeder houses to broiler houses as well as construct an additional 6 houses and associated infrastructure, to total 12 broiler houses. The additional 6 houses, including associated infrastructure, measure approximately 11 hectares in extent and are proposed to be constructed, adjacent to and west of the existing authorised footprint, in existing cultivated fields.

The 6 additional broiler houses are proposed as one fenced-in operational area, providing for three separately fenced in operational areas on site in total. Stocking densities will change from 58 740 in total for a breeder facility with a 66-week cycle (~1 cycle annually), to approximately 540 000 and 576 000 birds in total, with an 8-week cycle for a broiler facility and ~6.5 cycles annually.

The houses are not proposed to change, and as per the bulk services report, the twelve (12) broiler houses will be fully roofed and enclosed to floor level, with a concrete floor and a 600mm high concrete stub wall (except for the door openings at the gable ends). At the door openings, a 10m X 10m X 150mm thick concrete apron slab will be constructed to allow for the direct loading and direct transport off site of the chicken litter (chicken manure mixed with sawdust, wood shavings, chopped straw etc.) and to prevent pollution of the surrounding areas. The chicken litter is proposed to be transported in covered trucks to a registered composting facility, which is owned by the same project applicant.

The current authorisation included the expansion of an existing farm dam and the demolition of one dam (the demolition of the one dam is not proposed to change), nor is the expansion of the existing farm dam. The Bulk Services Report has confirmed the expanded dam, as authorised, will have the capacity to accommodate the AADD of 86.6m³/day and maximum daily demand of 240.8m³/day for the proposed 12 house broiler facility.

Processing of Broilers

As opposed to the breeders, the broilers would be processed by Sovereign Foods at their existing factory in Uitenhage.

Litter Removal and Disinfection

The process and procedure for litter removal is not proposed to change. The broiler cycle is however shorter, 8 weeks versus 66 weeks, and therefore the removal of litter will be required more regularly. Due to the shorter and increased number of cycles associated with a broiler facility, manure will be required to be removed from the houses more

regularly, which may result in increased vehicle trips and the impacts of this have been assessed in the Traffic Assessment. Similarly, the disinfection procedure is not proposed to change, however the number of disinfection cycles will increase annually and the impacts of this have been assessed in the Traffic Assessment.

Disposal of Mortalities

Similarly, the process and procedure for the collection and disposal of mortalities will not change. Removal rates will depend on the number of mortalities and one additional mortality freezer room will be required for the 6 additional houses. It is anticipated due an increase in the number of chicks for a broiler facility, versus a breeder facility, as well as an increase in the number of cycles there may be a concomitant increase in the number of mortalities which will require removal and will result in additional vehicle trips. The impacts of this have been assessed in the Traffic Assessment.

Based on the proposed changes to the project scope, the following has relevance to this amendment application:

- The location and layout for the authorised 6 breeder houses into cultivated fields, now partially cleared and compacted, will not change, including the size of the houses.
- The 6 breeder houses are now proposed to be used for the production of broilers with an 8-week cycle.
- Six additional poultry broiler houses, and associated infrastructure, adjacent to and west of the existing houses in one separately fenced in operational area.
 - An overlap of approximately 2 ha with the existing authorised area
 - The additional houses and associated infrastructure is proposed within cultivated fields approximately 11 ha in extent.
- Three (3) separately fenced in broiler operational areas, total of 12 broiler houses and associated infrastructure.
- The broiler houses will be constructed to accommodate 45 000 to 48 000 birds each with the standard 56-day grower (8 week) model applying versus a 66-week cycle.
- An additional stormwater detention pond with a storage capacity of 2 885 m³ and a footprint of 1 802m².

The following changes will apply to various sections of the amended Environmental Authorisation, should such be granted, as a result of the change in project scope:

- Egg collection rooms not required.
- Incubator room not required.
- Additional boiler room required for the 6 additional broiler houses.
- Generator room relocated to the southern boundary of the authorised footprint.
- No additional labourers' cottages required as it is proposed to use the existing labourers houses immediately south of the authorised footprint.
- Construction of a Maintenance Managers house on the northern boundary adjacent to the authorised breeder footprint.
- Relocation of the Managers house to the southern boundary of the site within the authorised footprint.
- Additional mortality freezer room for the additional 6 houses, total 3 mortality rooms
- Additional shower room for the additional 6 houses, total 3 shower rooms

See Chapter Two of the Report for further detailed information regarding the project description and change in project scope.

SUPPLEMENTARY BULK SERVICES REPORT

The supplementary bulk services report prepared by JJ Spies Civil Engineers concludes the following with regards to the roads and wet services required for the proposed amendment:

- In strict adherence to the detailed design and execution of earthworks, roads and wet services systems as indicated in this report, the proposed chicken broiler house development on Portion of portions 6, 10, and 40 of farm T'Zoetgeneugd No. 192, in the Sundays River Valley Municipality, Eastern Cape, **could be serviced effectively from a civil engineering perspective.**
- An **additional** stormwater detention pond near the north-western corner of the site fence will have an effective storage capacity of 2 885 m³ and a footprint of 1 802m².
- The average water usage for the 12 x poultry broiler house development compared to the authorised 6 x poultry breeder house development **will increase by 11 534m³/year and the AADD will increase by 31.6kl/day (31.6m³/day).**
- The AADD for water of the proposed 12 x poultry broiler houses, 1 x manager's house, 1 x maintenance manager's house, 3 x shower rooms and wash areas will be 86.6kl/day (86.6m³/day) and a maximum daily demand of 240.8kl/day (240.8m³/day).
- The authorised expanded dam **will have capacity to accommodate** the AADD of 86.6m³/day and maximum daily demand of 240.8m³/day of the proposed 12 x poultry broiler house development.

- It is further recommended to design and construct a primary 2 x dual-chamber sedimentation facility at the water filtration plant, with an effective storage capacity of 400m³ each (total effective storage capacity of 800m³), to accommodate the water filtration and effective supply for operational and domestic purposes.
- The total design Average Dry Weather Flow (ADWF) of domestic effluent calculated for the proposed 12 x poultry broiler house with 2 x manager's houses and at the 3 x shower rooms and wash areas on site, has been calculated to be 2.94 kilolitres per day (2.94 m³/day). The 2.94 kilolitres/day (2.94m³/day) domestic effluent that will be generated by the 12 x poultry broiler house development **will be 0.185 kilolitres/day (0.185m³/day) less** than the 3.125 kilolitres/day (3.125m³/day) of the authorised 6 x poultry breeder house development.

See Chapter Four of the Report for further detailed information regarding the bulk services assessment.

ECOLOGICAL SPECIALIST ASSESSMENT

No significant advantages or disadvantages of the proposed change in project scope have been identified, from a biophysical perspective. The impacts that were previously identified, which relate to the vegetation and associated habitat, are deemed to still be applicable and are not anticipated to change. All mitigation measures previously proposed are still applicable.

The additional area proposed to be included as part of the amendment (11 ha for 6 additional houses and associated infrastructure) has been irreversibly transformed into lucerne fields. The location and layout for the authorised 6 poultry breeder houses into previously cultivated fields will not change. The footprint of the authorised 6 breeder houses has been partially cleared and compacted, however no top structures or associated infrastructure have been constructed, with the exception of the upgrading of the Eskom transformer on the southern boundary of the site.

The Sundays River forms the northern and western boundary of farm Portion 6, 10 and 40 of Farm T'Zoetgeneugd No. 192 and the associated Estuary terminates at the western corner of Portion 40 of Farm 192. No aquatic features occur with the area proposed to be included in the amendment application. Condition 3.3.7 of the Environmental Authorisation which reads "*The areas where the poultry houses and other components of the development are to be constructed must be clearly demarcated and all construction activities, inclusive of storage of material and equipment must take place within such demarcated areas.*" must be adhered to in order to prevent direct impacts on the Sundays River and Estuary.

The terrestrial and aquatic systems, their current state and functionality were evaluated against the original impacts assessed. No additional impacts have been identified as a result of the change in project scope. Minor changes have been made to mitigatory measures to ensure they are in line with the change in project scope, that is, reference to a broiler facility and the stormwater management system proposed by the project engineer. No ecological impacts required re-evaluation after mitigation. **The proposed amendment will not increase** the significance of impacts post-mitigation and the impacts would remain **LOW**.

See Chapter Five of the Report for further detailed information regarding the ecological impact assessment.

TRAFFIC IMPACT ASSESSMENT ADDENDUM

The Amendment to the Traffic Impact Assessment prepared by Engineering Advice and Services (Pty) Ltd concludes the following with regards to the traffic impacts for the proposed amendment:

- MR00450 is planned to be upgraded by the road authority (SANRAL) within the next 12 months.
- **No adjustment** is required with regard to the approved access for the breeder facility to accommodate the broiler facility.
- **The Broiler facility will generate less weekly and daily trips** when compared to the breeder facility.
- An average of 10 truck trips per day (5 in and 5 out) for the 12-house broiler facility will be generated at full development and will thus have **less impact on the operational capacity** of the road network compared to the approved breeder facility provided regular maintenance is conducted and vehicle loads do not exceed legislated maximums.
- The change from a 6-house breeder facility to a 12-house broiler facility results in a **decrease** of 3 trips per day and 2649 trips over the total breeder facility cycle.
- Although traffic volumes related to the proposed broiler facility are lower than the approved breeder facility, there will be impacts on MN50595 as a result of additional heavy vehicles using this road over the 8-week breeding cycle.

See Chapter Six of the Report for further detailed information regarding the traffic impact assessment.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The following section provides details of the Public Participation Process undertaken for the Amendment Application. The assessment process being implemented can be divided into three phases namely:

- **Phase 1: Pre-Application and Project Announcement**
 - Pre-application consultation with DEDEAT
 - Approval of the Public Participation Plan by DEDEAT
 - Notice to DEDEAT of intention to submit an Amendment Application
 - Project Announcement, Comment and Registration of I&APs (32 days)
 - Specialist Studies
- **Phase 2: Application Form and Amendment Report**
 - Submission of Amendment Application Form to DEDEAT
 - Draft Amendment Report Review (30 days) (**We Are Here Now**)
 - Submission of Final Amendment Report to DEDEAT
- **Phase 3: Decision Making and Appeal Period**

The Amendment Application Process is currently at the stage where an Amendment Application Form has been submitted to the competent authority, DEDEAT. The Draft Amendment Report (Draft AR) is being released for a 30-day comment period, extending from **11 December 2023 to 2 February 2024**. Please note that the **comment period has been extended as the period between 15 December 2022 and 5 January 2023 must be excluded in the reckoning of days, as required by Regulation 3 (2) of GN 326.**

The following provides a summary of the issues raised during the Project Announcement Phase. The number in brackets indicates the number of times a specific issue has been raised by I&APs during this phase (Project Announcement Phase) of the assessment process:

- Potential Impacts on Water Resources (12)
- Amendment Application and Public Participation Process (8)

The issues raised have been included in the Comments and Responses Trail in Chapter Three of the Report and copies of these comments are included in Appendix F. No comments have been received from I&APs which have required additional specialist studies to be undertaken as part of the Amendment Application Process.

For more information regarding the public participation process see Chapter Three of the Report.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

- The potential impacts of the proposed amendment as a result of the change in project scope on Farm 192 do not differ significantly from those originally assessed in the Final BA Report (2019) for the breeder project.
- The most significant change is the change in use from breeders to broilers and the addition of six broiler houses, and associated infrastructure, approximately 11 ha in extent. This is however into cultivated fields and no significant advantages or disadvantages of the proposed change in project scope have been identified, from a biophysical perspective.
- The broiler houses will be constructed to accommodate 45 000 to 48 000 birds each with the standard 56-day grower (8 week) model applying versus a 66 week cycle.
- An additional stormwater detention pond with a storage capacity of 2 885 m³ and a footprint of 1 802m² will be constructed near the north-western corner of the site fence.
- The average water usage for the 12 x poultry broiler house development compared to the authorised 6 x poultry breeder house development will increase by 11 534m³/year and the AADD will increase by 31.6kl/day (31.6m³/day).
- The authorised expanded dam will have capacity accommodate the AADD of 86.6m³/day and maximum daily demand of 240.8m³/day of the proposed 12 x poultry broiler house development.
- The impacts that were previously identified, which relate to the cultivated fields, are deemed to still be applicable and are not anticipated to change.
- The proposed amendment will not increase the significance of any impacts post-mitigation and the impacts would remain LOW.
- No adjustment is required with regard to the approved access for the facility to accommodate the broiler facility.
- The Broiler facility will generate less weekly and daily trips when compared to the breeder facility.