In an Eggshell....... 

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October 13th 2017 is World Egg Day. October is the world egg month and we have been celebrating this event religiously every year for the last decade or so.

Why do we celebrate World Egg Day?

It is a day, second Friday in October every year, earmarked for spearheading the message throughout the world promoting our product and telling people about the excellent health benefits and versatility of the egg. International Egg Council (IEC) now known as World Egg Organization has launched the first World Egg Day 21 years ago and many countries have been celebrating the day in order to make sure that everyone in our midst knows that eggs are an excellent, affordable source of high quality protein, with the potential to feed our citizens, poor and rich, young and old, sick and healthy.

An egg has potential to contribute towards total eradication of poverty, reducing hunger at both household and national level, provide good health, gender equality, provide decent work and economic growth. Eggs are an excellent source of vitamins, minerals and low calorie protein.

But, there has never been any deliberate program aimed at increasing egg consumption in Zambia and yet the product has myriads of solutions to problems that the Zambian people are facing such as high poverty levels, hunger, and other nutritional issues. To make sure that they are playing their role in increasing egg consumption and awareness about the various benefits of the egg, members of the Poultry Association of Zambia that are involved in the production of eggs donate eggs to orphanages within Lusaka especially on world eggs day. The world egg day is celebrated in the countries of Europe, Americas, Asia and Africa.
It is very appropriate now to reproduce the press release dispatched to Poultry Association of Zambia by the Director General of International Egg Commission of which Zambia is a member,

The Perfect Start in Life is Egg Shaped
WORLD EGG DAY, 13th OCTOBER 2017

Friday 13th October 2017 is set to get off to a cracking start when we celebrate World Egg Day. This year a range of international events and campaigns will promote the contribution that eggs make to fulfilling the nutritional requirements of the global community – from before we’re even born.

A benefit to everybody’s body

Eggs have a valuable role to play at the very earliest stages of human development and can continue to be of significant benefit throughout our lives. With the power to sustainably feed the world, eggs high quality protein, essential vitamins and minerals are essential for:

- Foetal development
- Healthy brain development in young children
- Improving concentration levels at school, work and play
- Supporting the body’s immune system
- Essential to support the effectiveness of vaccinations and antiretroviral drugs
In recognition of the proven health benefits that eggs provide, particularly for children, this year’s World Egg Day has an eggs-citing twist, with organisers inviting the young and old alike to ‘crack them up’ by sharing their funniest egg jokes through their social networks.

The little egg with big possibilities and big laughs

The annual event is organised by the World Egg Organisation (WEO). Julian Madeley, Director General of WEO explains how this year’s activity is set to raise a smile: “Over the past 22 years, we’ve communicated the positive impact that eggs can have on our lives. They are not only universally beneficial to our health; I’ve also discovered that they’re universally funny! In both developed and developing populations – a high quality source of protein is a fundamental requirement; and that’s a very serious message. However, we also want engage with the widest possible audience, by encouraging children and their parents to share the more humorous side of the humble egg.”

Eggs on a roll

World Egg Day is celebrated in more than 50 countries, from Australia to Zambia. Last year the campaign was embraced by organisations as diverse as international charities to premier league football clubs. 2017 is set to reach an even wider audience as we all Enjoy Glorious Giggles.

Eggs as a force for good in the world, is typified by the International Egg Foundation’s involvement in Project Canaan in Swaziland. The united efforts of the global egg industry has provided a much needed high quality source of protein through eggs to local orphans and children in the surrounding rural community, where malnutrition is a daily reality; as it is for an estimated one billion people.

Spread the word about nature’s premium protein

Packed full of goodness and essential nutrients; eggs provide a complete food solution. It’s a simple message to share and you can be part of this eggs-traordinary celebration on Friday 13th October. The day the humble egg makes the world LOL.”

In developed populations eggs are also effective for weight control. Packed full of goodness in their own biodegradable packaging; eggs provide a complete food solution.

Also rich in amino acids, calcium, sodium, iodine, selenium, choline and vitamins A, B, D and E, the message is loud and clear; ‘eggs are the answer’. They are an affordable, sustainable building block for a healthy, nutritious diet that benefits from a low carbon footprint.

As well as the health advantages, eggs also taste great! They’re one of the most versatile and adaptable store cupboard essentials. Healthy eating has never tasted so good - so get cracking and discover endless eggy creations during the festivities. Embrace your wellbeing with a daily dose of egg!
World Egg Day provides an opportunity to educate people about the true value of eggs and the importance of high quality protein in a fun and engaging way.

Do you remember the dream (of our beloved first President, Dr Kenneth David Kaunda), ‘an egg a day for every Zambian’? That dream has not lost its significance. In fact, it has become more relevant now than any other times in our lives. The major problem of under nutrition or malnutrition in Africa is caused not mainly due to deficiency of carbohydrate but due to lack of protein. The major problem is Energy Protein Imbalance (PEM), caused by under or malnutrition.

Our egg production or layer sector has not been doing well in the recent past, with various vagaries we have been facing such as very high depreciation of Kwacha, constant and long power cuts, escalating cost of producing feeds and chicks, continuous reduced price of eggs in the market place, low or reduced export of eggs to DR Congo, the layer or egg farming in Zambia has been met with serious setbacks. Recently egg consumption has drastically reduced both in Zambia and DR Congo who takes more than 35 percent of eggs produced locally! The buying power of people has come down and the farmers are forced to reduce the number of flocks or temporarily fold up their operations in order to storm away this very difficult time. In fact, the cost of production is disproportionately high against the prices of eggs prevalent, and the farmers are forced to sell eggs at a cost lower than that of production. Now that cost of feeds is coming down remarkably thanks to reduced price of Maize and Soya beans, we can see far a silver lining at the end of the tunnel for layer farming in Zambia!

It is a fact also that the major hurdle in increasing its consumption is the lack of knowledge and awareness among our people, of the nutritional quality of egg, of the convenience of having it for any time of the day, of its making sense economically as one of the ‘eggcellent’ but inexpensive food for the people of all walks of life. The positive side of the story is that our per capita consumption of eggs in Zambia has gone up from say 32 eggs per annum about five years ago to say more than about 55 eggs or more per capita per annum (even after taking into account of eggs being sent to DR Congo!) in 2015/16, thanks to great efforts of breeders, feed producers, other allied industries and above all the layer farmers, small and large. The consumption levels have increased over the years also due to the realization among our people that the eggs are most affordable proteins available to them now.

Other side of the story is this: when it comes to the intake of protein foods the common argument is that our people languish with the lack or reduced disposable income or purchasing power.
But when you observe our food habits closely we will know that most of us do not manage a well balanced diet at least cost. We tend to ignore eating some of the most nutritionally valuable products like eggs but go after rather expensive foods which may not come any closer to the nutritional excellence of eggs! The truth is that we will not find a complete protein like eggs that are available affordably and conveniently for the masses. How ever, the current trend in increased consumption of eggs is a new beginning indeed!

A common question is: what can you do to lower the risk of heart disease, lower the risk of breast cancer and the risk of age related eye diseases such as cataracts and macular
degeneration, while at the same time reduce muscle loss and promote healthy growth and aging?

The answer is incredibly simple, and completely natural: just eat eggs.

As mentioned before, eggs are an excellent source of high quality protein, rich in amino acids, calcium, sodium, iodine, selenium, folic acid, choline and vitamins A, B, D & E; described by nutritionists, as a large vitamin pill enriched with a mineral cocktail, they contain all the essential vitamins and minerals required for a healthy diet, with a natural degradable packaging! No adulteration is possible or eggs can not be adulterated at all!

In a nut shell, rather, ‘in an egg shell’, it is packed with full of goodness; from vitamin A, which is needed for the healthy development of the body’s cells, helping to maintain healthy skin and eye tissue and assisting in night vision, vitamin B12, which is necessary for the formation of red blood cells, important for the immune system to function properly, and helps protect against heart disease, right through to choline, vital for nerves and muscles to function correctly, and proven to lower the risk of heart disease, prevent age related memory loss and reduce the risk of breast cancer by as much as 40%. We are regularly told how important it is to eat a balanced diet; we need protein and plenty of vitamins and nutrients. Fruits, vegetables and meat naturally spring to mind, and combined can provide all these, but one food contains them all – eggs.

Health organizations around the world are actively encouraging people to eat more eggs to ensure that they benefit from nature’s natural vitamin pill. The Australian Heart Foundation recommends that people eat six eggs a week. In Canada eggs carry the country’s health check mark, and the Irish Heart Foundation has coined the phrase, an egg a day is ok.

In order to increase the egg consumption further in Zambia, we need to have more affordable price structure for eggs; that means, the industry should wake up to have ‘sensible’ profits and ‘sensible’ production costs in egg production. I know it looks absurd to say it now, with an unprecedented hike in the cost brought out by rather an unprecedented depreciation of local currency! Optimizing efficiency in rearing and production systems should make the corner stone of a successful egg production management. More players in the industry should be encouraged to go into egg production.

Eggs ready for market
Marketing of eggs should be handled more professionally and NOT on an ad hoc basis as it has been done by both small scale and large scale layer farmers in the country. When you sell eggs, make them more attractive (better after lay care, packaging and presentation, branding etc) and appetizing. Educate your customers on the nutritional quality of eggs. Small hand bills on nutritional information, egg recipes etc will do to start with. The recent move by layer farmers initiated by PAZ in marketing eggs sensibly should make a good start for the viable and stable egg industry in Zambia.

Demystifying Eggs

The Cholesterol myth exploded!

Let us ponder again. It is unfortunate that the eggs have gathered over the years an infamous tag with them that says eggs can cause cardiac problems and is rich in cholesterol. Let us look at the reality scientifically. (The entire scientific world has developed a soft corner for eggs in recent times!)

Let us ask this question. Eggs contain cholesterol, but does eating eggs raise blood cholesterol and increase the risk of heart disease? No, not at all.

Let's explain: two commonly talked about types of blood cholesterol include LDL (Low-Density Lipoprotein) and HDL (High-Density Lipoprotein) cholesterol. LDL cholesterol is considered ‘bad’ (more saturated fat) because the scientific world somehow associated it with an increased risk of coronary heart disease where as HDL cholesterol was considered ‘good’ (more unsaturated fat) because it was thought to help reduce the risk of heart disease. The fact is that eggs contain cholesterol that has low in saturated fat and high in unsaturated fat. Studies show that saturated fats play the most critical role in raising blood cholesterol levels. In recent studies, adding two eggs to a healthy diet did not significantly increase blood cholesterol levels in men or women, young or middle-aged, with either normal or moderately blood cholesterol levels.
In addition to this information we also know that there is no sufficient evidence yet to say that dietary cholesterol significantly increases blood cholesterol. The prestigious organizations such as American Heart Association, British Heart Association, the Foods Standards Agency and the like do not restrict the number of eggs in the diet. The dietitians and medical doctors who are aware of this fact only limit eggs for health reasons especially for people who suffer from diabetes or from a genetic condition of predisposition to high cholesterol.

To conclude, eggs should get its deserving place in School feeding programmes. NGOs, Government and the industry should team up here to reach out to our children and incorporate eggs in their diet. They are our future and their future is in our hands. There is milk already included in School feeding programme in some selected schools. Why not egg also finding its way there. Anyone is listening?

“If you want to have a carbonated soft drink and an egg you can have both if you wish; but if you can afford only one of them you should opt for eggs. You may have three or four eggs for the price of a drink and make a most nutritious and delicious relish for a family of five at your home!”

I end up this write up quoting P.G Wodehouse in his 1906 novel, ‘Love among the chickens’, “Have ever seen a man, woman, or a child who wasn’t eating an egg or just going to eat an egg or just coming away from eating an egg? I tell you, the good old egg is the foundation of daily life.”

Let’s give a try with this incredibly nutritious and affordable egg!

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