



AUSTRALIAN CHICKEN MEAT FEDERATION INC.

Ph 02 9955 3224 Fx 02 9925 0627  
PO Box 579, North Sydney NSW 2059  
acmf@chicken.org.au www.chicken.org.au

## FACT SHEET

### HORMONES

**No hormones whatsoever are fed or otherwise administered to poultry in Australia.**

Unfortunately there are a number of people in Australia who believe that the chicken meat and egg industries feed hormones to poultry. This in part stems from a television program in July 1985 in which hormonal abnormalities in young women in Puerto Rico were linked to feeding of hormones, specifically oestrogen, to chickens. At the end of May 1986, the United States Department of Agriculture announced the results of its 8-month long special testing program of meat and poultry in Puerto Rico. There was no trace of either diethyl stilbestrol (DES) or Zeranol, the two animal growth promotants that had been blamed as a possible cause of early sexual development among young female Puerto Rican children.

Without actually saying so, the story implied that the feeding of oestrogens to chickens was a common practice worldwide - and indeed a practice followed in Australia.

Although oestrogens were once administered to young male chickens as a hormonal alternative to castration to produce capons, the practice is now universally banned. The administration of oestrogen to chickens was banned in Australia in the early 1960s and capons have not been marketed for more than four decades.

To maintain consumer confidence in poultry products, hormonal growth promotants (stilbenes) are tested for in the Commonwealth Government's National Residue Survey program. No residues have ever been detected. Results of NRS testing can be obtained from the NRS website at [www.brs.gov.au/residues/residues.html](http://www.brs.gov.au/residues/residues.html) or by phoning (02) 6272 3446

*Dr Jeff Fairbrother  
Executive Director  
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