



PEOPLE

UNITY
Working as one

COURAGE
We persist and
persevere to
continuously
improve

Our Fabulous Feed Millers



From bottom left:
Jake, Sam, Rob

From top left:
Mikey, Darcy, Mick,
Adam, Corey & Josh

Missing: Andy, Craig,
Bill, Wayne, Allan, Gary
& Alex

Like Santa's elves, the Feed Mill boys toil in the background to produce and deliver the best feed so our chickens are healthy & grow to specification.

The Mt Cotton feed mill is the site where Darwalla first began, when Dolf Benfer started growing chickens in 1933. The feed mill has grown from those days of hand-mixing feed in the backyard to what it is now, a quite unique old-but-modern facility with a great view over Moreton Bay.

But enough about the building—the magic happens because of the people who work there. Sam & Rob lead a small team including Mike, Mikey, Corey & Adam; they are the chefs extraordinaire who create the perfect pellet from the raw grains ably purchased by Gary and tested by Alex who operates our weighbridge. Our drivers Wayne, Bill, Jake & Allan ensure the silos are kept filled.

As mentioned, the feed mill is an old girl who needs regular check-ups. This is where the maintenance team steps in; Darcy, Andy, Craig & Josh work closely together with the feed mill to ensure she's up and running when needed.

The feed mill quietly beaver away creating no less than 9 types of chicken feed, whose ingredients are formulated by our nutritionist, Karen. Karen & Gary work closely together to match the birds dietary requirements with the raw ingredients & additives we purchase in.

So it really is One Team working together. They are a huge piece of the Darwalla success story, as we could not grow Great Chicken without them. Thanks lads!



The team from Mt Molar celebrating Christmas together at the Toowoomba City Golf Club

CHRISTMAS IS COMING!

This year Darwalla decided it was safest to celebrate Christmas within our teams. We did not want to risk a COVID outbreak, so unfortunately we won't all be celebrating together, however we're hoping you'll enjoy a celebration together with your team.

Please send through your pictures to share in next month's newsletter!

CHRISTMAS GRINCH



Please remember that Christmas parties are still considered work functions, so the usual policies around workplace harassment still apply, even if you are at the pub.

Darwalla recently terminated an employee who inappropriately touched a work colleague. We want our workplaces to be safe both physically and psychologically, so have no tolerance for harassment in the workplace.

Please also plan ahead how to get home safely from your Christmas celebrations. This may mean nominating a designated driver, organising a pick-up or pitching a tent! This is your responsibility so please give it some thought beforehand and have a Plan B.

WELCOME TO DARWALLA

This month we welcome the following employees to our teams!

Hatchery: Mathew & Corey

Laidley: Kelly

Killarney: Shannon, Katie, Jordan, Ethan & Dakota

Meet our growers: Jim — Dowding's farm



Jim has been growing for Darwalla for 12 years (since batch 151!) and quietly runs his 5 shed farm in Marburg alongside his wife. Jim's had his share of bad luck with a shed fire around 5 years ago and a huge hail storm last summer. But he's resilient and continues to push out beautiful birds, batch after batch.

◆ *How did you get into chicken farming?* I met up with Bob Logan (another of Darwalla's growers) when I moved to the Lockyer Valley & started working with him in his sheds. I later bought myself a farm and started growing my own chickens.

◆ *What did you do before you joined Darwalla?* Prior to getting into chickens, I had a cattle & grain farm in Goondiwindi.

- ◆ *What do you like best about your job?* I love working with animals & helping them grow.
- ◆ *If you weren't a chicken farmer, you'd be...?* I'd either be driving trucks or tractors. I love seeing the country and driving is a great way to do it.
- ◆ *What do you do when you're not in the sheds?* Spending lots of time with my wife, showing her different parts of Australia, as she's only been here for 3 years. We love to go camping together somewhere remote & quiet.
- ◆ *What's your favourite chicken recipe?* I enjoy cooking a roast chicken on the BBQ rotisserie but if we're eating out, satay chicken is my favourite.
- ◆ *Which Darwalla farmer would you like to nominate for us to meet next?* Matt Van Den Brink from Milora. You're up next, Matt!



Above left: Jim uses this loader to place the chicks in the sheds as quickly as possible in his sheds



Above right: 14 hours after a big storm in 2019, hail stones remain piled up against Jim's sheds

IMPROVEMENTS

COURAGE

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FREE RANGE FEED TRIALS

Darwalla has been growing free range chickens for almost 3 years. Our biggest end customer Coles require our free range birds to have a vegetarian diet, which is sold in Coles as their 'Bare Bird'. Chickens aren't naturally vegetarian, so our Nutritionist Karen has had to formulate a new diet without meat additives.

As we've no doubt all experienced, a change in diet can mean a change in our bathroom visits and the same can be said for our chickens! But with perseverance and various trials, there have been fantastic improvements in our free range birds.

These feed trials are often occurring quietly in the background, as those involved work together to improve our product. A huge thank you needs to go to the following people who are instrumental in making these trials happen:

- ◆ Andrew from our Waterford farm—he and his team grow the birds and make sure they're fed the correct trial feeds
- ◆ The Feed Mill team—they carefully make the special trial feeds and carefully deliver to keep them separate from the standard feeds
- ◆ Karen our Nutritionist & Rod our Veterinarian—they're doing the background research to determine the best dietary needs for our birds to be healthy and grow well
- ◆ Dave and Shar—who do the administration off to the side and ensure we don't fall foul (fowl?!) of the tax office!

Another great story of how our Darwalla people work together as:

One Team, growing Great Chicken



CORRECTION

Oops! Last month I quoted a hatchability figure of 75% which was incorrect. The Aviagen hatchability standard is actually much higher at 86.8%, however our result at 88.5% is still better than the standard. My apologies for any confusion.

BIOSECURITY



OWNERSHIP

We are accountable for our own actions and those of our team

ON-FARM WATER SANITATION

Water is the most important feed ingredient for your flock! Birds cannot utilise their feed without water. Poor quality water will affect performance, and may be a source of infection and serious disease to the flock.

Sanitisation of drinking water supplies is one of the cornerstones of our biosecurity and flock health. The use of untreated or poorly treated drinking water has been implicated in a number of exotic disease outbreaks in commercial poultry in Australia, and no doubt is the cause of many instances of low level disease cases and inferior performance in flocks.

Filtration and treatment of water is critical. Just as critical is regular monitoring of your sanitation system so that you are never in doubt about its effectiveness. We need to also be considering how we treat our evaporative pad water, as this water is recycled and therefore gathers microbes.

SAFETY



COURAGE

We welcome challenges and see problems as opportunities



Congratulations to Corey from the Feed Mill (I'm sensing a Feed theme this month..!!) who was recently presented with a Safety Award.

Corey is a great contributor to our QHSE (Quality, Health, Safety & Environment) Best Practice Group and is often putting his hand up to help with investigations and improvements.

There's lots of moving parts in a Feed Mill, so safety is super important in this work area, so we welcome Corey's input to help keep the team safe.

Thanks Corey!

WELLBEING



WORK-LIFE BALANCE



Feeling frazzled at the end of the year?

Perhaps you could use the festive season to reset your Work-Life balance to improve your overall wellbeing.

This month we've got tips on improving your **work-life balance** by clicking [here](#) or going to: <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/work-life-balance>

Wanting to become an expert at **sleeping**? Click [here](#) or go to: <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/sleep>

Worried about yours or someone else's **drinking**? Click [here](#) or go to: <https://drinkwise.org.au/>

And if you're a smoker, it's always a good time to consider **quitting**. Click [here](#) or go to: <https://www.health.gov.au/health-topics/smoking-and-tobacco/how-to-quit-smoking>

ENGAGEMENT SURVEY



WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK!

Every 6 months we ask our employees to give us feedback via our Engagement Survey. We conduct this survey each June & December to identify areas for improvement.

This will be sent out in early December by email (for those with a Darwalla email address), or by SMS (for those without a Darwalla email address). The survey only takes a few minutes and we ask that as many employees as possible complete the survey. Even if you're new or have been with us for years, we appreciate your input.

Why do we do this? Here's some examples of improvements we've either made or are progressing based on your feedback:

- ◆ More feedback, thanks & recognition: we're implementing weekly feedback across all staff which will provide opportunity to improve in these areas. Training will be provided in early February for both staff and managers/supervisors.
- ◆ Pay rises during 2020 for the vast majority of staff across the business.
- ◆ Better communication: we're stepping our team meetings to improve information flow, so people are informed & supported where needed.

CHRISTMAS GIVING

RESPECT

We treat each other the way we would like to be treated

Throughout the year, but especially around Christmas, Darwalla is helping those in need by donating money or product.

Here are some recent examples of how Darwalla supports the wider community, both in the Redlands, the Southern Downs and further afield:

- ◆ We are taking up a Christmas collection of gifts and food for The Rock Christian Church, who will distribute to needy families in the Redlands. If you'd like to contribute, please drop items into the Mt Cotton office by Tuesday 15th December.
- ◆ We donated money to the Allora "Day for Girls" volunteers so they can purchase materials to make menstrual care solutions for young girls around the globe.
- ◆ Darwalla is donating over 500 chickens to local charities to share with those who are struggling, such as the Salvation Army, The Rock and City Church Foodbank.
- ◆ Golden Cockerel continue to support Foodbank with regular donations of fresh chicken, which they either distribute or cook into meals.
- ◆ Darwalla donates to a Redland City Council's event which raises funds to support those impacted by domestic violence.
- ◆ Volunteer Marine Rescue in Moreton Bay help boaties in need & we've supported them with a donation.
- ◆ We collect and forward our expired first aid kit supplies to Cleveland Rotary, who send these and other useful items to Papua New Guinea where they're put to good use
- ◆ Our old hatchery egg room is being used by a local charity to store books and library shelving, which is shipped across to Vanuatu to build libraries in remote communities.



- ◆ We donate to The Cage who supports at-risk youth in the Redlands

- ◆ We donate to the Donald Simpson Centre, a place for the over 70's to continue to live well & learn

