

Pick n Pay denies selling refrozen chickens

Pick n Pay denied on Monday that it was selling refrozen chickens that had past their sell-by da

"We are 100% satisfied that no chickens sold to Pick n Pay have ever, or will ever, be refrozen and remarked with new expiry dates," said Pick n Pay spokesman Tamra Veley in response to an article in *Rapport*.

Company representatives paid a surprise visit to Supreme Poultry, the company named in the article, and found no evidence to back up the allegation.

According to the report the company was allegedly washing, injecting, rebranding, then reselling the chickens with new expiry dates to outlets such as Pick n Pay and Shoprite Checkers.

The source was Johan Matthee, a former production manager at Supreme, who is involved in a labour dispute with the company and, according to *Rapport*, the claim was confirmed by two former employees.

He alleged that some chickens were treated with chlorine to reduce the bacterial load.

Veley said Pick n Pay's turnover was also so fast that there would be no opportunity for undamaged return

Damaged returns are sent to the health department for destruction.

Damaged products from hypermarkets are sent back to Supreme for conversion into bonemeal "and our audit demonstrated this to be the case.

"We would like to reassure our customers that no refrozen or remarked chickens are ever supplied to, or sold in, any Pick n Pay store anywhere in the country. The health and safety of our customers is our principal priority," said Veley.

Supreme produced almost a third of Pick n Pay's no name brand frozen chickens, according to the report.

The Shoprite Group said they had received confirmation that no reworked poultry is supplied to them by Supreme Poultry, by the CEO of Country Bird of which Supreme Poultry is a subsidiary.

A statement said that it procured poultry from accredited suppliers that conform to legal and food safety requirements.

"Supreme Poultry, who is [Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point] accredited by the SA National Standards authority and [Foundation for Food Safety Certification] 22 000 compliant, is one of these suppliers."

Comment from Supreme Poultry was not immediately available.

Source: Sapa

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