



No more chicken, please

How a strong grassroots movement in Cameroon is successfully resisting damaging chicken imports from Europe, which are ruining small farmers all over West Africa



In memory of Margaret Nkume



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Graphs: Mayte Mari: p. 3, 11

Revised campaign brochure “Poulets congelés” by ACDIC from Cameroon

Printed on 100 % recycled paper – November 2007

“You have vowed to respect each other and encourage each other to love and do good works.”

The father of the bride quotes Lisa and Lukas’s marriage vows and raises his glass. “Let’s drink to that and to your happiness.” The guests toast the happy couple. Next, a buffet is served. Colourful salad platters, chicken breast wrapped in courgettes, mixed fish platters and other delicacies. A wedding in Germany.

“We are going to eat chicken,” is how the inhabitants of Mbou in the west of Cameroon have been greeting each other all week long, in anticipation of a celebratory dinner in honour of Martin and Dorint’s wedding. A day of celebration. Family and friends, the whole village is attending. The couple is getting married in the traditional way. One of the rituals is for the husband and wife to feed each other. This is a way of saying that they will care for each other. After a prayer by the village priest, the highest traditional representative starts off the celebratory meal. There is chicken with yam puree in a palm oil sauce with deep-fried plantains. Legs, wings and necks are floating in the thick sauce. Everybody digs in, strictly according to their standing in the village. First of all the guests of

honour – the village chief, the worthies, state, church and traditional celebrants. Then come the men, women and, last of all, the children.

Two wedding parties - one in the northern hemisphere, one in the south. The wedding guests are eating the same chickens. Those in the north the fillets only, those in the south the rest. The chickens are jointed and the pieces sold where they bring the highest price. For example, in West Africa. Imported chicken products from the EU have become a major hit with consumers in Cameroon and elsewhere. European chickens are cheap and can be bought by piece: legs, wings, necks and feet. Local poultry has only ever been available whole and most consumers can only afford whole birds for holidays and celebrations. Chicken is a high-status food in West Africa. Those serving this delectable delicatessen – even if it entered the country as cheap European imports – instantly enhance their own standing.

At the same time, these imports are threatening the livelihood of Cameroonian chicken farmers like Fridolin Mvogo. “Thanks to the

Left: Chicken Breast
Wrapped in Courgettes

Right: Chicken legs,
wings and necks with
yam puree in palm
oil sauce: A wedding
in Cameroon





Frozen chicken pieces from Europe on display in Cameroonian markets. A health risk for the population

imported chicken, I don't sell nearly as many birds as I used to." In recent years, the massive exports of frozen chicken pieces from Europe have ruined domestic markets in West Africa. Cameroon's small farmers simply cannot compete with the low prices of imported poultry. Selling prices have dropped so sharply that they no longer even cover their costs, they do not have the money for new chicks and they can no longer pay back their loans. Many have lost their livelihoods. At the peak of the crisis 120.000 jobs disappeared. And not only that. The frozen chicken pieces from Europe are jeopardising the health of the population, because more often than not, in countries like Cameroon, there is no guarantee of a closed refrigeration chain. Over four fifths of the frozen chicken pieces that reach markets on Cameroon are not suitable for human consumption according to a study by the Centre Pasteur from Jaunde in 2004. After being unloaded in the port of Douala, the meat generally quickly thaws out, leaving it crawling with bacteria before it ever reaches the market stalls. "The export of frozen chicken pieces is an

attack on the farmers, on the health of our population and on our national economy," says Bernard Njonga, President of the civil society group ACDIC.

A Grassroots Movement is Born

However, not all is bad. This brochure tells a success story. In Cameroon, the end of 2003 witnessed the foundation of the civil society organisation ACDIC: Civil Association For the Defence of Collective Interests. ACDIC launched an effective campaign against the "chickens of death" from Europe, by revealing the appalling hygienic conditions under which the meat is imported and a successful bid to mobilise the media, politicians, consumers and farmers. "This is the first time that a campaign in Cameroon has been met with such a great response from the public," says Jacob Kotcho, ACDIC's Permanent Secretary. ACDIC Consumers in Cameroon quickly began boycotting the frozen chicken from Europe. The government responded by setting quantitative limits on imports. Meanwhile, social mobilisation continues to increase.

A Market is Flooded

The export of poultry from the EU to countries like Cameroon and its neighbours has quadrupled from around 35,000 tonnes (1996) to just under 140,000 tonnes (2005). In 2004, Cameroon imported 24,000 tonnes, twenty times as much poultry as eight years before (978 tonnes). Three quarters of these chicken meats originate from the European Union (EU), mainly from France, Belgium, Holland and Spain, and all of the goods are imported frozen. Research from ACDIC shows that 29 % of the imports in Cameroon came from the Netherlands in the period between 1993 and 2002. Before 1996, Cameroon was self-sufficient in poultry. Only a few tonnes were imported, mainly ducks, geese and guinea fowl for the supermarkets in the cities of Yaunde and Douala. Frozen meats were considered a luxury and the people buying them were mainly foreign expats.

The law has always limited poultry imports to Cameroon: to 600 tonnes per year in 1996 and 5,000 tonnes per year in 2004. Import quantities need official approval from the Ministry for Animal Breeding. Nevertheless, as ACDIC research revealed, in 2004 more than

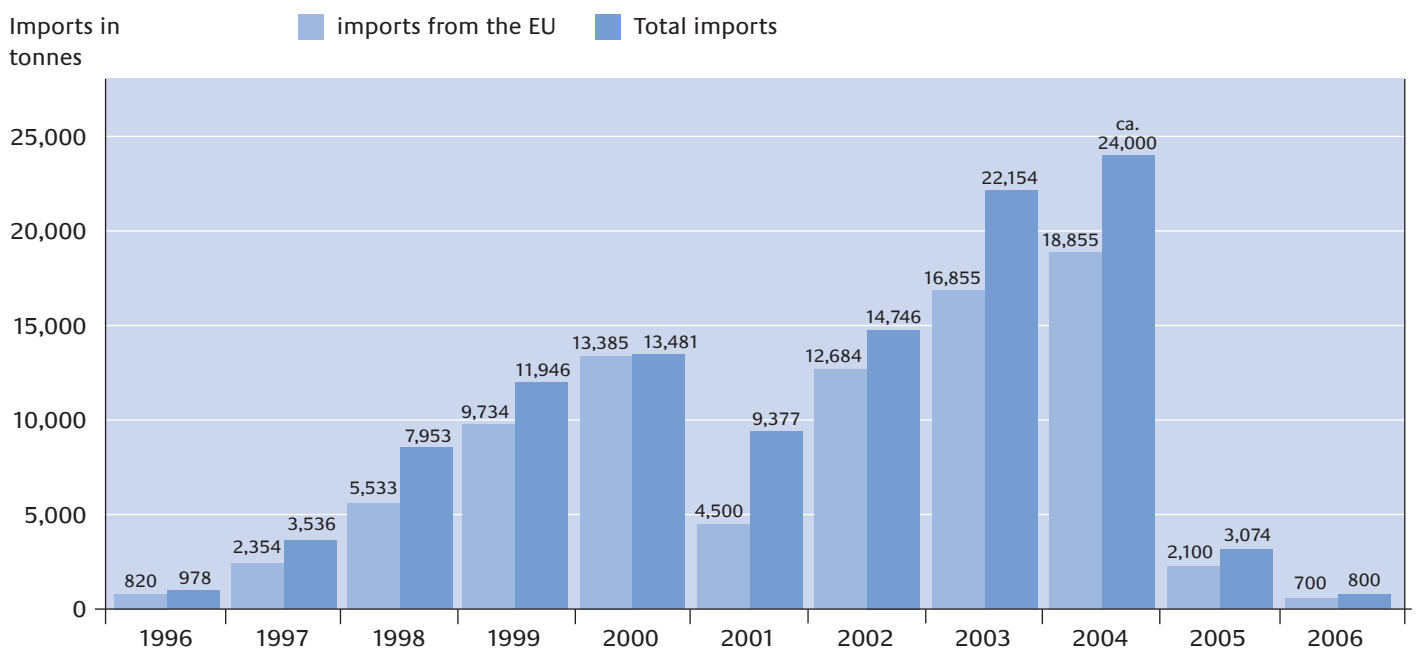
five times the official import quota was imported, mainly due to the shortage of inspectors and inspections. Effectively, neither the quantity nor quality of the imported goods was ever monitored. Moreover, bribery of customs and the licensing authorities were the order of the day.

For the growing number of importers, the frozen poultry pieces were great business. They could buy a kilo of poultry for a maximum of 0.80 and sell it on for € 1.50 per kilo – giving them a net profit of almost 100 per cent.

“Not Fit for Human Consumption”

At first there were rumours. Then there were more and more reports about wedding or funeral guests ending up with food poisoning. People whispered it had something to do with the frozen poultry pieces from Europe. Nevertheless, consumers in Cameroon continued to buy the imported product. Local chickens are traditionally sold alive; that is the most hygienic way. However, they are unaffordable for daily consumption for most people. Cheap European imports, sold by the piece, suddenly brought chicken within reach

Poultry Meat Imports in Cameroon from 1998 to 2006





Frozen food is a health risk in countries without a closed refrigeration chain. Semi-frozen and defrosted chicken meat is sold at cheap prices in the markets in Cameroon. It is often contaminated with pathogens.

of the average consumer. “The frozen chicken doesn’t have any flavour,” says one purchaser. “But it costs less and it is better than nothing for the children. The children feel as though they are eating meat.” Eating chicken is seen as upward social mobility. But the cheap meat has its price – the health risk. In the spring of 2004, ACDIC had 200 random samples of frozen poultry meat taken from 28 sales points at various locations in Cameroon in the presence of an auditor. The results of the analyses from the Centre Pasteur in Yaunde: 83.5 per cent of the chicken pieces examined were not fit for human consumption. Contamination with microbes was 180 times above the EU maximum levels for poultry. 15 per cent of the random samples contained salmonella and

around one in five was contaminated with campyl bacteria, the second most common cause of diarrhoea infections after salmonella. “A disaster for public health,” was ACDIC’s conclusion.

Broken Refrigeration Chain

In the tropics and poor countries, frozen food is a risky technology. Once the frozen chicken meats are been unloaded at the port, there is no controlling the refrigeration chain in Cameroon. Chicken pieces are transported for several hours to markets all over the country in large quantities on open trucks – at over 30 °C and 90 % humidity. Often, the poultry is sold there on open market stalls without refrigeration. And the situation was scarcely better in shops with freezer cabinets, as ACDIC found out. Some 15 per cent of the freezer cabinets were rusty, while a quarter were open and the food had started to defrost.

Public health, mad cow disease and global marketing

An entire web of factors has contributed to the rapidly increasing exports of EU chicken parts to West and Central Africa: trading policy, international trade rules, loopholes in food legislation and the EU customs classifications, lifestyle and consumer behaviour, corporate marketing strategies and much more.

In December 1995, Cameroon became a member of the newly-founded World Trade Organisation (WTO). The country acceded to the Agreement on Agriculture, which stipulates a limitation of import tariffs to a maximum rate of 80 per cent. With regard to poultry meat, Cameroon caps its import duties at only 20 per cent; the reason behind this is the pressure from international donors and WTO to establish a common tariff for the Central African Economic Community (CEMAC). However, it does at the same time cap import quantities. The low level of import duties makes

Cameroon and other African countries interesting markets for European exporters.

In Europe, eating habits changed in the 1990s as a consequence of the BSE scandal and other beef crises (antibiotics and dioxins in fodder). Consumers avoided beef and began to consume increasing amounts of poultry. Overall meat consumption fell, as did prices. Since the mid-1990s, magazines have tended to include increasing numbers of recipes using chicken breast. With the advent of the wellness and fitness wave, lean fillet meat with little skin and fat gained significantly in popularity. Furthermore, consumers express an increasing preference for meals that are quick and easy to prepare. The microwave is replacing the oven. In 1993, 70 % of chicken meat in Central Europe supermarkets sold in the form of whole birds. Today, the situation is reversed. 80 % of the

chicken is sold by the piece, either fresh, as ready meals or for fast food chains. Consumers all demand chicken breast or drumsticks – frozen chicken pieces are completely out of favour. The increased demand for breast meat and drumsticks has significantly driven up prices to an average kilo price of € 5 – 9 on the German or Dutch market, allowing all other parts of the chicken – wings, lower leg, neck and giblets – to be offered up for exports at 70 cents per kilo. Even small scale African farmers, despite their low profit expectations, cannot compete with such cheap meats flooding their consumer markets. Consumers in Europe tend to buy the expensive chicken breast and fresh drumsticks, thus are paying for almost the whole chicken. So, the business has been done. Export of the rest is good supplementary business.

The Chickens Were My Only Source of Income

Many stalls are empty in Cameroon because poultry farmers have had to give up. Their families are ruined. Former civil servant Michele Atangana is one of the victims. He had turned to poultry farming and taken out a small loan to buy chicken feed. “At first I had a good income and could pay back the instalments.” But then he began having to sell his chickens without a profit, could no longer pay back the loan and could afford neither chicks nor feed. The collapse came in 1999, and chicken farmer Atangana had to give up his farm.

The local economy cannot compete with the cheap imports. Many chicken farmers have had to give up their farms.

The imported chicken from Europe was available at € 1.44 per kilo. Some parts could be bought for as little as 40 cents. Local producers simply could not compete. Cheap local poultry cost € 2.40 per kilo.

“Nobody can compete,” says farmer Atangana. The figures bear him out. Between 1997 and 2000, the annual production of poultry meat in Cameroon fell by as much as a quarter.

A Catastrophe for the National Economy

ACDIC selected a random sample of 100 poultry farmers who had bought up to 500 one-day-old chicks from AGROCAM in 1996. Six years later, only eight of them were still in business. It was not only the producers who lost their work. The fall in production also destroyed the livelihoods of the farmers producing the feed. The butchers’ stalls on the markets, where the customers go to have their live chickens slaughtered, plucked and jointed, also experienced job losses.

With these imports, there is a lot at stake for Cameroon’s economy. According to calculations by ACDIC, five jobs are needed to produce one tonne of chicken meat: three for poultry production, rear the birds and produce their feed, two in the towns for plucking and selling. With the import of 24,000 tonnes of chicken meat, – the figure for 2004 –, 120,000 jobs were lost.

The import of frozen poultry parts from Europe constitutes a threat to Cameroon’s self-sufficiency. The demand for chicken meat is estimated at around 35,000 tonnes. In 2002, local production still managed to meet around 60 per cent of demand. In 2003, because of the high import levels, this had dropped to a low of 37 per cent.



„I want to start up my poultry farm again “



Vekwusi Margaret Nkume,
Poultry Farmer

“My poultry farm was very successful when I started it in 1995. I invested CFA 70,000 (€ 106) to rear 100 chickens in two months and I managed to sell them for CFA 150,000 (approx. € 230), which was good business at the time. That encouraged me to expand my production and I took out a loan. The African Development Bank gives micro-loans to small businesspeople like me. To qualify, we women have to form groups and save 20 per cent. We get the rest from the bank. Once a woman has paid back her loan, the next woman in line can receive a loan from this fund.

That was in 2000, when imported frozen chicken parts already began to fill the market stalls. But I worked hard and still managed to make a profit.

In 2002, I took out another loan to increase my income. But by then, ever more frozen chicken was appearing on the market at very, very low prices. My customers bought this cheap meat. I could no longer sell what I produced and lost everything. I miss the money that I earned. My children can no longer go to school regularly because we can't afford the school fees. I am hopeful again since ACDIC has made the government reduce the import of frozen chickens. I am ready. I want to start up my poultry farm again and want to be able to pay back my loan. But it is hard to get together the start-up capital.”

This interview took place in 2005. In October 2007 Margaret died unexpectedly at the age of 42, leaving four children.

She shared her experiences with the import of frozen chicken with many women in her region, the Northwest of Cameroon. In 2004, she joined the ACDIC campaign against the import of frozen poultry. She focused her engagement on to the right of women farmers to own and market their own production. As a caring mother, enabling women to secure a reliable income to support their families was always a key issue for Margaret. Following the success of ACDIC's campaign, she became an activist with the GEED foundation, an organisation for women's rights, where she later became a member of the board. Ever indefatigable, a few months ago she decided to take out another loan for the purchase of 500 chicks to restart her poultry farm. Unfortunately, she passed away before she could see it prosper.

The editors of this booklet dedicate it to Margaret, commemorating her as strong colleague and tireless activist for women rights. We are grateful for the work she has done and the experiences she has shared with us, helping us to understand exactly how harmful the export and dumping of under-priced foods from Europe can be, especially for women farmers in Africa. Tilder Kumichii, president of ACDIC North West and member of the GEED foundation, expressed what we all feel: "Our sister Margaret actively supported the empowerment of women. Her death is a big loss for all of us. May her soul rest in peace!"

Successful Resistance

The advisory organisation for farmers SAILD (Service d'Appui aux Initiatives Locales de Développement) has been involved with the issue since 2003. SAILD, an EED and ICCO partner organisation, has been advising and supporting farmers in Cameroon since 1988. When cheap imports began flooding the market, it soon became

apparent that this would lead to political controversy. Meanwhile, local chicken farmers were insufficiently organised to take on the issue on their own. An independent organisation was needed to unite stakeholders, engage in political lobbying and public campaigning. "We founded ACDIC in order to have a means of mobilisation," says Jacob Kotcho, permanent secretary of ACDIC. "We wanted to send out a signal for a change of policy and help to determine Cameroon's development route."

ACDIC, which is the French acronym for "Citizens Association for the Defence of Collective Interests", was first founded at the end of 2003. While SAILD provides offices, employees work for ACDIC on a voluntary basis.

ACDIC rapidly developed into a citizen-based social movement, that is spread nationwide and is independent, cross-party and democratically structured organisation that is open to all levels of society. ACDIC defines itself as an advocate for the people in negotiations with the government and seeks to include all stakeholders: producers and consumers, importers and dealers.

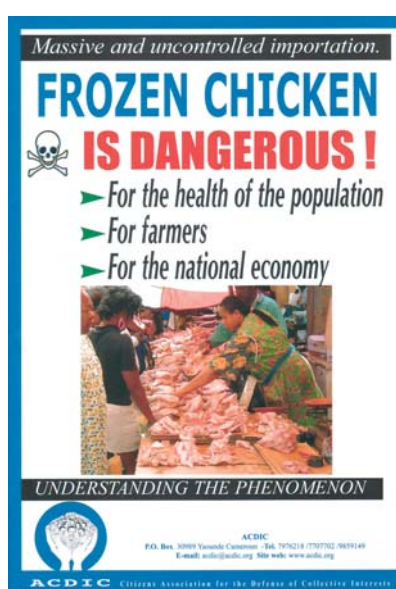
"Chicken of Death" – The ACDIC Campaign

ACDIC thoroughly researched the causes and consequences of chicken imports from Europe and published its findings in March 2004 in a brochure entitled "Frozen Chicken. Risk of Death! - For public health, for rural chicken producers and the national economy".

The situation is likely to change most quickly if we can convince consumers, was ACDIC's assessment. 10,000 copies of the "Chicken of Death" brochure were distributed, especially at markets in the towns. ACDIC activists engaged with the people, educating them about the risks attached to frozen chicken. ACDIC's word of mouth campaign was a success: market dealers from the countryside quickly spread the story to their villages.

In addition, ACDIC also engaged in organising workshops and informing poultry farmers, consumers, dealers, importers, political decision-makers and the media about the negative effects associated with the surge in chicken imports. In June 2004, local producers and consumers held a rally in Bafoussam in the West of Cameroon, demanding that the government put an immediate halt to EU poultry imports. "Consumer concerns centred not only on the health risks, but also on the social and economic effects of the imports," believes Jacob Kotcho, permanent secretary of ACDIC.

"Imported chicken causes illnesses" – "The massive import of chicken is killing our poultry farms" – "Imported frozen chickens make people poorer ... and kill." The ACDIC campaign made the front pages of all the Cameroonian newspapers. Over 100 articles appeared and there were reports on the radio



Frozen Chickens: Risk of Death!
10,000 copies of this brochure were distributed by ACDIC.

Advocacy for farmers' interests

SAILD core business is to advise farmers' organisations on key issues, from strategies for intensifying the cultivation of agricultural products, as well as product storage, sales and marketing, to micro-financing and self-organised health insurance.

SAILD's objective is combating poverty, especially in rural areas, by improving the lives of farmers. EED and ICCO have supported the organisation since 1990.

ACDIC – an independent grassroots movement



At the end of 2003, an independent grassroots movement, known by its French acronym ACDIC – which stands for – Citizens Association for the Defense of Collective Interests –, was founded. It is non-partisan and independent from religious or ethnic groups.

ACDIC is a civil society organisation which aims to highlight and emphasise public interests and to enhance popular engagement with public concerns. Its main themes include civil rights, equal living conditions, collective interests and justice.

ACDIC aims at bringing about change in Cameroonian society, empowering citizens to engage in advocacy activities on issues crucial to livelihoods and sustainable development. Therefore, ACDIC conducts research, studies and surveys, and uses the findings to inform the public, raise awareness and offer training and support. ACDIC advocacy and lobby campaigns are based on solutions and constructive ways identified in its policy work.

In summer of 2007, ACDIC had over 13,000 members. Many smaller non-governmental organisations have joined ACDIC. The movement made “food sovereignty” – self-sufficiency in basic foodstuffs - the focus of its campaign. Since 2005, ACDIC has been receiving funding from EED and ICCO within the context of a North-South project.

and on public television. ACDIC also used the presidential election campaign in Cameroon to highlight its concerns. Wherever candidates appeared throughout the country, they were questioned about the chicken imports.

ACDIC’s political demands were heard, even within the governing party. In December 2004, 120 of the 180 parliamentarians attended a meeting organised by ACDIC – at the time, an unprecedented event in the history of Cameroon. And the Minister for Agriculture and Animal Breeding received ACDIC representatives. The chicken campaign has served to change the relationship between civil society and political decision-makers.

The Campaign is Working

Soon, everyone selling chicken in Cameroon was being asked: “What kind of meat is that?” Hosts no longer dared to serve their guests frozen meat. Every man, woman and child was acutely aware of the risk of the frozen food.

Consumers in Cameroon reacted quickly and stopped buying frozen chicken parts. The dealers were left with the goods, even though the price was falling. Just before the presidential elections in October 2004, the government started to react to the protests. It finally promised to monitor the imports and to guarantee compliance with the statutory import contingent. The government demanded that local poultry

farmers quickly increase production. It soon became apparent that an import limit or higher import duties alone would not be enough. The chicken sector had already been undermined to the extent that a quick revival was out of the question. Many small farmers did not have the ready capital to buy chickens and feed, and they failed to qualify for new loans, as they were already indebted and had often been unable to pay back the loans they had previously taken out.

The importers, faced with an imminent ban, in 2004 ordered vast quantities of poultry which they subsequently marketed at give-away prices in 2005. The pressure on the government increased and finally all import licences were revoked in the spring of 2005. A monitoring of producers, government and grassroots movement was installed at the port of Douala to prevent illegal imports. The frozen chicken pieces disappeared from the markets. The success of this new policy became immediately apparent from the summer of 2005. According to the Cameroonian Ministry for Animal Breeding, local farmers could now meet between 60 and 75 per cent of the estimated annual demand for 35,000 tonnes of poultry meat. Chicken was scarce for Christmas in 2005, and prices rose. The Animal Breeding Ministry agreed to the import of 5,000 tonnes. This news reached members of the ACDIC executive committee in Hong Kong. The Finance Ministry had included some ACDIC members as experts in the Cameroonian delegation to the WTO negotiations.

The decision to relax import restrictions met with great dismay in Cameroon. But the Cameroonian poultry farmers are no longer helpless; thanks to ACDIC they have their own association. Together, they mobilised a mass rally – the first to be organised by small farmers in the country's history. In January 2006, over 10,000 people gathered to demonstrate against the lifting of the import ban. The police banned the march, which was attended by leaders of farmers' organisations from other African countries, as well as José Bové, the world-famous French alter-globalisation campaigner. That impressed the government. The Prime Minister finally decided to grant the protesters an audience, where he apologised for the ban on the demonstration and revoked the recent import licences. This success clearly demon-

strate the extent to which the controversial "chicken" has served to shift the social balance in Cameroon.

Unfortunately, in the spring of 2006, Cameroon's poultry farmers were struck by yet another disaster: bird flu. But that's another story. However after this new shock, the poultry sector (layers and broiler) could begin to gain the trust of consumers again. The measures to protect local production are still valid. Step by step poultry producers are covering the



Demonstration against the resumption of chicken imports in 2006 with the famous leader of French farmers Jose Bové and Bernard Njonga, ACDIC in Yaoundé.

demand of consumers in Cameroon. This, however, is not easy, because during the years of imports, the production of needed inputs, e.g. day-old chicks and feed production declined, too. But the main problem for small-scale farmers, especially women, is the lack of capital for investment, because of the high debts they incurred during the times when imports were high. This is the reason why, on Christmas 2006, the Cameroonian government, in an agreement with producers and ACDIC, decided to allow renewed imports of frozen chicken, if only for a short period of time. High demand, coupled with these supply-side constraints, had driven prices sky-high.

Now in October 2007 the market is open for investment of poultry farmers, small scale, backyard or large scale and the next step will be to look for an investment for slaughterhouses around the big cities of Yaounde and Douala, with a sophisticated cold chain, so that poor consumer in the towns are able to buy again, chicken parts, but now from local chicken, bred by local small scale farmers.

Small Farmers Need Support



Bernard Njonga, President of the ACDIC Grassroots Movement

What conclusions does ACDIC draw after three and a half years of campaigning against chicken imports from Europe?

Njonga: Overall, it is very positive. Since mid-2005 there have been no new import licences for poultry. Although the euphoria and a tremendous boost to investment in the sector were slowed down by the bird flu, today, in summer of 2007, only local poultry is being consumed in Cameroon, at moderate prices. That is important, because we are thus keeping a promise to the consumers, who have contributed to this success by refusing to buy EU chicken pieces.

Are these outcomes also beneficial to small farmers?

Njonga: Their situation is still very difficult. They have outstanding debts and now have to supply the market. We are therefore demanding from our government and the EU that they implement an immediate programme to give them financial support to invest in the chicks they need to rear chickens. Furthermore, we support investors who want to set up slaughtering and refrigeration chains, so that locally produced

chicken pieces can be marketed in the towns, which is what the consumers want. This should prove beneficial to small farmers. Unfortunately, the bird flu has delayed these plans.

What will have to change politically?

Njonga: The success of the campaign against poultry imports has encouraged us to launch a campaign that demands that our government protect and promote the whole agricultural sector. We are demanding "food sovereignty" for Cameroon and other African countries, 70 % of whose populations are dependent on agriculture. 650,000 people in Cameroon have already signed our petition for support for the agricultural sector. "Let us eat what we produce," because we also have our own tomatoes, rice, onions and cooking oil and don't need any cheap imports. And we need different trade rules, both with the EU and within the context of the World Trade Organisation. Trade rules that protect our markets against being flooded with cheap food imports. That is why we are rejecting the free trade agreement,

called Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA) in the proposed form just negotiated with the EU.

How important is ACDIC in Cameroon?

Njonga: ACDIC has grown quickly. We now have a membership of over 13,000 and offices in all 10 provinces. We are the biggest civil society organisation after the religious communities. Up to two thirds of parliamentarians and some ministers have come to our Parliamentary Evenings. That is unique in the history of Cameroon. It is a great obligation for us to meet expectations, not only of our members, but of Cameroonian society as a whole. It is important for us that people note that they can exert political influence. When they are committed, citizens can change things.

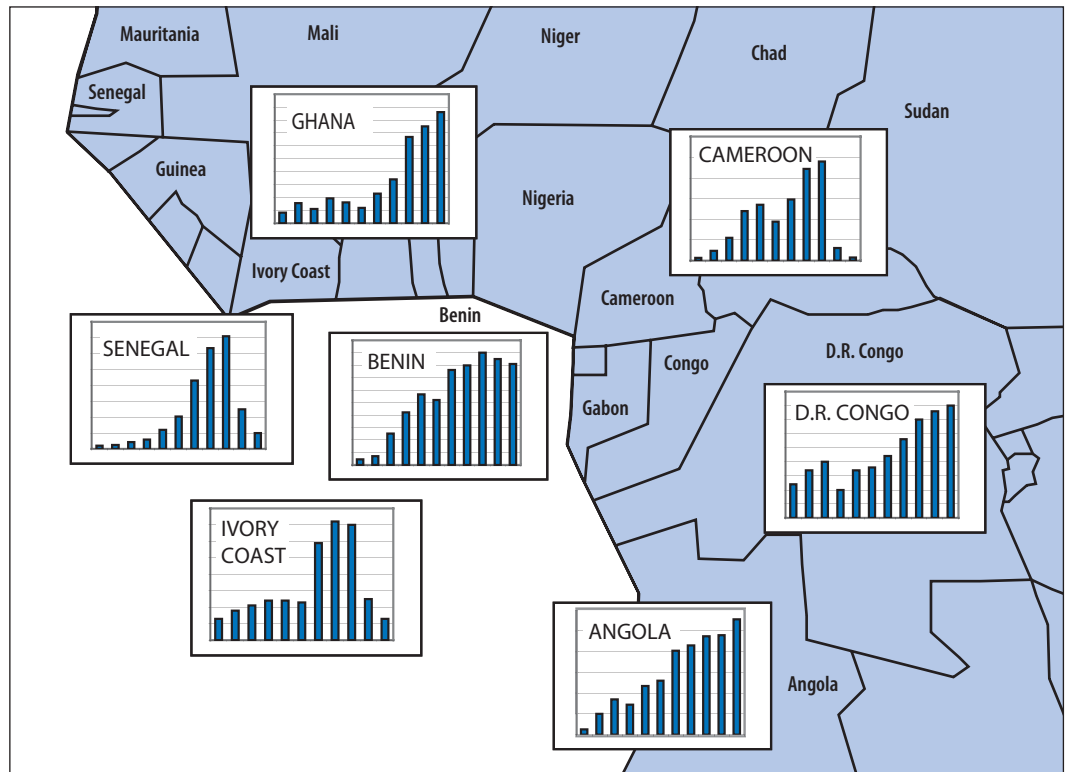
This interview was conducted by Francisco Mari in July 2007. Mari worked in Cameroon for several years and coordinates of the EED/ICCO/APRODEV project "No more chicken please".



World Social Forum 2007 in Nairobi: Activists from Brazil, Cameroon, Europe and Kenya against EPAs and poultry exports to Africa.

Frozen Chicken Legs are Conquering Africa

Poultry meat exports to West Africa (1996 – 2006)



Source: Francisco Mari,
Rudi Buntzel:
Das Globale Huhn

There is no real shortage of chicken in any of the importing countries and almost everywhere chicken is available in the form of live birds. However the frozen poultry meat from Europe is unloaded all along the West and Central African coast. Gradually at first and almost unnoticed, this “frozen chicken” has been making inroads in markets in Africa since the mid-1990s.

From the year 2000, imports to Senegal and the Ivory Coast, for example, shot up. In other countries, such as Liberia, imports rose by a staggering 400 % as of 1996. But the worst case by far is Ghana, which experienced an 800 % rise in imports since 2001 to some 86,000 tonnes in 2006. Only 10 % of demand is met by local producers. And not even the outbreak of bird flu in 2006 managed to reduce import quantities. Protests led to a parliamentary decision to raise import duties. However, in response to pressure from the World Bank, the government did not even begin to implement it. The decision was subsequently reversed in a

new parliamentary vote. The small country of Benin experienced a particularly severe case of damaging import surges. With only 6 million inhabitants, it imports so many chicken legs that the “Beninois” should technically be consuming significantly more chicken meat per head than the average European – and 500 %



Kaneshi Market in Accra/Ghana, April 2007.
Chicken parts from The Netherlands are everywhere sold to low prices.

ICCO campaign against unfair trade relations: Our exports are crowding out poor farmers in Africa.



more than their neighbours. However, domestic consumption does not give the full picture. An important part of the story behind the figures lies in the import stop on European chicken parts issued by neighbouring Nigeria.

Nigeria is the country with the highest population in Africa (140 Millions) and naturally, European exporters also tried to capture this promising consumer market, with similar adverse effects as elsewhere in Africa. However, they had not reckoned with Nigeria's former

president Olusegun Obasanjo, himself a successful poultry breeder, who quickly followed up on complaints from his former colleagues by stopping imports of European poultry surplus from entering the country. The loophole for exporters is Benin. While Nigeria is trying to shield its market, chicken products have replaced cars as the most popular item smuggled into the country from its neighbour Benin: 90 % of Benin's imports make their way across the Nigerian border.

Because of similar import restrictions in Cameroon, recently followed by Senegal and the Ivory Coast (see graphic), European frozen chicken parts are simply migrating further South along the African coast. The total amount of chicken exports to Africa has not been reduced. Now it is mainly the markets of the Democratic Republic of Congo and Angola that are being flooded with the surplus cheap meat. After the fighting in Kinshasa came to an end, the Congo became interesting as an alternative market, especially for Belgian imports. Angola is exposed to a flood of 100,000 tonnes of poultry meat each year – mostly from the USA and Brazil – and the EU. Here, imports are not pushing out poultry farmers - because of the long civil war there is hardly any poultry production left -, but mainly the local cattle farmers. The cheap poultry pieces are much cheaper than local beef. In addition, the cheap imports are also crowding out the re-establishment of small-scale, pro-poor local poultry production.

„Something has to be done“



Julienne Faha, Dealer in Mokolo Market, Yaoundé, Cameroon

“I can no longer sell my chickens, not even for celebrations or holidays. We have fed and reared them for two months. When customers come, they offer just about CFA 2,000 to 2,500 (€ 3 to 3.80) for a whole chicken weighing two kilos. If I don't want to sell at this price, they turn round and go into the next shop. There, a kilo of chicken legs costs only CFA 1,000 (€ 1.50).

I have been in the business since 1987 and I have never had such poor turnover as in 2003. There were times when I had a pen for 500 chickens behind my own house and also bought chickens from other poultry farmers. I no longer have my own poultry farm. Today, I don't even sell the 300 live chickens that I stock. Something has to be done!”

North-South Campaigns in Europe



Frozen chickens thaw out slowly. The problems related to chicken exports are vividly brought to life for the residents of Berlin.

Europe Is Plucking Africa

“We cannot solve the problem in our country alone”. When ACDIC first launched its campaign in Cameroon, it asked its partner organisations in Europe for support. These include EED and ICCO, the German and Dutch member organisations of APRODEV (see box, page 14) the Belgian-Luxembourgian SOS-Faim, CFFD – a French development organisation based in the Catholic Church – and Agir Ici from France. These partners were asked to investigate what could be done against the damaging export of frozen chicken pieces and bring the issue to the attention of the broader public and to relevant European decision makers.

Under the motto “Europe Is Plucking Africa” (*L’Europe plume Afrique*), a campaign was launched in France and Belgium in April 2004. Together with the Netherlands, France is one of the main exporters of the frozen chicken pieces, with a market share of 31 per cent. The organisations involved in the campaign began informing the public of the damaging effects of massive EU chicken exports on the African

continent. The campaign was picked up by the media, and 50,000 postcards were collected and presented to the EU, demanding that it bring an end to this unfair trade.

In Germany and the Netherlands, EED, ICCO and APRODEV jointly launched the project “No more chicken please”. Its objective is to explore and portray the background underpinning the cheap chicken exports to Africa and bring about changes in politics, industry and among consumers. In their campaign – in articles, radio broadcasts, television reports and in their information stands at public events –, ICCO and EED use the situation in Cameroon to highlight the issue. Together with civil society organisations like ATTAC, One World shops and church groups, EED and ICCO also engage in organising public events, such as a lecture tour with Tilder Kumichii, the President of the North West Province of ACDIC. Another highlight of the campaign was an expert meeting in Iserlohn in November 2006, where EED and ACDIC confronted representatives of the German Agriculture Ministry, business, academics and consumer groups with the outcomes of the project research.

ICCO also organised a meeting with experts from the Dutch Agriculture Ministry and representatives of the Dutch chicken industry in the Hague. These meetings have resulted in a paper recommending that the major European meat exporting countries take their responsibility at the European level (see www.eed.de/meatexports).

The case of Cameroon’s poultry exports so clearly demonstrates the inconsistencies in the EU’s policies that the media broadly embraced the case to highlight the unfairness in trade relations. On the one hand Europe is helping small farmers with microcredits to build up the local poultry farming sector, through development agencies using donations or funds from European tax payers. On the other, it is destroying these same projects through its unfair trade practices. The inconsistency is so obvious that it is hard to find anyone who will defend this. But it is still going on.

Fair and sustainable trade relations



Rudi Buntzel

Diana van Loenen

Interview with Rudi Buntzel, EED Commissioner for World Food Issues and Diana van Loenen, ICCO Policy Advisor on Trade Issues.

Why are ICCO and EED involved in this campaign?

Van Loenen: ICCO's mission is to work towards a world where poverty and injustice are no longer present. To this goal ICCO supports local small-scale producers of poultry meat in West Africa. Our position is that the governments in developing countries must keep the policy space to take temporarily measures to protect vulnerable economic sectors if necessary.

Buntzel: Keeping small animals is an effective means of combating poverty, it is effective for income and employment, especially for women in rural areas. Furthermore, EED wants to make a contribution to shaping socially responsible and fair trade relations between the EU and African countries.

At whom is the campaign addressed?

Buntzel: On the one hand, the decision-makers in business and politics, in particular in the European Union, such as the Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers, and the supervisory authorities for food legislation. National governments are also critically addressed by the individual NGOs involved in the campaign.

Van Loenen: Regulations for frozen meat exports to developing countries are highly unsatisfacto-

ry. Therefore we need to discuss directly with the meat-exporting business in Europe the extent to which it is meeting its ethical responsibility and whether the industry is adhering to the EU food legislation framework for exports. Finally, we want to raise consumers' awareness to make more informed choices when buying poultry products.

What further steps are planned?

Buntzel: We are lobbying to ensure that the protected rights of developing countries are strengthened against dumping of any kind in international trade agreements. For example, in the World Trade Organisation negotiations and in the EU's Economic Partnership Agreements with African countries. With our partners at home and abroad, we are taking part in activities for a fairer world trade.

Van Loenen: We are also in direct dialogue with all other stakeholders. In July 2007 ICCO hosted a stakeholders dialogue with the participation of the Dutch ministries as well as the Dutch industry and exporters. The Netherlands are the biggest exporters to West-Africa when it comes to chicken meat.

What can consumers do?

Buntzel: As consumers, we are also responsible for pieces of poultry meat becoming cheap meat. We have an exclusive preference for chicken breast and drumsticks. As a result, the remainder of the chicken is recovered in Europe below cost or sold in the world market at rock-bottom prices and ending up in Africa. But there are tasty recipes, such as "coq au vin", where the whole chicken is needed for a good meal. I believe that a balanced, holistic way of life also involves eating as much as possible of the animal.

Where ACDIC's advocacy efforts in Cameroon have been successful in effectuating an import ban on frozen chicken parts in that country, this has resulted in significant trade diversion to other West-African countries. Therefore, EED and ICCO, in cooperation with the APRODEV Secretariat, will continue their campaign, until damaging exports of surplus chicken products, either from the EU or from elsewhere, have effectively ceased to be dumped onto African countries. One of the avenues pursued is to work towards the incorporation of effective safeguard measures in future trade agreements between the ACP and the EU – in particular the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) currently under negotiation. Lobby efforts aim at providing flexibility for Cameroon to design trade policies that protect and promote the poultry sector by exempting poultry from tariff elimination and reduction schedules or by labelling it a 'Special Product'. This work is ongoing.

Food Self-Determination – Strengthening People

In the countries of the South, three quarters of poor people live in the countryside. Poverty is rising in the cities because economic activity in the countryside is falling. Many farms are very small and primarily feed the farmer's family. Only a fraction of the food produced is sold. Self-sufficiency in basic foodstuffs is very important for developing countries. Independently determining their own agricultural policy must be enshrined as their inalienable right. As a social movement, ACDIC is continuing to grow. ACDIC's campaigns are continuing to emphasise public interests, empower citizens to exert political influence and strengthen their commitment to bring about changes. "Helping to de-terminine Cameroon's development route," as the Permanent Secretary of ACDIC, Jacob Kotcho, puts it.

Lobbying at the European level in Brussels – APRODEV



70.000 Signatures against EU poultry exports for the EU Commission!

From left to right:

Grodent (SOS-Faim, Belgium), Mandelson (EU-Trade Commissioner, UK), Njonga (ACDIC, Cameroon), Van den Bergh, (Ex-MEP, Socialist Party), Morgantini, (MEP, GUE), Ghaler (MEP, CDU, Germany), Faraggi (Filmmaker, Chicken Madness)

At the European level, EED and ICCO have been working in cooperation with the APRODEV Secretariat in Brussels engaging in lobby activities towards the EU institutions and the EU-ACP (Community of African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries) Joint Parliamentary Assembly.

Aprodev is an association of 17 major Protestant, Anglican and Orthodox development and humanitarian aid organisation in Europe. Globally, the Aprodev agencies work within the alliance of churches and humanitarian agencies of the World Council of Churches and the Lutheran World Federation. Aprodev agencies engage in many kinds of activities related to development cooperation and emergency relief in over 60 countries worldwide.

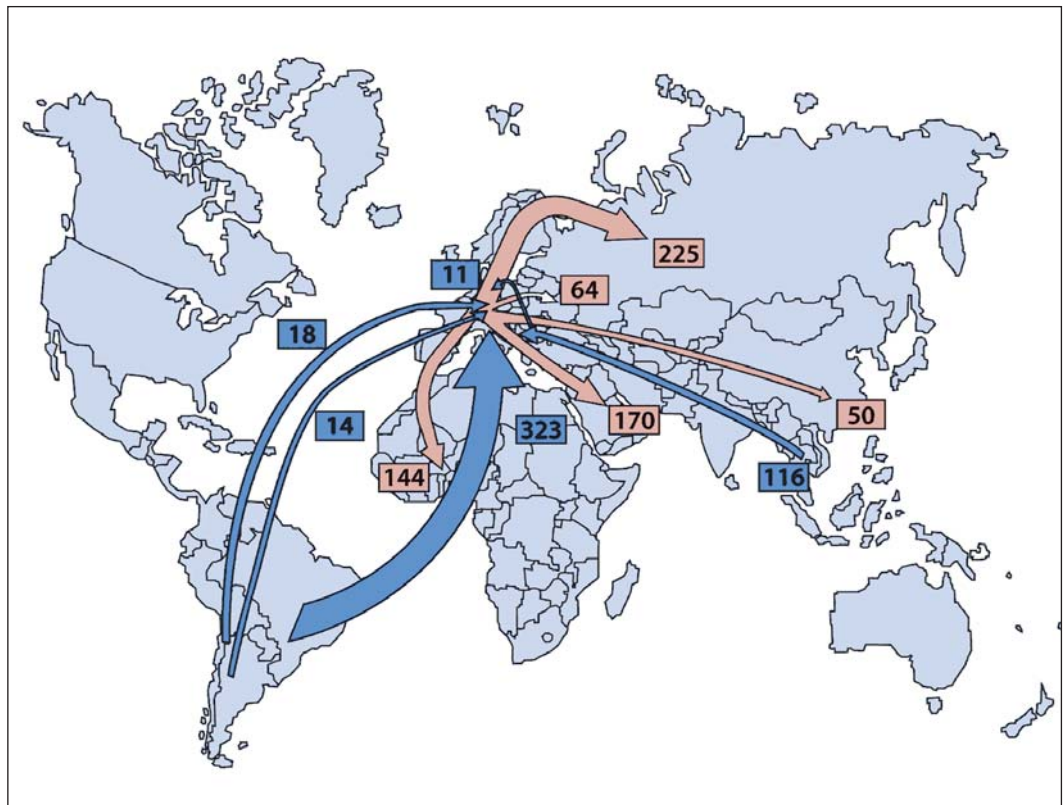
The Aprodev secretariat has a specific mandate for monitoring and lobbying with regard to EU policy processes that are likely to have a major development impact. From this perspective, the Aprodev secretariat alerted its agencies to the negotiations of economic partnership agreements (EPAs) between the EU and the 78 African, Caribbean and Pacific countries. The ongoing reform of the EU's Common

Agricultural Policy has resulted in an increased competitiveness of the European food processing industry and has made the EU a net food exporter. EU food exports to developing countries are acting as competitive substitutes to local food production and have triggered changes in urban consumption patterns. As such, they are undermining small-scale (women) farmers' access to resources and capital and thereby their opportunities to secure a stable livelihood and improve their entrepreneurial skills, as they are the first to be pushed out of trading at local markets.

In June 2004, Aprodev organised a hearing in Brussels, where its partner ACDIC highlighted the results of a study on the effects of poultry meat imports in Cameroon, confronting over 30 experts from the EU Commission and NGOs with yet a new case of unfair trade with developing countries. The report triggered the various campaigns in support of ACDIC and the farmers in Cameroon.

APRODEV argues that the EU as one of the major exporting countries/ regions must assume responsibility to effectively prevent this destructive trade that has proved to be a) ruinous to African small-scale farmers, b) harmful to sustainable economic and food security and nutrition policies and c) incoherent with previous development finance in support of (gender-based) small-scale poultry farming. "The EC argues that though there is documented evidence, there is lack of proof that the injury in Cameroon is caused by dumping of EU frozen chicken parts. Whereas an increasing number of European and African stakeholders support the call for measures to be taken to prevent this destructive trade, the EU and European industry to date have not shown any willingness to design measures to prevent this unfair trade from continuously causing harm, and restrict themselves to careful monitoring of further developments", says Karin Ulmer, Policy Officer on Gender and Trade at APRODEV in Brussels.

EU Trade with poultry meat - imports and exports 2005 (in 1000 tonnes)



© EED
 Source: Michael Heiden,
 Institut für Marktanalyse
 und Agrarhandelspolitik,
 Forschungsanstalt für
 Landwirtschaft; Daten-
 basis: FAOSTAT 2006



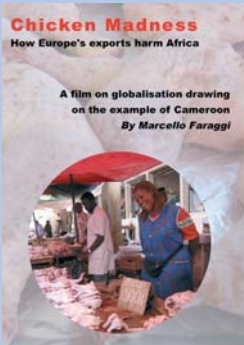
Karin Ulmer

In September 2007, Aprodev organised an expert meeting where it presented a critical analysis of the EPA texts: The final statement summarized: “Given the vulnerabilities exhibited in ACP countries’ agri-

culture sector, the socio-economic consequences of liberalising ACP agricultural markets need to be thoroughly investigated monitored. Safeguards are needed to counter price depressions and import surges and hence contribute to ensuring food security and livelihood security. The limited number of sensitive product exclusions creates difficulties for concluding a list that provides for a fair and balanced outcome between different interest groups at country and regional level. ACP countries need speedy structural change to benefit from trade liberalisation and to cope with the serious problems of preference erosion, but lack the resources to transform their agricultural sectors”

“If African countries would be given these opportunities, African poultry farmers would no longer suffer half as much from the dumping of cheap poultry meat”, says Karin Ulmer.

Books and DVD



Chicken Madness

How Europe's Exports are Damaging Africa

A Film about Globalisation using the example of Cameroon
By Marcello Faraggi

This DVD, produced by EED and its partners, shows the damaging effects of poultry exports to Cameroon and describes the successful North-South campaign.

28 min DVD

Soundtrack contents six languages: Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, French, German, English

Order from: www.eed.de and www.eu-media.info

Other EED publications are available under www.eed.de

Addresses

More information about the uncontrolled import of frozen chicken meat from the EU is available from these organisations:

- ACDIC – Association Citoyenne de Défense des Intérêts Collectifs Yaoundé/Cameroon, www.acdic.net
- APRODEV Association of World Council of Churches related Development Organisations in Europe. www.aprodev.net
- CCFD – Comité catholique contre la Faim et pour le Développement, Paris/France, www.ccfid.asso.fr and www.ccfid.asso.fr/dossier/volaille/
- ICCO – Interchurch organisation for development co-operation Utrecht/Netherlands, www.icco.nl
- SOS Faim Belgique – Agir avec le Sud Brussels/Belgium, www.sosfaim.org
- EED – Church Development Service – An Association of the Protestant Churches in Germany, www.eed.de



No more chicken, please

How a strong grassroots movement in Cameroon is successfully resisting damaging chicken imports from Europe, which are ruining small farmers all over West Africa

Since the mid-1990s, cheap chicken meat from the EU has been depressing local poultry sectors West and Central Africa. Small-scale local farmers in simply cannot compete with the under-priced imports and many have lost their livelihoods.