



Grimaud raises the bar in Vietnam with quality breeder ducks



By the end of this year, Grimaud Vietnam will have all six houses at its duck farm in Vietnam's southern province of Dong Nai filled with GP ducks imported from Grimaud Freres Selection in France. CHAKRIT RIDMONTRI reports that when all these GP ducks reach production stage, production would go up to 150,000 PS ducks/year or about half of the requirement in Vietnam.



Bui Van Nhat

Grimaud Vietnam is a joint-venture between France-based animal genetic selection firm Groupe Grimaud and Evalis Vietnam, which is a subsidiary of France-based animal nutrition firm Evalis.

In 2008 the joint venture set out to produce and supply high quality PS ducks to the Vietnamese market. Its farm was established in Dong Nai in early 2009 and comprises of six environmentally controlled houses and a hatchery.

The first batch of 2500 GP ducklings imported from Grimaud Freres Selection in France the subsidiary of Groupe Grimaud that's in charge of duck breeding and selection arrived in October 2009. They were placed into two houses at the farm.

The second batch of 1250 GP ducklings were placed in July this year.

The importation will continue throughout the rest of the year until all the houses are filled. By then, Grimaud Vietnam will have a total of 7500 GP ducks at its farm comprising of three lines of meat type breeder ducks of Grimaud Freres – Star 53, Star 76 and Star 42.

"After all the houses are filled we will be able to produce and supply over 150,000 PS ducks/year or about half of the total PS duck

requirement in Vietnam, and we will have all the three lines available for the Vietnamese market," said Bui Van Nhat, General Director of Grimaud Vietnam.

According to Mr Nhat, Grimaud is committed to supplying high quality duck genetics to Vietnam, which is the world's second largest duck producer after China.

Advantages

Mr Nhat said Grimaud's breeder ducks have many advantages. At the PS level, they produce a high number of ducklings and are efficient in feed conversion.

"On average, Vietnamese customers achieve about 260 hatching eggs/PS for the production cycle of about 46 weeks.

"The efficient feed conversion trait is also inherent in the ducklings that can grow to a required market weight in a shorter time compared with other breeds," he explained.

Importantly, Mr Nhat said, Grimaud's commercial ducks have a higher carcass yield ▽

◁ with good meat quality as shown in a low fat percentage.

"All these advantages have been made possible through the vigorous selection of duck breeders at Grimaud Freres Selection in France and the conditions in which the GP ducks are reared at our facility in Vietnam," he said.

Firstly, he said, the house was designed to meet physical and biological requirements of the breeder ducks.

Besides adoption of closed housing for rearing breeder ducks, the houses at Grimaud Vietnam are also equipped with feeders and drinkers suitable for the breeder ducks.

The birds are fed with high quality feed formulated to match their development and the

feeding is done with a strict body weight control to ensure that their growth is in line with the standard.

"Since this is a joint-venture with Eivalis Vietnam, which is a feed manufacturer, we are able to formulate specific formulations for each stage of development of the breeder ducks for the farm," he said.

Duck farming in Vietnam

In Vietnam, duck farming cannot be separated from rice fields, which provide shelter and feed for all types of ducks in the country.

Even for breeder ducks, their life cycle is closely related with the rice fields and rice farming seasons.

"In the duck farming business in Vietnam, everything depends on the rice field," said Bui Van Nhap, General Director of Grimaud Vietnam.

Grimaud Vietnam started supplying PS ducks from its GP duck farm to customers in early 2010. Although the GP are reared in a controlled environment under disease free conditions, their offspring or the PS ducklings have to spend a part of their life roaming in the rice fields.

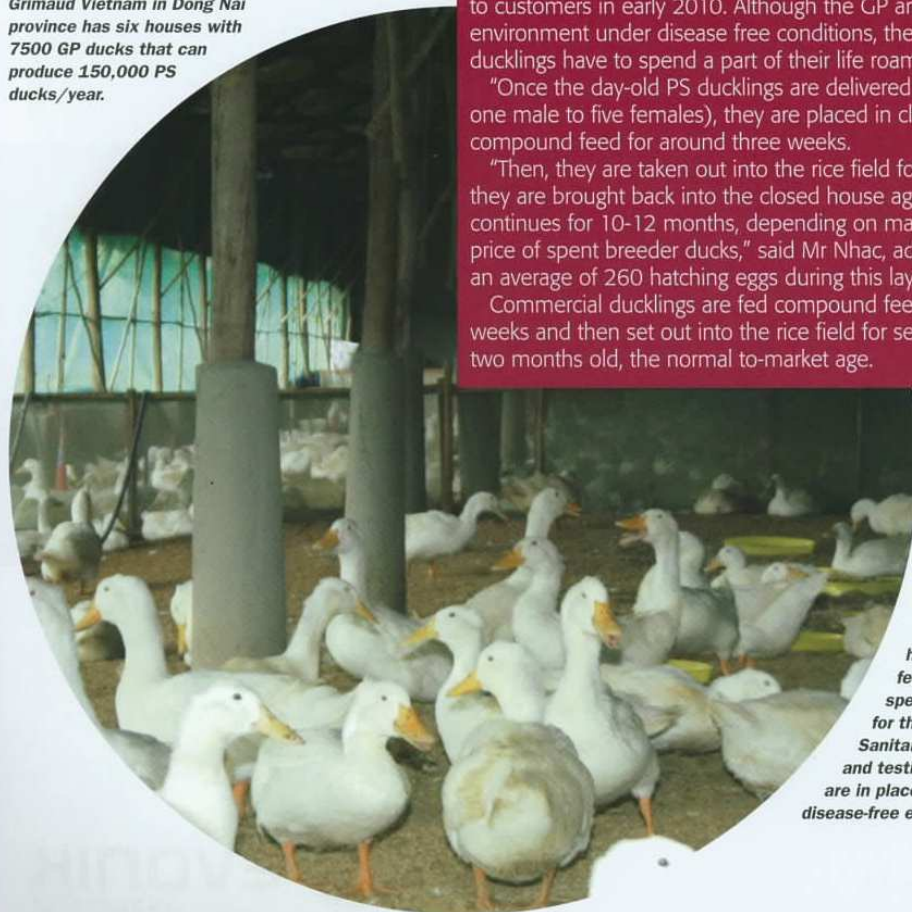
"Once the day-old PS ducklings are delivered to our clients (ratio of one male to five females), they are placed in closed houses and fed compound feed for around three weeks.

"Then, they are taken out into the rice field for 6-7 months before they are brought back into the closed house again for laying. This continues for 10-12 months, depending on market demand and the price of spent breeder ducks," said Mr Nhap, adding that customers get an average of 260 hatching eggs during this laying period.

Commercial ducklings are fed compound feed for the first three weeks and then set out into the rice field for self feeding until they are two months old, the normal to-market age.



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Grimaud Vietnam in Dong Nai province has six houses with 7500 GP ducks that can produce 150,000 PS ducks/year.



Left: GP ducks are reared in closed houses equipped with feeders and drinkers specifically designed for the breeders. Sanitary measures and testing procedures are in place to ensure the disease-free environment.

Next, the breeders are reared under strict sanitary procedures. Regular samples are taken of anything that could lead to bacterial contamination such as water and rice husk used in the litter. These are sent for laboratory analysis on a regular basis.

The breeders are vaccinated against duck plague, cholera, avian influenza and hepatitis.

"It is important to supply disease-free duck breeders to our customers as the high health status is the basis for their performance," said Mr Nhac.

Market development

Mr Nhac said Grimaud Vietnam is focusing on the market in the south, especially in the Mekong Delta, in the first year of its operations.

He said duck farming in the Mekong Delta is growing rapidly alongside growing demand for ducks both from the live and processed duck markets in the region.

"A positive sign witnessed in the south is that the consumption of



A hatchery is also located on the same premises as the GP duck farm of Grimaud Vietnam.

dressed duck is increasingly popular. This has motivated two processors in the delta to establish modern duck processing facilities for slaughtering and dressing for the supermarkets," said Mr Nhac.

This development, he said, would lead duck farmers to pay more attention to the breed they use

because the processors would source only live ducks that are larger in size, high in carcass yield and good meat quality.

These market requirements fit well with the features of Grimaud's meat type ducks that are now available in Vietnam. ■