

## Solar Lighting System Improves Egg Production



Rosemary Ngorima is a 68-year-old poultry farmer from Gweru, Midlands province, who runs an 800-bird layer project despite her little knowledge of farming.

Rosemary, a former teacher, had to quit her job after her husband suffered a life altering stroke, to become his primary care giver. Therefore, for survival, she looked to poultry production, despite having little knowledge in the field of poultry.

Rosemary initially relied on a natural lighting system when she started, then moved to battery powered torches to extend the egg production period. At this time, she was doing batches of 20-50 chickens. However, this yielded little impact on her production levels resulting in low profits. In 2020 she became a member of IPVC and subsequently of Platinum Poultry Association (the Gweru Poultry Business Association - PBA). After receiving numerous trainings in layer management, biosecurity and financial literacy, her knowledge base was boosted, leading to improvements in her management techniques. She then increased her batch to 600 chickens. Rosemary subsequently benefited from the IPVC project's green technologies pilot by receiving a 3.5 KV photovoltaic lighting system, resulting in increased egg production. In two weeks, her project started producing 22 crates up from 20.

The photovoltaic system for lighting has helped her reduce her carbon footprint and electricity costs, as she is no longer relying on the electricity grid.

In addition, she currently does batches of 1,000 hyline and 250 Boschveld layer breeds. The solar system helped improve her lighting hours in the chicken houses, which in turn improved her egg production. Upon receiving the solar system, her then batch was nearing its end of cycle for egg production. The system increased her egg production by five crates per day. Her Boschveld breeds lay eggs for fertilisation, from which she sells chicks to neighbouring farmers.

The lighting system has reduced theft of her chickens. Theft used to be rampant on her farm before she received the lighting system.

“I am now getting profit of US\$0.04c/egg up from US\$0.02c/egg. I am already planning to increase my flock to 1,500 birds. The trainings in financial literacy have also helped me to plan for the future in terms of investment”, Ngorima said.

With improved egg production due to the solar lighting system, Rosemary is now able to sell her eggs at a profit and take care of her family as the bread winner.