

South East Water and EPA Victoria have partnered together to carry out a Cleaner Production Study at Ingham's Enterprises chicken processing plant in Somerville.

Ingham's Somerville operation currently processes approximately 120,000 birds per day. Processing these quantities requires a substantial supply of potable water and also results in significant trade waste effluent discharge. However, through the delivery of several projects the Somerville plant has cut its water usage per bird by 11.4 per cent in the 18 months prior to July 2008.

Ingham's currently recycle part of the treated water back to the plant for truck, back landing and crate washing.



Flow control for various process sprays and nozzles were installed to improve efficiency and minimise water use through a project co-funded by South East Water.

A Cleaner Production Study provided an in depth evaluation of process flows and compositions that facilitated development of an overall plant mass balance. This identified the key water and resource generating areas. A review of the unit operations of the processing plant created a list of water saving projects.

Fifteen projects identified savings of approximately 210 million litres of water and effluent discharge per year.

Based on attributing the full processed cost to the water used (initial purchase, effluent discharge, heating, chilling and sanitising) the overall saving to Ingham's could be substantial. A significant portion of this is in power and gas usage. The proposed reductions would also have a positive impact on Ingham's energy use and greenhouse gas production.

A significant number of the projects have attractive paybacks that are encouraging enough for Ingham's to thoroughly review all projects with a view to implementation. Ingham's are committed to reduce water usage, waste generation and energy demands and to ensure long term sustainability.

