

Ostriches, emus neck-n-neck in 'new' meat industry

Farm-raised birds served around state

By Margaret Claughton
THE BATTALION

Chicken isn't the only drumstick on the market anymore. Not only are ostriches and emus big birds, but they're big birds in the meat industry. And people with a taste for the new and nutritious are flocking to eat them.

Craig Morris, a graduate student in Texas A&M's Department of Animal Science, said in a recent article that American consumers' food preferences have changed in recent years, causing a major revolution in the meat industry.

This revolution, he said, opens the window for new products, primarily ostrich and emu, to establish themselves as meats of choice.

"Many people are looking for something new," he said. "And I think this may be what they are looking for."

The birds are expected to appeal to people because they are low in fat, high in iron, high in protein and taste more like a beef product than a poultry product.

Many area ranchers have begun raising these birds in the hope that their meat will eventually become big sellers. In fact, Larry Ruffino, owner of Readfield Meats in Bryan, said approximately 60 to 70 percent of all emu breeders reside within a 100 mile radius of Conroe, Texas.

Readfield Meats has processed 70 emus in the last year. Ruffino said he expects the number of processed birds to increase three or four times in the next year in response to the increased demand for the birds.

Although both ostrich and emu are eaten throughout Texas, ostrich has gained more recognition and is found in more restaurants statewide.

Ostrich meat is a rich red meat that appeals to beef lovers, Ruffino said. But unlike beef, ostrich meat is very low in fat.

A recent article in American Ostrich magazine said a cut of ostrich similar to the eye-of-round cut of beef contains 2.74 grams of fat, while the beef contains 6.51 grams of fat. The same quantity of chicken breast delivers 3.57 grams of fat.

Penny Lynch, vice president of Tops Inc. which markets ostrich meat, said ostrich appeals to many health conscious people.

"Especially the people who are trying to eat heart-healthy," she said. "Some-

one who can't eat beef will be able to eat ostrich because it is so low-fat."

In his article "Ostrich Meat Market Challenges," Morris said 60 percent of consumers consider fat content the most significant factor in influencing health.

Ostrich and emu are not only marketable for their nutritional attributes but for their taste as well.

The Texas A&M University's Ostrich Meat Industry Development Project conducted a study in which four cuts of ostrich meat were compared to Choice beef top loin steak.

Dr. Rhonda Miller, one of the researchers who conducted the study, said ostrich compared very well as far as flavor and tenderness.

The National Culinary Review said ostrich has the potential to be "the premiere red meat of the next century."

Chef Randall Warder of the Mansion on Turtle Creek restaurant in Dallas, said the taste of ostrich has been very well received by their customers.

"People enjoy its taste and that it is low fat," he said. "It tastes like a cross between beef tenderloin and venison, but it doesn't have a gamey texture."

Warder said customers pay approximately \$40 a piece for ostrich plates.

Morris said the target markets for ostrich meat are the finer three, four and five star restaurants primarily because of its price. The price is high due, in part, to the cost of breeding the animals and slaughtering them.

"We know it is an expensive product right now," he said. "It is mostly for white-tablecloth restaurants. This type of low-fat, clean cut meat appeals to the high income consumer."

Though both meats are somewhat in demand, Morris said they are not about



Stew Milne/The Battalion

to replace or even compete with beef or chicken in the meat industry.

Although the American Meat Institute estimates Americans will consume 6.93 million pounds of meat in 1994, the high retail price of ostrich will keep it out of the mainstream.

According to Morris, beef, pork and chicken retail for \$1 to \$6 per pound while ostrich is somewhere between \$20 to \$30 per pound.

Despite the success of ostrich, Ruffino said he thinks emu meat will eventually be more widely accepted.

"I think ostrich is a little more popular because it was the first marketed," Ruffino said. "I think emu will get bigger however, because the animals are less wild and easier to raise."

He said he hopes emu and ostrich meat will become more popular so the local breeders' hard work will pay off.

"I've had ostrich burger, and it was terrific," he said. "And emu sausage made with 1/3 pork is very tasty. I think it has good potential."



Stew Milne/The Battalion

Koriyama students jump cultural hurdles

By Jeremy Keddie
THE BATTALION

First semester is hardest, director says

There are many adjustments students spending their first semester away from home must make, but for international students from Japan, adjusting may take a little more time, John Norris, director of the Koriyama Support Office said.

"We do a lot of hand-holding and mother hen," Norris said.

Norris, who received his doctoral degree in 1984 from Texas A&M, said there are about 230 students from Japan studying at A&M.

To help prepare the international students to study abroad, A&M created a school in Koriyama in May 1990. Students who wanted to study at A&M, spent their first year at Koriyama before coming overseas. Norris said the program at Koriyama prepared the students for a higher education in the U.S., and also taught some of the traditions of

A&M. Last fall the school had a bonfire for the students.

"Many more of them knew what it meant to be a Texas Aggie than some of the typical freshman," Norris said.

However, Norris said because of funding difficulties which were centered around Japanese politics, the school closed in August.

Japanese students who want to study at A&M will now have to apply through the same process as other U.S. citizens.

Norris said he admires the international students for their courage.

"When they chose to study abroad, they went totally against the grain," Norris said.

He said students who studied abroad in the past would have difficulty

in finding a job when they came back, but employers are now beginning to accept the trend.

"I think they see the huge influence of Japan in the United States, if they have an employee that's bilingual they will hire them," Norris said.

One of the biggest cultural changes these students face is their appetites, Norris said.

"Making the adjustment to American food is difficult for them," Norris said.

He said many of the students are used to eating dishes with rice two to three times a day. For such reasons, many of the Japanese students who live on campus choose to cook their food, rather than eat at the dining halls.

Learning to be comfortable with the mannerisms of American students also

is difficult, he said. Norris said most Japanese students tend to be quiet and to them, American students seem loud, boisterous and informal.

However, Izumi Mitsumoto, a 21-year-old A&M student, studied at Koriyama before coming here. "American students are friendly, and I think that is good," he said.

A majority of students have said that dorm life is noisy, and most would prefer to move out, Norris said. And moving out may not be as much as a problem for them as it is to Americans.

But Mitsumoto said he feels proud to be studying here. He said his parents are worried about his medical care and safety, but believed that it would be good for him to study here.

"Perhaps Japanese companies will

hire me because of English," he said.

The cost of an international education Norris said, is 10 times greater for the Japanese students than it is for students from Texas. But it is still less expensive than it is in Japan.

"Here, everything is so inexpensive for them," Norris said, "they can buy anything at a fraction of what it costs in Japan."

He said that most Japanese students do not want to be singled out, and are embarrassed when it happens. Norris said they are not accustomed to receiving awards as individuals, but rather in groups.

"There's a saying in Japan," Norris said. "The nail that sticks up gets hammered down."

Despite the adjustments to American cuisine and attitudes, many of the students said an American education may help them in their Japanese careers.

Stereotypes plague 'A Good Man in Africa'

Oscar-winning director disappoints with new movie

By Anas Ben-Musa
THE BATTALION

"A Good Man in Africa"
Starring Colin Friels,
Sean Connery, John Lithgow,
Diana Rigg and Louis Gossett Jr.
Directed by Bruce Beresford
Rated R
Playing at Hollywood 16
★ 1/2 (out of five)

When a director has two Oscar winners (Sean Connery and Louis Gossett Jr.), a two-time Oscar nominee (John Lithgow) and a Tony award winner (Diana Rigg), it's a great opportunity to create a quality film.

So what can go wrong with a such cast in the film "A Good Man in Africa?" Well — everything!

Director Bruce Beresford manages to create a film full of stereotypes and old cliches, which is unusual for Beresford, who directed the Oscar winning film, "Driving Miss Daisy," a poignant film that broke down many

stereotypes with its rich characters.

But with "A Good Man in Africa," the characters are shallow, and little or nothing is known of their past or what they feel in the present.

Based on the acclaimed novel by William Boyd, "A Good Man in Africa" is a story of political intrigue and how one man can change a nation.

Mid-level British diplomat Morgan Leafy (Colin Friels) is frustrated about his career in the small west African nation of Kinjanja. His only passion is alcohol and women.

And that's how his career takes a turn for the worse. The British High Commissioner Arthur Fanshawe (John Lithgow) orders Leafy to befriend soon-to-be Kinjanja president, Professor Sam Adekunle (Louis Gossett Jr.).

The British want exclusive rights to large oil fields that have been discovered on the coast of Kinjanja. Leafy tries talking to Adekunle, but he only succeeds with Adekunle's wife, Celia. That's when things get a little messy.

Leafy gets caught in bed with

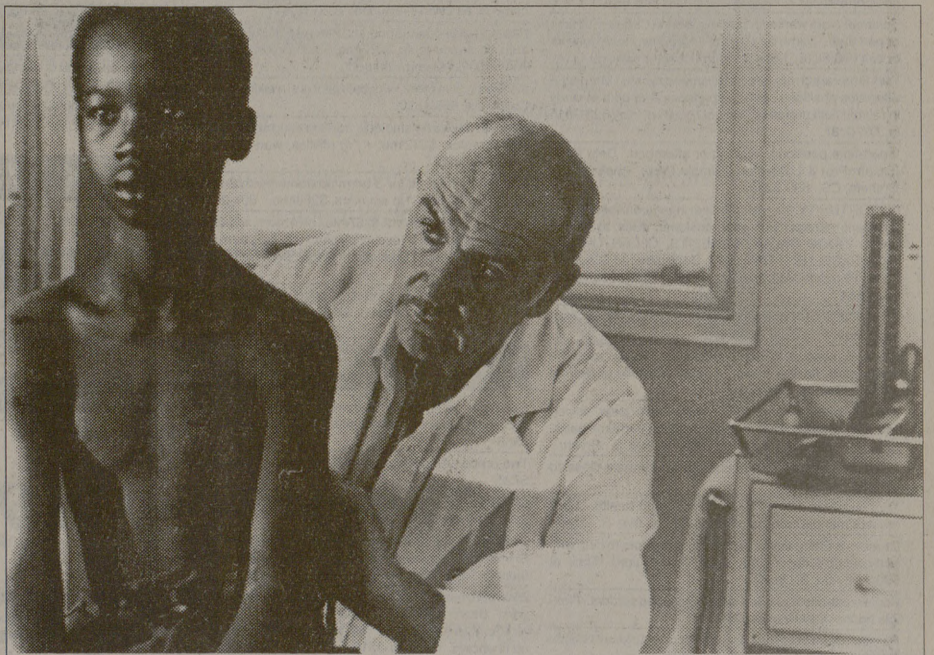
president-elect's wife, Celia Adekunle (Joanne Whalley-Kilmer). Adekunle gives Leafy an ultimatum. Leafy needs to "convince" Dr. Alex Murray (Sean Connery) to pass a plan to construct new buildings at the local university or else.

Unfortunately, Leafy cannot bribe Murray. He is the "Good Man in Africa," a man of virtue and strong moral character. He refuses to help Leafy because it would make Adekunle a rich man.

With such an intriguing storyline, there is potential for a quality film.

But the movie is plagued with stereotypes, stereotypes — boring, pompous British diplomats, superstitious, ignorant-looking Africans and sex-crazed women who all want Leafy.

Beresford succeeded with "Driving Miss Daisy," but he didn't do anyone a service with "A Good Man in Africa."



Dr. Alex Murray (Sean Connery) examines a young patient in the Gramercy Pictures release, "A Good Man in Africa."