

**I**n line with the growth in production of 'Label Rouge' poultry, there has been parallel breeding development to produce special strains of birds for this gourmet market. Not surprisingly,

product range it has ever seen. ISA alone can offer the ISABrown, ISAWhite, Babcock B300 white egg and B380 brown egg layer for commercial egg production. For meat strains they have the ISA

because of the strong local connection.

"We are a research company in genetics and zootechnology," says ISA's President Yves Courtillé, "our primary goal is to improve the

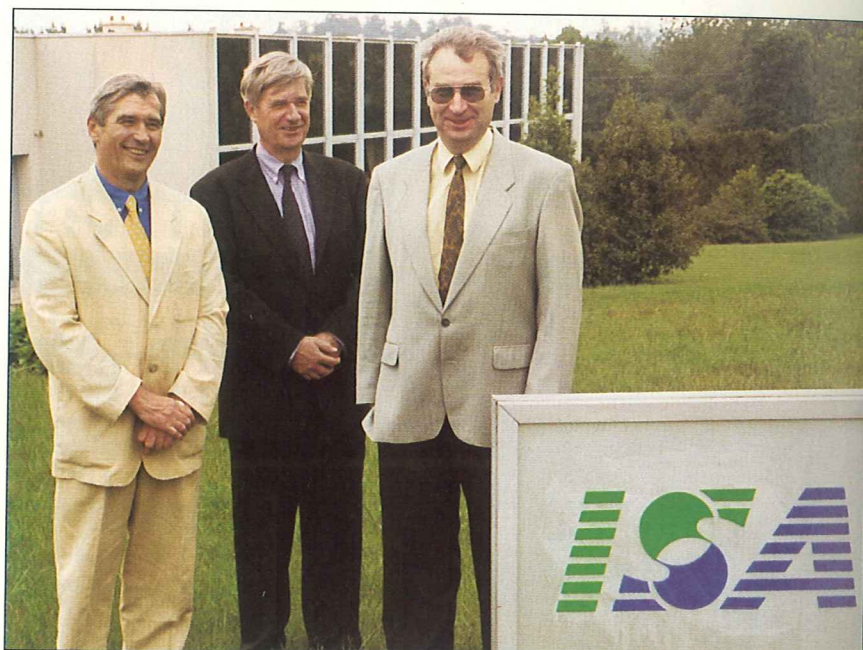
## Breeding For 'Label' Production

the leading French companies have led the way, although other international breeders have also developed programmes along similar lines.

ISA (Institut de Selection Animale) at their breeding base near Ploufragan in Brittany have been active in this regard for many years and along with the SASSO company from Mont de Marsan, dominate the market. Both companies now present an intriguing product line-up ready to meet all the specialised types of 'Label' requirement.

The essence of 'Label Rouge' production lies in creating the image of traditional rural breeds reared in free-range management conditions and fed on diets free of any raw materials of animal origin and any pronutrients, conditioners or prophylactics. The expansion in volume of this market, its diversification into more further processed products and the move into export trading are all clear pointers to the success of this niche market philosophy.

ISA, already world leaders in the breeding of brown egg commercial layers, as a result of nearly 40 years of selection and steady improvement, now have a diverse and impressive showcase of products. More recently, with the formation of MERIEL through the merger of MSD Agvet and the French company Merieux, which brings together under one ownership ISA, Babcock, Shaver, Hubbard and turkey breeders BUT, they can present the world industry with the most comprehensive



**ISA President Yves Courtillé (centre) with sales director Jean-Francois Hamon (left) and geneticist Michael Protais (right) outside the company breeding headquarters near Quintin in Brittany.**

Vedette, ISA 20 and ISA 30MPK female lines plus the 177, 199 and 122 male broiler breeders. In addition, bred specifically for the needs of the free-range 'Label Rouge' they can offer the ISA JA57 and ISA P6N female breeders with a number of specialised male lines and the ISA ESSOR Guinea fowl.

Although their 'Label' type products represent only a small part of ISA's annual sales - they claim a 60-65% current share of the world brown egg parent breeder market and through their Babcock and Shaver associations roughly 20% of the market for white egg layers, specialised niche markets are equally important, the more so

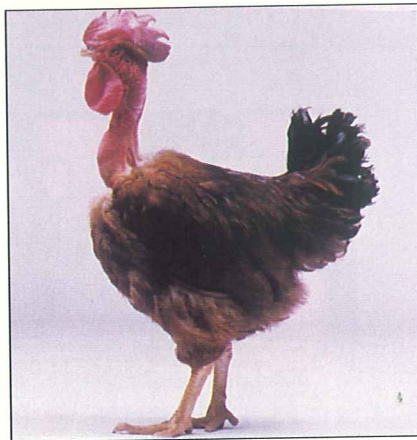
genetic traits of all our breeds, in order to give the best economic returns to all our customers. But because we are a global worldwide company, we are obliged to segment our operations into a range of products to meet all the market requirements."

The SASSO company from the Sarthe region in the south-west of France have concentrated on breeding chickens for 'Label Rouge,' free-range and semi-intensive production for the past 20 years. Coloured feathered birds are one of their specialities. "We are the 4-wheel drive of the chicken market," says Dr Eric Guinebert, Sasso's Director. "Other breeders are more

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SASSO female line SA51.



SASSO male line T44N (naked neck).



Grimaud's Muscovy Canedin3 R31'.

like the designers of Formula 1 racing cars, they need a special circuit to show their best performance. Our birds can go anywhere."

Their individual approach to the market demand could well be described as "custom breeding." Currently, having specialised in producing male lines, they have no fewer than 18 different options available: light or heavy; red, black or grey feathers; white or yellow skin pigment; black legs and bare or feathered necks. To mate in combination with these they have the SA 31 for coloured semi-industrial production and the dwarf SA51 for 'Label' or free-range production. In all, the Sasso range

offers six different types of female, dwarf or compact, heavy or light and autosexing. With justification they say they have a product for all conditions. They claim a major share of the French 'Label' market as well as sales in Italy, Switzerland, Spain and Germany while Sasso birds can also be found in the Far East from Malaysia to Japan.

The Grimaud Group from La Corbiere near the city of Nantes, began their breeding operations as a family business specialising in ducks, nearly 30 years ago. Today, they have grown to rank with the major international breeders with operations stretching all over the world. From their early days with Muscovy Ducks, their breeding

activities now extend to Mule and Pekin Ducks, geese, rabbits, pigeons, turkeys and even ostriches. For the 'Label' market they have developed a special type of black/grey Muscovy R31 as well as lines R41, R51 and R61 heavy or light ducklings for either free range rearing, standard production or force feeding. The R31 female achieves a liveweight of just over 2.5kg at 74-77 days while the heavier males go to 4.7kg at 94 days. A breast fillet yield of 15-16% is a special feature of this strain, an important consideration at a time when duckmeat processing is moving towards nearly all portions and further processed products rather than whole birds. **PI**



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