

# SA poultry producer invests in Zambia

SA poultry producer Astral Foods has expressed its commitment to doing business in Africa by investing further in Zambia.

In a statement on Monday, 14 June 2010, the JSE-listed company said it had, through Tiger Animal Feeds Zambia, opened TIGERChicks, its new state-of-the-art broiler breeding farm and hatchery in the southern African country.

"We have been involved in Zambia for more than 10 years and have experienced growth in our business over this period," Chris Schutte, Chief Executive Officer said.

He added that TIGERChicks demonstrated that the company's business plan for Africa began with entering a market with feed premixes, followed by feed production and then identifying the most viable option to enter the broiler market.

Roedolf Steenkamp, Managing Director of Astral's Feed Division, said Zambia was self-sustainable in terms of agricultural commodities.

## Springboard

It was also regarded as being a strategic country to further invest in as a springboard into the rest of Southern Africa, he added.

"Following my involvement in Zambia as an employee for Astral for over seven years and understanding the agricultural market in Southern Africa, Astral saw this as a valuable opportunity to expand our operations in this region."

With the establishment of the new state-of-the-art broiler breeding farm and hatchery, Steenkamp believed that Astral could continue to provide job opportunities, deliver a quality day-old chicken to the local broiler farmers, while also offering them training and support in terms of nutrition and broiler farming best practices.

This would ensure that the broiler market developed to its potential, he said.

"Poultry remains the most affordable and sustainable form of animal protein and hence the importance of supporting small-scale local poultry farmers."

Currently, broiler consumption in Zambia was approximately 2.5 kilogram per annum versus 31.8 kilogram in South Africa.

## Prime property

Steenkamp said TIGERChicks consisted of a 790 hectare property.

"The benefit of this property, from a bio-security point of view, is that it was completely undeveloped and it is also strategically positioned to service the region.

"The design specification of this state-of-the-art broiler breeding farm and hatchery adheres to OIE [Office International des Epizooties or International Epizootic Office] standards."

## **New bird**

He added that TIGERChicks was introducing a slow featheringbird for the first time to Africa.

"Trials to date have shown that this bird is performing exceptionally well in similar markets."

Steenkamp said that at present, the hatchery could hatch 120 000 day-old chicks per week.

"The footprint for the hatchery and breeder farm has been established to produce and hatch up to a million day-old chicks per week as the demand for broilers in the region increases.

"We also transport these day-old chicks to the local poultry farmers in environmentally controlled delivery vehicles."

*Source: Sapa*

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