Astral Foods Limited (Astral), a leading South African integrated poultry producer, has through Tiger Animal Feeds Zambia opened TIGERChicks, its new state-of-the-art broiler breeding farm and hatchery. “We have been involved in Zambia for more than 10 years and have experienced growth in our business over this period. TIGERChicks demonstrates that our business plan for Africa begins with entering a market with feed premixes, followed by feed production and then identifying the most viable option to enter the broiler market either through the introduction of a broiler hatchery and or breeding farm, which has enabled us to implement our integration strategy of good nutrition leading to a poultry business and to express our commitment to Africa,” said Chris Schutte, Chief Executive Officer of Astral.

Roedolf Steenkamp, Managing Director of Astral’s Feed Division, explained: “Because of Zambia’s position in relation to other developing countries in Southern Africa, being self-sustainable in terms of agricultural commodities, this is 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.”

In 2006, Tiger Animal Feeds won the annual award for Distinguished Service to Agriculture in Zambia from the Zambia National Farmers Union for its contribution to the development of agriculture in the country. Steenkamp reinforced that: “With the establishment of the new state-of-the-art broiler breeding farm and hatchery, we believe that Astral can continue to provide job opportunities, deliver a quality day old chicken to the local broiler farmers, whilst also offering them training and support in terms of nutrition and broiler farming best practices to ensure that the broiler market develops to its potential. 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 is approximately 2.5 kg per annum versus 31.8 kg in South Africa.

TIGERChicks consists of an impressive 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 standards (the World Organisation for Animal Health). This is a first for Zambia.

TIGERChicks is proud to be introducing, in association with Aviagen, the Lohmann Meat Broiler Breed, a slow feathering bird for the first time to Africa. According to Steenkamp, “trials to date have shown that this bird is performing exceptionally well in similar markets.”

Steenkamp stated that at present, the hatchery can 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.”
“When we took the decision to commission a facility of this high standard in Zambia, we concluded an Investment Protection and Promotion Agreement with the Zambian Development Agency and the Zambian Government for an investment of up to 10 million US Dollars,” commented Steenkamp. He continued by saying that: “when we started building the TIGERChicks broiler breeding farm and hatchery we entered into “supply contracts” with Zambian individuals and companies by awarding contracts for various services and product delivery to ensure the completion and continuation of this world-class facility.”

Schutte concludes: “the development of TIGERChicks in Zambia is another step in Astral’s business plan to strategically focus expansion, in a responsible and cautious manner, outside the borders of South Africa.”

Ends

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Company background

Astral Foods Limited (Astral), a leading South African integrated poultry producer, with key activities in animal feed pre-mixes, manufacturing of animal feeds, broiler genetics, production and sale of day-old chicks and hatching eggs, with integrated breeder and broiler production operations, abattoirs as well as sales and distribution of various key poultry brands. The brands in the Astral stable include:

- Earlybird
- Festive
- Goldi
- County Fair
- National Chicks
- TIGERChicks (Zambia)
- Ross Poultry Breeders
- Meadow Feeds
- Meaders (Mauritius)
- NuTec
- CAL Laboratories
- East Balt
- Tiger Animal Feeds (Zambia)