

From Experiment to Empire

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Abagold Limited has grown from humble beginnings as an experimental hatchery 20 years ago, to a sizable operation incorporating three large abalone farms and a world-class processing plant. Through an entrepreneurial spirit instilled in every employee, the company today is one of the largest marine aquaculture operations in the world and one of the principal employers in the Overstrand.

The success story

Today Abagold comprises three farms: Sea View, Bergsig and Amaza. These three farms produce in excess of 220 tonnes of abalone per year. In 2010 the company purchased a further 7ha of land adjacent to Bergsig, with a view to expand onto a fourth farm. Construction work on this new project, called Sulamanzi, has already started and the first tanks will be operational by the fourth quarter of 2011. Once completed, this new farm will raise Abagold's total production capacity to 475 tonnes per annum and the staff complement, which currently stands at 270, will increase to approximately 470.



Abagold Abalone Farms

Abagold has its own hatchery on its Sea View farm and only premium broodstock are used for spawning. After three years on Sea View, the abalone are moved to their respective grow-out farms: Amaza and Bergsig. After five years of farming and nurturing, the abalone are sent to the processing facility where they are sorted according to weight and size before they are canned or dried.



Sorting Abalone

Food safety is of paramount importance to Abagold and the highest standards of hygiene and farming technology are strictly adhered to. Abagold is the only South African abalone processing facility with HACCP accreditation – the global certification standard for food safety and quality, utilising a systematic and preventive approach. All ingredients in Abagold’s products be traced through the entire production cycle and are completely free of preservatives.

A Delicacy

The mother-of-pearl that lines the large ear-shaped shell, gave rise to its South African name, a corruption of the Afrikaans “pêrel moeder” to “pêrel moer” and today perlemoen. Previously this mollusc was also known also by the name “klipkous” (stone sock), i.e. “stone sock”.

The meat of this mollusc is considered a delicacy in all parts of the East, where it is commonly known as Bao Yu, and almost always forms part of a Chinese banquet. Similar to shark fin soup or birds nest soup, it is considered a luxury item, and is traditionally reserved for special occasions such as weddings, Chinese New Year and other celebrations. In the East, abalone is served as Awabi Sushi, Steamed, Boiled, Chopped, Dried –prepared in almost any form, except the way it is traditionally served in South Africa – minced, cooked with cream and garlic and served as a starter or mains.



Abagold Products

The availability of commercially farmed abalone has allowed more common consumption of this once rare delicacy, and is locally available as a canned product. Due to poor preparation and cooking techniques, abalone meat is often undeservedly labelled as being tough – which is not actually the case. The “foot” part of the perlemoen is the edible muscle which, in its natural environment clings to rocks. When the animal is removed, this muscle contracts and needs to “relax” again in order to become tender. Due to the nature of the product, however, canned abalone is naturally tender and needs minimal preparation time.