

Abagold receives a visit from a VIP

21 June 2013

On Wednesday, 11th June, Abagold had the privilege of hosting from Mr. Alan Winde, Western Cape Minister of Finance, Economic Development and Tourism.



Christo du Plessis, Abagold's Managing Director (left) with Minister Alan Winde, in the tour area on the Sea View Farm.

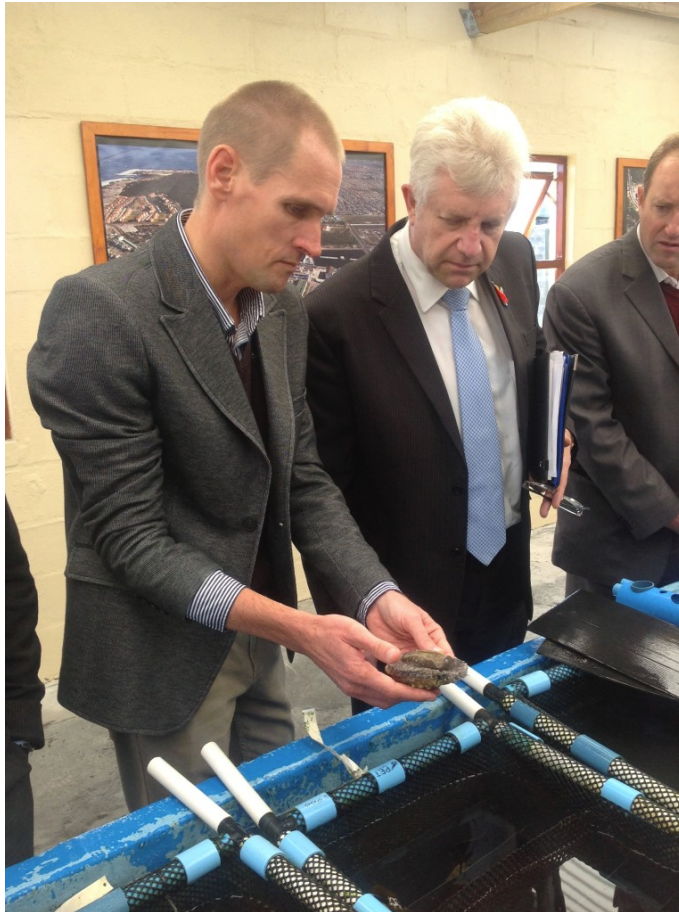
The purpose of Min. Winde's visit was to familiarise himself with the commercial aquaculture industry which is an important growth industry in the Western Cape Province. The second reason for his visit was to find out more about Abagold's innovative wave energy project that aims to generate electricity by harnessing the power of the ocean.



The visiting group consisted of members of the provincial Department of Economic Development and Tourism, Western Cape Aquaculture Development Initiative, WESGRO (Export promotion agency in the Western Cape) and the Overstrand Municipality.

This was followed by a discussion on the whole abalone industry and the specific challenges it faces, ranging from rising electricity costs, land issues and red tape to the need for research, training of junior- and middle-management and trade barriers in various markets.

A tour of Abagold's operations and facilities was undertaken and proved valuable for the visitors, many of whom had never seen a live abalone before.



Christo du Plessis, managing director of Abagold, talked Minister Winde through the whole business process – from spawning to the market.

Minister Winde released a statement to the media shortly after his visit, emphasizing the importance of aquaculture in the Western Cape. He stated that his aim is to facilitate the removal of obstacles currently hampering the aquaculture sector and that R50 million is being invested in the facilitation of industry expansion – thus creating additional jobs.

He further stated that he is investigating the option of declaring the area from Hermanus to Gansbaai a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) for aquaculture. The benefit of operating within an SEZ is the availability of government grants to stimulate growth and investment.

(Also see our “In the News” section on our website – “Minister Alan Winde announces investigation of Special Economic Zones for Western Cape’s aquaculture sector.”)

Abagold offers comprehensive farm tours to the general public at their Sea View farm, weekdays 11 am. The tour starts with a brief introduction to the history of the abalone industry in South Africa (and the history of Abagold) through the various stages of breeding, growth and cultivation techniques used to the processing and marketing of cultivated abalone. Bookings may be done in advance although it is not required. Large groups are by appointment only.