

The Story of an African (Abalone) Farm

June 2011

When Dr Pierre Hugo started his research on spawning abalone in captivity almost 30 years ago, little did he know that his research would lead to the establishment of the largest abalone farming company in South Africa.



The Old Harbour in Hermanus – the birthplace of Abagold

25 Years later, Abagold Limited had been formed. The company consisted of three farms, namely Sea View, Bergsig and Amaza, with a production capacity of 275 tons per annum. In July 2010 the next chapter of the Abagold story unfolded when a 7Ha piece of land was bought to build a fourth farm, called Sulamanzi.

This farm would be different from the other three by making use of integrated seaweed production to strip nutrients from the water before returning it to the sea, and thereby also providing feed for the abalone. This farm, once completed, will provide 200 much needed employment opportunities to residents of Hermanus and almost double the production capacity of Abagold.



Photo showing the location of each of Abagold's farms in Hermanus



An Environmental Impact Assessment was completed and after receiving the "go-ahead" the teams started clearing the property.

Large rocky outcrops had to be blasted, and thereafter a crusher and screen was hired to crush the fill on the site to a suitable grade to ensure adequate compaction and to limit damage to the platform when installing water and airlines. Finer crusher dust is required for bedding of the pipes and placing the concrete tanks, while the stones are used as cover throughout the farms.



The Stone Crusher and Screen creating fill material of high quality

The next step was to level the platform, and to start installation of the main water lines and constructing the perimeter wall.



A section of the platform being levelled

The perimeter wall consists of two sections, namely a lower, retainer section and the security wall on top. The retainer section is built using filled, reinforced cement blocks. Once the retainer wall had been completed, the security wall was built to a height of 2m on top of the retainer wall. The perimeter fence is therefor made up of 2.4m high security panels with 600mm of electric fencing on top.

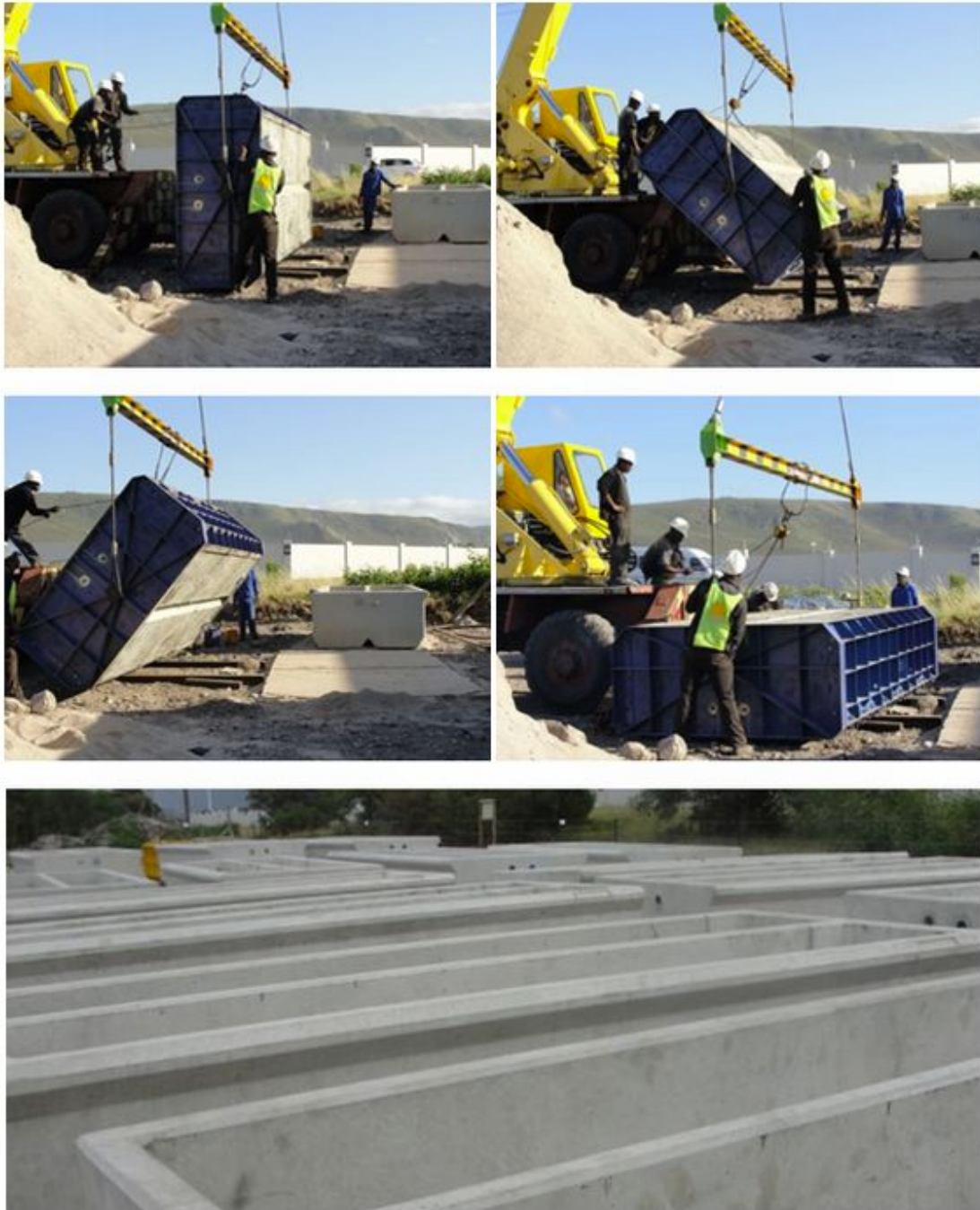


The perimeter wall



The 1200mm Main seawater pipes made from GRP

While the civil works were undertaken on the site, newly designed abalone tanks were being casted on a piece of adjacent land. The contractors worked round the clock to enable them to supply the required amount of tanks timeously.



The first of 15 farms on Sulamanzi will be commissioned by October 2011, and the project completed in 2016.