

FTSE 100**+0.08**

6 304.63

DOW JONES**+1.21**

15 176.10

NIKKEI**+1.94**

12 686.52

Metals**Gold**
R1 385.89**Kruger**
R15 600**Interest Rates****Prime rate**
8.50%**Repo rate**
5.00%**Currency****Rand/US\$** R9.9925**Rand/Pound** R15.6696**Rand/Euro** R13.3322**Rand/Yen** R0.1054**ECONOMIC ZONES MOOTED**

Plan to boost aquaculture industry in Western Cape

Business Reporter

THE WESTERN Cape government is looking at establishing special economic zones from Hermanus to Gansbaai to boost the local aquaculture industry, which employs 2 300 people.

Finance, Economic Development and Tourism MEC Alan Winde announced this plan during his visit to two of the province's largest abalone farms, Abagold and HIK Abalone Farm, this week.

Based in Hermanus, both farms produce more than 400 tons of abalone each year.

Abagold is one of the biggest farms in South Africa, employing 350 people, and earlier this year won the SA Premier Awards Exporter Award.

HIK has 1 500 tanks and features a hatchery, a grow-out farm, and its own processing facility.

The Western Cape has the highest number of abalone farms in the country, with 20 operating in the province.

Winde pointed out that the aquaculture sector in the province was projected to show triple-digit growth

over the next 10 to 15 years.

He said it was estimated that, in order to maintain the current level of per capita fish consumption, global aquaculture production would have to grow from 45.5 million tons a year (as recorded in 2004) to 80 million tons by 2050. This is according to a study done by the Western Cape Department of Economic Development and Tourism.

"Globally, production from capture fisheries has levelled off, and most of the main fishing areas have reached their maximum potential. Aquaculture will be the only way to fill the gap. In spite of its vast natural and human resources, the contribution of Africa to global aquaculture production is extremely low relative to the contributions made by other continents."

Winde added that, to ensure that the province plays a leading role in filling this gap and increasing Africa's contribution to global production, the Western Cape government was focusing on removing red tape, which was hampering the industry's growth.

He said rising electricity costs in the

**FISH FARMING**

Western Cape aquaculture is set for triple-digit growth over the next 10-15 years

past few years had hit abalone farmers hard, with those in municipal areas particularly affected, as they could not negotiate special rates with Eskom.

"The Western Cape government is investigating whether energy costs could be reduced by way of zoning

arrangements, such as the declaration of special economic zones. These zones will then be entitled to the incentives offered by SEZs."

Winde said the department, the Western Cape Aquaculture Development Initiative and the National

Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries were looking to declare the area from Hermanus to Gansbaai a special zone.

The final decision on such zones rests with the national Department of Trade and Industry.