

African Pioneer Marine acquires canned pilchards brand Glenryck

African Pioneer Marine (APM) has acquired canned fish brand Glenryck from Bidvest Namibia. The Glenryck brand, first registered in South Africa in 1937, joins one of South Africa's largest fishing trawler owners and processing companies, the 100% black-owned Pioneer Fishing, under the umbrella of African Pioneer Marine.



Credit: Glenryck

APM is a subsidiary of the wholly black-owned African Pioneer Group (APG), one of the country's longest-standing unlisted B-BBEE investment companies, established in 1990 and now actively managing assets of over R4bn with diversified holdings in food and beverages, fishing, leisure, gaming and energy.

Working towards fishing industry transformation

APM said in a statement that the deal deepens black economic empowerment in the fishing industry value chain, and will enable product diversification, volume growth and greater employment security for seasonal fishery workers.

Stephen Dondolo, APG founder and group chief executive, commented that the acquisition of Glenryck South Africa as a widely recognised producer of premium canned fish supported the company's expansion strategy and strengthened APG's mandate of working towards true transformation and empowerment in the local fishing industry.

Pioneer Fishing employees participate in and benefit from the company's growth in share value through the Employee Share Ownership Programme (ESOP) which holds a 10% stake in the company and shares in the annual distribution of dividends paid from profits.

"When we acquired control of Pioneer Fishing in December 2018, we saw that the company would benefit from owning a recognised premium brand to support our future vision and strategy for expansion. The incorporation of Glenryck, a name that is firmly established in the local market, is therefore a logical step in our growth.

"The acquisition will enable Pioneer Fishing to increase production volumes and create more year-round jobs. Creating employment opportunities and enhancing skills development is a large part of African Pioneer's overall vision and mission, and we view the prospects of significantly growing our market share as an immense opportunity – one that will ultimately offer long-term empowerment benefits to the communities we operate in and from," Dondolo said.

Pioneer primed for expansion

Glenryck's canned fish products will now be primarily produced at Oranjevis, Pioneer Fishing's cannery in St Helena Bay, and Dondolo said that the Glenryck acquisition would allow Pioneer to expand its brand and product categories substantially, opening up opportunities for new product development in frozen fish and related products.

Dondolo said that the expansion of APM's holdings would further strengthen the company's long-term sustainability. "To manage a sustainable marine processing facility, you need a guaranteed source of quality raw material, a motivated workforce, modern reliable equipment and a recognised brand that gives you assurance of continuous movement of product into the market to keep consumers supplied. Now we have all that."

Pioneer Fishing is already active in export markets and plans to continue growing the Glenryck brand in South Africa as well as adding it to its export portfolio to SADC countries and other markets.

Dondolo said the acquisition also gave African Pioneer Marine access to the expertise of the experienced and well-established sales and marketing team behind the building of the Glenryck brand, with Glenryck financial director Piet Brink moving into the CEO position and Stravros Deligianidis continuing as Glenryck sales and marketing director.

Glenryck will remain headquartered in Gauteng and the sales and marketing team will be responsible for growing all Pioneer Fishing brands in diverse markets.

Glenryck was acquired by Bidvest Namibia in 2015, which established it as the independent Glenryck South Africa in 2016. At one time the second largest canned fish brand in South Africa, the Glenryck product is now back on South African shelves and Dondolo said the intention was to continue growing the brand and benefit consumers by offering a diversified product choice.

Pioneer Fishing COO Pieter Greeff noted that the Glenryck acquisition potentially strengthened the company's position in the Fishing Rights Allocation Process (FRAP) of the Department of the Environment, Forestry and Fisheries to take place next year for allocation from January 2022.

Pioneer Fishing currently produces canned pilchards at Oranjevis in St Helena Bay, and markets the product under the Sea Pride brand, mainly sold to wholesalers and institutional and school feeding programmes. Oranjevis also supplies canned pilchards to retailers under private label or house brands.

According to the Competition Commission, the current combined share of the South African canned pilchard market for Glenryck and Sea Pride poses no threat to the market.

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