



Press Release

ASTRAL GRANTED PERMISSION TO VACCINATE POULTRY BREEDING STOCK AGAINST BIRD FLU

30 June 2025: Astral Foods Limited (Astral), a fully integrated poultry producer, can report that after a very rigorous application process spanning 18 months, the Director: Animal Health under the Department of Agriculture has today issued a permit for Astral to commence with the vaccination of broiler breeding stock against the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza virus (bird flu). This approval, under the very strict conditions of the 22 November 2023 guidelines published by the Department of Agriculture, will allow Astral to commence with a vaccination strategy on one of its large broiler breeding farms situated in Gauteng.

The vaccination on this farm against the H5 strain of the bird flu virus, will use a commercially available vaccine supplied by an international manufacturer. This vaccine is already used elsewhere in the world where a vaccination strategy against bird flu is allowed. Astral would like to highlight that this vaccine is not for the H7 strain of bird flu which South Africa encountered during the severe 2023 outbreak. However, the prevalent disease risk, both globally and in South Africa at present, is the H5 strain of bird flu. A locally manufactured H7 vaccine awaits final registration.

The requirements under which Astral has been granted permission to vaccinate include; strict control of the vaccine through prescription for use by a Poultry Veterinarian, and controlled supply by the relevant animal health company. Equally important is the storage and security of the vaccine stocks by the poultry producer which will be audited by the Department of Agriculture. The vaccinated poultry breeding stock has to be kept under very strict biosecurity conditions, and will be subjected to extensive weekly and monthly surveillance using molecular diagnostic techniques for possible challenges from any prevalent strains of the virus in the field.

Surveillance of the vaccinated birds will be under the supervision of a team of private poultry veterinarians, as well as State Veterinarians. In addition, the progeny of the vaccinated poultry breeding stock has to be completely traceable in the downstream poultry integration, and compliance at this level is critical.

Dr. Obed Lukhele, Astral's Technical Executive, states that: *"The vaccine will ensure that the birds develop immunity to infection from any potential circulating strain of the H5 virus in the field. This immunity will develop within three weeks of being vaccinated. The vaccine is designed to prevent the birds from succumbing to bird flu infection through the immunity that they will develop. The vaccine does not prevent infection from a H5 bird flu virus, but the producer will at least not suffer huge financial implications from losing their breeding stock or having to cull the birds due to infection. A vaccinated flock will also reduce virus shedding and reduce widespread contamination of the environment from the virus. The vaccine allows the birds to recover and continue production, as the impact of an infection in the field is far less severe than if the birds were not protected by vaccination."*

Gary Arnold, CEO of Astral, commented: *"Astral's team has worked relentlessly on this vaccination application, and made great strides to meet the stringent vaccination protocols. This milestone marks a significant step forward in Astral's ongoing commitment to biosecurity"*

and safeguarding animal health and welfare, whilst ensuring the sustainability of its operations. The permit granted is a testament to the Company's rigorous biosecurity protocols, which are critical under the regulations guiding the vaccination strategy. This proactive approach to disease prevention will see the approved farm, which represents approximately 5% of Astral's total breeding stock, vaccinating in the coming few days. We regard this as the beginning of an on-going process, and offers Astral a "blueprint" for further applications for a number of its breeding operations for which approval will be sought. We also believe that this provides the Department of Agriculture with a working example of the vaccination strategy. We thank the Department for all their hard work in achieving an outcome that is of importance for the industry. This breakthrough will now allow commercial application of the available vaccine in South Africa for the first time."

Arnold concluded: "Given the global rise in bird flu infections, this development represents a critical step in ensuring food security as well as protecting jobs in South Africa. We see this approval as a great advancement in the fight against bird flu and reinforces Astral's leadership in responsible poultry production."

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Company background

Astral Foods Limited (Astral), an integrated poultry producer, with key activities in the manufacturing of animal feeds, broiler genetics, production and sale of day-old chicks and hatching eggs, integrated parent breeding and broiler production operations, abattoirs as well as the sales and distribution of various key poultry brands. The brands in the Astral stable include:

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| • County Fair | • National Chicks |
| • Festive | • Meadow Feeds |
| • Goldi | • Tiger Animal Feeds |
| • Mountain Valley | • Tiger Chicks |
| • Ross Poultry Breeders | • Central Analytical Laboratories |