

SENTINEL GETS CLUCKY FOR AGRIBUSINESS

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RURAL & AGRIBUSINESS SALES & LEASING



WARREN Ebert's Sentinel Property Group is diversifying into the agribusiness sector with the acquisition of a major chicken farm facility in south east Queensland for \$22.8 million.

Sentinel has bought the Purga Breeder Farms outside Ipswich. The 157 acre site comprises three poultry breeder farms, four staff residences and associated infrastructure and has a total of 35,252 sqm under roof with a licensed capacity of 187,000 birds.

The modern facility was purpose built for Steggles, which occupies the property on a 20-year lease commencing 1 January 2007.

It is the first asset for the new open-ended Sentinel Income Trust, which has a forecast year one distribution of 12% pa.

Ebert said the company's entry into the agribusiness sector continued its 'first mover' strategy of identifying and capitalising on new emerging asset classes.

"We are not one to have all our eggs in one basket and our strategic acquisition of a major poultry business, and entry into the wider agribusiness sector, follows on from our recent focus on securing prominent assets in locations such as the Gold Coast and North Queensland that are well positioned to benefit from the rebounding tourism sector.

"Sentinel is committed to always staying ahead of the pack and our ability to identify new emerging investments, before they have been recognised by others, has been strongly supported by our investors. Similar to our expansion into tourism markets, we see a lot of positive upside in exposure to Australia's agribusiness sector and we are actively looking at further opportunities to grow our presence in this sector," he added.

Ebert said poultry is the strongest performing component of Australia's agribusiness sector with a reported increase in domestic production of over 75% in the past 10 years.

"Only 2% of the world's chicken meat is currently produced in Australia and we are the only continent that has not had bird flu, so there is enormous future international growth potential for this industry.

"The capital raising for the Purga acquisition was immediately oversubscribed by investors, continuing the ongoing strong demand for new Sentinel investment opportunities across all asset classes," Ebert said.

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