

Rolfes Leather expands into East Africa

Rolfes Leather, a division of JSE listed, Rolfes Holdings, says that 2019 sees the company explore the beam-house market in Ethiopia. Specialists in leather tanning chemicals and solutions, Rolfes Leather will offer its extensive knowledge, skills and chemical range to this growing market.

Quintin Marais, managing director, Rolfes Leather, says that Ethiopia has the 5th largest cattle herd in the world, making the potential leather market for bovine, sheep and goats significantly bigger than South Africa: "We have been researching this market segment for the past decade and feel the timing is right for us to run beam-house trials. While Ethiopia has a large market, its quality of raw materials is mediocre. Our team is perfectly placed to improve these processes and assist the country to grow its leather market sector."

This transfer of knowledge and technical expertise is welcome as Ethiopia looks to grow this industry through not only local tanneries, but also welcoming investment from foreign companies.

In 2015, the country expanded its export production range including consumer-focused goods. Marais says that while these products sell, the biggest market for leather remains the automotive sector: "Locally, automotive is by far our biggest market sector and we have gained immense experience in the associated tanning processes. It is exciting to take this knowledge into Ethiopia and assist in growing that market."

Rolfes Leather is currently targeting Namibia after which Marais says it will explore markets in Kenya and Tanzania.

For more information, visit www.rolfesza.net.