‘Abattoir faces liquidation

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By Timothy Gobah

THE ¢14.5 billion Accra Abattoir runs the high risk of being liquidated unless the shareholders provide an immediate lifeline of at least ¢2.5 billion.

This amount is needed to pay creditors and redeem bank overdraft, with the remainder serving as a working capital to keep the 240 cattle capacity per shift per day modern slaughter house operating.

The slaughter house can also handle 240 sheep/goats and 120 hogs or pigs per shift per day.

Currently, the abattoir, which faces intermittent utility service cuts, creating serious environmental problem in and outside the precincts of the compound, operates below 20 per cent capacity.

The stench from the abattoir as a result of intermittent water cuts has made it lose its reputation as a place where animals are slaughtered under hygienic surroundings at least for the moment.

Mr Emmanuel Simpson, Managing Director of the company, in an interview in Accra, stated that attempts to get the shareholders to rescue the project from its financial malaise, have so far proved futile and unless something immediate is done, management of the company will have no other option but to close down.

The Accra Abattoir is a limited liability company with government having the highest shares of 51.36 per cent and SSNIT 36.36 per cent.

Other shareholders are Accra Metropolitan Assembly, 7. 19 per cent; MASAI 48.4 per cent, and the Butchers Association of Ghana 0.02 per cent.

Mr Simpson said in last December a committee of the Board of Directors proposed that to save the company from collapse, the various shareholders must provide additional equity based on proportionate shareholding positions to raise ¢800 million to save it from collapse.

He said based on the shareholding, government was to pay ¢431.82 million, SSNIT ¢307.73 million whiles AMA pays ¢60.45 million.

He said MASAI had declared that it would no longer make any contribution to the company, while the position of the butchers association was not certain.

The three major shareholders are thus required to raise the money.

Mr Simpson said while SSNIT insisted that they will pay up only when the others have, the government asked that the company goes for a loan and insisted that the AMA must ensure that butchers patronise the facility.

The AMA is the only major shareholder which made good its share of ¢60.45 million.

Mr Simpson said the abattoir is a project with a future, despite the present mess in which it finds itself.

He said if the company could recapitalise, management intends to engage in the production of meat in addition to the service slaughter it now undertakes, site sales points at vantage points to service customer needs, seek strategic investors, and process animal waste that is generated at the company into feed.

Mr Simpson expressed regret that despite the fact that AMA is a shareholder, it permits butchers to slaughter their animals at unauthorised places in and around the city against the authority's by-laws.

He said in spite of the attempt by the former Minister of Presidential Affairs, Mr Edward Osei-Kwaku to arrange to have butchers patronise the facility as far back as last October, no positive response has been achieved.

He said currently workers salary is in arrears for close to seven months which has led to the lowering of morals and agitation, among the work force.

This, he said, threatens the security not only of the management of the company but the facilities as well. He, however, appealed to the shareholders to consider the long-term viability of the company and save it from collapse.