

# Premier Foods in court fight over use of name

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Premier Foods, in which investment group Brait has a majority stake, is taking Premier Food & Fishing (PFF) to court over the company's name.



The food producer says the move became necessary after the recently listed African Equity Empowerment Investments subsidiary failed to change its name by an agreed deadline.

Premier Foods group marketing and strategy executive Siobhan O'Sullivan said the company had taken issue with PFF's name even before it listed, as Premier Foods had spent decades building goodwill and reputation in its trademarks and trading name.

"The concern was that members of the public may erroneously believe that PFF is associated with Premier's business, when this is not the case," O'Sullivan said.

She said the dispute followed an agreement between the parties in which PFF and its parent company undertook to change the name. In its high court application on 4 August, Premier Foods claims PFF and African Equity Empowerment Investments are in breach of the agreement.

CEO of the parent company Khalid Abdulla said on Monday the company was aware of the proceedings. "Our attorneys have received the papers and, we will be defending this."

Gauteng-based and unlisted Premier Foods was founded almost 200 years ago. It expanded its operations in 2012 from traditional milling and baking into confectionery as well as home and personal care brands. Its brands include Snowflake, Iwisa, Super C and Vulco & Dove cotton wool.

Premier has operations in Lesotho and Swaziland. Additionally, the group exports to 15 countries with 19% of its revenue delivered from outside of the country.

PFF, established in 1952, is a predominantly commercial fishing, fish processing and marketing company. It listed on the JSE in March 2017. It is the largest black-owned and controlled fishing company in SA.

Its products include rock lobster, octopus, squid, abalone, pilchards, hake and environmentally friendly agribiotechnology products. PFF's share price fell more than 3% in intraday trade on Monday, trading at about R4.05.

*Source: Business Day*

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