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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT URGES THE PUBLIC TO JOIN IN THE FIGHT AGAINST RABIES

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agriculture, land reform & rural development

Department:
Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT URGES THE PUBLIC TO JOIN IN THE FIGHT AGAINST RABIES



All dogs must be vaccinated.



Dr Mpho Maja from Directorate: Animal Health during the vaccination of pets in Free State.

Samuel Kgatla

“If your dog or cat is correctly vaccinated against rabies, it cannot get the disease, and this protects humans,” said Dr Alicia Cloete from the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD), Directorate: Animal Health. Dr Cloete was raising awareness on the importance of rabies vaccination for dogs and cats ahead of World Rabies Day (WRD) on 28 September. She urged communities to contact their nearest state veterinary offices for further information on rabies

vaccination as provincial veterinary services across the country will be hosting rabies vaccination and awareness campaigns in September.

“In South Africa, veterinary services and health services work together to try to prevent rabies outbreaks in dog populations to safeguard our communities and to provide urgent treatment to people who have been exposed to animals with rabies,” she

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Dr Botlhe Modisane from Directorate: Animal Production Health overseeing the vaccination of dogs in Thaba Nchu.

added. WRD also celebrates everyone who works hard to prevent this disease. DALRRD encourages members of the public to be part of the global community and join in the world-wide fight against rabies by ensuring that their dogs and cats are correctly vaccinated against the disease.

WRD is an international initiative celebrated annually for the purpose of raising awareness on and accelerating efforts towards rabies elimination. It is also a day to call for action to eliminate rabies as a public health threat. The chosen theme, “breaking boundaries”, reflects the pressing need to move beyond the status quo, where rabies elimination remains elusive in many parts of the world, causing suffering and claiming both human and animal lives.

Rabies is a deadly viral disease that can be transmitted from animals to humans through bites or scratches. The virus attacks the nervous system and can cause death if not treated. There is no cure for rabies once symptoms appear, however, it is preventable. The best way to prevent rabies is to get vaccinated against the disease. Vaccination is also important for pets, as they can transmit the virus to humans.

Rabies symptoms in animals include a change in behaviour (either an aggressive or wild animal becoming tame and calm, or a calm animal becoming aggressive), paralysis or partial paralysis in many cases, abnormal vocalisation (dogs barking strangely), animals attacking inanimate objects (like biting rocks or trees), hydrophobia and foaming at the mouth, among others. However, rabies in animals is even more difficult to diagnose without laboratory testing as the signs can vary so much in different cases.

Vaccinating dogs, including puppies, through mass dog vaccination programmes is the most cost-effective strategy for preventing rabies in humans because it stops the transmission at its source. Effective vaccines are available to immunise people, both before and after potential exposures. It is a legal requirement in South Africa for all cats and dogs to be vaccinated at 12 weeks against the rabies virus and to have a booster before 12 months of age. Thereafter, yearly or every third year depending on the specific manufacturer.



HOUSEHOLDS STRUGGLING WITH FOOD SECURITY IN KWAZULU-NATAL



Premier Thami Ntuli receiving the National Food and Nutrition Security Survey KZN report from the MEC for Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.



Premier Thami Ntuli, Ms Thembeni kaMadlopha-Mthethwa and Dr Jemina Moeng at the NFSS handover.

Samuel Kgatla

The National Food and Nutrition Security Survey (NFSS) has revealed that more than 70% of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) households are food insecure, with 17,1% facing severe food shortages. These survey findings were handed over to the KZN Premier, Mr Thami Ntuli and the MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development, Ms Thembeni kaMadlopha-Mthethwa, during the Agricultural Extension Indaba held at the Olive Conference Centre in Durban on 20 August 2024. The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) commissioned the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) to conduct the NFSS between 2021 and 2023 for all provinces.

These findings were presented ahead of the World Food Day (WFD), which will be commemorated under the theme: "Right to food for a better life and a better future". The WFD commemoration is observed on 16 October as a reminder of the critical role that food plays in our lives. Beyond being a source of sustenance, food is a fundamental human right and a cornerstone of cultural identity.

The survey underscored significant regional disparities and highlighted crucial areas for intervention. The report provides the first ever, full-scale baseline assessment of the NFSS conducted in all 11 districts of KZN. Moreover, it stipulated that households in the province depend on food purchases, crop production and livestock for survival. Water shortages and recurrent droughts emerged as the main challenges. The survey's findings offer insights into the dire state of food and nutrition security in KZN. These results suggest that addressing food insecurity in KZN should focus on strategies to increase agricultural production systems among households.

Food and nutrition security is a constitutional right in South

Africa, and the government views it as a core strategic priority. Numerous policies, strategies and programmes have been developed and implemented to ensure that people have enough nutritious food to eat. HSRC fieldworkers visited more than 34 500 South African households across all nine provinces. The fieldworkers conducted interviews in local languages to gather data on the types and amount of food people consume. They also used questionnaires to gather household information on issues such as education, employment, and the effect of COVID-19 on households' ability to access food. In some households, children were measured and weighed to assess their health and growth.

During the presentation of the survey findings, Dr Jemina Moeng, Chief Director: Food Security at DALRRD, highlighted that KZN was facing a problem of obesity and access to land, and she advised everyone to eat healthily. "What is critical for the KZN report was access to land and obesity. People must eat healthy, nutritious food. KZN is not coming out strongly when it comes to commodities compared to other provinces. We must work together to address inequalities in food and nutrition security," she said.

Premier Ntuli welcomed the report and acknowledged the areas that needed special attention. "The survey is going to help us decide where we should bring serious intervention. It is our responsibility as KZN to improve food security as it is a crucial issue in our province and the issue of "one home one garden" must be realised. People cannot continue to buy spinach and onions while they can grow them instead. I believe in our extension officers, and we are ready to support them. We must use land to support agricultural activities. Agriculture plays a crucial role in our economy and alleviating poverty. We must adapt to challenges like climate change, urbanisation and rising input costs to support our farmers," he concluded.

SOUTH AFRICAN CONSUMERS STILL PAY MORE FOR FOOD, BUT INFLATION IS DECREASING



Eggs experienced a substantial price surge of 35,2%.

Ndivhuwo Thenga

The annual rate for food and non-alcoholic beverages (NAB) was 4,5% in July, down from 4,6% in June. Food and NAB registered a slowing inflation trend since its most recent high of 9,0% in November 2023 and is currently at its lowest since September 2020 (3,8%).

According to Statistics South Africa's latest consumer price index published on Wednesday, 21 August 2024, while overall food inflation has slowed down, the bread and cereals category reflected an upward trend. This category recorded an annual increase of 5,6% in July, up from June's 5,2%. Products with the largest annual increases in July include rice (21,3%), pizza or pies (11,6%) and samp (6,9%). Maize meal prices rose on average by 5,1%. On a positive note, bread flour, cake flour, pasta and macaroni are cheaper than a year ago.

During July 2024, the nominal cost of the National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC) 28-item urban food basket amounted to R1 276,80 compared to the R1 278,37 reported in June 2024. This represents a monthly decrease of 0,1% and a year-on-year increase of 7,4%. Between July 2024 and July 2023, 13 of these 28 items witnessed price increases that exceeded the inflation target of 6% set by the South African Reserve Bank (SARB). Notable products in this category include eggs, which experienced a substantial price surge of 35,2%, followed by instant coffee (27,1%), Ceylon/black tea (26,2%), rice (20,9%), oranges (19,4%), dried beans (16,8%), peanut butter (16,8%), baked beans (10,6%), apples (10,3%), cabbage (7,9%), maize meal (7,7%), white sugar (6,9%) and potatoes (6,9%).

Comparing July 2024 and July 2023, the food group that contributed most significantly to observed food inflation was coffee and tea, experiencing a substantial increase of 26,7%. Following this were bean products which increased by 15,7%,

dairy and eggs by 11,5%, fruit by 9,5%, bread and cereals by 9,4%, sugary foods by 6,9% and vegetables by 2,7%, while fats and oils, and animal products decreased by 0,3% and 0,4%, respectively. When looking at month-on-month price changes, coffee and tea showed the most significant escalation by 2,0%, followed by bread and cereals which increased by 1,0%, bean products by 0,3% and dairy and eggs by 0,1%. During this period, fats and oils, vegetables and fruit decreased by 0,3%, 2,8% and 4,5%, respectively. The price of sugary foods remained unchanged.

The global nominal food price index, as reported by the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO), decreased in July 2024. This decline was primarily driven by a reduction in the cereal price index (3,8%), which outweighed increases in other indices. The decline was primarily owing to improved global wheat and maize production prospects. The vegetable oil price index rose by 2,4%, driven by higher prices for sunflower and palm oils owing to tight supply conditions and increased demand. The sugar price index also increased by 0,7%, mainly due to concerns over adverse weather and monsoons affecting production in Brazil and India. The meat price index rose by 1,2%, as global demand for poultry and beef stabilised price fluctuations. On the contrary, the dairy price index remained virtually unchanged.



Black tea increased by 26,2% .

MINISTER NYHONTSO APPEALS TO COMMUNAL PROPERTY ASSOCIATION TO GRASP OPPORTUNITIES COMING WITH LAND PROVISION



MEC of Agriculture in North West, Madoda Sambatha, together with Bo-Moshe Communal Property Association's chairperson, Ms Noko.



Bo-Moshe Community and workers are reaping the fruits of their long lost land.

Mphahlela Rammutla

The Minister of Land Reform and Rural Development, Mr Mzwanele Nyhontso, says: "Government has an obligation to decolonise existing structures and processes that inhibit our people from fulfilling the ambition of living higher quality lives." The minister was addressing an ecstatic group of members of the Bo-Moshe, also known as Hlogo-Kgolo, in Majakaneng during a celebration of the successful conclusion of their land claim in North West last month.

During the event, the community received title deeds for a total of 661,8639 hectares of land, which comprise nine out of ten portions of land restored to the community to date. The Commission on the Restitution of Land Rights is expecting to transfer the remaining land parcel as soon as outstanding processes are concluded.

The land claim by the Bo-Moshe Community was lodged by Mr Ronald Mabale on behalf of the descendants of the originally dispossessed community and was submitted on 23 December 1998. Chairperson of the Bo-Moshe Communal Property Association, Ms Noko, narrated the story of the dispossession of her people sharing information on the brutality of scenes that occurred during the violent removal of the original small community of land owners of the Hlogo-Kgolo people. She said that the farmers were killed; some had their hands cut off, were buried alive and their livestock were taken away by force.

The events of dispossession left a trail of poverty, destruction, and division among the communities. Accepting the title deeds on behalf of the community, Ms Noko said: "By making most South Africans landless in the country of their birth, the apartheid system produced inequality, division and poverty. Today we are gathered here, united as South Africans witnessing the returning of the land to its rightful owners of Hlogo-Kgolo Community." She added that the foundation for the upliftment of her community has been laid, the challenge now was to build a better society.

"That is the legacy inherited by the democratically elected government in 1994. Government's land reform programme helps to redress the injustice of apartheid and fosters national reconciliation and stability," Ms Noko concluded.

Minister Nyhontso indicated that Bo-Moshe Community getting their land back comes with great expectations and that includes creating employment for the community. "The economic growth of land is not limited to farming; there are opportunities to expand to agro-processing. The CPA should strive to provide more revenue and employment opportunities to the community. It's our call for the compliance of the CPA. CPAs should desist from infighting," said the minister.

He further appealed to the community to add value to agricultural opportunities that have been presented to the CPA and the community.

The department notes that the community has lost technical skills and knowledge on farming owing to many years of dispossession and with help, the claimants will enter an "engagement period", during which they will receive comprehensive training in farming operations.

Safriblue, a key partner to this initiative, will invest R2 million annually over five years in upskilling the CPA Executive Committee and other beneficiaries. This includes funding for agricultural training, short business courses, and enrolling three youth students annually in agricultural colleges or universities.

Minister Nyhontso was accompanied by the North West Member of Executive Council for Agriculture and Land Reform, Madoda Sambatha and Madibeng Local Mayor, Councillor Maimane, to witness this historic day of reversing one of the legacies of apartheid.

MINISTER STEENHUISEN SIGNS THREE KEY MARKET ACCESS PROTOCOLS WITH CHINA'S GENERAL ADMINISTRATION OF CUSTOMS

“In the past, an outbreak of FMD anywhere in the country would have led to a shutdown of the entire beef export market. Under the new MOU, it will only be restricted from the affected province. This is just the beginning of opening the Chinese market for South African products with more exciting announcements to be made later in the year.”



Minister John Steenhuisen attending the meeting with officials from the Department of Agriculture.



Yu Jianhua, Minister of General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China (GACC) attending the meeting with his delegation.

Rony Moremi

The Minister of Agriculture, Mr John Steenhuisen, signed three key market access instruments, including a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on foot-and-mouth disease (FMD), and two protocols for the export of greasy wool and dairy products from South Africa to China. He did this during the state visit to China on 2 September 2024 on the margins of Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC). The dairy protocol will allow access to the Chinese market for South African dairy products, while the greasy wool protocol will keep the trade in greasy wool open after an agreed treatment method. The FMD MOU means that, for the first time in history, the Chinese will accept the compartmentalisation of the import of South African beef products.

Signing of these protocols is important as more South African products will be able to enter the Chinese market.

“In the past, an outbreak of FMD anywhere in the country would have led to a shutdown of the entire beef export market. Under the new MOU, it will only be restricted from the affected province. This is just the beginning of opening the Chinese market for South African products, with more exciting announcements to be made later in the year,” said Minister Steenhuisen.

The agreement to sign the protocols was made by both Minister Steenhuisen and the Minister of General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China (GACC), Yu Jianhua, during the sanitary and phytosanitary ministerial meeting on 16 August 2024 in Pretoria.

South Africa and the government of the People's Republic of China signed an agreement on Phytosanitary Cooperation and another on Cooperation in Animal Health and Quarantine back in 2000. The purposes of these agreements were to strengthen bilateral phytosanitary cooperation through preventing pests from entering a country and spreading to the other and to strengthen collaboration in the areas of animal quarantine and health to prevent the introduction of infectious and/or contagious and parasitic diseases into each country's territory. A few protocols for the export of agricultural products of plant origin have been signed articulating the technical requirements for the prevention of pests.

Minister Steenhuisen informed the delegation that sanitary and phytosanitary standards set out parameters for engagement between the Department of Agriculture and the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China.

Minister Yu Jianhua said that he sees great potential in the bilateral relations between the Department of Agriculture and GACC. “South Africa has an advantage on biosecurity and sanitary and phytosanitary measures and GACC would like to have frequent interactions in this area,” commented Minister YU Jianhua.

He added that he was comforted by the efforts made with regard to controlling the spread of FMD. He also shared that in 2023, China imported greasy wool from South Africa and that South Africa is the second-largest exporter of greasy wool to China.

when a new pest/regulated pest of plants has been detected in South Africa

1. Any user of land and/or land owner including any individual, municipal authorities, traditional authorities, community members, farmers, fruit and vegetable industries, universities and other affected role players in the Republic of South Africa must immediately notify the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Land Reform (DALRRD) of any suspected occurrence or detection of a new pest/ regulated pest/s in their area.
2. The above triggers the required regulatory actions and DALRRD shall launch an investigation to determine whether the detected pest is a regulated pest or not.
3. If the detected pest is not a regulated pest, the land user/owner shall be notified.
4. If the detected pest is regulated in terms of the Agricultural Pests Act, 1983 (Act No.36 of 1983) and is a quarantine pest, the area concerned shall be declared a quarantine area by the executive officer of the said Act. The DALRRD shall initiate awareness actions in collaboration with the land owners/users and other role players within the affected area on the appropriate management practices for the regulated pest.
5. The land user/ owner of the affected land shall be served with an official order in terms of Section 7 of the Agricultural Pests Act, 1983 (Act No. 36 of 1983).
6. The land user/ owner of the affected land shall be advised accordingly about the phytosanitary control measures to be complied with in terms of Section 6 of the Agricultural Pests Act, 1983 (Act No. 36 of 1983) as prescribed by the official order served.
7. The prescribed measures may include specific management practices to control the pest and prohibition of movement of host plants or plant products in and out of the area concerned as per the official order served.

NB: The above measures will assist in protecting our plant and plant resources against phytosanitary pests in order to maximise crop yield and to safeguard our export markets.

To report occurrence or suspected occurrence of the pest contact:	For inspection and removal permit contact:	For awareness and promotion contact:
Directorate: Plant Health Division: Early Warning Systems Tel: 012 319 6384 Email: JanHendrikV@dalrrd.gov.za	Directorate: Inspection Services Tel 012 319 8735/8795/8763 Email: removalpermits@dalrrd.gov.za	Directorate: Food Import & Export Standards Division: Plant Health Promotion Tel: 012 319 6295/6475 Email: info.sps@dalrrd.gov.za



Bactrocera dorsalis.
Photo courtesy: Bob Copeland



Fall armyworm (larva)
Photo courtesy: Desiree van Heerden



Banana Bunchy Top Virus symptoms (Typical dwarfed, upright growth and bunched at the top)
Photo courtesy: Dr Elize Jooste

BIOSECURITY BREACHES ARE A SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGE GLOBALLY

Mercia Smith



African Swine Fever in pigs and avian influenza in poultry are some of the challenges faced by the agricultural sector.

Biosecurity breaches are not uniquely South African and have become a significant challenge globally, according to Wandile Sihlobo, Chief Economist at Agbiz. Frequent outbreaks of the foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) in cattle, African Swine Fever in pigs and avian influenza in poultry are a common occurrence. In 2022, six of the nine province of South Africa reported outbreaks.

South Africa had an FMD-free zone without vaccination prior to January 2019. Since January 2019, 10 outbreak events were reported which compromised the status of the FMD-free zone without vaccination. Five of these FMD outbreak events were resolved and closed with the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH), and five are open.

“These outbreaks weigh heavily on the cattle industry’s fortunes and can have a negative impact on livestock production exports to a range of markets for some time,” says Mr Sihlobo. Any negative impact on the livestock and poultry industry risks presenting a material impact on the fortunes of South Africa’s agriculture. This subsector accounts for roughly half of agriculture’s gross value added.

Mr Sihlobo says that South Africa’s biosecurity breaches signal some serious capacity challenges in farm biosecurity measures and the country’s veterinary and related support services, mainly laboratories, livestock movement control and vaccine production.

“The South African government and organised agriculture and industry bodies should work together closely to address the country’s biosecurity challenges,” Mr Sihlobo urged.



Biosecurity is the prevention of disease causing agents entering or leaving any place where they can pose a risk to farm animals, other animals, humans, or the safety and quality of food products.



These outbreaks weigh heavily on the cattle industry’s fortunes and can have a negative impact on livestock production.

MINISTER NYHONTSO REASSURES TRADITIONAL LEADERS OF HIS COMMITMENT TO ACCELERATE LAND REFORM



Minister Nyhontso listening to issues raised by traditional leaders.



Some of the House members who attended the sitting in Parliament.

Tabisa Mashiya and Qhawe Ntuli

The Minister of Land Reform and Rural Development, Mr Mzwanele Nyhontso, reassured traditional leaders of his commitment towards accelerating land reform to fulfil the promises made to the landless people of South Africa. He emphasised this when he presented his five-year strategic plan to members of the National House of Traditional and Koi-San Leaders in a sitting which took place in Parliament on 13 August 2024. At this sitting, the minister also addressed concerns raised by traditional leaders regarding the functioning of communal property associations (CPAs) in traditional communities.

Outlining his plans, Minister Nyhontso said, “The department will speed up the programme of issuing title deeds to farmers through the land redistribution programme, further indicating that this programme is critical towards redefining land ownership patterns in the country and in augmenting available funding options for farmers.” He further said that the department was also awaiting a decision on the Expropriation of Land Bill that has been processed through Parliament to further explore ways of accelerating land reform. Minister Nyhontso stated that, during his term, he will continue to recognise the plight of communities who were living under the former Coloured areas whose land was taken away through the past oppressive laws, mentioning that land will be transferred to those communities in title through the Transformation of Certain Rural Areas Act (TRANCRAA), 1998 (Act No. 94 of 1998) process.

“We will continue in terms of the Restitution of Land Rights Act to provide development support for restituted land,” he stated. The minister indicated that the partnership with the Department of Agriculture and the provincial departments will assist in providing funding and agricultural support for agricultural activities on land under traditional leadership. He said, “In the settlement of land claims to date, where land restoration has been chosen, trusts and CPAs have been preferred as land holding entities by some

communities.”

Minister Nyhontso cited issues such as conflicts and infighting, failure to comply with founding legislation, inadequate governance, management and administration knowledge and inadequate financial support of business initiatives as some of the challenges that some CPAs have been riddled with. He added that some have been in disagreements with traditional leaders, and in this current term, he will consider the review of CPAs and the Commonal Property Associations Act, 1996 (Act No. 28 of 1996) to address the legislative gaps identified. He appealed for participation of traditional leaders in this consultation process to ensure that the land that is restored benefits their communities and provides jobs, food security and economic growth. “We will also continue to train CPA executives on governance to ensure stability,” he remarked.

At this sitting, traditional leaders mentioned the presence of CPAs in traditional communities as one of the problematic issues that impedes development in their communities. Nkosi Joyi, one of the members of the House, compared the existence of CPAs in traditional communities to having two bulls in one kraal, adding that the existence of these structures somehow results in power struggles and competition for control of communities. He requested the minister to look at the power dynamics that exist between CPAs and traditional councils and suggest ways of mitigating them to ensure that CPAs understand their roles and responsibilities in traditional authorities.

Nkosi Langa Mavuso, Deputy Chairperson of the National House of Traditional and Khoisan Leaders, urged the minister to work with traditional leaders in implementing the Land Summit resolutions. He stated that some farms allocated to individuals in their communities are never utilised and as such food security gets compromised. Nkosi Mavuso asked the minister to allow traditional leaders to utilise these farms to make them productive, pointing that these farms can be recapitalised and turned into profitable businesses again.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTED TO INTENSIFYING BIOSECURITY REGULATORY SYSTEM FOR CITRUS FARMERS

Samuel Kgatla



DALRRD officials tasting citrus during the awareness meeting at Uitenhage.

When the Minister of Agriculture, Mr John Steenhuisen, assumed office in July, he mentioned biosecurity as one of his main priorities for the sector, and the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) has heeded his call by hosting a citrus biosecurity and promotion meeting. This public awareness meeting on the regulatory framework regarding the 5 km citrus-free buffer zone with land owners and farmers was held on 24 July 2024 at the Citrus Research International (CRI)'s Citrus Foundation Block (CFB) at Uitenhage, Eastern Cape.

The intention was for the department to create awareness among citrus land owners, farmers, extension practitioners and other role players on the importance of the CFB and legislative implications around the foundation as it relates to maintaining the buffer zone as part of biosecurity measures in terms of the Agricultural Pests Act, 1983 (Act No. 36 of 1983) and Control Measures R.110 of 27 January 1984, as amended.

Citrus is one of South Africa's most important subsectors in the agricultural sector which is a significant contributor to job creation and economic activity in the country's rural communities, with over 100 000 ha of land dedicated to production. This awareness initiative is part of the department's intervention to build a productive and sustainable agricultural sector.

The department's National Plant Protection Organisation (NPPO) is collaborating with farmers and strategic partners in the citrus industry to help the industry to always be ready for any

possible risk management that relates to quarantine diseases or pests. During the meeting, the delegates explored the importance of the citrus-free buffer zone, engaged with CRI representatives, toured the CFB facility, and enjoyed a delightful citrus tasting of the different cultivars whose propagation material are part of about 150 000 seedlings in the CFB.

CRI is a research and technical services organisation based in South Africa which focuses primarily on citrus development in Southern Africa. The Citrus Foundation Block is CRI's facility and is responsible for increasing and releasing propagation material to the citrus industry or registered nurseries. The 5 km radius around the CFB has been declared a citrus-free zone with the aim of minimising the risk of diseases' introduction into the CFB.

Mr Macmichael Dwane, who is one of the farmers from Uitenhage, mentioned that they need such awareness training to improve the citrus industry. "We have learnt a lot and we do not want diseases in the sector. Diseases are dangerous and awareness like this do help farmers. We are fortunate to have enough water in this area and we must work well with the government," he said.

According to Professor Paul Fourie, CRI Biosecurity Manager, they are dealing with propagation material that include distributing citrus cutting budwood and seeds to many nurseries in South Africa. "The industry is built from what comes from the foundation," he said, adding, "It is a unique structure operating like a one-stop shop for the citrus industry. It is vital that the biosecurity of citrus is always protected."

Mr Mpho Sekgala, Deputy Director from Directorate: Food Import and Export Standards, said that Government needs to collaborate with farmers on awareness to move the industry forward. "We need to thank the Citrus Foundation Block for the good work it is doing, and this is so far one of the best facilities. Biosecurity is everyone's responsibility—from farmer to a gardener, from a villager to an international traveller, and local traveller to an ordinary citizen," he said.

Dr Maanda Rambauli, Deputy Director from the Directorate: Plant Health, also emphasised the need for community members, land owners and farmers to comply with the 5 km citrus-free buffer zone where no one is allowed to plant or cultivate any citrus trees. It is a restricted zone with the aim of preventing introduction and the distribution of pests and diseases into the CFB. He indicated that the buffer zone regulation is the law of the Republic and that any keeping, cultivating and planting of citrus trees within the 5 km radius around the CFB is contravention of the law.

INTRODUCTION OF THE E-CERTIFICATION (eCert) SYSTEM

in the PHYTOSANITARY ENVIRONMENT

WHAT IS AN E-CERTIFICATION (eCert) SYSTEM

This is an online platform created to receive, verify, process and deliver certification information to trading partners involved with plants and plant products export. This simply means all phytosanitary certifications for export of plants and plant products is managed online with no hard-copy paper applications.

BENEFITS OF THE E-CERTIFICATION (eCert) SYSTEM IN THE PHYTOSANITARY ENVIRONMENT

- Applications are completely managed online.
- If the ePhytosanitary certificate/ePhyto is rejected or approved, an automated response is sent to the client.
- Applicants are able to track their applications on the dashboard.
- Applicants can select at which office they would want their applications processed.
- This also brings efficiency in the phytosanitary certification system.
- Reduces fraudulent activities through certificate traceability.
- Helps to eliminate lost documents.
- Minimises human error on paperwork.
- Reduces environmental impact by lowering paper usage.

GETTING STARTED/WHAT TO DO TO START USING THE SYSTEM

All role players involved in the export of plants and plant products must

register on the eCert platform, as only applications done on the online system will be accepted. Visit the eCert system on www.ecert.co.za to begin with the registration. If you experience any problems on how to register, visit the eCert support team for assistance.

E-CERTIFICATION (eCert) SUPPORT:

Users of the system will be able to receive support by contacting the following parties:

- IT Technical Support: Please use the ticketing system on www.ecert.co.za to log a technical support question or email support@ecert.co.za.
- User Guides: User guides are available under <https://ecert.co.za/guides/> and are being revised and updated periodically.
- Phytosanitary Queries: The normal channels used for such queries still apply or e-mail e-cert.enquiries@Dalrrd.gov.za
- Queries: These can be directed to the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development: on Phillel@Dalrrd.gov.za, Tel 012 309 8764/ 060 973 4233 and PhindileN@Dalrrd.gov.za, Tel 012 319 6043/076 223 9055

SIGNING OF CLIMATE CHANGE ACT WIDELY WELCOMED



The Climate Change Act is South Africa's first comprehensive legislation to encourage the development of an effective climate change response.

Mercia Smith

President Cyril Ramaphosa signed the Climate Change Act, 2024 (Act No. 22 of 2024) into law on Tuesday 23 July 2024. This is an important move to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and enhance climate resilience across various sectors, including agriculture. The Minister of Agriculture, John Steenhuisen, welcomed the legislation and explained that the Climate Change Act would enable a more coordinated approach to planning and mitigating these effects, crucially focusing on building resilience in the sector.

The Climate Change Act is South Africa's first comprehensive legislation to encourage the development of an effective climate change response. The Act sets out the legal mandate for a country-wide climate change response and the alignment of the country's

climate change response policy and actions. This decision implies, among others, that this Act will include mitigation and adaptation actions, which will play a key role in regulating the country's contribution to the climate change response as it strengthens the country's ability to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and build climate resilience.

The policy gives direction and certainty for sound investments that will reduce the country's carbon emissions and take the country to a lower carbon economy, thereby accelerating the Just Energy Transition. South Africa has set itself the target of achieving zero emissions by 2050 as part of South Africa's Low-Emission Development Strategy (SA LEDS).

TOPA NAMA POULTRY COOPERATIVE AIMS FOR COMMERCIAL FARMING

Obed Makgoale



Cooperative members together with trainee learners watering crops at section of vegetable production.

With the high rate of unemployment in the country, especially in rural areas, the Topa Nama Cooperative says it is fighting to employ more community members in its chicken production project in the Sekhukhune District Municipality in Limpopo. The project, which consists of five members: four females and one male, was registered as a cooperative in 2010 following a successful application and registration process.

The Ga-Mashabela Community and the surrounding villages in the Sekhukhune District can access fresh vegetables and live chickens at lower prices because of the Topa Nama offering. In addition, they no longer have to travel long distances to buy chickens, as they can do so locally and closer to their homes.

According to Ms Raisibe Choenyane, board member of Topa Nama, nearby schools, hawkers, catering clubs, wedding events and funeral organisers are their regular customers. "As we speak, we are also playing an important role in the skills development of the rural communities," explained Choenyane.

She further said that they are currently housing 20 learners under the eight-month Agri-Seta Learnership Programme in partnership with the company called African Solution. "This is the second group of learners for whom the cooperative is providing space for further learning purposes," she added. The learners are paid a monthly stipend until they exit the programme.

Mr Daniel Letsoalo, District Director at the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development office in Sekhukhune indicated that with the support of Government, the project will grow. "Although they are currently relying on an informal market, which is doing well, the aim of Government is to see small-holder farmers graduating into commercial farming and we are confident that the Topa Nama Cooperative will ultimately graduate to commercial level."

"As the cooperative expands and increases production, we are looking forward to seeing them participating in the formal markets such as the long-awaited Lebowakgomo Abattoir, whose operations now seem imminent," added Letsoalo.

Although the cooperative was mainly registered to farm with vegetables, poultry, and livestock, the poultry aspect being the broiler production business is currently the main commodity. The cooperative has four houses that can accommodate about 4 400 chickens. There is also a section for vegetable production that is under production and has the potential to expand further.

In the current financial year, DALRRD has supported the project with poultry feed, 4 000 chicks and various poultry production equipment to the value of approximately R500 000

In addition, various production equipment, including chicken feed, sawdust, medication, water tanks, lights, gas heaters/brooders and automatic egg incubators and hatchers has been provided by the department.

The Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality has also supported the project in the last financial year and on-going support is being provided by the Limpopo Provincial Department of Agriculture (LDARD).



Four of the 25 trainee learners inside chicken house.

LOUDEST VOICE FOR AGRICULTURE WILL BE MINE, SAID MINISTER JOHN STEENHUISEN



Mr John Steenhuisen, Minister of Agriculture recently held a round-table discussion with farmer and agricultural organisations.

Mercia Smith

“I’ll be the loudest for agriculture,” said Mr John Steenhuisen, Minister of Agriculture at a round-table discussion with farmer and agricultural organisations on 6 August 2024 in Pretoria. He further appreciated the productive meeting he had with the farmer organisations. “I had a productive meeting with agricultural organisations, from big ones such as Agbiz and Grain SA to small ones such as the Black Agricultural Commodities Federation,” he added.

These organisations had the opportunity to share their concerns, ideas and areas where they feel the department could assist and do better. The minister shared his vision of turning agriculture into the engine room of job creation, food security and economic growth.

Mr Steenhuisen emphasised that partnership with farm workers is important as they are agriculture’s greatest asset. Partnerships with agricultural organisations that do research, development and extension services are also areas where he is looking forward to building growing relationships.

The minister concluded by saying: “We will get frustrated with each other and we will not necessarily agree on everything, but I

will make sure that the path forward will benefit most.” He said he is going to organise bilateral meetings with the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition and the Department of Transport as soon as possible as some of the issues raised by the industry organisations involve these departments as well as the Department of Agriculture.



On the left is Mr John Steenhuisen, Minister of Agriculture, talking to Dr Moshe Swart, CEO of the Black Agricultural Commodities Federation.