Pulse of the land

DALRRDnews

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TITLE DEED HANDOVER BRINGS JOY AND PRIDE TO ACORNHOEK COMMUNITY

Samuel Kgatla

Minister Thoko Didiza talking to the community of Acornhoek during the handing over of title deeds.

The long wait for the title deed to their land is finally over for the Leamington community in Mpumalanga. This comes after the official settlement of the community land claim and handing over of the title deed by the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) on 18 November 2022 in Acornhoek under the Bushbuckridge Local Municipality.

The title deed was issued to the community for the remainder of the farms Andover 210 KU and Leamington 207 KU, which are currently used as a nature reserve called Andover Nature Reserve. The properties are both currently owned by the land claimants through the Andover and Leamington Community Property Association (CPA).

The claim was lodged by various individuals on behalf of their respective communities and families. The claims were later consolidated in consultation with the two individual and the three principal claimants in their capacities as chiefs of the three respective communities. These claims were lodged before the cut-off date of 31 December 1998, as set out in the Restitution of Land Rights Act, 1994 (Act No.22 of 1994). The total number of hectares of the properties claimed is 6 552,1700.

DALRRD spent R34 729 291,62 in financial compensation to community members and the available balance on the commitment register to date is R275 622,38. The Office of the Regional Land Claims Commissioner in Mpumalanga is in the process of compiling and submitting a phase 3 S42D submission for 300

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agriculture, land reform & rural development

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

2030 NDP

households, which will be the full and final settlement of the claim as financial compensation through a standard settlement offer/ housing quantum. Payment is expected in the 2023/24 financial year.

Chairperson of the Andover and Leamington Communal Property Association (CPA), Mr Walter Malumane said that cooperation between the claimants and chiefs is important. “Together we can achieve more, and I am appealing to everyone to work well with us. We faced some difficulties, however, at the end we won. We must work together to improve this place. We are celebrating because we got our place. It has been a long and painful journey, but we thank the minister for bringing this matter to fruition,” he said.

The Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, Ms Thoko Didiza, echoed the same sentiment and encouraged the claimants to work together with the chiefs. “A title deed is not only a document that proves you are the rightful owner of the property, but also a document that secures your livelihood and your family’s future. We must not forget where we come from as we celebrate today. We are witnessing the return of land to the Andover and Leamington community, and the land must benefit all the beneficiaries. It is important for the chiefs to work with the communities,” she said.

Beneficiaries of Andover and Leamingtong community celebrating with the minister after the handing over of the title deed.

Andover and Leamington community representatives posing for a photo with the title deed.

Mr Walter Malumane holding the title deed for Andover and Leamington community in Mpumalanga.

Representatives of Andover and Leamington community holding a title deed handed over by the department.

OUTBREAK OF RABBIT HAEMORRHAGIC DISEASE (RHD) IN WESTERN CAPE AND NORTHERN CAPE

Press release

The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development wishes to announce the outbreak of the Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease (RHD) in the Western and Northern Cape.

The department received reports of die-offs of wild rabbits and hares from the Karoo areas in Western Cape and Northern Cape. State Veterinary Services, private veterinarians and the Department of Forestry Fisheries and the Environment were involved in field investigations. Postmortems were performed and samples collected to confirm the cause of the deaths. Diagnostic tests were performed at the Onderstepoort Veterinary Research Laboratory and the cause was confirmed as RHD.

RHD is a disease caused by a virus (Calicivirus) and this is the first detection of the disease in South Africa. The disease results in a high number of deaths in rabbits and hares and animals die suddenly with bleeding in the organs such as the liver, kidney and spleen. At this stage it is still unclear how the disease could have entered the country, since the importation of rabbits and hares is not allowed. Investigations are underway to determine whether illegal importation could be the source.

The control of RHD in rabbitries relies mainly on vaccination, but the vaccine is not available in South Africa. This increases the importance of biosecurity measures in rabbitries and anywhere where rabbits or hares are kept. Rabbit owners are advised to ensure that their rabbits are secured and must prevent any contact with other rabbits or hares, either directly or indirectly through people or equipment.

Rabbits that can be affected by RHD.

FARMERS PLEAD FOR SUPPORT FROM THE PRESIDENT AND DALRRD

Samuel Kgatla

Smallholder and subsistence farmers of Northern Cape pleaded for more support from President Cyril Ramaphosa and the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD). They mentioned this during the successful Fifth Presidential Imbizo held in Upington at Mxolisi Dicky Jacobs Stadium at the end of October 2022. The president was accompanied by several ministers and deputy ministers, the Northern Cape premier, MECs and district mayors. The Presidential Imbizo was held under the theme: “Leave No One Behind”.

Some farmers told the president that if they could receive enough support from the department, then they could do better. Unemployment is one of the biggest plagues facing Northern Cape residents. Other issues and concerns raised include teenage pregnancies, shortage of resources to support farmers, abuse of seasonal workers by some farmers, mining not benefitting immediate communities and drugs in several communities. Furthermore, government was requested to review the issue of those older than 35-years not being included in most job recruitments.

Responding to the matters raised relating to DALRRD, Minister Thoko Didiza told everyone that the department is planning to resuscitate the One Household, One Hectare programme. “We will work with the MECs in order to address the issue of household food security. We are also going to work with the Department of Employment and Labour to deal with the issue of abuse of seasonal workers,” she said.

President Ramaphosa told residents that all their concerns are taken seriously. “We are a government that listens to the people. No one must be left behind and whatever we do must be inclusive and involve our people. The majority of unemployed people is the youth, but we are also targeting those older than 35-years because they are affected by unemployment. There are answers for some questions and others will take time for the Government to respond to. This was one of the best imbizos,” he said.

The president emphasised that the challenges raised during imbizos will not be left on the shelf, but will be acted upon with resolutions expected to be found by government. Ministers and deputy ministers were given a chance to respond to the questions raised by residents and share their plans on how they are going to help them.

President Cyril Ramaphosa addressing the people of Northern Cape during the Presidential Imbizo.

Ministers Didiza, Ndabeni-Abrahams, Nxesi and De Lille attended the Presidential Imbizo in Northern Cape.

BOERE PLEIT OM ONDERSTEUNING VAN DIE PRESIDENT EN DLGHLO

Samuel Kgatla

Kleinboere en bestaansboere van die Noord-Kaap het by President Cyril Ramaphosa en die Departement van Landbou, Grondhervorming en Landelike Ontwikkeling (DLGHLO) om meer ondersteuning gepleit. Hulle het dit gedurende die vyfde suksesvolle Presidensiële Imbizo, wat aan die einde van Oktober in Upington by die Mxolosi Dicky Jacobs Stadion gehou was, genoem. Die president was deur verskeie ministers en adjunkministers, die Noord-Kaapse premier, LUR'e en distriksburgemeesters vergesel. Die Presidensiële Imbizo was met die tema: "Los niemand agter nie" gehou.

Sommige boere het vir die president gesê dat hulle beter kan doen as hulle genoeg ondersteuning van die departement kan kry. Werkloosheid is een van die grootste probleme wat Noord-Kaapse inwoners in die gesig staar. Ander kwessies en bekommernisse wat geopper is sluit in: tienerswangerskappe, 'n tekort aan hulpbronne om boere by te staan, seisoenale werkers wat deur sommige boere misbruik word, mynbou wat nie die nabye gemeenskappe bevoordeel nie en dwelms in baie gemeenskappe. Die regering is ook verder versoek om die kwessie van diegene ouer as 35 jaar wat nie in meeste werkswerwings ingesluit word nie, te hersien.

In reaksie op die DLGHLO verwante kwessies het Minister Thoko Didiza gesê die regering beplan om die "Een huishouding, Een hektaar" program te laat herleef. "Ons sal saam met die LUR'e werk om die huishoudelike voedselsekerheid probleem aan te spreek. Ons gaan ook saam met die Departement van Indiensneming en Arbeid werk om die saak van seisoenale werkers wat misbruik word, te hanteer," het sy gesê.

President Ramaphosa het vir inwoners gesê dat al hulle sorge ernstig opgeneem word. "Ons is 'n regering wat na die mense luister. Niemand mag agtergelaat word nie, en wat ookal ons doen moet inklusief wees en al ons mense insluit. Die meerderheid van werklose mense is jeugdiges, maar ons teiken ook diegene ouer as 35 jaar omdat hulle deur werkloosheid geraak word. Daar is antwoorde vir sommige vrae en dit sal tyd neem om op ander vrae te reageer. Dit was een van die beste imbizos," het hy gesê.

Die president het beklemtoon dat die uitdagings wat tydens die imbizos geopper is nie opsy gesit sal word nie, en daar sal opgetree word met die verwagting dat die regering oplossings sal vind.

Daar was vir ministers en adjunkministers 'n kans gegee om op inwoners se vrae te reageer en hulle planne te deel oor hoe hulle die gemeenskap gaan help.

President Cyril Ramaphosa het die mense van Noord-Kaap tydens die Presidensiële Imbizo toegespreek.

Ministers Didiza Ndabeni-Abrahams, Nxesi en De Lille het die Presidensiële Imbizo in die Noord-Kaap bygewoon.

DIMBAZA GETS FIRSTHAND INFORMATION ABOUT LAND CLAIMS

Matsepo Malatswane

The Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, Mr Mcebisi Skwatsha, together with the MEC for Social Development in Eastern Cape, Ms Fanta, led an information session on land claims. The session allowed the community of Dimbaza to engage with the deputy minister on various issues pertaining to the land claims challenges facing the community.

Furthermore, Deputy Minister Skwatsha handed over some much needed agricultural start-up tools, such as JoJo tanks, seedling, etc., to the Toymzantsi Community Project in Mzantsi Village, as well as to the Qhayiya Care Centre in Madakeni Village. The agricultural tools are a means to revive and encourage the spirit of cultivating home food gardens, thereby alleviating hunger. The project owners were enthusiastic on the amount of work put in by the department to help their projects succeed.

Government has enacted several pieces of supporting legislation as part of a comprehensive land reform programme to redress inequity in land ownership and transform the spatial landscape.

The purpose of the session was to give feedback to the community regarding the settlement of their land claims and forge a way forward in pursuing common actions towards rural development. The session also afforded the community an opportunity to interact with the department on issues pertaining to land claims. The community highlighted their concerns and needed reassurance that their land claim issues are being taken into consideration.

Mr Zama Memela from the Eastern Cape Regional Land Claims Commission engaged with the community of Dimbaza on the progress of their concerns. Giving feedback to the community regarding progress on the settlement of their land claims, Mr Memela said that the concerns raised have been taken into consideration and will be addressed by the commission.

The commission is mandated to provide for the restitution of rights in land to persons or communities dispossessed of such rights after 19 June 1913 as a result of past racially discriminatory laws or practices.

Land reform is a moral, social and economic imperative. Government will continue to accelerate the pace of land reform within the framework of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, respective legislation and according to the rule of law. It will at all times act in the best interest of our nation. Government's intention is to unlock the economic potential of land and supports the land restitution and redistribution process, which supports agricultural production and investment in the land.

By bringing more land into productive use and giving more South Africans assets and opportunities for sustainable livelihoods, the country is creating conditions for greater, more inclusive and more meaningful growth.

Government provides support to beneficiaries of land redistribution through financing, training, market access, irrigation and the provision of seeds, fertiliser and equipment, all of which contribute to the sustainability of emerging agricultural enterprises.

South Africans are urged to be patient and trust the parliamentary processes to address land dispossession, rural development and food security. The proposed constitutional amendment seeks to clarify and reinforce the fundamental principles of the property clause, which, among other things, prohibits the arbitrary deprivation of property and holds that expropriation is possible in the public interest, subject to just and equitable compensation.

Agriculture start-up tools and food products.

Community of Dimbaza came in numbers.

DEPUTY MINISTER MEETS COMMUNAL PROPERTY ASSOCIATIONS IN EHLANZENI DISTRICT

Innocent Mhlanga

Deputy Minister, Mcebisi Skwatsha with MEC Busisiwe Shiba, Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs.

Deputy Minister Mcebisi Skwatsha, accompanied by senior departmental officials, held an engagement with various communal property associations (CPAs) in Mpumalanga to outline what transpired in the build-up to the Presidential Imbizo in May of this year and to report on progress about the resolutions taken during the previous engagements.

Several CPAs were invited for a one-on-one engagement with the deputy minister and to listen to their concerns and challenges regarding their CPAs. Some of the issues raised with the deputy minister and his team had been left unattended during the previous engagement held in Badplaas.

CPAs that managed to attend the meeting included Matsamo, Mkhomane, Mokolobe, Babina Kwena Baga Maja Kgomu, Mpakeni, Mlegeni, Dinkwanyane, Matsamo, Sabaan, Bakoni ba Phetla, Nwandlamhari, Mawulu, Endlovini, Mashobotho, Mbuyane and Morolemang.

They raised similar challenges, some of the issues included the arrangement of elective AGMs; most CPAs have not been able to elect new leadership because of differences between EXCO and their communities, and some could not elect new leadership because there were court orders preventing them from taking place. In addition, some CPAs had not implemented findings of forensic audits implicating the executive committee in wrong doing.

Furthermore, other challenges included issues pertaining to illegal land invasion on sections of certain farms by community members, the illegal selling of land and the lack of basic services owing to their land not being in the spatial plans of the local municipality. Additionally, access roads to some of the farms are also a major challenge. Other CPAs were not happy with their land saying the properties are unsuitable for farming owing to the mountainous terrain.

Allegations of rampant corruption also came up strongly as it emerged that only a few members are allowed to elective and community meetings. Non-beneficiaries are co-opted into the CPA and taking up leading positions.

Other challenges that were raised include the South African Police Services (SAPS)—there are allegations that they are interfering with operations on the farms, and that they collude with officials by using one of the farmhouses as a place of residence without paying rent money.

Responding to the CPAs, the deputy minister requested all officials to be professional when dealing with the communities, adding that they should maximise the levels and channels of communication with the claimants because some of the complaints revolved around their behaviour. He also instructed the top management of provincial shared services centre (PSSC) to attend to those issues raised by the CPAs. The deputy minister emphasised that the outstanding AGMs should be resolved at least by the end of March 2023. He also promised to make sure that their issues are attended to, and solutions to all the challenges are found.

Members of the CPAs that attended the meeting in Mpumalanga.

NARYSEC GRADUATES ARMED WITH SKILLS FOR EMPLOYMENT MARKET

Sam Kgatla

Deputy Minister Mcebisi Skwatsha presided over NARYSEC Certification Ceremony.

The Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development), Mcebisi Skwatsha, presided over the tenth Western Cape National Rural Youth Service Corps (NARYSEC) certification ceremony. This fruitful ceremony was held at Hazendal Wine Estate in Stellenbosch on 4 November 2022.

The Western Cape NARYSEC programme trained 244 youths (145 females and 99 males) in various skills programmes between 2017 and 2019. The onset of COVID-19 in 2020 delayed the preparation of the certification ceremony and the continuation of the NARYSEC programme.

Had everything remained normal, the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) would have held the twelfth certification ceremony; however, the pandemic did not discourage the department to plan the memorable event. An amount of R18 million was invested in the training of NARYSEC participants. DALRRD has recruited 3 433 youth in the Western Cape since the inception of the programme.

DALRRD established the NARYSEC programme in September 2010 with the aim of equipping unemployed rural youth with appropriate skills to enable them to gain enhanced access to economic opportunities.

The youth participants who were trained at different colleges received qualifications in the following fields: firefighting, electrical studies, accounting, plant production, marketing, pipe fitting, welding, fresh meat processing, construction surveying, water and waste water treatment, processes control supervision, fruit packing and grading processing. Several participants have already found employment in the police service, municipalities, hospitals and other professions.

King Ngobeni, one of the participants who received a certificate, thanked the department for the continuous support throughout the programme. Ngobeni managed to open a gym in Saldanha Bay after obtaining skills through the NARYSEC programme.

Deputy Minister Skwatsha congratulated all the participants and wished them well. “I am happy to preside over this certification ceremony for our young people. NARYSEC inspires hope and there is discipline instilled in those who went through the programme. The choices you make is very important and the issue of discipline is crucial. I want all of you to do your best after receiving the certificate,” he said.

NARYSEC participants who received certificates during the ceremony held in Stellenbosch.

Deputy Minister Mcebisi Skwatsha awarding a certificate to Selwyn Maquena.

NARYSEC HAILED AS SKILLS DEVELOPMENT HUB IN THE RURAL COMMUNITIES

Mphahlela M Rammutla

A graduate of the National Rural Youth Corps (NARYSEC), Emile Urion, from Northern Cape hailed the programme as a skills development centre in the heart of the rural communities.

Emile Urion is one of the 353 participants who received their awards at the pass-out parade held at the South African Infantry, Oudtshoorn, Western Cape on 27 October.

“I value this programme and I can see the difference the programme is making in the lives of young people, mostly in rural areas. I see myself as a firefighter in the next year after completing the course, I came here as a nobody,” said an excited Émile. He bagged the Best Overall Learner award in the NARYSEC Programme.

Madika Sekatane, 29, from the small town of Steynsburg in Eastern Cape, has also seen the benefits of NARYSEC. She said that the programme has equipped her with agricultural knowledge on crop and animal production. She added that the programme sparked her interest to venture in agriculture on her family land upon returning home.

To date, the NARYSEC Programme has enrolled 17 393 youth since its inception in September 2010. It is a youth skills development programme of the Department of Agriculture Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) and notably one of the key contributors towards alleviating the high levels of unemployment among young people in rural areas.

Through this programme, youth are recruited by way of multi-stakeholder collaborations, and the skills development of the youth is aligned to economic opportunities in each district in line with the District Development Model (DDM), which is aimed at developing rural areas.

Presiding over the pass-out parade at Oudtshoorn, Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, Mcebisi Skwatsha, said that the NARYSEC Programme continues to develop young, vibrant, disciplined and patriotic leaders who can facilitate change and contribute meaningfully to their communities. “We are celebrating their determination in character, which has been tested during the training. NARYSEC young people, you have stayed in an environment that was alien to you at first and you have shown your dedication and commitment to yourselves, your families and your communities. Today, I say to you—well done.”

Deputy Minister Skwatsha also praised the partnership that the department has with the South Africa National Defence Force (SANDF) and Goldfields Tvet College for the enormous role they play in shaping the rural youth. “The youth who are graduating from the Youth Leadership Programme today were trained by SANDF in partnership with Goldfields Tvet College. The graduates will return to their respective provinces where they will continue with their skills development phase at institutions of higher learning in various fields of study,” the deputy minister concluded.

The programme recruits rural unemployed youth between 18 and 35 years, with the minimum of qualification of grade 9.

The graduates of the NARYSEC programme graced the photo opportunity with their awards at Oudtshoorn in Western Cape.

NARYSEC participants during pass-out parade at Oudtshoorn in Western Cape.

Deputy Minister Mcebisi Skwatsha handing over an award to Emile Urion at South African Infantry Oudtshoorn, Western Cape.

Labour tenants from all the provinces attended the Labour Tenants Assembly in Johannesburg.

LABOUR TENANTS CALL FOR ACTION

Samuel Kgatla

Mr Jabulani Sithole is one of the labour tenants in KZN.

Labour tenants pleaded with the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) to help them resolve their cases and claims. They mentioned this during the Labour Tenants Assembly (LTA) held at Constitution Hill in Johannesburg on 10 and 11 November 2022. Under the theme: "Our Land, Umhlaba Wethu," the event was organised by stakeholders working on labour tenants in the country. The assembly provided an opportunity for labour tenants and the various organisations from different provinces to interact among each other, in terms of how to organise themselves to the benefit of an individual claimant.

Labour tenants said that the department should work together with the Special Master of Labour Tenants (SMLT). Phillip Shabalala, one of the labour tenants said that government takes a long time to resolve their cases and claims and some tenants died before their concerns were ever resolved. "Government should work with SMLT and chiefs to deal with our problems. Labour tenants go through pain and struggle. We must have specific timeframes to deal with land claims. Farm dwellers have huge problems. The department should do more to process the labour tenants' claims," he said.

Stanley Mokoena echoed the same sentiment that some labour tenants go through pain. "They may look happy outside but they are enslaved inside. The problem is that not much support is given to the special master. The special master goes through some difficulties when helping the labour tenants. More support from government is needed to help the special master. We are hoping to see more action after this LTA," he said.

The SMLT was appointed at the behest of an order of the Constitutional Court of South Africa confirming and upholding the order of the Land Claims Court of South Africa. This followed a harrowing protracted lawsuit between the DALRRD and organised labour tenants assisted by the Association for Rural Advancement (AFRA). Before 31 March 2001 thousands of labour tenants had lodged applications under the Labour Tenants Act for security of tenure and restoration of ownership. Where applications were opposed and the matter could not be settled, the department had to refer the matter to the Land Claims Court.

The Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, Thoko Didiza mentioned that all stakeholders must work together to help the labour tenants claims and their problems. "If we can bring our energy and resources together, then we can help our labour tenants' problems. We are trying our best to make sure that the claims are resolved. Events like this assembly give us an opportunity to see the progress we have made and our failures.

We are still committed as government to work with the special master to make sure that your problems are resolved," she said.

KWAZULU-NATAL FARMER HAS LONG-TERM VISION

Mercia Smith

Nestled in the rolling green hills of KwaZulu-Natal is the Umdoni Valley Estate Farm. Siyanda Khumalo acquired the farm of 203 ha in the Ugu District, Ray Nkonyeni Municipality in 2013 through the Pro-Active Land Acquisition Strategy (PLAS). Through the programme, beneficiaries are allocated agricultural land acquired by the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Land Reform for redistribution.

Current production on the farm consists of 55 ha macadamia trees, 20 ha banana, six ha tea tree and 30 ha timber. When Siyanda was allocated the farm nine years ago, it was mainly a cabbage and sugar cane farm. Owing to long periods of soft rain, followed by warm sunshine, the cabbage got soft and rotted and he was forced to change direction. Another factor was the closing of the Umzimkulu Sugar Mill and sugar cane deliveries were diverted to Illovo's Sezela Sugar Mill for processing. Diversion of cane means higher transport costs and deterioration of cane quality due to the longer period between harvesting and crushing. All of this led to lower value for the farmer.

"For as long as I can remember I have always wanted to become a farmer," Siyanda said. He and his wife both studied at the Cedara College of Agriculture in KwaZulu-Natal. After completing his studies, he stayed on as a farm manager at the college and then found work on a dairy farm.

Siyanda Khumalo in the nursery where he grows his own macadamia seedlings.

Since he started farming at Umdoni Farm he has expanded the macadamia plantations with 10 ha a year. When he acquired the farm, there was 5,09 ha macadamias, and now there are close to 60 ha planted with macadamia trees. This, however, meant more input costs while waiting for the crop to be profitable.

Macadamia farming is not based on a short-term profit outlook. "I am over my head in debt, and I was relying on the tea tree to carry us through. Unfortunately, the tea tree oil market is not strong now," Siyanda said. He is currently looking for sponsors for a mobile distiller so that he can process his own tea tree crop as well as those of neighbouring farms.

From seed to harvest, tea trees take around 12 to 15 months. The tree is then cut from just above the ground and the leaves are steam distilled. Tea tree regenerate quickly and over the next two to three years yield higher levels of oil each year.

To cut down on input costs Siyanda started his own nursery for macadamia trees. In 2018, he won third place in the Youth in Agriculture and Rural Development competition (YARD), hosted by the former Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. He used this prize money to put shade netting over the concrete slab of the nursery. South Africa is the largest macadamia nut producer in the world. Macadamia saplings can take up to 18 months before they are ready for planting and the first crop is usually expected in five years. The macadamia industry is export based, with more than 97% of production being shipped internationally.

For Siyanda Khumalo, farming is a way of life and not just a job. He works physically as hard as his workers, and currently employs eight women and seven men on a permanent basis. During harvesting time he employs 16 casual workers. Being a farmer who works next to his workers, and not only just observe, who is motivated to start something from scratch and follow it through to the end, Siyanda is going to succeed, in the long term.

There are 20 ha of banana trees on the farm that are sold at the local market

Cattle of the surrounding community causing damage to the young macadamia trees planted by Siyanda.

PROTECTING THE CONSUMER THROUGH CORRECT PRODUCT LABELLING

Rony Moremi

Raw processed meat products.

If it is not meat and does not have any compositional properties of meat, its name cannot be sausage, burger, or mince. Section 6 of the Agricultural Products Standards Act, 1990 (Act No.119 of 1990) prohibits sellers or traders to sell any product under names prescribed for other products other than those intended.

According to the Act, the use of names prescribed for processed meat products is prohibited in the sale of plant-based products. For example, the use of the name "sausage" for meat analogues, also known as meat substitutes or faux meat or mock meat is prohibited because there is a regulation that sets out minimum compositional standards for processed meat products.

The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) issued a communiqué on the importance of compliance with the promulgated processed meat products regulations of 2019. The regulations set out norms and standards regarding compositional properties, quality standards, packaging requirements and labelling.

The main objective of the regulations is to ensure fair trade practices by ensuring that producers adhere to the same applicable standards. The regulations also protect the consumer against the sale of substandard products. Implementation of the regulations has been assigned in terms of the Agricultural Products Standards 1990, (Act No.119 of 1990) to the assignee, Food Safety Agency, appointed in terms of Section 2 of the Act for the inspection of regulated animal products, poultry meat and eggs and any other meat products for which regulations may be promulgated.

Compositional standards prescribed in terms of the Act are important in ensuring the integrity of the nutritional properties of the prescribed products. For example, meat products guarantee the consumer the presence of certain nutritional elements, whereas the alternative products may not contain the same. Therefore, labelling is very important in communicating to the consumer what to expect from the product because it influences their purchasing preferences. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) also considers food labelling as an important direct way of communicating information such as ingredients, quality and nutritional value of the product to the consumer.

In terms of fair trade, sellers of prescribed products are expected in terms of law to comply with the prescribed minimum standards to ensure that claims that are associated with the product are properly authenticated. Currently, the department is considering the development of regulations for meat analogues and products derived from cellular agriculture, for example cultivated meat. During the development of the regulations, naming conventions of such products will be considered which will be in alignment with the products in terms of the product names.

The regulations are important to ensure that the legitimate purpose of the Agricultural Products Standards 1990, (Act No.119 of 1990 is realised and to further prevent lawlessness and misleading information in terms of sale of agricultural products.

TSHILIDZI WINS WITH GOOD FARM MANAGEMENT STYLE

Mercia Smith

National winners Agricultural Writers SA Farmer of the Year — ALS Group (Agri Division)

Agricultural Writers SA Agriculturalist of the Year — Pieter Bruwer from Langfontein Seeds in Wakkerstroom

South Africa's top contributors to agriculture were recognised at the 2022 Agricultural Writers SA (AWASA) Awards on Friday, 11 November 2022. The annual event salutes those who work hard to promote sustainable farming enterprises, elevate food security, support rural economies and nurture the image of agriculture in South Africa.

The AWASA Awards create an opportunity to celebrate excellence in agriculture by means of announcing the AWASA Farmer of the Year, Agriculturist of the Year, and New Entrant to Commercial Farming. "This is not about competition, but recognition. The awards are made through a nomination process that allows our members to shine a light on ambassadors in agriculture," said Liza Bohlmann, Chairperson of Agricultural Writers SA.

The winner of the National Agricultural Writers SA New Entrant to commercial farming category hails from Eastern Cape. This category is aimed at farmers with less than 10 years' experience as commercial producers. Tshilidzi (Chilli) Matshidzula embraced the support of a good mentor and started managing a dairy farm in Eastern Cape. As a native of Thohoyandou in Limpopo and a graduate of the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) in Pretoria, Chilli ended up in Eastern Cape. He took over the management of the dairy on Little Barnet 5 km from Alexandria in September 2005 at the age of 18. He became a 40% shareholder in Matshibele (Pty) Ltd, who owned the farm. At that time, the farm was milking about 450 cows. This dairy was awarded the prestigious Mangold Trophy by the Bathurst Conservation Committee in 2016. In the same year, Chilli was named the Eastern Cape's Young Farmer of the Year.

In 2019, Oakleaf Agri and Chilli ventured into a new partnership starting a new dairy, Mountain Park, in Stutterheim. Mountain Park has more than 1 000 dairy cows.

In 2020, Chilli was the winner of the Milk Producers Organization (MPO) and Nedbank's Stewardship Award.

Today, Chilli is 33 years old and a 5% shareholder of the farm with an opportunity to grow his shareholding to 10%. Chilli serves on the board of the Eastern Cape Milk Producers' Organisation as well as on the committee of the Alexandria Dairy Study Group. He is invested in the training of agricultural students and he is married to Everest, who is also involved on the farm. His passion for dairy farming is reflected in his excellent farm management style and attention to detail, which includes extensive consultation with experts and peers to maintain best practices. He has an extraordinary vision and certainly knows what is needed for future sustainability.

From the left is Tshilidzi, Everest and Wandeme Matshidzula, and Liza Bohlmann, Chairperson of Agricultural Writers SA.

DG addressing participants at the CEO Forum.

SHAPING THE FUTURE OF THE INDUSTRIES AT THE CEO FORUM

Matsepo Malatswane

The Director-General of the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, Mr Mooketsa Ramasodi, hosted a CEO Forum meeting in Pretoria. The discussions during the forum were based on the implementation of the Agriculture and Agro-processing Master-plan, an update on the report of the state of readiness for the planting season, an update on the commitment of the sector towards employment and food security.

Industry leaders were given an opportunity to present on their readiness in their sectors. The first speaker was Theo Boshoff of AgBiz who mentioned that SA farmers plan to increase the planting area by 0,2% to 4,3 million ha for the 2022/23 season. “Early parts of the 2022/23 summer season has brought heavy rains over most parts of South Africa,” said Mr Boshoff. Another the speaker was Mr Gerhard Schutter from the Red Meat Producer Organisation who updated forum attendees on the commitment of the sector towards food security and employment. The red meat industry has a vision to grow the sector’s gross value of production by more than R8,3 billion above the baseline. The industry has an estimated R12 billion contribution to the economy annually.

The presentation by SAFDA’s Dr Siyabonga Madlala was focused on the frustrations that are confronting black farmers that are not being clearly articulated and acted upon. SAFDA provides a vehicle for farmers, especially black farmers, to represent themselves in the sugar industry and other commodities. SAFDA is home to all progressive farmers, black and white, small, medium and large.

The importance of building strong working relations with the department and industries was one of the priorities during the CEO Forum discussion. Issues such as climate change and access to vaccines were paramount during the engagement, with Onderstepoort Biological Products (OBP) giving an umbrella overview on how they are handling the accessibility of vaccines in the country.

Captains of industries understood the importance of creating employment in the country. Reflecting on the impact of assistance from industries to farmers is crucial owing to the challenges facing farmers such as climate change and access to vaccines, with the industry mentioning that they are willing to assist where they can. The forum ended on a positive note, with the future of the industry looking bright.

DDGs, CEOs and captains of the industries.