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**agriculture, land reform & rural development**

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



## DO NOT LET PESTS HITCH A HIKE—DECLARE ANIMAL AND PLANT PRODUCTS AT PORTS OF ENTRY

Rony Moremi

The festive season is around the corner, with thousands of people travelling to other countries and others returning to South Africa. This movement of people holds the potential to transport dangerous and destructive plant pests and animal diseases that can be transmitted through animals, animal products, plants and plant products. Plant pests and animal diseases know no boundaries and, as such, travellers are advised to take precautionary measures to avoid introducing potential plant pests and animal diseases into the country. The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) urges all international travellers visiting South Africa, and those returning to South Africa, to comply with import regulations.

South Africa has several laws aimed at regulating the importation of agricultural and related products; it is mandatory for all travellers to ensure that they comply with the import conditions and follow the correct procedures when importing agricultural products and other regulated goods, irrespective of quantity, quality or intended use.

These measures are important in achieving some of the country's agricultural development priorities and securing the domestic and international trade in plants and plant products, animal and animal products, as well as other regulated articles.

When arriving at South African ports of entry, it is mandatory to declare the following products to the Border Management Authority (BMA) officials upon arrival:

- Live animals and animal products, including animal and animal products, skins, dairy and dairy products;
- Plants and plant products, including tobacco, bamboo, plant roots and cuttings; and
- Any other potentially harmful items or carriers of foreign pests, including curios from plant and animal material, growth medium, soil, honey and honey products, insects, pathogens and liquor products.

These materials may only be imported into South Africa by means of an import permit, unless exempted, and must be declared upon arrival at the port of entry to the BMA officials for inspection before entering South Africa.

Mpho Sekgala, Deputy Director: Biosecurity Promotion and Awareness at DALRRD, says that the introduction, establishment and spread of new pests is not a good thing for any country. South Africa has from 2010 to date been experiencing introductions of the Oriental fruit fly, Tomato leaf miner moth, Fall armyworm and Banana Bunchy Top Virus. Although these pests are spread in parts of some provinces, they are difficult to deal with, costly to manage and cause a lot of damage to host crops.

Officials from the BMA conduct luggage and consignment inspections at the ports of entry by means of visual and sniffer dogs to ensure compliance with the import regulations. Any product that is not complying with import regulations as

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prescribed, or is classified as a prohibited product, will either be confiscated, destroyed, or returned to the country of export, and non-compliance may lead to a fine of up to R20 000,00 or imprisonment.

It is important to note that import conditions differ according to countries of origin/export, global pest distribution, type of products, etc. Therefore, it is advisable for travelers to contact DALRRD offices to enquire about import requirements/conditions at:

**Animals and animal products:**

Tel.: +27 12 319 7476/ 7500/ 6313

Fax: +27 12 319 8292 • Email: [VetPermits@dalrrd.gov.za](mailto:VetPermits@dalrrd.gov.za)

**Plants and plant products:**

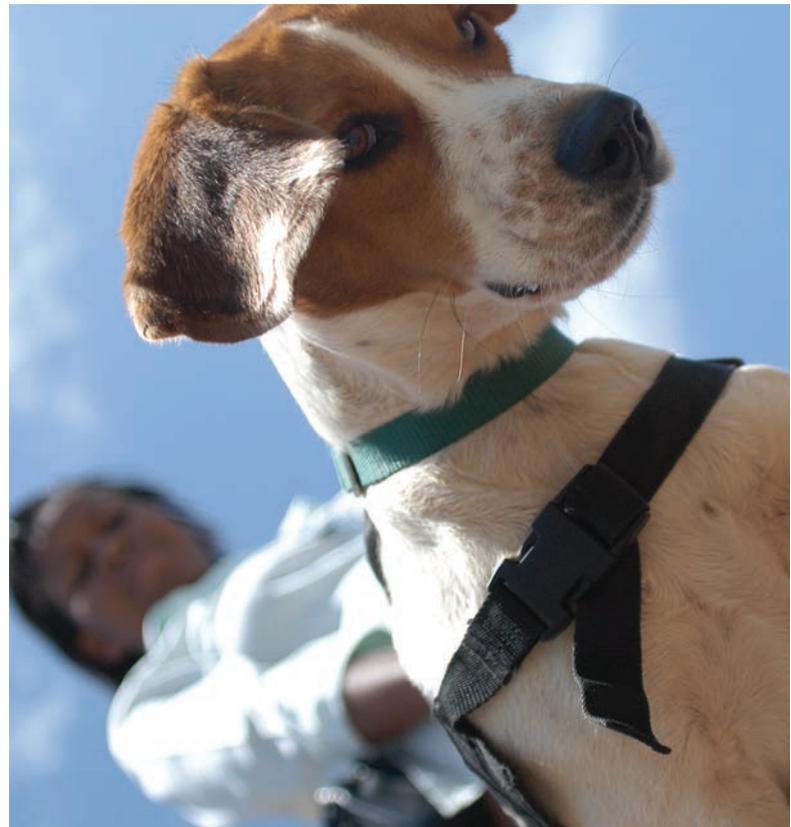
Tel.: +27 12 319 6102/ 6130 or 6207/ 6313

Fax: +27 12 319 6370 • Email: [PlantHealthPermits@dalrrd.gov.za](mailto:PlantHealthPermits@dalrrd.gov.za)

**Liquor products:**

Tel.: +27 11 971 5138 or +27 12 319 6137

Email: [NjokoS@dalrrd.gov.za](mailto:NjokoS@dalrrd.gov.za)



*A sniffer dog doing inspection training to identify products that should be declared.*



*One of the sniffer dogs in action at OR Tambo International Airport.*

## HIGH FOOD PRICES A THREAT TO HOUSEHOLD FOOD SECURITY



According to the NAMC Food Basket Price Monthly Report, the price of onions increased by a staggering 64,7%.



Potatoes increased by a staggering 33,6%.



The price of eggs has doubled owing to high energy costs and the outbreak of Avian flu.

Ndivhuwo Thenga

South Africa is facing high poverty levels and unemployment, an energy crisis, rising energy tariffs, everincreasing interest rates and the rise in the cost of living, which includes soaring food and fuel prices. While the country is food secure at national level, the afore-mentioned challenges have seriously impacted on its food security by making food not easily accessible to many people, thereby increasing the number of individuals and households experiencing food inadequacy and hunger.

According to Assessing Food Inadequacy and Hunger in South Africa in 2021, using the General Household Survey (GHS) report published by Stats SA in April 2023, the country was estimated to have 17,9 million households. Almost 14,2 million reported that they had adequate food access, with 2,6 million having inadequate access and 1,12 million having severely inadequate access to food.

The National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC) monitors food prices at retail level and releases regular reports on behalf of the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD). The Food Price Monitoring Committee (FPMC) tracks and reports food price trends in South Africa to provide explanations of the observed trends and advise the department on any possible action that could be taken should national and household food security be threatened. The FPMC was established after the high food price incident of the 2000/01 season. The Food Basket Price Monthly Report was produced because of discussions with the agricultural industry to keep a more frequent watch on the movements of food prices.

When asked if government can intervene if there is a sharp increase in food prices that threatens food access by consumers, Ms Corne Dempers, Senior Economist at NAMC said that factors such as employment, cost of administered services and the cost of food need to be investigated properly to determine where the cost increases arise from and be able to determine what interventions are possible solutions. "Any intervention by government will have a cost implication. This cost must be determined to assess viability and impact. Interventions in the food value chain might have far reaching unintended negative outcomes over time. The more obvious level of intervention must be consumer based", said Ms Dempers.

The concept of food security has four pillars: availability, access, utilisation, and stability. Access is closely related to affordability and purchasing power of consumers. Unpredictable price change endangers food security status. It harms households who then allocate a high percentage of their income to food purchases.

The cost of the NAMC's 28-item urban food basket increased by 6,7% in September 2023 compared to the same period last year, reaching R1 197,68 compared to R1 122,10, with a monthly (August – September 2023) increase of 1,0%. Amongst these 28 items, 18 saw price increases that exceeded the inflation target set by the South African Reserve Bank (SARB) of 6%. Notable products in this category include onions, which experienced a substantial price surge of 45,8%, followed by potatoes (33,4%), bananas (29,5%), Ceylon/black tea (28,6%), polony (22,9%), white sugar (22,7%), rice (19,8%), cheddar cheese (14,7%), full cream milk (13,1%), instant coffee (12,6%), baked beans (11,6%), peanut butter (11,1%) chicken giblets (10,8%), cabbage (10,4%), maize meal (9,4%), dried beans (8,2%), IQF chicken portions (8,0%) and fish (8,0%).

Comparing October 2022 and October 2023, the cost of the NAMC's 28-item urban food basket increased by 10,1%, reaching R1 221,52 compared to R1 197,68, with a monthly (September 2023 – October 2023) increase of 2,0%. Amongst these 28 items, 19 witnessed price increases that exceeded the inflation target set by the SARB of 6%. Notable products in this category include potatoes, which experienced a substantial price surge of 63,8%, followed by bananas (42,1%), Ceylon/black tea (29,2%), white sugar (23,9%), rice (22,5%), polony (19,9%), onions (19,6%), instant coffee (16,2%), cheddar cheese (15,1%), apples (13,9%), full cream milk (12,6%), baked beans (12,5%), peanut butter (11,1%), chicken giblets (9,7%), oranges (9,1%), fish (8,3%), cabbage (7,2%), maize meal (7,0%), and IQF chicken portions (6,3%).

To avoid price shocks, efficient price management should be applied in the food market to ensure the stability of food supply chains. An increase in the price of food threatens the buying power of consumers. Governments need to develop direct measures to deal with food market management to ensure sustainable food availability.

## MOLETELE CPA CALLS ON DEPUTY PRESIDENT TO SPEED UP LAND CLAIMS

Samuel Kgatla



Deputy President Paul Mashatile was happy with the progress made at Moletete CPA.

**B**eneficiaries of the Moletete Communal Property Association (CPA) say they believe that the CPA's engagement with Deputy President Paul Mashatile on 17 November 2023 at Moletete in Limpopo will speed up the processing of its land claims. This CPA is one of the best run in the country, contributing substantially to the upliftment of the community, the local economy and fighting unemployment. During the visit, the deputy president was accompanied by the Deputy Minister of Public Enterprises, Mr Obed Bapela, and the MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development, Mr Thabo Mokone.

Moletete CPA, with a world-class packhouse, won the 2014 National Vumelana Governance Award for being the best managed CPA in the country. About 4 000 households are members of the CPA and it is one of the largest producers of citrus in the Mopani District. This community, whose land was restored following the lodgment of a successful land claim, wants government to fast-track its remaining land claims so that it can continue creating more jobs for its members..

The Moletete community, which comprises 1 615 families, has lodged claims for 70 000 ha of land in the Hoedspruit area. The initial claim lodged in 1992 by the Moletete Traditional Authority consisted of only 30 farms. To date, government has restored 10 000 ha of prime citrus and eco-tourism land worth R255 million to the Moletete community. At the time of registering the CPA, only 63 ha were under cultivation, despite the availability of full irrigation rights. The community farms with oranges and mangoes and exports some of its citrus produce to European countries.

Chairperson of the CPA, Mr Albert Thabani, said that only 10% of the land claims were given to them and they really appreciate

what the department has done for them. "We are happy with what was given to us, but we are just pleading with the deputy president to help speed up the entire process. Our work speaks volumes as you can see, and we are also doing a lot as we offer bursaries to some students as well," he said.

The deputy president confessed that government is moving slowly on the issue of land claims and that is why President Cyril Ramaphosa sent him to the CPA to see how its problems could be resolved. "We are a working and listening government. We have been visiting provinces to see what is really happening on the ground. We must walk together and resolve the problems together."

"We cannot always rely on the reports and memorandums we receive in the office because sometimes not all is mentioned. Mopani is a big district, and your problems cannot be resolved in one day. We are going to form an inter-ministerial committee on land reform to deal with all the problems. The best way to deal with people's problems is by visiting and interacting with them," he said. The deputy president acknowledged the outstanding work done by the Moletete CPA and encouraged it to continue working hard.

The Moletete community's success in using land productively is an example of how CPAs can lead to a successful business amid failures, mismanagement of funds and infighting within some CPAs in South Africa. This CPA is expecting a bumper harvest of mangoes during this festive season.



Citrus trees of Moletete CPA in Hoedspruit.

## FARMERS MUST ENSURE THAT FIREBREAKS ARE IN PLACE ON THEIR PROPERTIES DURING THE FIRE SEASON IN SOUTH AFRICA

Mercia Smith

**T**he outbreak of uncontrolled veld and bush fires can have a devastating impact on farmers through the destruction of their properties, livestock and grazing land. To control the outbreak of veld and bush fires, any person occupying, using, or owning land has a legal duty and responsibility to ensure that veld fires do not break out on that land. This is according to the National Veld and Forest Act, 1998 (Act No.101 of 1998), which is currently under review.

“Veld fires are addressed in line with the National Veld and Forest Act that promotes the prevention of spread of veld fires through the formation of fire protection associations, communication of fire danger rating, creation of firebreaks and readiness to fight fires in case they occur,” said Dr Ikalafeng Kgakatsi, Director: Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction at the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD).

Furthermore, the Disaster Management Act, 2002 (Act No. 57 of 2002) and the National Disaster Management Framework of 2005, as amended, put more emphasis on prevention, mitigation, and preparedness in dealing with natural hazards, including veld fires. “In case fires occur, they are addressed in line with the disaster management process that is stipulated in the Disaster Management Act,” Dr Kgakatsi said.

Through the Directorate: Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction, DALRRD developed the Sectoral Disaster Risk Management Plan on how natural hazards in the sector are addressed, including veld fires. The department further assists farmers who do not have the means to create and maintain firebreaks on their communal farms in line with the available budget.

Early-warning information in the form of monthly National Agrometeorological Committee advisories and daily extreme weather warnings are issued to the farming communities, agricultural unions, provincial offices, and early-warning committees.

Veld fire management is a requirement in terms of the Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act (CARA), 1983 (Act No. 43 of 1983). Management of fires is governed by law and there are legal implications of negligence in the management of veld fires.

DALRRD is the custodian of the natural agricultural resources of South Africa and is responsible for ensuring the conservation and sustainable use of natural agricultural resources.

CARA prescribes control measures which all land owners must

comply with. These include the prevention and control of veld fires and the utilisation and protection of veld which has been burned, among others.



*A firebreak must be wide enough and long enough to have a reasonable chance of preventing a veld fire from spreading to or from neighbouring land.*

## AGRICULTURAL FINANCIAL SCHEME SHOWS SIGNS OF SUCCESS



Moeketsi Ntsane

**J**ust over a year since its launch, the Blended Finance Scheme is already yielding results as it approved more than 90% of the funding applications it received in Northern Cape.

This was revealed by Mr Carel Burger, Agricultural Finance Manager from the Land Bank, Upington branch during the Food For Mzansi's Farmers' Day event held in Heuningvei, Northern Cape. Mr Burger said that the bank had few finance applications declined since the fund was launched. "The scheme has exceeded the bank's expectations," said Burger.

The fund, which is a combination of a loan and grant, was launched by the Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, Ms Thoko Didiza, in October last year.

"The aim of the fund is to support the development of small- and medium-scale producers to participate in the mainstream agricultural economy and along the agricultural value chain," said Burger. He further said that farmers could apply individually or as a cooperative to qualify for funding. Moreover, Burger said that the loan repayment of the financial scheme was market related with a percentage ranging between 11% and 14% based on the credit rating of each applicant.

To qualify for funding, applicants must be South African citizens with a valid identity document and/or a registered business entity. Black-owned and Black-managed farming enterprises that are commercially viable in commodities are prioritised in the Agricultural Agro-processing Master Plan (AAMP).

"For joint ventures, the non-black partner should have a maximum of 40%, but not less than 26% ownership in the enterprise," said Burger.

"Upon the approval of financial assistance, applicants are linked with successful neighbouring farmers for support and mentoring purpose," concluded Burger.

Food For Mzansi describes the Farmers' Day as a learning network for "farmers and agricultural enthusiasts". The event also aims to "grow a vibrant agricultural community".

This time around, the Farmers' Day event was arranged deep in the desert sands of the Kalahari on the farm belonging to the Maungo Cruise Farming and Projects closed corporation. The 1 200 ha farm is co-owned by 28-year-old Mr Maungo Mokgoje and three other beneficiaries. Reaching the farm was a mission as one must negotiate one's way through a sandy soil road which glides and slides with no signage.

“ The aim of the fund is to support the development of small- and medium-scale producers to participate in the mainstream agricultural economy and along the agricultural value chain, ”

Cont.

Mokgoje started his farming from humble beginnings with one cow that was gifted to him by his uncle as a token of appreciation for looking after his livestock. "Farming is not a "smooth ride", it is difficult, and you must have character to overcome all obstacles. If you do not have passion for farming do not do it," he says.



*Mr Carel Burger, Agricultural Financial Manager at Land Bank, Upington branch during the Farmers Day Event held in Heuningvlei, Northern Cape.*

Although Maungo's love for farming was developed at an early age, becoming a full-time farmer was propelled at the end of his internship contract four years ago. With little prospects of finding a job, Mokgoje started a closed corporation and was fortunate enough to secure a cleaning contract that helped him to establish his farming business. Mokgoje is a cattle breeder and has 21 cattle on his farm. He is upbeat about his prospects of success in farming.

The line-up of speakers in the event included a representative from the Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA), Mr Katlego Loeto. He explained the services of SEDA that include business information, business training, incubation, access to markets, technology assistance, and marketing support.

Seasoned farmer Mr Mooki Baitiwe advised new entrants to the industry on the importance of "record keeping" and the vaccination of their livestock. He said that every activity on the farm

must be recorded for future reference. He said that record keeping should not be determined by the size of the farmer's operation. He encouraged even small start-up farmers to record their activities on the farm to maintain proper business management practice and for possible future funding opportunities.

Ms Lucia Mokgoje from the Africa Trade Promotions unit in the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, outlined the role and responsibility of their unit as providing supporting and advice to the department on trade and developments cooperation between South Africa and other countries, blocks or regions. The unit also monitors and evaluates development, which has an impact on agriculture.

The penultimate Farmers' Day event was hosted in Northern Cape, with KwaZulu-Natal being the last province still to host the event.



*Mr Mokgoje, who started his farming from humble beginnings with just one cow that was gifted to him by his uncle as a token of appreciation for looking after his livestock.*

## AQUAPONICS – A POSSIBLE SOLUTION TO FOOD INSECURITY



Seedlings produced through farming in aquaponics.

Samuel Kgatla

**R**esults from a feasibility study in Climate Smart Aquaponics (CSA) have revealed the enormous potential of the system to be a game changer in improving food security in the country. The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD), together with Agricultural Research Council (ARC), hosted a technology “Brown Bag Session” at Tsitsikama Hall, DALRRD’s new building on 7 November 2023 to share the outcomes of the feasibility study results on CSA.

Climate change, soil degradation, water scarcity and food security are arguably among the most crucial challenges facing our country and the world at large. Utilising new technology such as CSA could mitigate many of these issues.

The feasibility study on the adoption of leapfrog technology — one-house one-aquaponics climate smart entry modular community programme — started in December last year, and was completed in September 2023. It was conducted in all the five districts of Gauteng. The aim was to map and identify suitable areas in the province for establishing urban entry modular aquaponics farming systems as aquaponics knowledge and information data for supporting policy makers.

The study concluded that aquaponics production was as feasible as a leap-frog technology tool to curb food insecurity in Gauteng. 64 farms in all the districts were visited and 12 beneficiaries are in a better position to be selected as suitable beneficiaries for the adoption of aquaponics systems in Gauteng owing to their competitive strengths and opportunities. Vegetables and fish are the preferred choice for farming in aquaponics.

The Deputy Director-General: Rural Development, Ms Thandi Moyo, said that the feasibility study was the result of hard work and partnership between DALRRD, ARC and the Gauteng Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. “This demonstrates a pivotal role of how research technology can fight unemployment

and poverty. We can create further jobs through these projects. We just need to make sure that the system is affordable and sustainable. Urban farming is the way to go and I am just happy to see some young farmers farming in aquaponics in Gauteng,” she said.

Mr Neale Strauch, an engineer and commercial partner from the ARC mentioned that the feasibility study is going to help many people and address issues relating to food security.

Brown Bag sessions are informal business meetings or training usually held in an office setting during lunchtime.

The Brown Bag sessions within DALRRD serve as a platform where the research, innovation and technology projects implemented by the Branch: Rural Development are presented and cross-examined.



Mr Neale Strauch, an engineer and commercial partner from the ARC.

## DM MCEBISI SKWATSHA HANDS OVER TITLE DEEDS TO FIVE FAMILIES IN BRONKHORSTSPRUIT



Deputy Minister Skwatsha signing title deeds.



Deputy Minister flanked by representatives from the AmaNdebele kaNdunza Traditional Council

### Rankepile Khomo

The long journey for the five families to one day own their own land turned into a reality at an official title deed handover ceremony presided over by the Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, Mcebisi Skwatsha, on 3 November 2023 in Sokhulumu near Bronkhorstspuit in the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality.

Addressing hundreds of residents, among them senior officials of the department, and the AmaNdebele kaNdunza Traditional Council, DM Mcebisi Skwatsha said that the government was pleased to be part of the historic celebration where five families were to receive title deeds, which marked the end of the hard living conditions inflicted on them by the land owners, black or white.

“The progressive government legislations such as the Extension of Security of Tenure Act (ESTA), 1997 (Act No. 62 of 1997), as well as the Labour Tenants Act, 1996 (Act No. 3 of 1996), which were introduced by government, echoed the vision of former President Dr Nelson Mandela and many of our forebearers that there should be freedom, equality and justice for all in South Africa,” said Mr Skwatsha.

Three of the families have been residing on different farms in terms of the ESTA, and the other two families who have been residing on farms for many years with a history of labour tenancy.

Through the interventions of the PSSC Gauteng, the department has been able to successfully transfer properties to the families.

Jubilant scenes and songs of joy were galore when the deputy minister signed off the title deeds to the Mabena family, Bangwayo Mahlatini Maduna Family Trust, Malobola family, the Ntlatleng family and the Matjie family.

There was a sad moment when 84-year-old Ms Annah Magwarech Matjie shared her experiences of living not knowing what the future held for her and her family, staying in a thatch-roofed house built from mud, without electricity, and not being allowed to farm.

The Matjie family has been residing on Portion 89 of the farm Leeuwfontein 487 JR since 1986, when Ms Annah Magwarech Matjie and her late husband, Mr Kitimela Phineas Matjie, began



Deputy Minister Skwatsha handing over the title deed to the Maduna Family Trust.

*Cont.*

working for the owner of the farm. The farm was placed on the market for sale and the Matjie family was concerned about their tenure security.

“Today, my children and future generations to come can proudly call this farm home. I want to thank the deputy minister, and many government officials for honouring us with title deeds. The road was not easy but today, I saw the government protecting its people,” said Ms Matjie.

The allocated farms have a collective hectareage of over 391 ha. All the beneficiaries are to some extent involved in agricultural activities but at a subsistence level.

When asked to comment on the festivities of the day, the Director: Tenure and Implementations Systems, Mr Samfana Molema, said that there were preliminary measures undertaken by various departments and components to ensure that there would be development on those farms to enable the families to create jobs and alleviate poverty by using their land optimally. The department continues to be committed to ensuring equitable access to land for all South Africans.

“Today, my children and future generations to come can proudly call this farm home. I want to thank the deputy minister and many government officials for honouring us with title deeds. The road was not easy but today, I saw the government protecting its people,”



*Deputy Minister Skwatsha during his keynote address.*



*Beneficiaries rejoicing during the ceremony.*

## LIMPOPO FARMERS URGED TO FARM WITH LOVE AND PASSION



Limpopo farmers interacting with DALRRD and DARD.

Samuel Kgatla

**F**armers in the Capricorn District of Limpopo were urged to farm with passion and love if they want to succeed in the agricultural sector. The Limpopo MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development, Mr Thabo Mokone, was speaking to farmers during the FMD, Stock Theft and Market Access Awareness Campaign at Jack Botes Hall in Polokwane on 14 November 2023.

He added that people must stop thinking agriculture is for the illiterate. "Agriculture is for passionate farmers and not a shortcut to employment. People must go into farming with passion, and not when they are desperate to make money. We are busy giving our people land and money for farming, but some of them are still fighting. It is disturbing to see how our people are fighting instead of remaining together in farming," he said.

The purpose of the awareness campaign was for the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) to address challenges posed by animal diseases, market access and stock theft within farming communities in the province. The campaign coincided with the Global Entrepreneurship Week 2023 (13 November to 19 November). Trade bans and animal movement restrictions during FMD outbreaks cause economic hardships in the country.

Farmers in the affected areas are unable to move or sell their animals and animal products. Currently, there is no FMD in Limpopo, but farmers were warned to be vigilant and report any animal disease. The Mopani and Vhembe districts have both been affected by FMD in the past, however, there is presently no indication of circulating FMD viruses in these districts. The department is addressing challenges in livestock production, access to funding for farmers and market access opportunities.

During their interaction with the MEC, farmers requested more land and tractor assistance. They also raised the issue of high electricity costs, especially for some macadamia farmers. Farmers also complained about the few extension officers available to help them, lack of support from government, many unemployed graduates in the agricultural sector and difficulties in obtaining water rights.

The MEC responded by promising to help the farmers and said that the department needs more young people in the agricultural sector. "We are busy fighting with the issue of water rights in the country. We can only help some farmers and not all of you. We are going to hire more extension officers to help farmers and we plead with you to remain patient as we are dealing with your problems," he said.

Mr Emmanuel Mudau, one of the famous goat farmers from Ga-Ravhele and President of Indigenous Veld Goat South Africa, echoed the MEC's sentiment about farming with passion. He encouraged farmers to have a passion for farming so that they can remain in the sector for a long time.

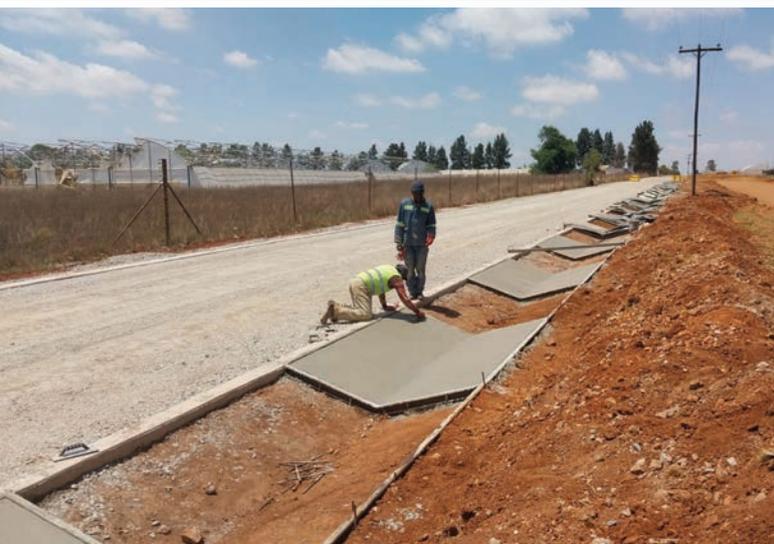


Young farmers showcasing their freshly harvested spinach during the FMD, Stock Theft and Market Access Awareness Campaign in Polokwane

## RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE AT THE HEART OF AGRARIAN TRANSFORMATION



Generator used to operate refrigerators during loadshedding.



A tar road construction by DALRRD leading to Tarlton FPSU

Themba Hleko

Considering the challenges, the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, through its Rural Development Branch, has taken the challenges in its stride to assist small-scale farmers. The establishment of farmer production support units (FPSUs) across the country is a perfect example of offering support to small-scale farmers. The aim of setting up FPSUs is to provide one-stop shop farmer support units that will make farming resources such as machinery and cold storage facilities available to farmers within a 30-kilometre radius. This will enable small-scale farmers to share the resources for the benefit of their farming businesses.

The Directorate: Rural Infrastructure Development (RID) in Gauteng is spearheading the development of all the FPSUs in the province. Though the level of development varies in different FPSUs, the Directorate: RID in Gauteng is making sure that infrastructure diffusion is fast-tracked in all the FPSUs. At the Tarlton, Eikenhof, Carmel Estate, Bekkersdal, Sokhulumi, Rooiwal and Winterveldt FPSUs, RID managed to install and erect farmer support infrastructure, mechanisation and inputs that includes vegetable production tunnels, delivery trucks, warehouses and storage facilities.

This investment by the department has the potential to resuscitate and reinvigorate the communal farming model, which can foster synergy between cooperatives and individual farmers. Many local cooperatives are offered leases or contracts in various FPSUs where they produce vegetables for the markets. Individual farmers have access to use all the mechanisations at the FPSUs to improve productivity in their farms.

Infrastructure development plays a pivotal role in land reform and agrarian transformation, particularly when it comes to developing small-scale farmers. Many small-scale farmers aspire to grow their farming operations to commercial proportions, but their development and progress is thwarted by structural and historical challenges that are replete in the farming community.

Constraints on production caused by lack of infrastructure such as storerooms and cold rooms, not affording production mechanisation like tractors and trailers, inadequate funding caused by improper business plans, lack of information on markets, lack of proper training in conducting agricultural work and insufficient access to extension services are some of the challenges faced by small-scale farmers.

## DALRRD CONSULTS WITH STAKEHOLDERS AND ADDRESSES COMPLIANCE CONCERNS REGARDING PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES



Attendees at the consultation workshop.

Innocent Mhlanga

Every year, the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) makes a call to all its members to review the scientific draft International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs), including draft recommendations for sea containers and the guide to phytosanitary audits during the 90 days (1 July to 30 September) consultation period.

The National Plant Protection Organisation of South Africa (NPPOZA), through the Directorate: Plant Health, convened a workshop to address the specific needs or concerns of South Africa in relation to compliance with ISPMs to ensure that there is successful implementation of the ISPMs while facilitating international trade with other trading partners. Various industry representatives, the scientific community and all other relevant stakeholders and implementers of the ISPMs were given an opportunity to provide comments/inputs and address their specific needs or concerns in relation to the draft ISPMs published for 2023 consultation.

This workshop was held earlier this year at the Premier Hotel in Pretoria, Gauteng, and its main objective was to identify and address specific issues of concern for South Africa regarding the proposals included in the draft ISPMs to ensure that there is successful implementation of the ISPMs in future. The ISPMs are recognised as the basis for phytosanitary measures applied in international trade by the members of the IPPC and the World Trade Organization under the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures to which South Africa is a signatory member. This will further ensure that South Africa complies with its international obligations in terms of the WTO-SPS agreement and the IPPC. It is further envisaged that the ISPMs workshop will ensure future facilitation of safe trade between South Africa and other trading partners based on harmonisation of ISPMs.

During the workshop, Ms Muneiva Mathavha from the Directorate: Plant Health gave an informative presentation on standards setting processes and their associated major stages for developing ISPMs. The processes include calls for the topics, drafting of the standards,

and country consultation, then followed by the final stage of adoption and publication of the ISPMs. Ms Mathavha further highlighted the importance of harmonising the ISPMs within the African region and how its implementation will assist in aligning them with the IPPC Strategic Framework of 2020–2030. The scientific community, industry representatives and other internal relevant stakeholders were invited and contributed to the revision of the draft international standards.

The following draft ISPMs, guide and draft recommendation on sea containers were published by IPPC for 2023 consultation. The 12 draft standards were shared with the relevant experts and various industry representatives for comments and were further discussed during the ISPMs workshop. The draft amendments can be found by following this link:

<https://www.ippc.int/en/core-activities/standards-setting/member-consultation-draft-ispm/>

The comments provided on the draft standards included technical, editorial, substantive and translation in accordance with the IPPC review process. These comments were received from various stakeholders, including the industry representatives. In relation to the draft ISPM 28: Cold treatment for False codling moth (*Thaumatotibia leucotreta*) on sweet orange (*Citrus sinensis*), the Citrus Research International (CRI) industry agreed to this draft ISPM and further supported its adoption. Forestry South Africa, which is a representative of the wood industry in South Africa, supported the proposal for inclusion of draft Annex to ISPM 39 (international movement of wood): Use of systems approaches in managing the pest risks associated with the movement of wood. It was further agreed that NPPOZA will form a forum that will engage with the wood industry regarding the wood commodities system approach. Subsequent to that, a follow-up meeting was arranged with the wood industry to observe the processes that take place in the wood production chain.

*Cont.*

The draft on Commission of Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) sea container recommendation was supported, however, it was suggested that the draft should be approved and adopted by CPM as a guide and not an ISPM. It was also suggested that a forum of various stakeholders should be established to ensure successful implementation upon adoption. The NPPOZA also supported the proposals on draft ISPMs and the guide and draft recommendation on sea containers, however, with comments in some of the drafts standards.

The consolidated comments were compiled and subsequently posted to IPPC by the manager of International Plant Health Standards, Mr Kgabo Matlala, through the IPPC online comment system before the 30 September 2023 deadline. The CPM-18 will consider and decide on the adoption of the submitted comments in

2024 after all the processes have been concluded. It is envisaged that comments from South Africa will be considered by the Standards Committee and the Implementation and Capacity Development Committee that will develop a recommendation for inclusion into the IPPC work programme.

In conclusion, the chairperson encouraged everyone participating in the annual review of the draft ISPMs, including participation in the expert working group for developing the draft ISPMs. By successful implementation of ISPMs, South Africa can reduce pest spread and minimise the impact of plant pests and diseases while enhancing food security, economic growth and protecting the environment.



*The workshop was attended by relevant stakeholders.*

## THE DEPARTMENT WELCOMED PUBLIC COMMENTS FROM PLANT BREEDERS



*Stakeholders commenting on the regulations.*



*Attendees during the public commenting workshop that took place in Pretoria*

**Matsepo Malatswane**

A public consultation workshop on the plant breeders' rights and plant improvement legislation was held in Pretoria from 11 to 12 October 2023. The aim of the consultation was to finalise the regulations and inform the public, farmers and agricultural stakeholders of the plant breeders' rights and plant improvement acts that were approved by the Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development.

Convening workshops for public comment is important as it gives the public an opportunity to make inputs, offer alternatives, substitute language, and help decision-makers identify solutions they may not have initially considered. During the consultation, stakeholders stressed that any new legislation should accommodate all relevant parties.

The amendments to the regulations issued in terms of the Plant Improvement Act, 1976 (Act No. 53 of 1976), were published in the Government Gazette by the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development. Plant breeders are only granted rights for the kinds of plants that are declared in terms of the Plant Breeders' Rights Act, 1976 (Act No. 15 of 1976).

Plant breeders' rights (PBR), also known as plant variety rights (PVR), are rights granted in certain places to the breeder of a new variety of plant that gives the breeder exclusive control over the propagating material and harvested material of a new variety for a specified number of years.

With these rights, the breeder can choose to become the exclusive marketer of the variety, or to license the variety to others. To qualify for these exclusive rights, a variety must be new, distinct, uniform, and stable.

The plant breeders' right is a form of intellectual property right granted to breeders of new plant varieties for protection of their varieties against exploitation without their permission.

Those who breed a plant variety and would like to obtain financial rewards for the efforts, must register that variety with the Registrar for Plant Breeders' Rights. Once registered, a plant variety becomes the intellectual property of the breeder. Any individual breeder or breeding institution may apply for a plant breeders' right. Foreign breeders can only apply through an agent residing in South Africa.

Once a variety is approved, the plant breeder will be issued with a plant breeders' right certificate. Plant breeders' rights are valid for 25 years for vines and trees, and for 20 years for all annual varieties, calculated from the date on which a certificate of registration was issued.



*One of the stakeholders commenting on the regulations.*

## PIG FARMERS EMBRACE TECHNOLOGY WITH NEW APP TO TRACK PIGS' MOVEMENT

Mercia Smith

**T**he agricultural sector along with many other sectors has seen significant changes in the way business is done as a result of the introduction of smart technology and innovation. Applications, or apps as they are commonly known, are becoming increasingly popular within the agricultural sector as a way for farmers to get better information and solve problems relating to the sector. Farmers are also embracing technology to enhance production, ensure food safety and increase efficiency.

Among them is the South African Pork Producers' Organisation (SAPPO), which has invested in the Pig Movement App to strengthen its members' ability to provide assurance to consumers and trade partners that South African pork products are safe for consumption, have been produced in an ethical manner, and that products can be traced throughout the food chain.

Pigs are vulnerable to a wide range of endemic and epidemic diseases, including zoonotic infections, which can have a negative impact on their health, welfare and productivity. They become infected through direct contact with infected animals, eating virus-contaminated food, or physical contact with people and vehicles. The app will also assist in enabling movements within South Africa and in protecting current pork exports that are valued at R400 million to countries such as Asia and Europe.

It is important to note that users of the app must be involved in the pig producing business before they can access the application. Start by signing into World of Pork ([www.worldofpork.com](http://www.worldofpork.com)). Select the Pig Movement Menu, then the Movement List and follow the prompts.

Businesses that are receiving pigs will also be able to view these movements by signing into their own World of Pork accounts, clicking on the Pig Movement Menu, and then continuing to the Movement List.

World of Pork is an integrated platform which offers stakeholders in the South African pork value chain a protected environment to share information and facilitate interactions that create value and drive competitiveness, sustainability and food safety in the pork industry.

For any questions on the application, or if you need assistance, please send an email to [info@worldofpork.com](mailto:info@worldofpork.com) or call 012 100 3035 and ask for the World of Pork team.

