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COMMISSION ON RESTITUTION OF LAND RIGHTS REFLECTS ON 30 YEARS OF THE RESTITUTION PROGRAMME

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



30 YEARS OF LAND RESTITUTION



Minister Mzwanele Nyhontso with the Deputy Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Zolile Burns-Ncamashe



Minister Mzwanele Nyhontso and Deputy Minister Stanley Mathabatha observing a moment of silence for those who passed away while still engaging the commission

Jabulani Malinga and Tabisa Mashiyi

It was a moment of reflection for the Commission on Restitution of Land Rights (CRLR) as it commemorated 30 years since its establishment in 1994.

The commemoration event, which was led by the Minister of Land Reform and Rural Development, Mzwanele Nyhontso supported by Deputy Minister Stanley Mathabatha, took place at the Freedom Park Heritage Site in Pretoria on 2 December 2024. Held under the theme: **Dignity Restored through the Land**

Restitution Act, the celebration of this milestone in the history of South Africa brought together experts in land reform and restitution, beneficiaries of the land claims process, government officials, politicians and claimant communities.

The Restitution of Land Rights Act, 1994 (Act No. 22 of 1994), was enacted to restore land rights to individuals and communities dispossessed of their rights in land owing to past racially

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Cont.



Some of beneficiaries who received title deeds



Advocate Tembeka Ngcukaitobi speaking during the 30 years of Restitution celebrations

discriminatory laws and practices. It also established the Land Claims Court, which is now named the Land Court and created the Commission on Restitution of Land Rights to oversee the restitution process.

Addressing the gathering, Chief Land Claims Commissioner (CLCC), Ms Nomfundo Ntloko, said that although the commission has managed to settle about 90% of the claims that were submitted before the cut-off date of 31 December 1998, they are not only focused on the numbers, but it was important to look at what needs to be done to take land restitution further.

“It is important for us to not be inward looking but to actually ask our partners and beneficiaries for feedback in progress of the past 30 years and improve where necessary so that we achieve more in the next 10 years. It is for that reason that we have invited esteemed guests who are experts on the topic of land reform to come and give us their reflections on where to improve,” said Ms Ntloko.

The commission has, to date, managed to settle 83 234 claims, helping more than 465 488 households reclaim their dignity. It has also spent a total of R58 billion to address the legacy of dispossession and fostering healing.

Taking to the podium to give the keynote address, Minister Mzwanele Nkhomo said that it was a momentous occasion for him to participate in the 30 years celebration of the passing of the Restitution of Land Rights Act, as the act sought to reverse and undo sector colonial and apartheid oppression.

“Land restoration was at the heart of complete liberation for our people. We therefore need to ensure that we provide that liberation by giving back that land to them, because the land will help our people to build generational wealth. Through land, the dignity and self-worth of our people will be restored,” continued Minister Nkhomo.

The minister also warned the officials of the commission to steer clear of corrupt activities because they will be dealt with harshly. “If you steal land from the people when you are tasked with restitution and redistribution, then you are worse than the original land thieves,” he cautioned.

“Land is the reason why the wars of land dispossessions were fought, so we must address land restitution in a way that honours those who lost their lives fighting against land dispossessions,” remarked the Deputy Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Prince Zolile Burns-Ncamashe.

Reflecting on the restitution programme, Advocate Tembeka Ngcukaitobi stated that while restitution was a useful intervention by Government, it was never meant to be a substitute for land injustice. “Restitution was intended to be a limited programme, targeting only the victims of forced removals, however, a policy mistake was made during the transition by focusing the entire land injustice debate on restitution,” he highlighted, adding that that has, in a sense, overburdened restitution to resolve the colonial problem. He further recommended that the commission should speed up its work and include the introduction of the Land Redistribution Bill to address beneficiary selection, equitable access, and compensation and payouts for land claims.

The day ended on a high note as Minister Mzwanele Nkhomo handed title deeds over to 36 land reform beneficiaries from across all provinces. Ms Nuraan Davids-Latief, the co-chairperson of the Constantia Communal Property Association (CPA) in Western Cape was happy to receive a title deed for her CPA after 20 years of engaging with the commission.

“I am glad we have finally reached this stage with the department. We are now waiting for the minister to give approval for a development plan that we have negotiated with a reputable developer.”

FOOD PRICES INCREASE AMID DECELERATING INFLATION



Double digit increase for eggs – 19,6%



Double digit increase for cabbage – 16,1%

Ndivhuwo Thenga

South African consumers paid more for food during October compared to the same period last year. That is according to the National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC) Food Basket Price Monthly Report for November 2024. The cost of the NAMC's 28-item urban food basket had increased by 6,1% in October 2024 compared to the same period last year, reaching R1 296,49. When compared to the R1 288,81 in September 2024, the basket increased by 0,6% on a monthly basis. From October 2023 to October 2024, of these 28 items, 11 experienced price increases that exceeded the 6% inflation target set by the South African Reserve Bank (SARB). Notable products in this category include margarine, which increased substantially by 40,5%, followed by instant coffee (19,7%), eggs (19,6%), dried beans (17,7%), Ceylon/black tea (17,5%), cabbage (16,1%), peanut butter (11,9%), apples (10,5%), oranges (7,8%), potatoes (7,7%) and rice (6,8%).

When looking at year-on-year price differences, the food group that contributed most significantly to observed food inflation was coffee and tea, which experienced a substantial increase of 18,7%, followed by fats and oils which increased by 16,2%, bean products (12,5%), sugary foods (5,6%), bread and cereals (5,5%), fruit (4,1%), vegetables (4,1%), dairy and eggs (3,8%) and animal protein (1,8%). Looking at month-to-month basis, fats and oils increased significantly by 16,2%. This was followed by fruit, which increased by 4,8%, vegetables (2,1%), coffee and tea (1,5%), bean products (1,3%) and sugary foods (0,9%). During the period under review, animal protein, bread and cereals, and dairy and eggs decreased by 0,1%, 0,9% and 4,0%, respectively.

The Pietermaritzburg Economic Justice and Dignity (PMEJD) Household Affordability Index, which tracks the prices of 44 basic foods from 47 supermarkets and 32 butcheries in Johannesburg, Durban, Cape Town and Springbok, shows that in October 2024, the average cost of the household food basket was R5

348,65, which is an increase of R92,97 (1,8%) from R5 255,68 in September 2024. When compared to October 2023, the average cost of the household food basket reveals a year-on-year increase of R51,07 (1,0%) from R5 297,58 to R5 348,65.

Meanwhile, the consumer price index (CPI) increased by 2,8% in the 12 months to October 2024. This represents a sharp decline from 3,8% recorded in September. According to the Statistics SA CPI Report released on 20 November, October's rate is the lowest since June 2020 during the SARS COVID-19 pandemic when the rate was 2,2%. The primary factor behind the slowdown is the falling fuel prices with petrol and diesel prices declining by 5,3% between September and October, taking the annual rate for fuel to -19,1%. The price for inland 95-octane petrol in October was R21,05, the cheapest since February 2022 when the price was R20,14.

After remaining steady for six months in the 4,5% to 4,7% range, annual inflation for food and non-alcoholic beverages (NAB) retreated to 3,6% in October. This is the lowest rate since November 2019 (3,5%). Inflation cooled down for most food and NAB subcategories in October, except for sugar, sweets and desserts and cold beverages.



The price of margarine increased by 40,5%

TRAVELLERS URGED TO COMPLY WITH IMPORTATION AND EXPORTATION OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS

Samuel Kgatla

WARNING -DECLARE-

"Protecting South African Agriculture, Biodiversity and Economy"
Travellers must declare the items below to agricultural officials at the port of entry



NB: If bringing any of the above into South Africa, an import permit or registration certificate may be required.
For more information please contact:

Directorate Inspection Services Tel.: +27 12 309 8778/8701 Fax: +27 12 309 8787			
Directorate Food Import and Export Standards Veterinary Import Permit Office Tel.: +27 12 319 7514/7476/7500/ 74007510 - Fax: +27 12 329 8292 Plant Health Import Permit Office Tel.: +27 12 319 6130/6102/6396/ 6383/ 6207 - Fax: +27 12 329 8292 Web: www.dalrrd.gov.za Email: info.sps@dalrrd.gov.za, VetPermits@dalrrd.gov.za, PlantHealthPermits@dalrrd.gov.za, www.dcaonline.co.za, AICHelpdesk@dalrrd.gov.za	Registrar - GMO ACT, 1997 Tel.: +27 12 319 6900/ 6384 6165/ 6033 Fax: +27 12 319 6298	Directorate Food Safety and Quality Assurance Division Liquor Products Tel.: +27 21 809 1687/1688 Fax: +27 21 887 6392	Directorate Agriculture Input Control Registrar: Fertilisers, Farm Feeds, Agricultural Remedies and Stock Remedies Act, 1947 (Act No. 36 of 1947) Tel.: +27 12 319 7103/7947 Fax: +27 12 319 7179

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As the festive season approaches, the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) is urging international travellers to comply with the country's biosecurity import requirements for agricultural and related regulated products. Travellers are warned not to bring prohibited agricultural products into the country. Items such as plants and plant products, live animals and animal products, insects and pathogens, dairy, growth medium and soil, liquor products, honey and honey products, pesticides, farm feeds, stock remedies and fertilisers must be declared to inspectors at the ports of entry.

DALRRD, together with other stakeholders such as the Border Management Authority (BMA), is prioritising biosecurity compliance in respect to movement of agricultural products. When travelling to South Africa, travellers must ensure that they do not

bring prohibited agricultural products into the country. These products may harbour pests that occur in other countries and their introduction may endanger South Africa's competitiveness in trade, food security and agricultural productivity.

For emphasis purposes, poultry, beef, eggs, pork (including lard), hides and skins and animal hair require a veterinary import permit whereas plant and plant products will require a plant health import permit that are both obtainable at the Directorate: Food Import and Export Standards at DALRRD. For live animals, an Animal Improvement Authorisation Permit must first be issued and presented to the Veterinary Import Permit Office as part of the prerequisites for application of an import permit for live animals as a legislative requirement.

Pests and diseases are serious threats to the life and health of plants and animals. To bring any of the listed products and items into South Africa, an import permit or certificate is required unless the product has been exempted. The importation of certain liquor products with alcohol content of more than 1% into the country for drinking purposes is restricted, except on the authority of an import certificate issued by DALRRD.

The South African food safety and food control systems are developed and enforced by three government departments: DALRRD, Department of Health, and Department of Trade, Industry and Competition working together with relevant entities such as the BMA and the National Regulator for Compulsory Specifications (NRCS).

Under South African agricultural products import laws, it is the responsibility of the importer to ensure that any product entering the South African territory is in full compliance with the sanitary and phytosanitary regulations or requirements as provided by the South African government.

Mr Mpho Sekgala, acting director from Directorate: Food Import and Exports Standards, advises international travellers and importers to comply with the South African biosecurity measures to avoid their products from being confiscated at the port of entry. "Non-compliance is not going to be tolerated and I am pleading with the entire target audience to comply. All food and agricultural products that enter South Africa must be inspected to ensure that they are not contaminated with any pest, disease, foodborne diseases or any unwanted or foreign material and that they are fit for their intended use. Biosecurity is everyone's responsibility. Through compliance we can safeguard the South African agriculture, biodiversity and the economy," he said.

BITTER STING OF FAKE HONEY



Minister Steenhuisen commended the raid conducted by the department



Honey must be correctly labelled to provide consumers with accurate information



Incorrectly labelled products pose a health risk to consumers

Rony Moremi

regulations are used to provide consumers with accurate and relevant information regarding the products. Regulation R835 of 25 August 2000 defines adulterants as any non-bee product added to bee products.

According to the directorate, no other word may appear on the label, for example, honey-based syrup or honey syrup. Honey should be the only listed ingredient on the label. Fake honey will have three ingredients, some of the ingredients will be sugar, water and citric acid.

The department encourages consumers to check the product label before purchasing. Some of the words that should appear on the label are honey, pure honey and raw honey, and it should also show the words "choice grade" for pure or 100% honey. Imported honey will be labelled "irradiated" because it has been irradiated. Irradiation is deliberate exposure to ionizing radiation to prevent introduction of quarantine pests into the country.

Most non-compliance discovered during the raid were incorrect labelling, for example, adulterated honey, which is honey mixed with other ingredients marked as honey when it should be labelled as syrup, misleading information, and quality of the products. Incorrectly marked products pose a health risk to consumers because consumers buy a product under the impression that they are buying the correct product when in fact they are buying a different product. For example, people suffering from diabetes are buying adulterated honey labelled as honey under the impression that it is pure honey.

During the raids, non-compliant products were removed from the shelves and non-compliant premises were closed down. SAPS issued two fines on the spot to Africa Cash and Carry as well as Team Cash and Carry for an amount of R1 500 each. According to the APS Act, those found guilty of an offence will be liable to a fine or imprisonment as prescribed in the Act.

Consumers are being warned to exercise caution when buying honey which is unrealistically cheap as it may be "fake". The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development recently conducted raids in Kempton Park, Crown Mines and Marabastad in Gauteng where 1 059 honey-based syrups and 388 non-compliant honey products were seized.

The Minister of Agriculture, John Steenhuisen, commended the raid which was conducted by the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) working with the South African Police Services (SAPS). Minister Steenhuisen says seizures of these products will be expanded to other provinces as part of efforts to ensure citizens get the quality goods they intended to purchase. He further encourages consumers to report foodstuff that is incorrectly labelled.

The DALRRD Directorate: Inspection Services is responsible for enforcing the Agricultural Products Standards Act (APS), 1990 (Act No. 119 of 1990) and related regulations. This Act regulates the quality of and marking of certain agricultural products at point of sale. Prescribed marking requirements in the

DEPUTY MINISTER CAPA ADDRESSES CHALLENGES FACED BY FARMERS

Innocent Mhlanga



Deputy Minister of Agriculture Nokuzola Capa responding to questions

He further said, “We would also like to register our challenge with the stock theft that is happening in our area, it needs to be attended to as soon as possible because farmers are losing their stock and not getting any help from the police.” In addition, he asked if the minister could intervene before it is too late.

Mr Hlomuka Ngidi, deputy chairperson of the South African Farmers Development Association, asked the deputy minister to intervene on the matter of the disappearance of tractors that were provided by government, because this creates more rifts among farmers.

“We are pleading with Government to speed up their monitoring processes so that it can monitor every assistance that Government is providing to farmers and make sure that officials and farmers do not collude for unethical behaviour,” said Ngidi.

He also complained about the poor state of roads leading to their farms, lack of access to markets, implements, fertiliser, inadequate land and funding for the expansion of their businesses. “We have, in the past, provided some communities and cooperatives with various implements and mechanisation for their farming startup, but today, none of those cooperatives can show you any of those implements or seeds that they were given. This has created a problem for the government and communities, because to this day, people are still asking or fighting for tractors, and what they do not know is that owning a tractor does not translate into ability to have a zeal to work on your land,” said the deputy minister.

Farmers who attended the KwaZulu-Natal Presidential Imbizo build-up engagement session, hosted by the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, brought to the attention of Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Ms Nokuzola Capa, the myriad of challenges hampering their businesses’ growth. Sugar cane farmers complained about the theft of tractors while other farmers are contending with stock theft, delays and favouritism in distribution of fertilisers, and lack of access to markets for their produce.

In response, the deputy minister acknowledged the challenges but conceded that finding solutions would take time. According to the deputy minister, collaboration between civil society and Government, particularly the South African Police Service (SAPS), can be harnessed to address these challenges, considering that some are self-created. She further said that the department would need to improve and tighten the administration of fertiliser distribution while other farmers need exposure to training like the Smallholder Empowerment and Promotion (SHEP) programme introduced by Japan’s government, which emphasises the need to obtain agreements with markets or buyers prior to engaging in any farming activity, particularly stock, crop or horticulture farming.

Chairperson of the South African Cane Growers Association, Mr Sibusiso Mkhize, said, “We are very pleased with the government’s interventions over the years; however, we would like to register complaints regarding the distribution of fertilisers. It seems like officials do not realise the urgency of delivering our fertilisers on time.”



Fresh produce displayed on exhibition stands

Cont. from pg7



Farmers and farmer representatives in attendance

The deputy minister was accompanied by the KZN MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development, Thembeni KaMadlopha-Mthethwa, during the engagement with farmers at Mount Edgecombe, Kwashukela. The aim of the pre-imbizo was to engage and afford all social partners in Government, traditional leaders, civil society organisations, labour, women, youth, persons with disabilities, businesses and communities an opportunity to collectively voice their challenges in an endeavour to champion inclusive economic growth and job creation.

The deputy minister also implored the communities to stop the infighting among themselves as it makes it difficult for Government to provide adequate services that are satisfactory to everyone. The department will continue to provide tractors, fertilisers, seeds, and other implements to the province for equal distribution to farmers in their districts around the province.

KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development, Thembeni KaMadlopha-Mthethwa, recounted that farmers have, in the space of two years, lost about R565 million from floods and other natural disasters without compensation from the government. She, however, added that the department was still discussing the matter and would soon create a disaster fund to cater for such eventualities.

Responding to issues such as the non-functional tractors, lack of fertiliser support, poor access roads and transportation raised by farmers, the deputy minister said that she had requested a report from the district management and a plan that would assist the department to deliver those services to the farmers.

She also requested all officials in her department to speed up the process of addressing all the issues that were discussed at the meeting and improve the lives of all the farmers, from backyard to mainstream farming.



Departmental officials provided agricultural information to the community that attended the imbizo



A community member, who is also a backyard farmer, asking questions at the imbizo

LAND REFORM IN WESTERN CAPE CELEBRATES THE SUCCESS OF PROTEA FARM

Tabisa Mashiya



Ms Marilyn Siegels Van Niekerk (Centre) chatting with DALRRD officials during a farm visit held recently

Protea Farm, Nitaflo (Pty) Ltd, which produces high-quality apples for both local and international markets, is one of the success stories that the Land Reform programme's Proactive Land Acquisition Strategy (PLAS) celebrates. This 74,6-ha fruit farm is located in the scenic Elgin Valley close to Grabouw in the Overberg District, Western Cape. It grows a variety of apples, including Pink Lady, Granny Smith, Sundowner, Rosy Glow, Royal Gala, Golden Delicious and others. Protea Farm consists of 38 ha of apple orchards with 33 ha of land currently producing fruit.

The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) has leased this farm to Mr Edward van Niekerk and his two daughters, Marilyn and Yolande, for a period of thirty years. The shareholding of the business that manages this farm favours women, with 80% of the shares held by women and 20% by men. To support this project, DALRRD contributed more than R5 million in recapitalisation and development funding, which assisted in infrastructure development, buying machinery and equipment, as well as production inputs. The farm has made remarkable progress over the years and, as such, it is rated as one of the successful farms of the Land Reform programme.

Speaking on the farm's success, one of the daughters, Ms Marilyn Siegels (née van Niekerk), said that their father's dream of owning a farm and the passion he had for farming was what inspired them to make Protea Farm a success, despite initial challenges with strategic partners. "Although things were not looking good in the beginning due to challenges with strategic partners, Protea Farm demonstrated remarkable resilience and determination," she remarked. According to her, Protea Farm has transformed over the past seven years from a struggling plum farm to a successful apple-producing farm which has a lot of potential to

grow even further. She adds that the farm manages to employ 20 permanent workers, 16 seasonal workers and also trains matric interns.

The farm currently exports 70% to 80% of its produce to more than 20 countries, including the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands, Ireland, China, India, Kenya and many more. The remaining 20% to 30% of the produce is sent to the local market for juicing. She added that hard work, passion and dedication are what brought Protea Farm to its current state.

The outstanding work done by these PLAS farmers is demonstrated by accolades and awards they received and the financial incentives accompanying the awards. Protea Farm has recently bagged the Western Cape Female Exporter of the Year Award, which was awarded by the Western Cape Provincial Department of Agriculture in August 2024. In addition to the award, it received R50 000 in cash, which will also assist them in growing their farming business even further. This was, however, not the first award these farmers have received. In 2019, the farm was awarded Western Cape Female Entrepreneur Commercial Producer by the former Department of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries.

The story of Protea PLAS farmers is a story of inspiration to struggling farmers out there and, in some way, it will give hope to other PLAS farmers who are on the verge of giving up on their farming businesses. Most importantly, it will silence some naysayers who doubt that the PLAS programme has the potential to turn Black small-scale farmers into commercial exporting farmers.



Protea farmers Marilyn and Yolande Van Niekerk standing in front of their orchards with the Overberg District Director, Ms Esmerelda Reid

PROVINCIAL CLIMATE SMART AGRICULTURE DIALOGUE



Attendees of the Climate Smart Agriculture Dialogue at the Capital Hotel in Nelspruit

Rose Mushwana

Climate change is described as a steady rise in temperatures, caused by increased and constant carbon dioxide emissions. The subject of climate change has seen a sharp increase in attention in the global agenda because of the effects of its impact on society, which has been characterised by the world experiencing more natural disasters over the past two decades than any other time in history.

According to Greenpeace, the planet has been experiencing extreme weather in the past few decades—global temperatures have been rising annually at a rate of 0,7 degrees Celsius. South Africa is recording rising temperatures at twice the global rate. Mpumalanga has not been exempted from experiencing these extreme temperatures. Ms Sibiya from the Provincial Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs, said that through their assessment of vulnerability from 2016, Mpumalanga has recorded rising temperatures each year that have brought about extreme weather.

It is due to these conditions in South Africa that Dr Ikalafeng Kgakatsi, Director: Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction, initiated this multi-provincial dialogue to discuss climate change and try to collectively come up with mitigation measures. The dialogue took place on 6 and 7 November at the Capital Hotel in Mpumalanga and is scheduled to take place in all provinces.

The agricultural sector is also affected by extreme temperatures that have an impact on crop production and livestock. In Manyeleti, for instance, 20 cows were recorded to die daily due to extreme heat and draught in 2024. These effects are directly affecting the economy of the province. However, this is not only a provincial problem, it also affects the country and the global economy.

The panel of experts came up with proposed tools under Climate Smart Agriculture; this includes new technologies, educating communities, research and development and smart agricultural practices. The office of the MEC for Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental affairs, through MEC Nompumelelo Hlophe, emphasised the importance of understanding this threat.

She mentioned that the province must change how it does things in order to be ready to deal with disasters that can occur as a result of extreme weather. She mentioned that people need to feel safe. She stated that farming should also change to mitigate the risks that come from these extreme temperatures, adding that they should be educated and assisted in the new methods.

It is projected by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) that the world's population will increase to over nine billion people by 2050 and, as a result, feeding people in decades to come will require ingenuity and innovation to produce more food on less land in more sustainable ways.

Cont. from pg7

To meet the increasing demands of food, countries and global role players will be required to develop new strategies and climate smart actions to increase agricultural production by enhancing resilience of agricultural and food production systems to eliminate hunger and reduce poverty.

The Agricultural Research Council and the department have already put several projects in place in households and formal agriculture to reduce the use of greenhouse gases. These experimental research programmes are showing promise. In some areas such as the Cyril Clarke School in Mattaffin where these smart practices are being rolled out, there has been tremendous success. The school principal expressed that the success of the project has gone beyond their intended purpose, they are feeding the students, selling to the community and are now looking for a formal market.

There have been some challenges. The dialogue recorded through Mr Moses Mkhabela from SAFDA that the farmers on the ground do not feel fully included in the research, it has not been made clear on how small-scale farmers are to benefit from the developments of the research. The commissions set up to discuss these issues came up with workable solutions that MEC Hlophe promised to review closely with her team and establish how they can be refined and implemented.



Expert panel members responding to the questions from the floor



Dr Ikalafeng Kgakatsi, Director: Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction at the Climate Smart Agriculture Dialogue



Mr Jabulani Mahlangu (The National African Farmers Union), Cllr IET Shabangu (Executive Mayor: Ehlanzeni District Municipality), Ms NE Hlophe (MEC: Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs) Cllr Sibongile Makhushu-Mazibuko (Executive Mayor: City of Mbombela Local Municipality)

DALRRD PLANS TO MITIGATE PEST INFESTATION IN SOUTH AFRICA



Delegates who attended the South African Emergency Plant Pest Response Plan (SAEPPRP) workshop in White River

Samuel Kgatla

Policy makers and pest control specialists from the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) and agricultural industry bodies converged at the Premier Hotel in White River, Mpumalanga, from 18 to 21 November 2024 to strategise on the prevention or minimisation of the introduction of exotic pests and diseases to South Africa. The other objectives of the workshop were to review the existing South African Emergency Plant Pest Response Plan (SAEPPRP) and intensify the emergency and rapid response interventions for any possible outbreaks.

The intention of the workshop was to consult with role players in the agricultural industry and provincial departments with the purpose of sharing lessons learnt during the implementation of SAEPPRP, as well as soliciting inputs to amend the plan to strengthen the anticipated actions. SAEPPRP is a technical implementation framework approved in 2013 by the department's Executive Committee to take care of early-warning and rapid response regarding phytosanitary pests. The reason for the review is due to changes in government administration and the environment like newly established pest outbreaks and management thereof, as well as enhancing inclusiveness.

SAEPPRP aims to outline effective rapid response to the detection, identification, eradication and/or mitigation of an emergency plant pest incursion in South Africa. These plans cover, among others, issues relating to plant pest response, notification, communication, enablers, control (containment, eradication and quarantine), institutional arrangement, monitoring and evaluation that were discussed during the duration of the workshop. Discussions were centred on strengthening early-warning systems, empowering farmers with real-time updates,

and leveraging technology-driven tools.

South Africa has experienced several exotic pest incursions including, among others, Oriental fruitfly, Fall armyworm, Tomato leaf minor, Banana Bunchy Top virus and Polyphagous Shot Hole Borer in some parts of the country. These pests have proven to be very aggressive, expensive to control, and require some level of expertise and effective collaboration between stakeholders.

Deputy Director-General: Agricultural Production, Biosecurity and Natural Resources Management, Mr Dipepeneng Serage, praised the team working on SAEPPRP and said the plan was the first of its kind for the department. "My branch will serve as a disaster centre to help everyone. We need to take our biosecurity measures very seriously. We should consider this as a plant health disaster prevention plan. We must look at what is working and not working. This plan is about the protection of plants. It will work as a bio-component for food security. We need maximum commitment from everyone to work together. This plan is about our people at large," he said.

In closing, Mr Jan-Hendrik Venter, Director: Plant Health said that they had a fruitful workshop. "I am very pleased to see many scientists gathered during the four-day workshop. Everything went well and I want to thank everyone for their inputs. We are going to monitor the progress of the plan and consolidate all the inputs," he promised.

As a way forward, the department is planning to consolidate all inputs and circulate to the stakeholders in December 2024. They are planning to finalise the plan next year, submit it to the Executive Committee of the department, and implement it around July 2025.

MINISTER WANTS TO MAKE DLRRD THE ECONOMIC PROPELLOR OF THE COUNTRY



Deputy Minister Stanley Mathabatha, Minister Mzwanele Nyhontso and Director-General Mooketsa Ramasodi

Mercia Smith

The Department of Land Reform and Rural Development (DLRRD) recently held a strategic visioning and planning session at Birchwood Hotel and OR Tambo Conference Centre in Boksburg hosted by the Minister of Land Reform and Rural Development, Mr Mzwanele Nyhontso.

“The department does not do basic things on its mandate and because of unclear positioning, it is unable to communicate achievements to the public,” said the minister. Since he took office, Minister Nyhontso has engaged with a wide range of people. He met with various stakeholders, including land claimants, rural communities who have benefited from the services of the department and equally with those who have grievances.

“After these visits, I realised we must include a solid change management programme for the establishment of the department. We cannot go on with the old,” he said. Examples of successful land reform can be found in various countries where targeted policies have led to increased agricultural productivity and improved livelihoods for rural populations.

“Reparations in the land reform and rural development programmes should take a practical path of psycho-social programming. People carrying multigenerational trauma cannot collaborate beyond the matters of survival. Reported failure of land reform is not limited to finances, market access and skills training. More dramatically, mental modes of our clients’ paradigms have a huge impact,” he said. The minister further remarked that the stereotypical understanding of land reform, land administration and rural development policies assumes that the department is delivering services in a healthy society. This posture is setting land reform initiatives up for failure.

“This strategy session must produce the strategy that will make this department the economic propeller of the country,” Minister Nyhontso continued. “To do it we need an engaged workforce, a workforce that has a desire to make an impact,” he concluded.



Dr Fhumulani Rachel Munyai and Ms Tsotso Sehoole

FARMERS SHARE THEIR GRIEVANCES WITH MINISTER NYHONTSO



Minister Nyhontso during the meeting with farmers

Farm evictions, post settlement support and title deeds were some of the issues raised by farmers during a meeting with the Minister of Land Reform and Rural Development, Mr Mzwanele Nyhontso, on 21 November 2024 at the department's head office in Pretoria. Farmers told the minister that they are eager to farm but they are so indebted they are even struggling to pay rent.

Rodney Mbuyazi, a farmer from Empangeni in KwaZulu-Natal whose sugar cane fields were torched during the 2020 July riots, pleaded with the minister to aid struggling farmers. Rodney said that the torching of his sugar cane field set him back. "I had to start from scratch. I used to plant sugar cane on 55 ha, now, I have only planted 20 ha. I was promised funding, but I have not received it, and I cannot afford input costs." He pleaded with the minister to provide post settlement support and registering of title deeds as he says title deeds will help farmers to access bank loans.

"I cannot invest in the farm if I do not have a title deed. It is difficult for me to invest in infrastructure on the farm if I do not have a title deed. Farmers are highly indebted because rental fees are very high," lamented Marcia Matlala, a broiler farmer from Hekpoort in Mogale City Local Municipality in Gauteng. She suggested that for post settlement support, a farm must be assessed as a business so that support can be based on the needs of the farm.



Farmers reacting to the minister's response to their grievances

Rony Moremi

In response, the minister acknowledged concerns raised by farmers and that he will resolve them working together with the farmers. He added that it is important to provide post settlement support, but the farmers must account for the support. "Three things must happen when you have a farm: the farm must produce food, the farm must create jobs, and the farm must contribute revenue." He further instructed officials to take calls from farmers and communicate regularly with farmers.

Nompilo Mtshali, a livestock farmer from KwaZulu-Natal, raised the issue of farm evictions; that if a parent dies, their children must be allowed to continue farming. She also requested that title deeds be registered with the Office of the Surveyor-General owing to challenges with farm boundaries between farmers and farm dwellers. Responding to the issue of farm evictions, Terries Ndove, Deputy Director-General (DDG): Land Redistribution and Tenure Reform, informed farmers that it is against the State Land Lease and Disposal Policy to evict people left on the farm if the lessee passes on. "Nobody must work against the policy," emphasised the DDG.



Deputy Director-General Terries Ndove assured farmers that as officials they commit to do what they're supposed to do

MANYELETI COMMUNITY CELEBRATES HISTORIC HANDOVER OF GAME RESERVE



Minister Mzwanele Nyhontso handing over a title deed to the Manyeleti Communal Property Association (CPA)



Mr Ntsako Sibuyi from Manyeleti Community Property Association was excited as the title deed was finally handed over to them

Samuel Kgatla

The Manyeleti Game Reserve, one of South Africa's most popular game reserves for tourism and conservation, was handed over by the Minister of Land Reform and Rural Development, Mr Mzwanele Nyhontso, to the Manyeleti Communal Property Association (CPA) following the settlement of their land claim, lodged over 30 years ago.

The minister handed over the title deed on 25 November 2024 during a ceremony in Manyeleti, located under the Bushbuckridge Local Municipality in Mpumalanga. The game reserve, which covers 25 393,31 ha was established in 1963 after the forceful removal of the community as a result of the past racially discriminatory laws and practices.

Manyeleti, which means "a place of the stars" in Xitsonga, is internationally recognised for being home to Africa's famous "big five" among other attractions.

The reserve is a significant contributor to the local economy, creating much-needed jobs in the area. The land claim was lodged by the late Chief Phillip Phedulane Mnisi on behalf of the Mnisi tribe before the December 1998 cut-off date provided for in the initial opening of the land claims process.

Explaining the delay in settling the claim, the Deputy Chief Land Claims Commissioner, Francois Beukman, said that the claim was burdened by disputes regarding the verification of the original membership of the Manyeleti Community. The property was transferred to the CPA in April 2024 and has 172 remaining claimants.

The reserve is working closely with the Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA) and the Regional Land Claims Commission in Mpumalanga. The claimants and MTPA are in the process of finalising a co-management agreement.

The chairperson of the Manyeleti CPA, Mr Hendrick Makhuvele, thanked all the stakeholders who worked with them during the land claim process. He said that he was grateful for what the department has done for them. "At least, today we are celebrating the handing over of a title deed and this is a perfect Christmas for us. We need to work together as a CPA," he said.

Addressing the community and dignitaries, Minister Nyhontso pleaded with the CPA to unite and work together to fight external forces who want to divide them. "Transparency is key for CPAs and many of them failed because of destructive outside forces. People need to know and understand that they cannot be in power forever. When your time is up, then leave because you cannot be in leadership forever," said the minister.

He further advised that: "Succession planning is crucial, and the young ones must also be given an opportunity. I want to thank the officials who are dealing with land claims because they are doing a splendid job. Post-settlement support is crucial, and I always believe that our people deserve it, especially when they are given land."

The claimants are going to be assisted by the department to apply for post-settlement support.