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NEW MINISTERS AND THEIR DEPUTIES DELIVERED THEIR BUDGET VOTE SPEECHES

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agriculture, land reform & rural development

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



NEW MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND HIS DEPUTY DELIVERED THEIR BUDGET VOTE SPEECHES



Rony Moremi

The newly appointed Minister of Agriculture, Mr John Steenhuisen, delivered his maiden Budget Vote speech in Parliament on Tuesday, 16 July 2024. He, together with Deputy Minister Nokuzola Capa, reflected on the work done in the sector and outlined plans for the new financial year.

Minister Steenhuisen, who recently took charge of the newly established Department of Agriculture, explained the role of agriculture as a primary sector that plays a key role in the provision of food, contributing 28% to the national economy and 6% towards creation of employment.

The minister also indicated that he has no intention of reinventing the wheel with regard to the Agricultural and Agro-processing Masterplan (AAMP). He said that he will accelerate

its implementation and ensure that the department upholds its commitments to the plan.

The minister acknowledged that biosecurity remains a top priority for the department, alluding to the recent outbreaks of avian flu and foot-and-mouth disease. He said that disease outbreaks not only pose a threat to the country but also to exports opportunities with to other countries. Mr Steenhuisen also explained that the department will focus on the track and trace system for the movement of livestock around the country. "The department will be focusing on a new track and trace system for the movement of animals around the country. This is becoming necessary because international export markets and trade organisations are rapidly moving to systems where trade

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EDITORIAL TEAM

Chief Director

Linda Page : 083 460 4482 • LPage@dalrrd.gov.za

Director

Moses Rannditsheni : 063 623 3012 • Moses.Rannditsheni@dalrrd.gov.za

Editors

Lutamo Ramuedzisi : 071 878 9618 • Lutamo.Ramuedzisi@dalrrd.gov.za

Lerato Mofokeng : 012 312 8303 • LeratoMOF@dalrrd.gov.za

Eben Rademeyer : 012 312 8310 • EbenR@dalrrd.gov.za

Princy Ramaite : 012 312 8309 • PrincyRa@dalrrd.gov.za

Ramokone Teffo : 012 312 8308 • RamokoneT@dalrrd.gov.za

Designer

Sibongile Ngcezu-Lingwazadzela: 082 640 2051 • SibongileN@dalrrd.gov.za

Production Manager

Dorethea Samaai : 083 441 9946 • DoretheaS@dalrrd.gov.za

Coordinator

Rony Moremi : 066 084 6192 • RincertM@dalrrd.gov.za

Reporters

Rony Moremi : 066 084 6192 • RincertM@dalrrd.gov.za

Ndivhuwo Thenga : 060 973 0058 • NdivhuwoTh@dalrrd.gov.za

Nontembiso Kgatle : 067 415 9333 • NontembisoK@dalrrd.gov.za

Keitumetse Moticoe : 067 415 9333 • keitumetse.moticoe@dalrrd.gov.za

Mercia Smith : 060 973 3816 • MerciaS@dalrrd.gov.za

Matsepo Malatswane : 066 084 6355 • MatsepoM@dalrrd.gov.za

Tabisa Mashiyi : 071 491 8449 • Thabisa.Mashiyi@dalrrd.gov.za

Qhawe Ntuli : 071 492 0132 • Qhawen@dalrrd.gov.za

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will only be possible with livestock products if such product can be traced to their origins,” described the minister.

He also outlined his plans for expanding South African agricultural exports by affirming his commitment to strengthen trade relationships and agreements such as the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) and the trade agreements with the European Union.

Deputy Minister Capa outlined the work and plans of the entities of the Department of Agriculture—the Agricultural Research Council (ARC), National Marketing Council (NAMC), Perishable Products Export Control Board (PPECB) and the Onderstepoort Biological Products (OBP). These entities are responsible for assisting the department with research, development of vaccines, marketing of agricultural products and certification of agricultural exports.

The deputy minister recognised the important role played by the entities and further explained that, by working closely with the private sector, the entities can be relevant to all farmers. “It is important to consider the effectiveness and capability of these entities in fulfilling their developmental mandates. By working closely with the private sector, these entities can become more relevant to all farmers, therefore boosting food production, fostering economic growth, and ensuring a healthier nation,” said the deputy minister.

She further mentioned that NAMC has been able to spend an amount of R202 million on transformation programmes from R1 billion collected through levies. She bemoaned that the amounts are not adequate in funding growth and inclusivity in the sector, which highlights the importance of better coordination of programmes and their funding between the government and the private sector and what AAMP advocates for.

The work of the ARC, in terms of research and innovation, will intensify Climate-smart Agriculture (CSA), which is a policy position of the country. This move will improve the integration of climate responsiveness farming and food production activities. In terms of assisting smallholder farmers, the deputy minister said that the ARC will intensify the implementation of the seed system strategy to cater for smallholder farmers, especially women, youth and persons with disabilities.

ARC’s Kaonafatso ya Dikgomo (KyD) accelerated its work on enhancing access to markets for communal farmers to ensure that these farmers participate actively in their rural economies, as well as the mainstream economy of the country. OBP, on the other hand, will work on its turnaround to produce adequate vaccines and animal solutions for the country and the world.

Through its digitisation programme, the PPECB aims to issue 60 000 export certificates electronically from a baseline of 14 000 the previous year. Furthermore, the PPECB will increase its analytical laboratory capacity for mycotoxin and pesticide analysis to support the South African export system.

Both the minister and his deputy made commitments towards the delivery and achievement of the programmes to be implemented and goals to be achieved for sustainable growth, inclusivity and employment creation.



Mr John Steenhuisen, Minister of Agriculture.



Ms Nokuzola Capa, Deputy Minister of Agriculture.

NEW MINISTER OF LAND REFORM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND HIS DEPUTY DELIVERED THEIR BUDGET VOTE SPEECHES



Department of Land Reform and Rural Development.

Ndivhuwo Thenga

The newly appointed Minister of Land Reform and Rural Development, Mzwanele Nyhontso, delivered his department's 2024/25 Budget Vote speech in Parliament on Tuesday, 16 July. The focus of the budget is on land reform, tenure security and spatial planning and land use management. Minister Nyhontso outlined his plans for the department, which include pushing for amendments to the Constitution to address land dispossession. He said that the skewed land ownership patterns in our country and inequitable access to land flies in the face of the spirit and letter of Section 25 of the Constitution that enjoins the State to ensure equitable access to land and security of tenure.

"Land is one of the key economic factors of production, and to unlock the economic potential of our country, and to eradicate the evils of the triple challenge of poverty, unemployment and inequality, land reform has to be prioritised and accelerated," said Minister Nyhontso. "The three legs of land reform, namely, restitution, land redistribution and land tenure reform still remain relevant for advancing redress in the land reform realm. Land administration will cover national geomatics, spatial planning and land use and registry of deeds," he continued

In the 2023/24 financial year, the department had committed to acquire and allocate land through land redistribution and land tenure programmes. It successfully acquired and allocated 67 376 ha of land to various beneficiaries during this period, surpassing the set target of 42 456 ha.

For the 2024/2025 financial year, the department has budgeted R466 million to acquire and allocate 46 767 ha of land for redistribution through the Proactive Land Acquisition Strategy and also for security of tenure purposes. "In order to address the plight of rural communities through the Transformation of Certain Rural Areas Act (TRANCRAA), 1999 (Act No. 94 of 1999), the department has transferred 473 938 ha of land in title to mainly Coloured communities who were deprived of land ownership by the past oppressive regimes, and this work will even be accelerated in the current year," said the minister.

The Restitution Programme has settled a total 83 205 land claims, including land restoration and financial compensation since 1998. These are made up of 2,3 million individual beneficiaries who are members of 465 005 households. Of those, 179 478 are female-headed households and 1 270 are headed by persons with a disabilities. In the past five years, the Commission on Restitution of Land Rights achieved all its Annual Performance Plan (APP) targets, settling 1 738 claims against the target of 1 597 claims and finalised 2 583 claims against a target of 2 026.

For land restoration, 3 million ha of land was restored to beneficiaries at a cost of R26,4 billion. An additional R26 billion was used for financial compensation claims, i.e., claims involving financial restitution. A total amount of R5,3 billion was spent on development grants allocated to land restitution beneficiaries,



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utilising Section 42(C) of the Restitution of Land Rights Act, 1994 (Act No. 22 of 1994) The total of outstanding old order land claims stands at 5 759 since 30 April 2024. For the 2024/25 financial year, the Commission on Restitution of Land Rights will settle 319 claims and finalise 339 claims at a cost of R3,5 billion.

He reiterated the department's commitment to improving the quality of life for South Africans through spatial planning, land use management, and geospatial technologies that drive spatial transformation and promote spatial justice. In this financial year, the department will continue to provide and improve on availability of the national control survey system, which provides the spatial reference framework that underpins all geospatial information in South Africa. "In our quest to provide high-resolution aerial imagery of our country, which dates as far back as 1926, we will focus on Mpumalanga, Limpopo and Gauteng during this financial year."

The department is at the forefront of transforming and building capacity of the geomatics, as well as the planning professions by continuing with the special bursary programme for studies in geomatics and planning. This capacity is crucial for implementation of spatial transformation strategies. In this regard, the department remains the largest provider of work integrated learning to students pursuing national diploma qualifications.

According to Deputy Minister Chupu Stanley Mathabatha, in the past five years, the Department of Land Reform and Rural Development has completed construction of 634 socioeconomic rural infrastructure projects, creating 5 842 jobs; 10 805 youth from rural areas were trained through the National Rural Youth Services Corps (NARYSEC) programme and linked to various exit economic opportunities (jobs and business enterprises). During the 2024/25 financial year, the department will implement 58 rural socioeconomic catalytic infrastructure projects, which include agri-parks and irrigation schemes that support both the agriculture sector and access to services and water for farmers and rural communities, respectively.



Mr Mzwanele Nyhontso, Minister of Land Reform and Rural Development.



Mr Chupu Stanley Mathabatha, Deputy Minister of Land Reform and Rural Development.

SUCCESSFUL LAND RESTITUTION PROJECTS A BEACON OF HOPE IN NORTH WEST



Ms Nomfundo Ntloko, Chief Land Claims Commissioner, samples a strawberry during her visit to Safriblue strawberry farm.



Officials took a tour of Safriblue strawberry farm.



Ms Mokope Selowa - Director: Quality Assurance was happy with the quality of the strawberries.

Nontembiso Kgatle

“If you are acquiring land where there is a business, the least the beneficiaries can do is to keep the business running at the same level of success they found it, however, the aspiration is to take it to the next level in partnership with committed stakeholders,” Chief Land Claims Commissioner, Ms Nomfundo Ntloko, told land claim beneficiaries during a visit to successful projects in North West recently.

Ms Ntloko and Regional Land Claims Commissioner, Mr Lebjeane Maphutha, undertook site visits to the Sangiro Abattoirs and Oberon Holiday Resort, both businesses operating on land that was successfully claimed by the Mekgareng Community and overseen by the Mekgareng Communal Property Association (CPA). The visit also included the Safriblue farm, where the Bo Moshe CPA has established a noteworthy partnership. These visits provided an opportunity to witness first-hand the transformative efforts underway, reinforcing a commitment to sustainable development and community empowerment with the land restitution programme as a base.

The first leg of the visit took the commissioners to the Sangiro Abattoirs and Oberon Holiday Resort. Accompanied by members of the Mekgareng CPA, the commissioners started at the Sangiro Abattoirs, where they were given an in-depth tour of the well-run facility. Subsequently, they visited Oberon Holiday Resort to assess the ambitious plans to improve the resort's amenities. The evident confidence in the project's potential success showcases the dedication of all stakeholders, emphasising a collective vision for a thriving future.

The second leg of the visit was at the Safriblue farm, where the Bo Moshe CPA has established a commendable partnership with the Safriblue farm. This collaboration is particularly noteworthy

for its emphasis on women empowerment, as the Safriblue farm predominantly employs women, providing them with vital employment and skills development opportunities.

Mr Ronald Mabale, the claimant who lodged the land claim on behalf of the descendants of the originally dispossessed individuals, shared a poignant story of perseverance. “On the last day of the lodgement of the old order claims on 23 December 1998, I lodged the claim. It's been more than 26 years, and with each different administration, we've persevered. It brings me great joy to see how far we have come and to witness the current progress,” said Mabale.

The significance of the Safriblue farm partnership cannot be overstated, especially in the context of the bleak employment prospects for black African women. By employing predominantly female berry pickers during the harvesting season, the farm not only economically empowers women but also benefits their households, contributing to improved livelihoods and community stability.

The Chief Land Claims Commissioner highlighted the importance of maintaining the success of acquired businesses. She also stressed the need for proper planning and discipline within the CPA to ensure the success of the projects and partnerships. “The claimant communities need to understand that this is a business, and it must be treated as such. There has to be a separation of the relationship between the business, the land, and the responsibilities of the committee to their CPA,” she emphasised.

The recent site visit by the commissioners underscores the promising future for land claim projects in North West. Under the leadership of Mr Lengane Bogatsu, the Chief Director: Land Restitution Support in North West, and his team, these initiatives are set to transform communities, drive sustainable development, and create lasting benefits for all involved.

LITTLE REPRIEVE FOR SA HOUSEHOLDS



Food that decreased in price in June 2024 by 5% or more include oranges.



Spinach decreased by 5%.

Ndivhuwo Tenga

South African consumers have had little reprieve during June when the average cost of the Household Food Basket (HFB) came down by a mere 1,5%. According to the Pietermaritzburg Economic Justice and Dignity's (PMBEJD) Household Affordability Index, the average cost of the HFB was R5 252,77 compared to R5 330,30 in May, which represents a decrease of R77,53 in monetary terms. The average cost of the HFB increased by R196 32 (3,9%) year-on-year from R5 056,45 in June 2023 to R5 252,77 in June 2024.

The PMBEJD Household Affordability Index tracks the prices of 44 basic foods from 47 supermarkets and 32 butcheries in Johannesburg, Durban, Cape Town, Pietermaritzburg, Mtubatuba and Springbok. The June 2024 average cost of a basic nutritional food basket for a family of four persons was R3 667,73.

Out of 44 basic foods tracked, 14 experienced price increases while the price of 30 foods decreased. Only tea recorded a price increase of 5% or more, with the prices of onions, soup, beef liver, worts, butternut, margarine, and polony increasing by between 2% and 4%. Food in the basket which decreased in price in June 2024 by 5% or more include fish, tomatoes, carrots, spinach, bananas, apples and oranges. Cake flour, samp, cooking oil, salt, potatoes, stock cubes, eggs, chicken gizzards, cabbage, canned beans and white bread, however, had price increases of 2% or more.

According to Statistics South Africa's Consumer Price Index for May 2024, headline inflation was 5,2%. CPI food inflation was 4,3% for food and the Producer Price Index for April 2024 shows agriculture was 10,9%. During June 2024, food baskets decreased in Johannesburg, Durban, Cape Town, Springbok and Mtubatuba. The Johannesburg basket decreased by R53,41 (-1,0%) month-on-month, and increased by R506,94 (10,1%) year-on-year, to R5 539,88 in June 2024.

Durban households paid R212,96 less for food, which was an increase of R51,89 (1,0%) year-on-year, to R5 127,83 while those in Cape Town paid a negligible R29,25 (-0,6%) less and a year-on-year increase of R116,28 (2,3%) to R5 100,74. The residents of Springbok in Northern Cape spent R105,52 less for their food basket, which represented a year-on-year increase of R75,67. For Pietermaritzburg residents in KwaZulu-Natal, they spent R94,11 more on food. Their year-on-year food basket cost increased by R141,85 (2,9%) to R5 087,89. Food prices in Mtubatuba decreased by R90,67 (-1,7%) month-on-month and by R53,32 (-1,0%) year-on-year to R5 233,42.



Fish is also among foods that decreased in price in June 2024, by 5% or more.



Out of 44 basic foods tracked, 14 experienced price increases while the price of 30 foods decreased. Only tea recorded a price increase of 5% or more.

COMMEMORATING THE NATIVES LAND ACT: A CENTURY OF STRUGGLE AND HOPE IN LAND RESTITUTION

Nontembiso Kgatele



President Cyril Ramaphosa handing over a title deed to the Meyers Family Communal Property Association (CPA).

includes R26,4 billion spent on land, R26 billion on financial compensation, and R5,4 billion on grants. Through this restitution process, a total of 376 976 individuals and communities have benefited, with 3 895,935 hectares of land returned to beneficiaries, including over 1 270 people living with disabilities who have received land or financial compensation.

The Land Act was finally repealed when The Abolition of Racially Based Land Measures Act, 1991 (Act No. 108 of 1991) came into force on 30 June 1991. As we move forward, the CRLR does so with compassion, determination, and an unwavering commitment to restoring not just land, but hope and dignity for all historically dispossessed South Africans.



Kock family CPA was also among the CPAs that received title deeds.



The Commission on Restitution of Land Rights mobile office on standby to assist communities with queries relating to restitution.

This year marks 111 years since the Natives Land Act of 1913 was signed into law, a move which drastically reshaped South Africa's socio economic landscape. The Act significantly impacted Black people by drastically restricting their land ownership, while allocating the majority of the land to White settlers.

This legislation led to the forced eviction of Blacks from their ancestral lands, pushing them into servitude and making cheap labour the norm. The Act deeply entrenched racial segregation, presenting Whites as superior to Blacks, a perception that has had lasting effects on our society.

This historical context underscores the importance of our current efforts in land restitution. The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD), through the Commission on Restitution of Land Rights (CRLR), remains dedicated to addressing the injustices of the past and accelerating the resolution of land claims.

Since the inception of the land restitution process, significant progress has been made. From 1998 to 2024, the CRLR has settled a total of 83 205 land claims lodged during the initial lodgement period. These claims represent historically dispossessed individuals and communities across the country.

The CRLR has been actively handing over title deeds and providing financial compensation to claimants in all provinces, with the majority of these claims in Western Cape (17 488), Eastern Cape (17 258), KwaZulu-Natal (16 179), Gauteng (13 271), Limpopo (4 834), Northern Cape (4 069), North West (3 981), Mpumalanga (3 450) and Free State (2 675).

By 31 March 2024, DALRRD had invested nearly R58 billion in settled land claims, grants, and financial compensation. This

LAND CLAIMS OFFICE DESCEND ON SECOND-BIGGEST TOWNSHIP IN THE COUNTRY TO GIVE UPDATES

“ I am glad I came. I did not know when my claim would be settled or what was happening with it, but hearing the updates from government officials who work with our claims has put me at ease. Even if I were to lay my head down, my children would know what to do with our family claim ”

The Office of the Regional Land Claims Commissioner in the Free State descended on the second largest township in South Africa over a period of three days to render services through their mobile office to update claimants on the status of their land claims.

Thousands of community members congregated at the Samson Sefuthi Community Hall in Botshabelo, Mangaung Metro Municipality earlier this year to receive updates on the status of their land claims and make inquiries on site from officials. Botshabelo, which means “place of refuge”, has been a home for many claimants that were dispossessed of land in areas such as Sediba Village in Thaba Nchu.

The acting Chief Director: Regional Land Claims in Free State, Mr Lengane Bogatsu, said the community engagement formed part of the national initiative of the Commission on Restitution of Land Rights, on rolling out the “Know the Status of Your Land Claim” campaign across the country to inform and engage beneficiaries on progress made by the commission since its establishment.

Speaking to the media during the roll-out, Bogatsu said that local and national media were important stakeholders to engage during the roll-out as they help by ensuring that the message reach the masses in their preferred languages and methods of communication. He said that it was important for community members to know that claims lodged before 31 December 1998 are being processed, however, claims lodged between 2014 and 2016 are not being processed owing to a Constitutional Court ruling.

He added that: “I also explained to the community the process was suspended after the validity of the Amendment Act was challenged in the Constitutional Court after it was ruled that it was invalid due to insufficient public consultations by Parliament as required by the Constitution.”

“The Constitutional Court in March 2019 confirmed that the commission cannot process the new order claims lodged between 2014 and 2016 until Parliament has introduced new legislation or the commission has settled all the outstanding old

Keitumetse Moticoe

order claims that were lodged before the December 1998 cut-off date. So, the claims are validly lodged, but cannot be processed just yet.”

Members of the community received services and their clarity seeking questions were addressed by officials who ensured that on each day, all members of the community would be assisted.

“I am glad I came. I did not know when my claim would be settled or what was happening with it, but hearing the updates from government officials who work with our claims has put me at ease. Even if I were to lay my head down, my children would know what to do with our family claim,” said the elderly Maria Mokoena, holding a copy of the Lamosa 2 judgement letter, that has a reference number and confirms that a claim was lodged between 2014 and 2016.

For Mr Teballo Mofokeng, the trip was well worth it. “I am glad that officials came to us to explain what was happening. We have heard them on radio reassuring us and updating us, but to engage them and get this letter that confirms our claim was lodged even though they cannot work on it, brings me peace. We know that our claim was lodged, and they have our document but because of the law, they cannot work on the claim just yet,” he said, adding that he hopes that the judgement will be lifted soon so they can be assisted.



Community members waiting to be assisted by officials.

KLEIN EZELJACHT FARM RECEIVES A MAJOR FACELIFT THROUGH THE LAND DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT PROGRAMME

Forklift purchased for the farm.



Irrigation pipes and fitting material.



Qhawe Ntuli and
Tabisa Mashiyi

their produce to the market without delays. He said, "Without your help, the business could have been a failure. If it were not for this department that reached out to us Blacks and Coloureds, I would not have been able to achieve my childhood dream of becoming a farmer."

According to Cloete, he had a dream of becoming a farmer from when he was just six years old and staying on a farm with his parents who were farm workers at the time. He stated that given an opportunity, the previously disadvantaged groups such as Blacks and Coloureds, have the potential to make farming business a success. He added that he and his family, with the assistance of their workers, are well on their way

to making Klein Ezeljacht farm a huge success. Mr Cloete also expressed his desire to plough back to the farming community in South Africa by sharing his knowledge and skills to young and upcoming farmers.

Mr Ishmail Motala, the Chairperson of the Deciduous Fruit Development Chamber and the implementing agency of this farm, said that the deciduous fruit industry in South Africa has a turnover of approximately R18 billion in revenue a year, adding that there are only 31 Black farmers in the industry and that accounts to only 3% of hectares that are planted in this country. "We still need more Black farmers like Mr Cloete to join this industry, especially in other provinces as well," said Mr Motala. The two farmhouses, which Mr Cloete personally designed are equipped with modern features that are designed to provide comfort and improve the quality of life for farm workers. Each of the houses contains a large living area, built-in kitchen, bathroom with shower, two spacious bedrooms and a water tank fitted outside.

These farmhouses were built as part of the department's initiative of improving the living conditions of farm workers and restoring their dignity. The equipment that DALRRD purchased for the farm includes a tractor, forklift, truck, trailer, two quad bikes, new irrigation system, two balancing dams, and ring beams. In addition, the department refurbished the storage shed and supplied the farm with chemicals for the orchards.



Some of the apples produced at Klein Ezeljacht.

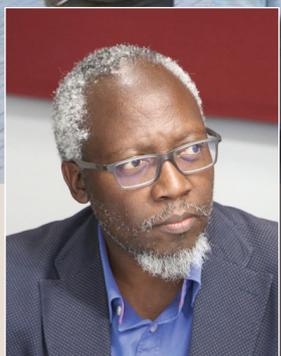
Klein Ezeljacht farm, located outside Greyton in the Overberg District of Western Cape, received a major facelift following the approval of over R10 million for the purchasing of production inputs, farming implements, water infrastructure and housing development as part of land development support offered by the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) to farmers. Earlier this year, the department officially handed over two brand new farmhouses and a range of farming implements to the lessee and residents of the farm.

This farm was acquired by DALRRD in 2007 through its Proactive Land Acquisition Strategy (PLAS) to provide Black farmers access to productive land, assist in the eradication of poverty and promote food security in South Africa. The farm was allocated to a Black farmer, Mr André Cloete, and in 2019 he signed a 30-year lease with the department, which included an option to purchase. The farm has a total area of 873,18 hectares of land.

Klein Ezeljacht farm is one of the successful PLAS land reform farms which produces apples and pears, and exports them to overseas markets. Other commodities on this farm include livestock farming and grain production. The farm created 42 permanent job opportunities and over 40 casual job opportunities for the local community during the pruning season and over 100 temporary job opportunities during the harvesting season.

In giving an update on the progress on his farm, Mr André Cloete could not hide his excitement over the support provided by the department, stating that the equipment he received, particularly the truck, helps him and the farm workers transport

SOUTH AFRICA-ZIMBABWE JOINT TECHNICAL COMMITTEE WORKING TOWARDS REAFFIRMING THE INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY



Chief Surveyor-General Siyabonga Mdubeki participated in discussions of the research findings.

South Africa-Zimbabwe technical committee discussed amongst others the research findings of the common boundary from historical agreements.

Rony Moremi

In 2007, the African Union established the African Union Border Programme (AUBP) for the delimitation and demarcation of African borders. The objectives of the AUBP are to promote peace, security and stability through delimitation and demarcation of borders; cross-border cooperation, capacity building and to create a platform for peaceful negotiation and determination of workable resolutions of border disputes.

South Africa, through the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development's (DALRRD) Branch: National Geomatics Management Service (NGMS), headed by the chief surveyor-general, has a duty in terms of the AUBP to ensure reaffirmation of international boundaries shared with neighbouring states. As such, the Office of the Chief Surveyor-General is responsible for the demarcation and delimitation of international boundaries, which is a joint responsibility with the neighbouring countries.

South Africa together with Zimbabwe formed a joint technical committee which conducted joint research on the South Africa and Zimbabwe international boundary. The aim of the study was to investigate the historical agreements between the two countries with regard to the international border. This technical committee held a bilateral meeting in Pretoria in May 2024 to collate and analyse historical information on the international boundary.

The committee was chaired by the Chief Surveyor-General, Mr Siyabonga Mdubeki and co-chaired by the Surveyor-General of Zimbabwe, Mr Edwin Guvaza. This joint technical committee used means such as the Convention of 1881 (Convention for the Settlement of the Transvaal Territory), which was signed in Pretoria and substituted by the London Convention in 1884.

The joint research confirmed that the international boundary is the medium filum of the Limpopo River. The two countries will conduct further joint research and collate information on the extent of properties along the Limpopo River to ensure that the boundaries of such properties are aligned to the definition of the international boundary.

Mr Mdubeki congratulated the committee on the successful completion of the bilateral exercise in pursuit of the objectives of the AUBP. He reiterated the importance of the reaffirmation exercise in ensuring continued certainty on the limits of the territorial lands and the international boundary between the two countries. He further gave an update on the fact that South Africa has begun drafting Terms of Reference to incorporate relevant stakeholders and role players from various South African departments to form part of the Joint Technical Committee.

Edwin Guvaza said his mandate, as appointed by his government, is to ensure that there is territorial integrity, which entails carrying out reaffirmation exercises for international boundaries between Zimbabwe and its neighbouring countries. This is in line with the AUBP directive to all African Union Member States to reaffirm their international borders by 2027. "We are engaging South Africa to make sure that we reaffirm our international boundaries; we have not signed a treaty with South Africa because we still need to define where the boundary is and draft maps, plans and documents to be incorporated into the international boundary treaty," said Mr Guvaza.

Work plans for 2024–2025 have been developed to outline the work that needs to be done such as defining the medium filum through land surveying methods. After all the work outlined in the work plan have been completed, the two countries will sign a treaty to be presented to the AUBP before the 2027 deadline.

LET US PROTECT BEES TO PROTECT OUR PLANET



A Honeybee delicately indulging in nature's sweet bounty, drawing nectar from the heart of a vibrant flower.



Beekeepers showcasing their honey products.

Bees play an important role in agriculture, ecological balance and biodiversity preservation. Without bees, there will be no pollination and consequently no food security. According to the United Nations, nearly 90% of the world's wild flowering plant species depend entirely, or at least in part, on animal pollination, along with more than 75% of the world's food crops and 35% of global agricultural land. Not only do pollinators contribute directly to food security, they are also key to conserving biodiversity.

This year's World Bee Day was celebrated at the Agricultural Research Council-Vegetable Industrial and Medicinal Plant (ARC-VIMP) campus in Roodeplaar by the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) in partnership with the Gauteng Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment (GDARDE), the ARC and the South African Bee Industry Organisation (SaBIO).

The event focused on the participation of youth in beekeeping under the theme, "Bee Engaged with Youth". A turn out of youth was evident on the day, with the youngest bee farmer being just 19 years old.

The event was held to raise awareness on the essential role that bees and other pollinators play in keeping people and plants healthy. The day was boosted with fun activities such as beekeeper competitions and a showcase of exhibition stands.

Approximately 300 people attended the World Bee Day event at ARC-VIMP in Roodeplaar, including beekeepers from Gauteng, GDARDE officials, DALRRD and SaBIO representatives and researchers. A variety of bee related products were exhibited. The event promoted beekeeping support and information sharing among all beekeeping professionals, provincial government representatives and beekeeping equipment producers.

World Bee Day was celebrated with an incredible honey competition where the ARC-Plant Health and Protection (ARC-PHP), in collaboration with GDARDE, DALRRD, Honey Judges Guild and SaBIO brought together 155 incredible entries of local honey, mead, wax, cosmetics and art, honoring our hardworking

Matsepo Malatswane



Dr Maanda Rambauli and Mpho Sekgala with beekeepers.

bees and the talented artisans who bring their magic to life. One of the winners was Ms Millicent Moloko, who walked away with an award and medal for being one of the best beekeepers. Millicent runs a farm in Gauteng under the family business venture founded by her late daughter Lerato Boikhutso Moloko "Khuti", as she was affectionally known, who introduced her family to the honey industry. Millicent currently sells honey to friends and family and hopes to go commercial soon.

GDARDE has so far supported 30 beekeepers with bee production equipment. One of the beneficiaries is Ms Lulu Letlapa from BongiBees, who is based in Rayton, City of Tshwane. Lulu started the business when she was diagnosed with an auto-immune disease and needed a healthy environment to work in and sustain her living conditions. She is currently training other women in the community in beekeeping and acquired funding for boxes and PPE to start up their own businesses. Lulu plans to increase the number of hives to produce at a larger scale.



ALTHOUGH UNDERRATED, SORGHUM IS A NUTRIENT-RICH CEREAL GRAIN



Even though the main stem can die, side shoots can develop and form seed when the water supply improves.

Mercia Smith

Sorghum is a cereal grain produced in South Africa on both commercial and smallholder farms across six provinces, namely Free State, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, North West, Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal. During a Farmers' Day gathering on Hamburg farm of Mr Willem Groothof in Settlers, Limpopo, the benefits of planting sorghum and the comparison of different cultivars were discussed and showcased. Sorghum trials are usually run on various farms in the country to see how different cultivars of sorghum perform.

Reliable cultivar performance information helps farmers select the best cultivars that are better adapted to the conditions where they are grown. This leads to an increase in yields and profits with little to no additional cost at all. The trials also make it possible for extension officers to recommend cultivars to farmers based on the impartial information about cultivar performance—a practice that has boosted the growth of the summer grain crops sector.

Most small-scale farmers who plant sorghum are in Limpopo and they produce mainly for their own consumption. The majority of these farmers send their sorghum to Progress Milling in Polokwane, where the produce can be stored in silos until price prospects are better, while some opt to exchange sorghum meal or maize meal.

Summer grain production regions are currently experiencing major challenges with drought conditions. "We have seen large areas where the damage is already irreversible," said Mr Tobias Doyer, Grain SA CEO. Sorghum is a good alternative, because during drier periods, it can remain in a virtually dormant stage and resume growth as soon as conditions become favourable. Even though the main stem can die, side shoots can develop and form seeds when the water supply improves. In South Africa, sorghum production mainly occurs under dryland cultivation. The cereal grain can also withstand higher temperatures than other grain

and can be cultivated on low potential, shallow soils with a high percentage clay content that is not suitable for maize cultivation.

Like other grains, sorghum has two basic markets that it serves, namely the human component and the animal feed component. In many parts of the world, sorghum is used traditionally in food products and various food items; e.g., porridge, unleavened bread, cookies, cakes, couscous, and malted beverages. It is a great source of fibre and protein and adds a hearty, nutty flavour to recipes. Sorghum can be added to salads, cooked dishes, and snacks.

Sorghum is also gluten-free. This makes sorghum a good substitute for wheat flour for individuals who are unable to digest food made from wheat. Sorghum, therefore, holds much promise as a resilient option for farmers to plant under changing climatic conditions.



During dry periods, sorghum has the ability to remain in a virtually dormant stage and resume growth as soon as conditions become favourable.