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agriculture, land reform & rural development

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



DEPARTMENT FIGHTS FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE



Livestock owners are encouraged to report to the local State Veterinarian immediately if they observe any clinical symptoms such as limping or hoof lesions.



FMD is caused by the virus that is found in all body fluids such as saliva, urine, faeces and milk of cloven-hoofed animals

Rincert Moremi

The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development's Directorate: Animal Health says it is intensifying efforts to control and eradicate foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) in the country. This as new cases of the disease surfaced on two dairy farms in Humansdorp, Eastern Cape. Preliminary investigations indicate that these are new infections and are confined to the two farms in Humansdorp, however, all neighbouring farms have been placed under surveillance as a precautionary measure to curb the spread of FMD.

The Eastern Cape Provincial Veterinary Services has placed the affected farms under quarantine and has started with full epidemiological investigations to identify the possible origin of the disease while also administering the vaccine.

Since January 2019, nine outbreaks have been reported; four of the cases have successfully been resolved and closed with the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) while five are open. In addition, the department has successfully closed and resolved all FMD outbreaks prior to 2021.

There are currently only three provinces with unresolved outbreaks in the previously FMD-free zones while all other outbreaks in the previous FMD-free zone have been resolved and closed with the WOAH. No cases of FMD have been reported in Northern Cape and Western Cape and these two provinces remain FMD free without vaccination.

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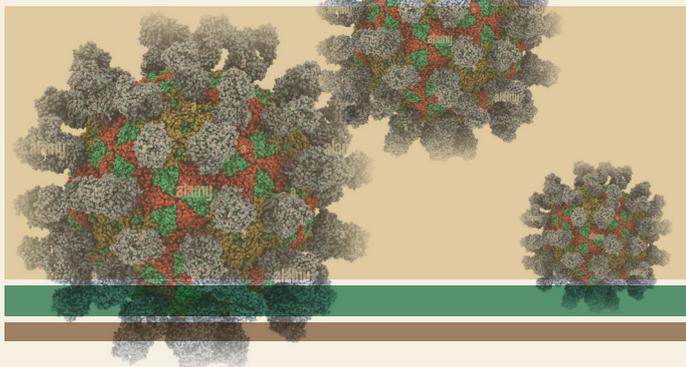
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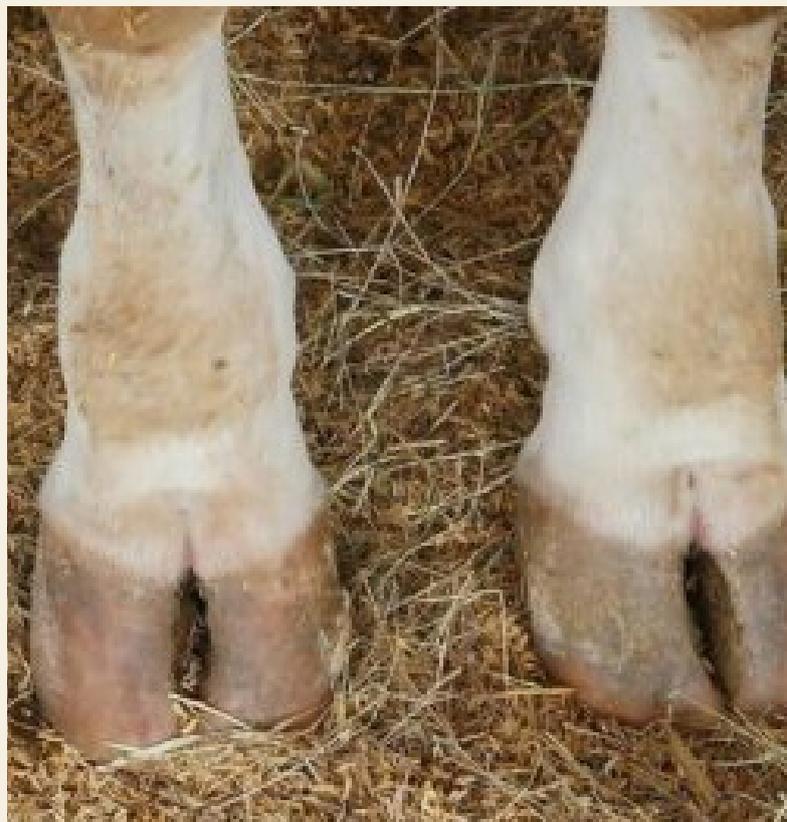
“South Africa lost the FMD free zone without vaccination status in 2019, but the control measures for FMD remain in place as stipulated in the Veterinary Procedural Notice for the Control of FMD in South Africa,”

To control FMD outbreaks, the department has implemented measures such as movement control through quarantine of affected farms and feedlots, declaration of disease management areas, national movement ban, movement control in unaffected locations, vaccination and controlled slaughter.

“South Africa lost the FMD free zone without vaccination status in 2019, but the control measures for FMD remain in place as stipulated in the Veterinary Procedural Notice for the Control of FMD in South Africa,” said Dr Mpho Maja, Director: Animal Health at the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development. This, she says, is to limit the spread of infection from the country’s endemic area of Kruger National Park and bordering game reserves and the infected areas of KwaZulu-Natal.

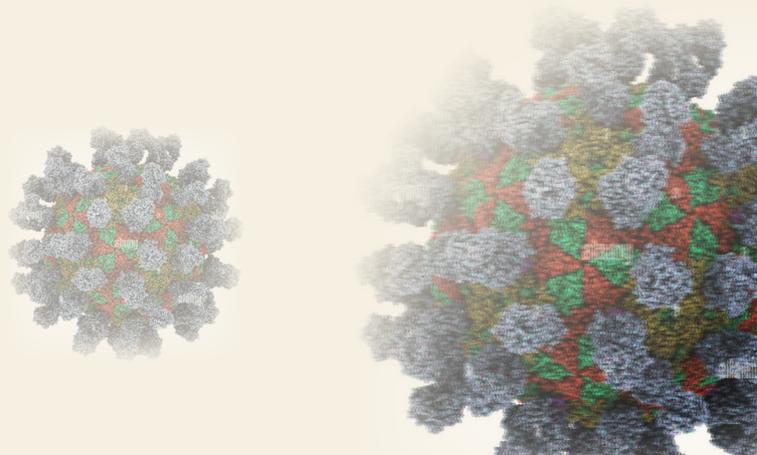
FMD is caused by the virus that is found in all body fluids such as saliva, urine, faeces and milk of cloven-hooved animals. It affects mainly cattle, pigs, goats, sheep and other cloven-hooved animals, including wildlife such as buffalos and antelopes.

FMD is transmitted mainly through the movement of cloven-hooved livestock from infected premises. Livestock owners are warned not to move animals if there is a suspicion of illness. If livestock owners observe any clinical symptoms such as salivation, blisters in the mouth, limping or hoof lesions, they should report to the local state veterinarian immediately and such animals must not be moved under any circumstances. FMD is a controlled and notifiable disease in terms of the Animal Diseases Act, 1984 (Act No. 35 of 1984). Any person who knows or suspects the presence of FMD must immediately report it to the nearest State Veterinarian.



FMD affects mainly cattle, pigs, goats, sheep and other cloven-hooved animals.

Livestock owners are advised to implement biosecurity measures on their farms or properties and not allow animals onto their farms without health clearance from a veterinarian at the animals’ place of origin. All animals that are brought onto the farm should be kept separated from the resident herds for at least 28 days. As investigations and monitoring continue on the affected farms in the Eastern Cape, the department urges farmers in the Kouga Municipality to keep their animals away from the periphery of the farms and avoid nose-to-nose contact with other animals on neighbouring farms.



FARMERS WARNED TO TAKE BIOSECURITY OF THEIR LIVESTOCK SERIOUSLY

Samuel Kgatla



Mr Azmon Buthelezi from Livestock Farmers Association praised Minister Didiza for helping them to fix the dip.

in some areas. The minister has managed to help the livestock owners to repair some dip tanks and reconstruct the ones that were in a bad condition in the King Cetshwayo District.

On behalf of livestock farmers and owners, Mr Azmon Buthelezi thanked the minister for providing the dip tanks and repairing some. Buthelezi is also the chairperson of the Livestock Farmers Association in the area and owns cattle. "We appreciate the support from the minister and her department. We also need a structure in Umfolozi Municipality where we can access medicine for our animals. We have seen some developments after your visit and you have proven that you are reliable," he said.

These small-scale farmers were warned by both the minister and Director: Veterinary Services in the northern region of the province, Dr Cameron Kutwana, to ensure their livestock is protected as the presence of animal diseases can prevent them from becoming commercial farmers. "We are here to enlighten the livestock farmers about animal diseases. The pricing of animals is also important. When you look at your livestock you must be proud of their value. If we take care of our livestock, then we will not have problems and make money from our animals. We continue to open international markets for our livestock farmers, but they must always be ready. The most important thing is to work together, and our job is to work with you," she said.

Livestock farmers of the King Cetshwayo District Municipality will start looking after their animals with more care and a better understanding following a warning that they must take the biosecurity of their livestock seriously or risk severe losses. This warning came during their engagements with the Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, Ms Thoko Didiza, at KwaMthethwa under Umfolozi Local Municipality, KwaZulu-Natal on 13 April 2024. The intention was for the department to bring awareness to the livestock farmers and owners of livestock in that area about the animal diseases.

South Africa, like many other countries, face various challenges in livestock biosecurity, including infectious diseases, parasites, and environmental factors. Some of the major concerns raised by farmers include the lack of animal feed, water scarcity for livestock consumption and irrigation of fields, a need for rehabilitation of dip tanks and even gullied infield roads.

The livestock farmers of Ward 7 at KwaMthethwa met with Minister Didiza in February this year and requested assistance with the repairing of the dip tank and the provision of new ones



DALRRD Minister Thoko Didiza had an engagement with livestock farmers of Umfolozi Local Municipality in KZN.

IMPORTERS AND EXPORTERS CAUTIONED TO COMPLY WITH ANIMAL IMPROVEMENT ACT DIRECTIVES



Calves are being transported properly with access to feed and water onboard.

Mphahlela Rammutla

After witnessing the animal cruelty and lack of compliance on the livestock carrier AL Kuwait, labelled as the “Death Ship” that docked in Cape Town transporting around 19 000 cattle from Brazil to the Middle East in February this year, the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) is appealing to importers and exporters to comply with the Animal Improvement Act, 1998 (Act No. 62 of 1998) (AIA).

The department cautions interested parties to comply with directives in line with the requirement for import authorisation for live animals in terms of this Act.

“Authorisation for the importation and exportation of live animals and related genetic materials must be applied for in terms of the AIA. This includes all existing veterinary import permits, which were issued prior 1 April 2024. In the case of new applications, the Animal Improvement Permit/authorisation must be applied for first, and the AIA Permit/authorisation must be attached to the application for the Veterinary Import Permit submitted to the department,” reads the DALRRD statement.

Speaking to members of the media, Deputy Director-General: Agricultural Production, Biosecurity and Natural Resources Management, Dipepeneneng Serage said that the alerts to importers and exporters are to make them aware of the existing regulations of the Animal Improvement Act of 1998.

“We ensure that we protect the genetic material of animals in the country. The ship that docked at Cape Town harbour was en route to another country and it docked to load fodder. Because we care for animal welfare, even at possible risk, we allowed them to load fodder, even though that was not our import,” indicated Deputy Director-General Serage.

In terms of welfare, Section 14 of the guidelines for exportation of live animals by sea stipulates the documentation that is required for the exportation of live animals. These documents may be submitted by email to the DALRRD Directorate: Veterinary Public Health.

DALRRD, however, indicates that importers and exporters of game and/or wild animals, as well as animals such as cats, birds and fish do not require an AIA Permit/authorisation.

Importers and exporters may use this link for further information on the directives: [mhttps://www.dalrrd.gov.za/index.php/component/content/article/339-animal-improvement?catid=19&Itemid=437](https://www.dalrrd.gov.za/index.php/component/content/article/339-animal-improvement?catid=19&Itemid=437).



Poor conditions of moving animals in the AL Kuwait carrier witnessed earlier this year. Photo by M&G.

YOUNG FARMERS SHARE EXPERTISE TO MOVE THE SECTOR FORWARD



A young farmer asking questions during the Farmers Indaba in Pretoria North.



MEC for North West Department of Agriculture and Rural Development Desbo Mohono and DALRRD Minister Thoko Didiza getting ready for Farmers Indaba.

Samuel Kgatla

More than 500 young rising farmers who attended this year's Food For Mzansi Young Farmers' Indaba left the gathering with more knowledge and bright new ideas to move the sector forward. This Third Farmers' Indaba was held at Lavender Kontrei Mark in Pretoria North, City of Tshwane from 4 to 6 April 2024. The event marked a pivotal moment in the journey of South African agriculture, where the youth take centre stage in co-creating the new face of farming. It provided an opportunity for the young farmers and role players in the sector to network and showcase their products, share experiences, innovation and agricultural prowess.

Food For Mzansi is a global multi-award-winning agricultural publication started five years ago. This year's indaba has attracted continental media from Lesotho, Namibia, Nigeria, Zambia and Zimbabwe who came to witness some of South Africa's young farmers as they unpacked key challenges and exciting opportunities in Mzansi's agricultural sector. Young farmers had an opportunity to pose questions to the Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD), Thoko Didiza, on issues affecting them in the sector. Issues of financial support, compliance, funding, food packaging and market access were raised.

During her keynote address, and in responding to some questions raised, the minister thanked Food For Mzansi for putting young farmers at the forefront. She continued to say that the sector is big enough for everyone to participate in. "Farmers must use their provincial extension services to get necessary help. Opportunities are out there, but they need farmers to be go-getters. We have opened many international markets for our farmers. We must also look at African market opportunities. Farmers must consider the issue of agro logistics when they

plan their farming operations. Agriculture is the backbone of the economy of our country and we need young people to lead," she said.

She advised livestock farmers to brandmark their animals to avoid problems when selling them. Brandmarking is important because moving animals from one place to another requires documentation. She urged farmers to seize opportunities and collaborate for success.

Mr Ivor Price, co-founder of Food For Mzansi, mentioned that young farmers have a bright future and they just need to do more. He added that farmers should listen to each other, and share their problems and achievements during the Farmers' Indaba. "We have dedicated ourselves to create this platform and it continues to grow. The minister is a friend of Food For Mzansi and Farmers' Indaba. The collaboration and partnership between Government and farmers can help to improve things in the sector," he said.

Ms Kitso Monyadi, a young hemp farmer and agripreneur said that people need to understand what hemp is and what the product can do. "This is a wonderful platform to showcase my stuff. We do everything from sowing seed to packaging packaging, ourselves. Although there is a lot of stigma around it, hemp has a lot of benefits and I think people should rather focus on that part of it," she said.

Monyadi was one of the speakers on cannabis and hemp cultivation opportunities for young farmers.

UTHUKELA AND UMZINYATHI FARMERS PLEAD FOR MINISTER'S INTERVENTION



Farmers of Uthukela and Umzinyathi Districts raised their concerns with the leadership of the department.

Farmers of Uthukela and Umzinyathi districts are positive that their crucial engagement with the Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development is going to yield positive results. The farmers met with Minister Thoko Didiza in Ladysmith on 15 April 2024, after requesting her to meet them over challenges affecting their agricultural activities.

The majority of farmers have been given 30-year leases on state-owned farms under the Proactive Land Acquisition Strategy (PLAS) of the Department of Agriculture Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD), while others were given financial support through the Ithala Development Finance Corporation. Ithala provides blended finance to small, medium and macro enterprises (SMMEs) operating in the sugar cane industry. It manages fully integrated business activities that provide a range of financial and property services throughout KwaZulu-Natal.

Some of the concerns from farmers include lack of government support in terms of funding and technical expertise, financial assistance towards owning farms, theft, policy changes, re-opening of the land claim processes, fencing around farms, high electricity costs, delays from the Office of the Valuer-General (OVG), disagreements among farmers and farm dwellers, high interest on leases, natural disasters, lack of production skills, and farmers' safety.

Representing PLAS farmers, Mr Mdumiseni Mlangeni said that they had been trying to call the minister's office for assistance, which resulted in some farmers receiving help. However, he added that there were still others who needed to be assisted. "We wanted to come together and raise our concerns, some things were not explained well in the past but now it is clearer after our meeting with the minister. We found some farm dwellers when we moved into some farms. The moment farm dwellers find out that the farm belongs to Government, they start feeling entitled to everything. Some are even stealing our maize," he bemoaned.

Samuel Kgatla

Minister Didiza highlighted that farmers needed to understand that Government gave them farms based on what was in the business plan. "We must educate our farmers about how government works when it comes to lease matters. We launched the Agro-energy Fund for farmers who want to stop being dependent on the grid. Farmers must know and understand that our financial institutions in the sector are different from the way private banks operate. The issue of farm dwellers is sensitive, but we will have to treat each and every case based on its experiences. I heard your concerns, and our department will attend to them," she reassured them.



Mr Mdumiseni Mlangeni explaining the farmers' concerns to the DALRRD minister.



DALRRD Minister Thoko Didiza responding to the concerns raised by PLAS farmers from Ladysmith.

LAND CLAIMANTS RELIEVED AFTER RECEIVING TITLE DEED

Samuel Kgatla

Mr Krishen Jugathpal and Mr Mveli Bhengu shed some tears of joy after finally receiving the title deed and financial compensation from the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) for properties from which they were forcibly removed from during the the previous government's implementation of the Natives Land Act of 1913 .

The handing over ceremony for both the Jugathpal family and Stonehill Community was held at KwaMakhutha outside Durban on 12 April 2024.

The Jugathpal family claim, valued at R1 535 764.72 was lodged by Mr Jugathpal in 1997 for the 5 356 square metre property in Durban North under City of eThekweni Municipality. The claim was settled in 2021 and the family opted for the restoration of the originally dispossessed property. DALRRD negotiated with the Department of Human Settlement to release the land with the negotiated value of R179 000 which is made up of historical and holding costs.

The Stonehill Community claims were lodged by three individuals claiming on behalf of their families and the the KwaMakhutha/Stonehill Community in their capacities as direct descendants of the originally dispossessed persons. All three claims were lodged by Mr Thula Bhengu Mr Mveli Bhengu, and the late Nicholas Njapha on 7 December 1998. The total extent of land claimed is 405 649 ha and the claimants had been removed from Stonehill and relocated to KwaMakhutha. The dispossession of the community of their right in land was effected between 1961 and 1968. At least 90% of the beneficiaries are still residents of KwaMakhutha Township. The claims consist of a total of 378 households with 2 876 beneficiaries. The final total settlement of the claim is R197 591 184,00, and each household will receive R522 728,00.

Mr Jugathpal said that it was a long and painful journey, but it was worth it. "It took Government 30 years to restore my land and dignity, but I am no longer complaining. My family appreciates what government has done for them. I never thought that I would witness our family land being handed back to us. I am lost for words, but I am grateful for the support from Government over the years with our claim," he said.

Mr Bhengu said that they are now rejoicing after the inhumane treatment by the apartheid regime as they were forcefully removed from their place. He also thanked Government for finally completing their claims.



Jugathpal family with Minister Thoko Didiza during the handing over of their title deed in KZN.

Minister Thoko Didiza mentioned the importance of land restitution and history and was also happy to see some smiles on the beneficiaries' faces. "We made a promise to the beneficiaries that we shall complete their claims. We are witnessing a good thing today because the land is officially handed back, and on the other hand, others received their financial compensation. We must be the defenders of our freedom and the beneficiaries are excited because we have delivered on our promise of giving their land back. It was important to rewrite history so that our next generation will understand where they originate from and how they got to where they are," she said.

HANDOVER OF TITLE DEEDS MARKS A HISTORIC ACHIEVEMENT FOR THE ZOAR COMMUNITY



DM Skwatsha with CPA Executive members after title deeds handover.

Tabisa Mashiyi

The implementation of the Transformation of Certain Rural Areas Act, 1999 (Act No. 94 of 1999) (TRANCRAA) process became a reality to the community of Zoar in the Kannaland Municipality, in Western Cape, when they were granted ownership of the land, with an extent of more than 5 600 ha.

This comes after the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD), through its tenure reform implementation branch in Western Cape, transferred and registered three portions of land to the Zoar Communal Property Association (CPA). The title deeds were handed over by the Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, Mr Mcebisi Skwatsha, in a ceremony that took place in Zoar on 23 April 2024 .

Deputy Minister Skwatsha described the handover as a historic achievement for the Zoar community. He complimented the Zoar CPA for this milestone, saying their dream of owning land was now a reality. He further said: “At times like these, when we celebrate our achievements, it is important to look back and reflect on how we got to this point. It is a moment to recognise those who came before you and before all of us, who lost their rights to land, those who suffered when they lost their dignity.” Deputy Minister Skwatsha also urged the Zoar CPA to work hand in hand with beneficiaries if they want development to proceed smoothly in their area.

He stated that disagreements among CPA members remained the biggest problem the department was confronted with. In addition to this, Deputy Minister Skwatsha cited lack of accountability and non-compliance with the CPA Act as some of the obstacles hindering development in certain TRANCRAA areas. He mentioned that TRANCRAA land was a heritage that did not belong to one person, but to the community as a whole, adding that it was imperative that proceeds of the land are therefore shared among all beneficiaries, and not just individuals.

Welcoming guests at the ceremony, the Executive Mayor of Kannaland Municipality, Alderman Jeffrey Donson, lauded the good work done by the department and mentioned that this land transfer was a significant step forward in the journey towards empowerment and development of the Zoar Community. He said: “Today we celebrate a transfer of ownership which represents more than just a paper, it symbolises the restoration of dignity, the recognition of rights and unlocking of potential rights.”

The chairperson of the Zoar CPA, Mr Sanfred Klink, stated that the process of getting their land back was not easy as there were many struggles along the way, adding that some people lost their lives while the process was underway. He expressed his appreciation to the department for the support and unwavering commitment it showed when assisting Zoar Community. “This marks the beginning of new things for Zoar: our plan is to revive agriculture and create employment for the youth to return Zoar to its former glory. With the help of Government, our land is now back,” he exclaimed. Mr Klink further urged the Zoar Community to unite and speak in one voice to ensure development of their land.

The Zoar Community lost their land rights in 1923 and on the day of the handover, they marked exactly 100 years, three months, and 23 days since they were dispossessed of their land through past racially discriminatory laws and practices.



DM Skwatsha with CPA Executive members after title deeds handover.

EXPLORING THE COMPLEXITY OF LAND RESTITUTION: INSIGHTS FROM EXPERTS AT LAND RESTITUTION EVALUATION STUDY CONFERENCE



Eastern Cape Regional Land Claims Commissioner (RLCC) Mr Zama Memela and Northern Cape RLCC Dr Mangalane Du Toit.



From left to right Prof. Malcolm Keswell, Ms Nonqubeko Mfeka, North West RLCC Mr Lengane Bogatsu and Western Cape RLCC Dr Wayne Alexander.

Nontembiso Kgatle

On 16 April 2024, the Commission on Restitution of Land Rights (CRLR) hosted the Land Restitution Evaluation Study (LRES) Findings Launch Conference in partnership with the Southern Africa Labour and Development Unit (SALDRU) at the University of Cape Town's Breakwater Campus under the theme, "Reversing the legacy of spatial inequality and poverty".

The conference featured sessions exploring various aspects of the impact of land restitution, including forced removals, framing redress, contextualising benefits, and reflecting on the impacts of restitution in South Africa. This gathering, which was attended by government officials, academics and community representatives, also examined the Land Restitution programme, its intricate complexities, and the emotional realities facing those affected—the claimants.

A touching highlight of the conference was Professor Mvuselelo Ngcoya's address, which illuminated the emotional journey of restitution through the narrative of Lizwelibanzi, a descendant of a study participant whose very name, "the land is vast", starkly contrasts with his landless reality. Professor Ngcoya's storytelling encapsulated the poignant struggles experienced by many victims owing to displacement as a result of past discriminatory laws and practices in land.

Ms Chris Julies shared insights into the role of spaces such as the District Six Museum in Cape Town in providing communities with a platform to voice their trauma stemming from forced removals and dispossession. She emphasised the therapeutic value of art in the healing process, highlighting how creative expression can aid in processing historical injustices such as those experienced by the District Six community and many others.

Professor Malcolm Keswell delved into the challenges inherent in restitution and repatriation efforts. He underscored the importance of acknowledging and addressing the gaps in the system, particularly

concerning individuals who fall through the cracks and do not claim their land due to various reasons.

Representing the Chief Land Claims Commissioner, Mr Lengane Bogatsu, Chief Director: Land Restitution Support in North West, emphasised the need to balance the emotional and practical aspects of restitution. He called for collaborative efforts between government bodies and academia to devise solutions to the multifaceted challenges facing the commission. Mr Bogatsu said, "The remaining cases are complex, therefore the need to get all affected parties involved to work together in resolving such issues. Untraceable claimants remain a challenge that further causes delays in finalising the outstanding claims. Conflicts amongst beneficiaries delays direct beneficiation to households that are in need, and as a result, restoration of land becomes meaningless to them.

Post settlement support remains a major challenge because most of claimants' beneficiaries are not capacitated enough to work on land on their own, and this can be assisted through structured interventions by all state departments and the private sector by injecting investment into these land parcels."

Ms Laurine Platzky of the Surplus People Project (SPP) left attendees with stirring words: "We need to remember, we need to compensate, we need to retribute." Her call encapsulated the essence of the conference, urging all stakeholders to remain committed to the pursuit of justice and equity in land restitution.

The Land Restitution Evaluation Study Conference served as a catalyst for meaningful conversations and reflections on the multifaceted nature of land restitution.

LAND FINALLY RETURNED TO THE SOMOPHO COMMUNITY



Beneficiaries of Somopho Community land claim during the title deed handover in Empangeni in KZN.

Samuel Kgatla

The Somopho Community, located just outside Empangeni in KwaZulu-Natal, is finally able to use its land freely for the first time following the handing over of a title deed on 14 April 2024 at Macekane Sportsground, Umhlathuze Local Municipality, by the Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development.

Their land claim was lodged by Inkosi Mtengeni Mthembu of Somopho Tribe, acting with the assistance of the then Somopho Tribal Authority, on 29 July 1996 in terms of Section 2(1)(D) of the Restitution of Land Rights Act, 1994 (Act No. 22 of 1994) (as amended) to the land originally described as Reserve No. 5 measuring 5 181,3163 ha in extent. The lodgement of the claim was accepted by the Office of the Regional Land Claims Commissioner in KwaZulu-Natal. Subsequently, Inkosi Mtengeni passed away and a council resolution indicated that Inkosi Bonginkosi Shilo Mthembu would proceed with the land claim.

The outcome of the verification exercise for the claim resulted in the identification of 74 households who suffered dispossessions on the claimed land with an estimated 344 beneficiaries. The Somopho Community elected to establish a trust, which was named and registered as Madoda Trust to receive the transfer of the land once funds to acquire the claimed land have been approved by the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) in terms of Section 42(D) of the Restitution Act. The total value of the land is now R169 316 000,00.

The chairperson of Madoda Trust, Mr Raymond Mnguni, representing the beneficiaries, thanked DALRRD for making sure that the title deed finally landed in their hands. He praised the minister for handing over the title deed. "We really want to thank the minister for returning our land back. We wish that the minister will come back after elections so that she can continue helping



DALRRD Minister Thoko Didiza handing over a title deed to Raymond Mnguni on behalf of Somopho Community.

people because she is one of the trusted and reliable leaders. Her work speaks volumes," he said.

Minister Thoko Didiza was excited to see the joy of the people of Somopho after having their land returned to them. "We remember how our parents and grandparents were tortured in the past. What we are doing today is great and we are giving people the land they were promised by Government after 1994. Today, you are the witnesses of how it feels to be given your land back. Land defines who you are, so your dignity and territory are defined by it. Trust committees must work well with the people of Somopho. They must know the value of their land and as Government, we want to see you develop because of this land," she concluded.