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agriculture, land reform & rural development

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



MINISTER STEENHUISEN PROHIBITS INSECTICIDES CONTAINING CHLORPYRIFOS AND CARTAP HYDROCHLORIDE



Green Leaf is one of the common unregistered chemicals sold on the streets.

Rony Moremi

The Minister of Agriculture, John Steenhuisen, has gazetted the prohibition on the acquisition, disposal, sale and use of agricultural remedies that contain chlorpyrifos and cartap hydrochloride with immediate effect.

The prohibition is effected under Section 7(b) of the Fertilizers, Farm Feeds, Agricultural Remedies and Stock Act, 1947 (Act No. 36 of 1947). Chlorpyrifos is an organophosphate insecticide that is used in agriculture for termite control, insect protection and

in cattle ear tags, while cartap hydrochloride is used for insect control. The prohibition of these chemicals forms part of the interventions by the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development to review and update legislation in relation to the regulation, authorisation and use of agricultural pesticides in South Africa.

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“Each of us needs to be better informed about the risks of pesticides and other dangerous products. Each of us needs to take responsibility for the safety of those around us, particularly children,”

During his address on deaths of children owing to food-borne illnesses, President Cyril Ramaphosa announced that the country has reported 890 incidents of food-borne illnesses across all provinces.

The president encouraged communities to only buy pesticides that are in their original containers and are clearly labelled for household use. “Each of us needs to be better informed about the risks of pesticides and other dangerous products. Each of us needs to take responsibility for the safety of those around us, particularly children,” said the president, encouraging communities to use pesticides responsibly.

The National Joint Operational and Intelligence Structure (NATJOINTS), which comprises the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD), Department of Health (DoH), Department of Home Affairs (DHA), South African Police Service (SAPS) and the National Institute of Communicable Diseases (NICD) have conducted raids in Gauteng, Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal.

The most common banned chemicals that have been confiscated during the raids were aldicarb (commonly known as Halephirimi), Green Leaf and other repackaged chemicals. Aldicarb is an agricultural remedy that was registered to control nematodes in potatoes and other pests in tobacco and tomatoes before it was banned.

The department advises communities not to use unregistered chemicals and/or use chemicals for purposes they are not registered for. For example, Terbufos, which was attributed to the deaths of six children in Naledi, Soweto, is an organophosphate chemical and is registered for agricultural use and not household use.

President Cyril Ramaphosa also announced, during his address, that hazardous chemicals should be taken off the streets. Other interventions announced by the president included the registration of all spaza shops and all food handling facilities within 21 days from 15 November 2024.



SA CROP FARMERS TO PLANT SLIGHTLY MORE THIS SEASON



South African commercial producers intend to plant 2,640 million ha of maize this season, which is 0,1% or 3 850 ha more than the 2,640 million ha planted last season.

Ndivhuwo Thenga

World Food Day, which was celebrated on 16 October, was commemorated in Dikgatlong Municipality, Northern Cape. Prior to the World Food Day commemoration, the Minister of Agriculture, John Steenhuisen, had launched the National Food and Nutrition Security Survey Report on 9 October. This report revealed that 63,5% of households, nearly two-thirds, were food insecure, meaning only 36,5% of citizens were food secure.

October also marks the start of planting for summer crops. Grains remain the staple food for the majority of South Africans. South African commercial producers intend to plant 2,640 million ha of maize this season, which is 0,1% or 3,850 ha more than the 2,640 million ha planted last season. According to the Crop Estimates Committee (CEC) figures released on 29 October, producers intend to plant 1,578 million ha of white maize, which is 22,850 ha (1,5%) more than in the previous season. Regarding yellow maize, the expected plantings are 1,062 million ha, which is 19,000 ha (1,8%) less than in the previous season.

The sunflower seed intended planting area has increased by 11,000 ha from 529,000 ha to 540,000 ha, which is an increase of 2,1%. The intended plantings of soya beans show an increase of 0,2% or 2,700 ha compared to the previous season—from 1,150 million ha to 1,153 million ha. Ground nuts will see expected plantings decreasing by 2,9% or 1,200 ha, from 41,200 ha in the previous season to 40,000 ha this season. Sorghum is expected to see a big jump of 28,3% or 11,900 ha, amounting to 54,000 ha compared to the previous season's total of 42,100 ha. The intended plantings of dry beans are estimated at 45,105 ha, which

is 14,0% or 5,555 ha more than in the previous season.

SA's main maize producing areas are Free State, Mpumalanga, North West and northern KwaZulu-Natal. Farmers in Free State will plant 840,000 ha white maize and 395,000 ha yellow maize, Mpumalanga (159,000 white maize and 358,000 yellow maize), North West (450,000 white maize and 93,000 yellow maize), and KwaZulu-Natal (50,000 white maize and 68,000 yellow maize). Free State sunflower seed farmers intend to plant 265,000 ha, an increase of 10,000 ha compared to last season's 255,000 ha. Following closely is North West with 176 000 ha, which is an increase of 1,000 ha. Limpopo brings up the rear with 90,000 ha, same as last season.

Free State producers intend to plant a staggering 560,000 ha of soya beans, followed by Mpumalanga at 315,000, North West with 155,500 ha, Gauteng with 47,000 ha and KwaZulu-Natal with 45,000 ha. North West and Free State are expected to plant 18,000 ha and 17,000 ha of ground nuts, respectively. Regarding the production of dry beans, Free State farmers intend to plant 13,500, Limpopo 12,200 ha, and Gauteng 7,500 ha. In Mpumalanga, farmers will plant 8,300 ha of sorghum, while those in Free State and Limpopo intend to plant 11,500 ha and 1,800 ha, respectively. Preliminary area planted for summer grains for 2025 will be released in January next year.

A LOOK AT THE 2024 TO 2025 SUMMER SEASON; ABOVE-NORMAL TEMPERATURES EXPECTED



Livestock should be kept in balance with carrying capacity of the veld.

Mercia Smith

Farmers are advised to be on the lookout for daily extreme weather warnings and to implement risk reduction measures. This is crucial information for farmers, as extreme weather events – such as heavy rains, droughts, floods, high winds or hail – can significantly impact crop yields and livestock health. To help manage these risks, farmers are advised to monitor weather reports to stay informed through local meteorological services to mitigate the impact of adverse weather conditions.

According to the Climate Advisory issued by the Directorate: Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction, most parts of the country reported reasonable to poor conditions for veld and livestock, and many dryland farmers have yet to receive adequate rainfall to plant. As a result of veld fires in several provinces, grazing land and infrastructure have been damaged, resulting in livestock deaths.

Farmers are also urged to keep up with biosecurity measures by preparing for pests and diseases associated with wet and hot conditions as above-normal rainfall and high temperatures are expected, especially in the north-eastern part of the country. Insect and tick transmitted diseases, particularly in the summer rainfall and other wet areas of South Africa, can cause huge financial losses if animals are not vaccinated on time.

For the remainder of summer, heatwaves and localised flooding are likely to continue. With minimum and maximum temperatures expected to be mostly above normal for the forecast period. Drought tolerant cultivars should be prioritised in areas that have constantly been experiencing dry conditions.

The department will continue to monitor the seasonal forecast and provide updates when necessary.



CLIMATE SMART AGRICULTURE CAN MITIGATE THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON FOOD PRODUCTION



Free State MEC for the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environmental Affairs, Ms Elzabé Rockman, with delegates that attended the Climate Smart Agriculture Dialogue.

Keitumetse Moticoe

Climate change has a negative impact on the agricultural sector, however, the recently held Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) Dialogue in Free State sought to share adaptable strategies that can enhance the resilience of food production and benefit the industry in mitigating the impact.

With the vision of ensuring maximum participants of the various stakeholders, the CSA Dialogue, held at Kopano Nokeng Lodge in Bloemfontein, saw various stakeholders come on board and contribute towards innovative solutions and discussions. The dialogue was led by the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) in collaboration with the Free State Provincial Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environmental Affairs (DARDEA).

According to the Directorate: Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction within DALRRD, agriculture is the most significant user of water (via irrigation), making it subject to changes in water availability, increased water pollution and soil erosion from more severe rainfall events and higher evapotranspiration. According to the directorate, owing to limited ability to adjust to climate change, smallholder, small-scale and under-resourced farmers are particularly susceptible to its effects.

Mr Thabile Nkunjana, a senior agriculturalist from the National Agricultural Marketing Council said that climate change has an impact on food inflation owing to its impact on food production.

“As one can see that this season, South Africa and other Southern African countries have experienced serious drought with other countries declaring states of disaster due to poor production as a result of climate-related issues, particularly drought. It is also projected that some countries will struggle, especially with access to food; mainly maize which is a staple crop within the region and as a result other people will be pushed towards food insecurity, something the continent of Africa has been battling for some time,” said Nkunjana.

Nkunjana explained that climate change has an impact on food insecurity because once food is not available owing to climate change or floods, it is going to lead to food prices escalating, as seen in the past. He reflected that in 2023, at least 29 countries reported states of disaster for various reasons such as flooding and drought.

The Free State MEC for Agriculture, Rural Development and Environmental Affairs, Ms Elzabé Rockman said, “Agriculture and food production are considered sectors that are most vulnerable to climate risk. Climate change is projected to contribute to additional adverse factors that include livestock mortality and decreasing water security. Projections emanating from scientific studies conducted on the long-term impact of climate change indicate that Free State is likely to become hotter and drier, with more extreme rainfall events during the summer seasons.”

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Rockman also highlighted some of the province's mitigating factors, saying: "As a province, we have put in place sector response measures that include programmes to support and capacitate farmers through government pre- and post-disaster recovery and rehabilitation programmes. Through the implementation of CSA principles and technologies, namely, Conservation Agriculture (CA), resource efficient soil conservation measures, the LandCare programme, disaster risk reduction, vulnerability assessments, water infrastructure development, awareness creation, capacity building and training to the multitudes of farmers and extension officers, the province is considered ready for any eventuality."

Rockman further added that, "The province is pioneering the adoption of CA through its flagship LandCare programme in the districts of Thabo Mofutsanyane and Lejweleputswa. Disaster risk management and LandCare programmes continue to raise awareness on the adaptation and mitigation measures to climate change."

Dr Ikalafeng Kgakatsi, director of Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction at DALRRD, reflecting on why the department hosted the dialogue, said: "We are passing over the baton as we have been developing the CSA Action Plan from 2019, and we are expected as a country to develop mitigation and adjudication plans to respond to climate change affecting all sectors."

Dr Kgakatsi said that they are currently rolling out the plans to local government and stakeholders within the sector such as farmers and the private sector. He said that they had also invited international organisations to bring additional information that might have been omitted to ensure that all crucial information is incorporated into the provincial document, which is going to be developed post the dialogue along with an action plan.

"The main thing is funding to make sure that the farmers are going to adopt these approaches we are developing these two days and continue to update yearly to make sure it is a living document," added Dr Kgakatsi.

The Provincial Youth Secretary of AFASA and Youth in Agriculture and Rural Development Mangaung District Secretary in Free State, Ramabenyane Setjhaba who, among other things, farms with Bonsmara cattle, cash crops and meatmaster, said that they welcome the initiative. They have witnessed the adverse effects of climate change with drought and numerous veld fires. However, he urged for the inclusion of farmers and organised agriculture in decision making and during the development of policies as farmers will be implementers. He said that, as young farmers, they are committed to the sector and would want to contribute towards any initiative that will help improve the sector and take it forward as it will be in their hands.



36 000 CARTONS OF SA ORANGES ALREADY SHIPPED TO VIETNAM



Oranges packed inside crates at an orchard. SA citrus producers can now export fresh oranges to Vietnam, Southeast Asia.



SA is the biggest exporter of citrus after Spain.

Ndivhuwo Thenga

A total of 36,280 cartons of oranges have been exported to Vietnam since this Southeast Asian nation commenced the issuing of import permits for the exportation of fresh oranges on 1 May 2024. Access to this market by local citrus producers took 11 years of intense negotiations and exchange of technical information for the purpose of establishing a bilateral protocol between the two countries.

Progress recorded so far includes the registration of 1,366 production unit codes, 269 packhouse codes, and 9,839 orchards as per the protocol requirements. Inspections were only conducted in KwaZulu-Natal for sea freight. There were no reports of non-compliance with protocols reported to South Africa by Vietnam. The original request submitted to Vietnam covered all citrus, and the two countries will continue to exchange information to allow for export of other fruit.

According to a joint media statement issued by the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) and the Citrus Growers Association of Southern Africa (CGA) after the finalisation of the protocol, the opening of the market offers an export potential of 15,000 tons of oranges for South Africa's citrus growers, which will contribute to more job opportunities and increased revenue. DALRRD and CGA have worked together for a decade to make sure local citrus growers benefit from increased market access. Collaborative efforts between the two were underpinned by extensive technical work done by the Citrus Research International, a subsidiary of the CGA.

The opening of the Vietnamese market is a major breakthrough for the citrus industry, considering that South Africa has the potential to increase exports from 165 million to 260 million cartons in the next eight years. In its media statement issued on 17 June, the department said that the opening of this market is an additional achievement to the many export markets of agricultural products realised during the democratic dispensation. South Africa is the second-biggest citrus exporter in the world after Spain and the local citrus industry plays an important role in the country's economy by earning foreign exchange, creating jobs, and ensuring food security.

Changes in the Vietnamese import regulations necessitated an establishment of a new protocol. All fresh oranges to be exported from SA to Vietnam must meet the phytosanitary requirements as defined by this Southeast Asian country. Citrus orchards, packhouses and cold storage facilities wishing to export oranges must be registered and approved by DALRRD. The registered orchards must implement good agricultural practices that include effective integrated pest management and orchard sanitation.

The Socialist Republic of Vietnam, with its capital in Hanoi, has a population exceeding 100 million, making it the world's fifteenth most populous country. It shares land borders with the People's Republic of China, Laos and Cambodia while also sharing maritime borders with Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia and Malaysia through the South China sea.

RAKWADU RETURNS TO ANCESTRAL LAND 60 YEARS LATER

Obed Makgoale and
Ndivhuwo Thenga

Minister Nyhontso further explained that the community should take into cognisance that the ownership of land is more than just farming, it is also an opportunity to expand into developing agro-processing and related industries in storage, packaging and transportation in addition to the sale of fruit and vegetables produced. All these related businesses or small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs) are further opportunities to create employment, especially for the immediate community.

He strongly encouraged the Rakwadu Community to take this opportunity of these two productive farms to do things better; to do things differently, by addressing their concerns such as the high costs of food, that make people food insecure. "If food is produced only for export and not for local consumption, it's unsustainable and it's maintaining the status quo of keeping our people hungry and poor. We are here to promote patriotic farmers who can bring down the food prices, while remaining profitable. No one should go hungry due to unaffordability of food," explained Minister Nyhontsho.

This historic handover marks the culmination of the Rakwadu Community's land claim lodged by Chief Rakwadu V, Nchaupa David Mohale on 7 December 1998 with the unwavering support of the Commission on Restitution of Land Rights. The community now stands ready to reclaim their ancestral land. Chief Mohale, is still alive to witness the return of the community's ancestral land.

Minister of Land Reform and Rural Development, Mzwanele Nyhontso, joined by Limpopo MEC of Agriculture and Rural Development, Naledi Sibanda-Kekana, and officials during the handover ceremony.

A historic moment was marked on 25 October 2024 when the Rakwadu Community of Greater Letaba Local Municipality in Limpopo received the title deeds to their land following the successful settlement of their land claim by the Commission on Restitution of Land Rights. This community comprising of 172 households and 1,002 beneficiaries had their ancestral land of over 2,400 ha of agricultural land restored almost 60 years after they were dispossessed of their rights in land owing to past discriminatory laws and practices.

The Minister of Land Reform and Rural Development, Mr Mzwanele Nyhontso, presided over the handover of the title deeds to the community. He was accompanied by the Limpopo MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development, Ms Naledi Grace Kekana, Deputy Chief Land Claims Commissioner, Mr Francois Beukman, local politicians and senior managers of the department who supported the minister in handing over the deeds to the farms Deelkraal 412 LT and the remaining extent of the farm Goedgelegen 566 LT situated under Greater Letaba Local Municipality in the Mopani District.

Minister Nyhontso said, "Our effort here today to restore the land to the rightful owners is not merely the handing out of a title deed, but it is the restoration of the dignity of our people. When the land was taken, so too, dignity was taken. The Rakwadu Community was dispossessed of their land because of past discriminatory laws over a period starting in 1964 and were humiliated into labour tenancy on the farms now held by white farmers."



Minister of Land Reform and Rural Development, Mzwanele Nyhontso, signing the title deed during the handover ceremony.

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“If food is produced only for export and not for local consumption, it's unsustainable and it's maintaining the status quo of keeping our people hungry and poor. We are here to promote patriotic farmers who can bring down the food prices, while remaining profitable. No one should go hungry due to unaffordability of food,”

The land, now thriving with lush avocado and mango orchards, embodies a fruitful partnership between the Rakwadu CPA and Westfalia Fruit, paving the way for sustainable growth and opportunities for generations to come. The model is now a joint venture between the Rakwadu CPA and Westfalia Fruit as the previous landowner, with the Rakwadu Community holding 49% and Westfalia Fruit 51% of the shares.

Delivering a message of support and reiterating on the journey so far, the Deputy Chief Land Claims Commissioner, Mr Francois Beukman, said: “This year marks 30 years since the enactment of the Restitution of Land Rights Act, offering the commission a moment to reflect on its journey of restoring dignity and humanity. It's a time to honour milestones, such as the success of the Rakwadu community, while also looking ahead to an equitable future.”

The Balobedu baga Rakwadu, a small tribe that originated from the same nomadic tribe as Balobedu ba ga Modjadji, accompanied by neighbouring traditional leaders, graced the occasion in large numbers to witness this historic moment. They welcomed the minister through their traditional dancers to showcase their rich culture and heritage.

Mr Ramawela Mokibela Albert, chairperson of the CPA, shared the lengthy journey of their land restitution process, marked by patience and resilience. Reflecting on their current status and future plans in their commercial partnership, he commended the collaborative efforts of Westfalia Fruit, the Commission on Restitution of Land Rights and Vumelana Advisory Fund. Together, they have not only resolved the community's land claim but also established a commercial agreement that ensures the land remains a viable farming operation, generates income, and provides opportunities for farming skills development for the Rakwadu community members.

He concluded by calling upon the government and relevant stakeholders to continue their support as they are very much in need of post settlement support. “The transfer of the land and conclusion of the commercial agreements is just the beginning and post settlement and funding support is required to ensure sustainability,” concluded Mr Ramawela.



A community member paying tribute to Chief Nchaupa Rakwadu Mohale V of Balobedu ba ga Rakwadu.

REFLECTING ON 30 YEARS OF RESTITUTION—A JOURNEY OF DIGNITY RESTORED



The nine boulders representing each of the nine provinces.



Chief Land Claims Commissioner Ms Nomfundo Ntloko at Isivivane in Freedom Park.

Nontembiso Kgatle

This year marks 30 years since the enactment of the Restitution of Land Rights Act, 1994 (Act No. 22 of 1994), a key legislation of South Africa's journey towards justice and equality. The Land Restitution Act brought on the existence of the Commission on Restitution of Land Rights, headed by the Chief Land Claims Commissioner, Ms Nomfundo Ntloko.

The Freedom Park Heritage Site in Pretoria has been chosen as the venue for the commission on Restitution of Land Rights' national event set to take place on 2 December 2024, commemorating 30 years of the Restitution of Land Rights Act.

Freedom Park embodies South Africa's triumph over oppression and its enduring commitment to democracy and freedom. Under the theme: Dignity Restored through the Land Restitution Act, this commemoration aligns seamlessly with the broader celebration of 30 years of freedom and democracy, highlighting the interconnected stories of restitution, dignity, and liberation that continue to shape the nation's journey.

As on 30 June 2024, the commission has successfully settled 83,234 land claims, positively impacting over 465,488 households, and restoring dignity to over 2,4 million beneficiaries. This achievement includes the restoration of rightful land to claimants, with R26,4 billion allocated for land compensation, and R26,2 billion provided as financial compensation for those who opted for monetary settlements. Additionally, the commission has extended grants to support claimants in rebuilding their lives. Together, these efforts represent an investment by the State exceeding R58 billion dedicated to addressing the enduring legacy of dispossession and fostering a future of healing and renewal.

Reflecting on the Restitution Programme's impact, Ms Ntloko noted how past discriminatory laws and policies stripped the majority of South Africans of their dignity through, among others, land dispossession. She emphasised that restitution is about more than just restoring land—it is about restoring identity, belonging, and the inherent dignity of individuals and communities.

"This milestone compels us to take stock of the journey so far," she said. "With 30 years gone, we must ask: 'is the programme still working as intended? Are there innovative ways to accelerate and enhance its impact?' These are the questions that demand robust and honest discussions, and that is why the upcoming panel at the national event on 2 December, 2024 will be so critical."

Ms Ntloko further called on the private sector and other stakeholders to join forces with the commission in advancing the Restitution Programme. "The success of restitution is not just for today's beneficiaries; it is for the future of South Africa as a nation striving for equity and unity. Together, we can ensure the process becomes more effective, sustainable and far-reaching," she said.

The Restitution of Land Rights Act remains a beacon of hope—a testament to the country's resilience and a promise of a more equitable future.

This 30-year commemoration is a call to action. It invites all South Africans to reflect on the sacrifices of the past, the achievements of the present, and the collective responsibility to build a brighter tomorrow where dignity is truly restored.