agriculture, land reform & rural development
Department:
Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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MEDIA STATEMENT **14 February 2025**

MINISTER STEENHUISEN: NEW PLANT HEALTH ACT TO BOOST AGRICULTURAL TRADE AND BIOSECURITY

Minister of Agriculture, John Steenhuisen is pleased with the signing of the Plant Health (Phytosanitary) Bill into law, as the "Plant Health (Phytosanitary) Act, 2024 (Act No. 35 of 2024). The Plant Health Act is the repeal of the Agricultural Pests Act, 1983 (Act No. 36 of 1983) and was assented to by President Ramaphosa earlier this week.

The Act provides for phytosanitary measures to prevent the introduction, establishment and spread of regulated pests in South Africa and the control of regulated pests. It further provides for the regulation of the movement of plants, plant products and other regulated articles, into, within and out of South Africa.

The new Act seeks to address gaps and challenges (such as constitutional issues, alignment with the international prescripts and provision of export) in the current phytosanitary system in view of the requirements of this country's major trading partners and the requirements under the relevant international agreements and treaties of which South Africa is a signatory member.

Among the notable changes in the new Act, is the inclusion of new sections or provisions that will cover amongst others, the establishment of the National Plant Protection Organisation of South Africa (NPPOZA), the development of regulations to facilitate exports, in transit and re-export of plants and plant products, establishment of pest free areas, areas of low pest prevalence, the provision of which is an obligation in terms of

South Africa's signatory membership of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC). This Act also provides for involvement of all spheres of government to cooperate when managing pests and diseases within the country.

This Act will serve as a Biosecurity measure to safeguard South African agriculture from plant pests and diseases to ensure an effective phytosanitary regulatory system that is needed to support trade-driven growth in the sector encompassing market access, regional economic integration and protection of natural resources.

It therefore aims to support the South African Government's objectives and priorities such as sustainable management and use of natural resources, the provision of effective national regulatory services and risk management systems as well as increased contribution of the sector to the country's economic growth and development, job creation and food security. Furthermore, it will contribute to our capacity to maintain existing markets and ability to enter into new export markets for plants and plant products and thus have a positive impact on the South African economy.

The new Act will also serve to position South Africa as one of the key roleplayers that will provide a more coordinated phytosanitary surveillance programme, preparedness and quarantine pest prevention systems in order to maintain and expand its competitive position in the global trade arena.

For technical enquiries, please contact Director: Plant Health, Mr JanHendrik Venter or Dr. Maanda Rambauli, Deputy Director responsible for National Plant Health Matters in the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, on 012 319 6384/ 6529/ 6164 or 078 827 4608 or e-mail janhendrikv@dalrrd.gov.za or emilgec@dalrrd.gov.za or maandar@dalrrd.gov.za

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For more information

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