



VRYSTAAT LANDBOU
TSA TEMO FREISTATA
FREE STATE AGRICULTURE



NEWS SNIPPETS

MARCH 2023 | ISSUE 12



COMMERCIAL AFFAIRS

ICASA mobilization by FSA to improve rural mobile signal

Following the survey by Free State Agriculture (FSA) which shows the clear increase in crime, due to poor mobile phone signals caused by load shedding, FSA communicated with Agri SA to discuss the facts with ICASA (Independent Communications Authority of SA).

ICASA national met with FSA on 23 March and the new provincial liaison person was introduced to FSA. ICASA explained that they only test signal strength along provincial roads because they have difficulty accessing farms / farm owners. FSA set out the process for access to farms as set out in the Protocol for Access to Farms. ICASA therefore has to call on safety representatives to gain access to farms where numerous complaints are reported.

If mobile phone signal problems cannot be resolved by a mobile phone service provider, ICASA can instruct the service provider to cancel the data and airtime portion of the contract.

The modus operandi of getting complaints reported to ICASA via FSA:

1. First report your case to your mobile service provider and get a reporting number.
2. Individual problem: If your case is not resolved as agreed by the service provider (with a paper trail of more than 3x attempts) you can send an email to elize@vslandbou.co.za
3. If the case affects a number of phone users (eg a faulty tower), a list of 10 numbers with their complaint reporting numbers must be sent to FSA at elize@vslandbou.co.za
4. FSA will then take up the matter with the mobile phone service providers and if they are not helpful, it will be sent to ICASA for further handling.



NATURAL RESOURCES

Water rights

‘A victory for agriculture is the Constitutional Court decision on 15 March which ensured the transferability of water rights.

FSA supported Agri SA and the South African water users association in their cases which were already decided in November 2021 in the High Court. However, the State appealed the case to the Constitutional Court. As stated in Agri SA's press release, “The Court ruled that water rights holders are entitled to transfer such rights in accordance with the provisions of the National Water Act. It also confirmed that receiving financial compensation for transferred water use rights is not prohibited or illegal in South Africa.”

On 09 March a media release was issued by the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) that all water users must register their water use with DWS and make sure that their latest contact details with DWS are correct. The letter that followed on 10 March in the government gazette expressly stated that current registered water users must ensure that their contact details with DWS must be kept up to date as per the provisions of the Water Act. To understand the water use authorization process, see <https://www.dws.gov.za/ewulaas/WUA.aspx>

To register or update your water use information, visit your Provincial Department of Water and Sanitation or Catchment Management Agency offices or go to: <https://www.dws.gov.za/Projects/WARMS/>

Please support our loyal service providers and business partners





YOUNG FARMERS

Young farmer conference

The Young Farmer Committee of Free State Agriculture will host their annual conference on April 18 and invite all young (and older) farmers to attend.

Rudo Opperman, chairman of the Young Farmer Committee, says that this event offers young farmers the chance to not only connect with other young farmers, but also to obtain information from experts to improve their business.

The theme of this year's conference, ***The beauty of our product***, promises to make every young farmer love what he/she does anew and fill them with new passion.

Speakers who will be addressing the young farmers this year are Prof Frikkie Maré (UFS), Hester Vermeulen (BFAP) and Prof Fika Janse van Rensburg.

Inquiries can be directed to Elize at FSA's office elize@vslandbou.co.za



VRYSTAAT LANDBOU
FREE STATE AGRICULTURE

YOUNG FARMER CONFERENCE 2023

"The beauty of our product."



18 APR



8am



**Monte Bello
Estate,
Bloemfontein**



Frikkie Maré
Speaker



Hester Vermeulen
Speaker

Limited space!
R.s.v.p on/ before 11 April

elize@vslandbou.co.za



Fika J. van Rensburg
Speaker





RURAL SAFETY

Stock theft

Francois Wilken, president of VL, would like to invite all members to attend this year's district meetings.

Stock theft is an issue that affects all farmers and is therefore one of the matters that will be discussed during the meetings. "Free State Agriculture will soon launch a project that we hope will have an impact on stock theft and we want to share it with our members first and get feedback."

Inquiries about the district meetings can be directed to cynthia@vslandbou.co.za

Safety training for agricultural communities

Standardized training for farming communities was offered in February 2023 in 2 geographical areas in the Free State, namely Parys and Bethlehem. At Parys, Phase 1 (largely home-and-hearth) training was offered in connection with farmers' association where 16 persons were trained. In Bethlehem, farmers were trained in Phase 1 and 2 training where Phase 2 primarily focuses on response group training. Farmers from six (6) farmers' associations were involved, a total of 32 people.

Further training for March 2023 has already been booked for Reitz and Zastron area. Farming communities wanting to book training can contact [**Pieter Kemp**](#)

Important dates 2023

- 18 Apr Young farmer Conference & Young farmer of the year
- 20 Apr District gathering, Perdeberg
- 25 Apr District gathering, Bloemfontein
- 3 May District gathering, Smithfield
- 12 May Young farmer day, Bloemfontein
- 2 & 3 Aug Annual Congress
- 22 Sept Agriculture.Golf golf day



RURAL DEVELOPMENT & LAND AFFAIRS

Expropriation Bill

Free State Agriculture has once again submitted comments to the bill which is now before the National Council of Provinces (NRVP), as well as input to Agri SA's submission. The opportunity to make final comments closed on 06 March.

We are now waiting to hear when the NRVP will hold public hearings (if at all) before they finally vote on whether or not to accept the expropriation bill. A 50% majority is required.

If the bill is accepted, Agri SA stands ready to oppose the first legal case with good merit of expropriation without compensation. Cases of unfair compensation after expropriation under the current Expropriation Act have already been won with costs.

*If the bill is accepted,
Agri SA is ready to
oppose the first legal
case with good merit
of expropriation
without
compensation.*

Agricultural training in the Free State - gaps & shortcomings

FSA's Rural Development committee held a workshop on the gaps and shortcomings in agricultural training on 01 March. The Free State alone currently has more than 2000 graduates in agriculture-oriented courses, from college to university level, who are unemployed.

The outcome of the workshop was that the underutilized Glen agricultural land, which is controlled by the Department of Agriculture, is transferred to the college so that greater private sector buy-in and support can take place for the college to train students with more practical knowledge in commercial agriculture.



LABOR ISSUES

Employer inspections by Department of Labor

The Department of Employment & Labor (DEL) has changed the approach to inspections at employers. The Compensation for Occupational Injury and Illness (COIDA) and Unemployment Insurance (UIF) information is nowadays combined and verified with monthly income tax returns as reported on the monthly returns (EMP201) and six-monthly return (EMP501).

Employers' financial statements are also requested. If the DEL identifies any differences, this leads to intensified inspections and clarification requested by the inspector. Retrospective information for up to four years, as determined by Art. 81 of COIDA, can be requested and must be delivered. That information is then compared with the annual return of COIDA and must match as much as possible.

It is vital that employers keep records of even casual workers and temporary staff in order to be able to answer any enquiries. Labor costs as reported on monthly UIF and Income Tax returns, and reported in the financial statements, must also match each other.

It is recommended that employers communicate with their accountants in order to proactively get records in order and maintain them. With the annual COIDA returns due at the end of March, it is important that the information matches financial statements.

Any queries regarding the issue, can be directed to [Jacques Taljaard](#)

Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act (COIDA)

On 13 Feb 2023, the Director General of the Department of Employment and Labor (DEL) announced that the annual wages must be declared electronically from 1 April 2023 to 31 May 2023. This includes wages of workers and working directors and applies to wages from 1 March 2022 to 28 Feb 2023 that were paid by a farm and the estimated wages from 1 March 2023 to 28 Feb 2024. Failure to do so will result in results in a 10% penalty being issued for late submission.

Any queries regarding the issue, can be directed to [Stephan Pietersen](#)

Just a reminder that membership fees are due on 1 May