



NEWS SNIPPETS AUGUST 2023 | ISSUE 15



RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Representing our members at various public hearings

Representatives of Free State Agriculture (FSA) attended the public hearing regarding the Bill on Preservation and Development of Agricultural Land at Mafube on Monday, 21 August 2023.

The bill, which can be viewed [here](#), has been conditionally welcomed, as it protects high potential agricultural land from mining and illegal development, although concerns have been expressed about the provisions of clause 31 of the Bill dealing with compliance inspections.

FSA is also aware of the public hearings 23-30 August on the National Veld and Forest Fires Amendment Bill that took place.

Free State Agriculture contributed to the written input of Agri SA. It was mostly about the powers of traditional leaders. Furthermore, FSA has been requesting for some time the compulsory membership of state landowners to the Fire Protection Associations. The introduction to the bill states:

The National Veld and Forest Fire Amendment Bill seeks to amend the National Veld and Forest Fire Act, 1998 in order to facilitate the establishment of fire protection associations by a municipality or a traditional council; to oblige a municipality, state enterprise, public entity or other state body that owns land to join the fire protection associations; to extend the powers of entry, search, seizure and arrest to peace officers (Fire Officers) and traditional leaders and to amend the title of the Act to the National Wildfire Act.



RURAL SAFETY

Crime and livestock theft for the 1st term 2023/2024

The Minister of Police recently released crime statistics for the 1st quarter of the financial year 2023-2024, i.e. from 1 April to 30 June 2023.

The following emerged:

- 1. Farm murders in the RSA increased by 4 incidents. In the Free State, 2 workers and 2 residents were killed on farms at Fouriesburg, Kroonstad, Oranjeville and Zamdela.
- 2. Increase in armed robberies in the RSA by 1% (346 incidents) - Free State and Northern Cape had the biggest increases ie 12.6% and 17.1%
- 3. Decrease of 110 farm attacks (183 attacks against 73) in the RSA which includes a variety of serious violent crimes. Free State had 8 farm attacks in which 3 workers, 2 producers, security guards, resident and visitor on a farm were attacked. Incidents took place at Bethlehem, Fouriesburg, Harrismith, Kroonstad, Senekal, Tweeling, Virginia and Wepener;

4. In terms of livestock theft, a total of 68 015 animals were stolen in the three-month period (25,418 sheep, 16,340 goats, 14,510 cattle, 10,422 chickens) - no numbers regarding recovered livestock.

5. Four (4) high crime towns in the Free State are Bultfontein, Selosesha, Thaba-Nchu and Harrismith. They represent 15.32% of the Free State's reported livestock theft figures.

6. The 19 high crime areas in relation to livestock theft in the Free State can be identified as:

- 8 border towns: Clocolan, Ficksburg, Fouriesburg, Hobhouse, Ladybrand, Kestell, Vanstadensrus and Zastron;
- 3 police stations in the QwaQwa area (Makwane, Phuthaditajba, Tseseng); Botshabelo/Selosesha/Thaba-Nchu police stations (trust areas);
- Bultfontein, Harrismith, Heilbron, Hennenman, Koppies, Mafube, Reddersburg, Reitz and Vrede.

These 19 towns/areas represent 51.85% of the Free State's reported livestock theft figures.

RURAL SAFETY (continue)



BOEREDAG

Tema: Landbou en Tegnologie

Vrydag, 22 September 2023 vanaf 09:00 by Bloemfontein Gholfklub

09:00 - 09:15	Verwelkoming deur Francois Wilken
09:15 - 10:30	Barenbrug Saad Piket Implemente Feedtek
10:30 - 11:00	Case Simulator
11:00 - 11:30	Tee Breek
11:30 - 12:00	Syngenta
12:00 - 12:30	Demonstrasie: Hommeltuig Bespuiting
12:30 - 13:30	Steak Braai
13:30 - 16:00	Vrywillige toer deur uitstal ruimtes

Vir registrasie kontak Tianke by 079 502 4670

BESKERM ONS BOERE

The Bloemfontein Golf Club will be a hive of activity on Friday, September 22. Why?

A golf day and farmer's day are offered simultaneously by the non-profit organisation, **Agriculture.golf**, in aid of Free State Agriculture's Safety Fund. The contribution through the golf day enables Free State Agriculture to empower farming communities with, among other things, safety training. In 2022, more than R200 000 was paid to the Safety Fund.

This year, 44 teams will compete against each other on the golf course, while 20 exhibitors and 6 associations will treat the players and visitors to the farmer's day.

If you want to attend the farmers' day, you can register with Tianke by contacting her on 079 502 4670.

Safety training

The safety training is primarily funded by Free State Agriculture thanks to funds obtained from sponsors. Farmers' associations or regional offices pay a minimal amount for persons who wish to undergo the training. Up to 40 persons can be trained per course. Take a look at the [video](#) by LGV to learn more.

Farming communities that still have a need regarding training are requested to get in touch with [Pieter Kemp](#).





COMMERCIAL AFFAIRS

Identification and traceability system

Following the mandate given to Free State Agriculture (FSA) by members during the 2022 FSA Congress, the Commercial Affairs committee launched an investigation into an identification and traceability system to address the serious issue of livestock diseases as well as livestock theft in the province.

FSA met with numerous role players who provide hardware (tags, scanners and microchips) and software (farm management and enterprise level databases) solutions. Christo Doman, FSA regional representative and Dr Jack Armour led the investigation with the careful monitoring and assistance of Francois Wilken (chairman) and Gernie Botha (CEO).

With a national Livestock Identification and Traceability System (LITS) still not available and a safety concern by livestock farmers to put their data on a government controlled system, the decision was made to instead consider the implementation of our own database which can easily upload data forms of farmers' existing livestock management and stud breeding programs.

During the 2023 Congress, Dr Jack Armour made a short presentation about the FSA-AIMS (Animal Identification, Movement and Security) system. Through the AIMS system, Allflex EID "tags" (ear tags) "readers (scanners/)" among others can be ordered which have FSA's logo and a QR code on them for easy identification from a mobile phone. Another advantage of the system is that it issues an Article 6 and 8 document when there is movement of animals, as well as health certificates. The system has been tested in the Eastern Cape and is user-friendly at no cost.

Access to the system can be obtained from FSA's website where a link will be uploaded when the system is officially launched. Dr Armour mentions that the system will be launched within a month or two. FSA bought the program and it is currently being expanded for FSA and in the future selected data can be linked with LITS with the farmers' consent.

For inquiries, Dr Armour can be contacted at jack@vslandbou.co.za



NATURAL RESOURCES & DISASTERS

Veld fires

On August 25, the Western Free State, especially the areas of Dealesville, Soutpan, Boshof and Brandfort, experienced devastating wildfires. It is estimated that nearly 40,000 ha was destroyed.

We urge all members to have their own fire emergency plan in place for their farm. This includes, among other things:

- Equipment must be ready and in working order;
- Workers must be trained in and with PPEs (the necessary equipment and protective clothing)
- Involvement by your local Fire Protection Association (BBA)

It is also essential that all Fire Protection Associations are properly registered with and meet the requirements of the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment. The provincial official responsible is Mr Qapela Ndabankulu, Tel: 051 400 3504, Cell: 060 973 2058 & Email: ndabankuluq@dffe.gov.za

Procedure if you have been hit by a fire and request assistance from FSA:

Please send to Free State Agriculture (jack@vslandbou.co.za and [CC elize@vslandbou.co.za](mailto:CC_elize@vslandbou.co.za)) a request for help on an agricultural association letterhead containing the following basic information:

1. Date and time (duration) of the fire
2. Environment burned; from where to where
3. Estimated extent of the fire
 - a. Estimated hectares burned
 - b. How many farmers / farms affected
 - c. Losses – hectares of pasture / crops, animals, stores, houses, workers houses, vehicles and equipment etc.
4. Immediate needs
5. Fire-aid coordinator name and contact details and pin-drop of drop-off point for donations





MEMBERS

2023 Annual Congress

"Who will fill the vacuum?"

"The time is over to expect a few dedicated individuals to step in and make a difference. Everyone will have to come to the table in his or her community and do their part so that we can survive.

History has shown that we have an incredible urge to survive and the time has come for it to emerge again. Our ancestors showed that lying down gets you nowhere. There are many challenges in agriculture at the moment, but through faith, hope and hard work we will get through this too.

Get involved in your local structures and community. We are often asked if we are getting something right. I can say with certainty that if no one had resisted in the past 29 years, we would not still be farming today."

This was the message of re-elected president, Francois Wilken, during this year's congress which was presented on 2 and 3 August in Bloemfontein. A short summary of the congress is available [on request](#).

2023 Agricultural Association of the Year

Agricultural associations are the glue of their community and deserve the recognition they deserve!

Agri-Hertzogville was named 2023 Agricultural Association of the Year during the Congress Evening Function on 2 August. OVK stepped in as main sponsor for the competition this year. In 2nd place was Steynsrus District farmers' union and 3rd place was awarded to Ladybrand Agri.

Is your agricultural association considering participating? Direct inquiries cynthia@vslandbou.co.za



Gys & Elaine Olivier from Agri-Hertzogville with Messrs Stefan Oberholzer from OVK (left) and Francois Wilken from FSA (right)



LABOUR AFFAIRS

National Minimum wage

The National Minimum Wage Commission invites all interested parties to submit written representations regarding possible adjustments to the national minimum wage. These recommendations will be considered by the Commission before an annual report and recommendations on the annual review of the national minimum wage are published later in the year.

Written representations must be submitted to the Directorate; Employment standards reached by 8 September 2023.

Submissions can be sent to:

The Directorate: Employment Standards
Department of Employment and Labour
Private Bag x117
Pretoria
0001

Or sent by email to nmwreview@labour.gov.za

The relevant Government Gazette can be found [here](#).

Free State Agriculture, through the Labor Committee, will also submit representations.

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