



COMMERCIAL AFFAIRS

FSA meets with FS provincial government

Free State Agriculture (FSA) held in-depth discussions with the members of the Free State Provincial Government on 7 September 2023 regarding community safety as well as the provincial road network.

Issues regarding rural safety, livestock theft, availability of police resources as well as police purchase procedures were discussed. Shortages of staff and vehicles at livestock theft units were also pointed out to the meeting as significant problems for the agricultural sector.



Read more [here](#)

FSA queries Department Of Agriculture's move away from a voucher system

The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development MEC, Saki Mokoena and his EXCO have decided that the mostly successful voucher system that has been in use for the past few years will be replaced with a tender/procurement panel system that again uses middlemen. The motivation for this is job creation and to grow the Free State economy by using local procurement. This decision affects agricultural businesses that are positioned to issue vouchers to the FS Department's CASP beneficiaries, of which there are members of FSA.

Read more [here](#)



RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Agri SA’s 10 “no’s” at public hearing on Expropriation Bill

Agri SA made an oral presentation to the Select Committee on Wednesday 27 September 2023 at the National Council of Provinces building in Cape Town where the public hearing on the Expropriation Bill [23-2020] took place. The document used in the submission can be found [here](#).

- Agri SA highlighted the following main points:
- Do not support R nil compensation.
 - Definition of Expropriation is unacceptable.
 - Expropriated landowners should always have recourse to the courts.
 - Compensation should be prompt, effective and adequate to enable landowner to start over.
 - The cost of expropriation should be borne by the fiscus; individual landowners cannot foot the bill for land reform through reduced non-market-related compensation.
 - Agriculture is funded against the collateral value of land, improvements, and livestock.
 - Expropriation should only be used as a measure of last resort.
 - Administrative justice principles must always apply.
 - Compensation should not depend on the state’s ability to pay.
 - Free market and the basic economic principles drive economy.

LABOUR ISSUES

National Minimum Wage

The Chairman of the National Minimum Wage Commission has by way of notice in the National Government Gazette dated 1 August 2023 requested comments regarding the National Minimum Wage and the recommendations made to the Minister of Employment and Labour.

Free State Agriculture submitted comments on the request which can be found [here](#). Agri SA also submitted substantial comments which were largely agreed with and also supported.

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



NATURAL RESOURCES AND DISASTERS

Almost 500,000 ha in Free State destroyed by fires

Farming communities in the Free State have been exposed to 5 328 veld fire incidents since May 2023 where nearly 500 000ha of land in the Free State burned down. Since then there have been daily/weekly wildfires in the Free State where farming communities in collaboration with "Working on Fire" teams are fighting the wildfires.

Some fires are started maliciously by people setting fires on high-risk days, or by illegal hunters maliciously setting fires by luring small game out of their holes, or roasting the game in the wild after it has been caught.

Some farmers and their workers were seriously injured or killed in wildfires. If a farming unit is 500ha, this could mean that over 850 farms could have been affected by the fires.

Farmers are requested that where there is any indication that veldfires have been started maliciously, such cases are immediately filed at the nearest police station as Malicious Property Damage under the National Wildfire and Forest Fires Act, 101 of 1998. Where it is related to the illegal hunting with dogs, such cases should also be opened for the necessary investigation (see complaints regarding illegal hunting with dogs on next page).

Such incidents/cases must please be brought to the attention of a safety representative of a farmers' association, for passing on to the structures of FSA. The monitoring of such cases are important.

Procedure if you have been affected by a fire and request help from FSA:

Send a request for help to **FSA** as soon as possible 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 location of drop-off point for donations.



RURAL SAFETY

Illegal hunting with dogs on farms on the increase

Illegal hunting with dogs is on the rise in the Free State among farming communities. It would appear that other provinces such as Mpumalanga and North West are experiencing the same problems, as has recently been pointed out in the media

Illegal hunting with dogs often leads to the commission of various crimes such as trespassing, malicious damage to property, livestock theft and theft (AgriSA's Legal Information document).

When farmers encounter illegal hunters and their dogs on their land, please do the following:

- Avoid any confrontation, especially if a farmer is alone - contact neighbors or sector members for assistance, because it happens that the hunters open false complaints to the police that they have been assaulted, threatened with a firearm, etc.
- Contact the local SPCA for help in seizing the dogs
- Keep any evidence at the crime scene until the police can record and collect it
- Put up a notice stating that it is private land (farm protocol) and that any access without the owner's permission will be considered trespassing
- Do not shoot any person / dog unless someone is in danger of being seriously injured - this could lead to a criminal charge of malicious damage to property or a civil claim;

The following complaints can be made by the landowner regarding the illegal hunting with dogs on his land:

- Entry;
- Animal Protection Act;
- Fencing Act;
- Wild theft;
- Malicious damage to property where animals have been killed/injured belonging to the landowner;
- Livestock theft (where it is related to the offence);
- Nature conservation ordinance of the Free State, 8 of 1969 - refers to hunting with dogs which is illegal;

If the dog is caught and the owner is known, a farmer can bring a civil claim in terms of tort law against the dog's owner for any loss/damage you have suffered. Farmers must please pass on such incidents to the safety representative, so that they can be verified, followed up and monitored during monthly meetings with the police.



RURAL SAFETY (continue)

Private Investigators regarding livestock theft

Private livestock theft investigators have been trained in the Fezile Dabe district since 1 July 2023 and currently serve the towns of Cornelia, Heilbron, Kroonstad, Mafube, Parys, Steynsrus and Tweeling.

Several successes in terms of arrests and recovered livestock had already been achieved. Preventive crime operations are also carried out continuously in order to determine the movement and movement of livestock to certain outlet areas. There are several initiatives underway to determine and effectively address the organization of livestock theft.

Dr Jane Buys confirms that requests have been received from additional high crime towns/areas to bring in private investigators, especially in farming communities located adjacent to the RSA/Lesotho border. Consultation meetings were held and will be held with the communities in order to identify private investigators.

Profiles of workers

It is important that farmers in all the high crime towns/areas pass on profiles of their workers to the private investigators. It is especially essential that Peet Swanepoel, who is the provincial coordinator, obtains the information.

The following information is of crucial importance and is required, namely:

- Full names and surname, as well as ID (photo of ID document);
- Mobile phone number/s as well as residential address (if there is a town address);
- Next of kin's name and contact number;
- The type of work a worker performs and number of years of service

Peet Swanepoel's email address is peetswanepoel86@gmail.com A proforma of the required profile information can be downloaded [here](#).

Private Investigators

You can watch the video explaining the initiative [here](#)



RURAL SAFETY (continue)

Monthly meetings with police - You may ask this!

According to Dr Jane Buys, farming communities can request feedback on the following aspects, in addition to the agenda, during a Rural Security Meeting with the SAPS:

- Any additional crimes that are problematic that have not been identified as crimes by the police, therefore the verification of all crime incidents especially those related to illegal hunting with dogs, thefts, livestock theft, housebreaking, etc.;
- What awareness campaigns have taken place in the area in the past month;
- Which farm visits or profiles were carried out by the Rural safety coordinators;
- Profile cases in which large losses have been incurred by the farming community, eg cattle theft, theft, must be placed on the "case flow", especially where arrests have taken place, so that the cases which successfully go through the courts are monitored;
- Challenges that are experienced regarding policing must be noted on the minutes, so that they can be forwarded to the district for the necessary intervention and or feedback;
- When exercises have taken place, the evaluation/feedback must also be briefly discussed.

Safety representatives of farmers' associations and or Unions must make sure that aspects that are problematic regarding policing are reflected on a minute. Such minutes where problems/challenges are listed must be sent to the regional safety representatives of FSA for the necessary follow-up at the district level with the police.

Local / station level and district level are considered to be operational levels within the police, and such meetings must take place monthly as determined by the National Safety strategy.

Inquiries can be directed to jane@vslandbou.co.za



THANK YOU!

Thanks to the *Agriculture.golf* golf day that took place in Bloemfontein on 22 September, Free State Agriculture's Safety Fund is now R270 000 stronger!

"Farmers and their employees are trying to produce food for our country under tremendous economic and political pressure. In order to ensure food security, the well-being and safety of the Free State's agricultural communities must be looked after." says Francois Wilken, president of FSA.

The funds from the golf day will mainly be used to empower safety structures at grassroots level through training to address crime and safety preventively.

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