



## Congress 2024

Free State Agricultural Congress was presented in Bloemfontein on 7 & 8 August 2024 .

The event was attended by approximately 120 delegated members, as well as several guests, including the Free State MEC of Agriculture.

A short summary of the speakers' presentations (in Afrikaans), with links to videos, is available [here](#) .



## Production forecast of summer crops

The Crop Estimates Committee released their 8th production estimate for the 2023-2024 summer grain production on 26 September 2024.

According to this report, the size of the expected commercial maize harvest was set at 12,801 million tonnes. This figure is 1.98% or 258,750 tonnes less than the previous estimate of 13,060 million tonnes. The expected national average yield of maize is 4.86 t/ha.

The full report is available [here](#) .





# RURAL SAFETY

## Safety and Livestock Theft Workshops

From 4 September to 20 November 2024, Free State Agriculture's Rural Safety Committee, in collaboration with the Police (RS coordinators and Livestock Theft Units) will offer safety and training workshops in all the districts of the Free State.

The workshops focus on the following:

- The 8 core pillars and criteria for the effective implementation of the National Rural Security Strategy (NLBS) between the SAPS as a key player in farming communities.
- All core legislation relating to livestock theft.
- What important burden of proof is required in order to successfully carry livestock theft cases through the courts.
- Advice, advice and information on how to address livestock theft.

Farmers, safety representatives and sector leaders are requested to attend the workshops where everyone will be provided with good advice, advice and information. Leaflets with contact persons' details will be passed out ahead of time. Peet Swanepoel, the provincial coordinator of the Private investigators on livestock theft, Isabel Kruger, livestock theft safety representative of FSA as well as Dr Jane Buys will provide input during the workshops.



*Peet Swanepoel, provincial coordinator of the private investigators*



*Isabel Kruger, livestock theft safety representative of Free State Agriculture*



*Dr Jane Buys, Safety risk analyst from Free State Agriculture*





## RURAL SAFETY (continue)

### FSA accompanies MECs to the Lesotho border

Dr. Jane Buys, FSA's safety risk analyst, recently accompanied the Free State MEC of Community Safety, Roads and Transport as well as the MEC of Agriculture to high crime areas along the Lesotho border. Dr Buys confirms that information sessions have taken place with affected farming communities on issues related to cross-border crime.

Towns such as Zastron, Vanstadensrus, Wepener, Hobhouse, Ladybrand, Clocolan, Ficksburg, Clarens, Fouriesburg and parts of QwaQwa were visited.

A report will soon be released in which short- and medium-term action plans will be formulated for effective intervention by national departments at provincial level.

[Read more](#)



Information sessions took place with affected farming communities



MECs's Mmbalula & Rockman meets with farmers



MECs are shown the consequences of arson by Lesotho citizens

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♥ **platteland damesdag**

2 November 2024

Tyd 09:00  
Plek: Leopards & Lions, Bloemfontein

Koartjie: R150

**SPREKER: Wynko Berg**

**Standard Bank** **ENGEN**

**Boere**

**INLIGTINGSDAG**

**KOM BRAAI/KUIER SAAM.**

Registrasie: R100 pp  
(Skakel weso en een bier/kooltrank in.)

VANAF 11:00

**11 OKTOBER 2024**

Terpoort Landbouwsaal  
1100 Wesselsdorp, 6011  
Klaar vir 11:00 AM





## NATURAL RESOURCES

### FSA's position on Prospecting and Mining Rights

Free State Agriculture (FSA) has a mandate and policy on how we deal with Prospecting and Mining Rights that encroach on the surface land rights of agricultural landowners. The FSA policy for handling Mineral and Gas Exploration Rights is available [here](#) for all members and has guided FSA successfully so far.

Every landowner affected by a prospecting or mining application is encouraged to participate in the Environmental Impact Study's Public Participation Process and list the concerns of development on your specific farm. These are then handled by specialists in the EIA report at the expense of the developer. If landowners are not satisfied with the specialist answers / handling of the issue, they can appeal. Where groups of farmers want to oppose a prospecting or mining application together, FSA can be approached by a letter from the agricultural association to help them establish a Forum which is a separate legal entity that can open its own bank account for fundraising for the appointment of experts to further act on behalf of the forum.

For any inquiries about prospecting and mining rights, Dr Jack Armour can be contacted at [jack@vslandbou.co.za](mailto:jack@vslandbou.co.za)



### Memel fires

After successive fires wreaked havoc in the Memel/Verkykerskop/Vrede area during 26 - 29 September, Free State Agriculture contributed R100 000 to the Memel Farmers' Association to address immediate needs. In addition to the financial contribution, the transport of two loads of roughage was also paid to support local farmers who lost everything in the fires.

"Even though it has rained in some parts of the Free State, a long fire season is still ahead," warns Kempen Nel, chairman of the Natural Resources committee.

[Read more](#)



## COMMERCIAL

### ESKOM's 44% increase application to NERSA - Farmers' input imperative

The National Energy Regulator of South Africa (NERSA) has released the sixth Multi-Year Price Determination (MYPD) consultation document for 2026 to 2028 for public input.

The MYPD process determines allowable income for Eskom using a cost-of-service, rate-of-return-based approach, with incentives for cost savings and efficient procurement. This process determines the rates across various customer categories. To ensure the implementation of new electricity tariffs by 1 April 2025, Eskom is expected to present a NERSA-approved tariff to Parliament before 15 March 2025.

Stakeholders are encouraged to provide feedback on the MYPD6 application for the 2025/26 to 2027/28 financial years. Specifically, comments are requested on:

- NERSA's discretion in applying the MYPD4 methodology.
- The impact of Eskom's tariff request, taking into account the already approved Regulatory Clearing Accounts (RCA).

The consultation document outlines specific questions in these areas, and stakeholders are invited to respond to each of these.

Free State Agriculture, in collaboration with Agri SA, plans to submit a formal written response to the proposed price increase and requests input from members to shape our mandate on this matter.

Although FSA's input at the local public hearing as well as his own written input will focus more on the affordability for farmers as well as the possible impacts on the agricultural sector in the Free State, key focus areas for the AgriSA presentation are more nationally oriented, e.g.:

- The impact of tariff increases on basic food prices for consumers.
- The effect on the competitiveness of export-oriented farmers in relation to international peers.
- The importance of Eskom not only increasing revenue, but also reducing costs, optimizing business operations and optimizing and managing its workforce much better.
- A comparison of the proposed tariff increases with similar service providers internationally, especially those with comparable coal reserves and infrastructure.

One question that NERSA always asks us at public hearings is, what is the threshold ESKOM energy cost that will make farmers decide to go off the "grid" and be self-sufficient? The question is of course very different for different categories of agricultural power users, and so we request members' input.

Input on the above points, as well as any additional considerations, must be submitted by 20 October 2024. Further inquiries can be directed to Dr Jack Armour at [jack@vslandbou.co.za](mailto:jack@vslandbou.co.za)





## LABOUR ISSUES

### Deductions in the farm worker sector

Understanding deductions from employees' wages is crucial for employers in the farming sector.

SEESA has provided FSA with a clear guide, based on Clause 8 of Sectoral Determination 13, which regulates such deductions. The document is available [here](#).

### Handling of disciplinary charges

When dealing with an employee facing a disciplinary hearing, it is crucial to make sure that the charges against them are clear and detailed. This gives the employee a fair chance to understand what they are being accused of and to prepare their side of the story. This was highlighted in a recent court case of Murray and Roberts Cementation (Pty) Ltd v Association of Mine Workers and Construction Union obo Dube and Others (JA96 / 2022) [2023] ZALAC 26; [2024] 1 BLLR 23 (LAC); (2024) 45 ILJ 276 .

A guide provided by SEESA to handle the process correctly is available [here](#)

### Introduction to employment equity compliance

Whether it is sow time or harvest time, when it comes to Employment Equity all designated employers are strongly advised to comply with the obligations placed on them as a designated employer as prescribed by legislation.

A guide by SEESA provides guidelines to handle the employment equity process correctly. Click [here](#) to download the document.

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