



AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT

Expropriation Act: We pledge to protect property rights

The announcement of the signing of the Expropriation Bill by President Ramaphosa on 23 January 2025 sent shockwaves through agriculture and wider society.

See FSA's [press release](#) on this. In this regard, several organisations have already indicated that they will test the constitutionality of the law in the courts and Agri SA is also busy putting its foot down to consider a litigation route.

FSA will provide more information to members as it becomes available.

Illegal occupation of land: Guidelines for handling

In light of the signing of the Expropriation Act, Agri SA has compiled guidelines to assist landowners if they are faced with an illegal land grab situation.

Free State Agriculture urgently appeals to landowners to be vigilant regarding any illegal occupations. See the guide for dealing with illegal land occupations [here](#).

Preservation and Development of Agricultural Land Act

Agricultural land is a scarce and valuable natural resource, and its protection is an integral part of national food security. Agri SA and Free State Agriculture therefore welcome the signing of the Preservation and Development of Agricultural Land Act (PDAL), on 27 January 2025.

This Act establishes a national regulatory framework to coordinate the responsible development and conservation of agricultural land in order to ensure food production for current and future generations.

[Read more](#)



RURAL SAFETY

Safety training for farming communities

Free State Agriculture, in collaboration with LGV private security, has been offering safety training to farming communities for the past 3 years. The training, which is divided into Phase 1 (home and hearth) and Phase 2 (Response Group), involves training farmers, their wives and even children in all aspects related to safety. Phase 3 involves more advanced training and focuses largely on involvement and integration into safety structures. Phase 3 has already been developed and can be offered after communities have successfully completed Phase 1 and 2.

FSA is urging farming communities, especially young farmers who have not yet undergone such training, to empower themselves. The threats and risks to safety and crime that appear to be increasing in certain areas necessitate farmers, their families and even workers to equip themselves with the necessary knowledge on how to effectively address certain situations. FSA is partially funding the training, while farmers' associations are also required to make a financial contribution.

Farming communities that are in need of the above training are requested to contact **Pieter Kemp** to determine dates for training.

Survey: Weak cellphone signals in rural areas in the Free State



Free State Agriculture is currently sending out a survey to all farmers regarding the impact and extent of poor cellphone signals in farming communities in the Free State. A recent farm attack has once again highlighted the poor cellphone signals that make farming communities very vulnerable to criminal exploitation. FSA has already lodged a complaint with the telecoms regulator, ICASA, because safety structures could not be deployed following the attack.

Consolidation of respondents will take place, after which the report will be forwarded to various departments as well as semi-state institutions with active requests for intervention.

Farmers are requested to please complete the survey, which only takes 2-3 minutes, on their cellphones.

For inquiries, **Dr Jane Buys** or **Dr Jack Armour** can be contacted.



KEEP OUT
PRIVATE
PROPERTY

RURAL SAFETY (continued)

Survey: Stray animals in the Free State

Stray animals—including cattle, sheep, pigs, horses, donkeys, and Boer goats—pose a serious safety risk to motorists, particularly in the rural areas of the Free State. To address this issue, municipalities must implement appropriate by-laws and establish impoundments for stray animals, as outlined in the Free State Provincial Gazette No. 64 (18 October 2024) for Matjhabeng Local Municipality’s Animal Safekeeping and Impoundment regulations, as well as the Free State Impound Ordinance No. 18 of 1952.

However, enforcement remains a challenge, as these by-laws lack an approved fine structure. Without a proper system for law enforcement officers to issue fines for stray animal-related offences, municipalities struggle to hold offenders accountable.

The urgency of this matter was highlighted during the December 2024 festive season when multiple motor accidents were reported due to collisions with stray animals, resulting in injuries—some severe.

Given ongoing complaints from farming communities, it is essential to assess the full impact of this risk across 88 towns in the Free State. To facilitate this, Free State Agriculture (FSA) is calling for a survey where farmers, their families, and farmworkers document incidents. FSA is therefore requesting a survey where farmers and their families and even workers ensure that their photos & GPS coordinates, together with an incident report book entry, are passed on to the nearest police station as well as to a safety representative of a farmers’ association.

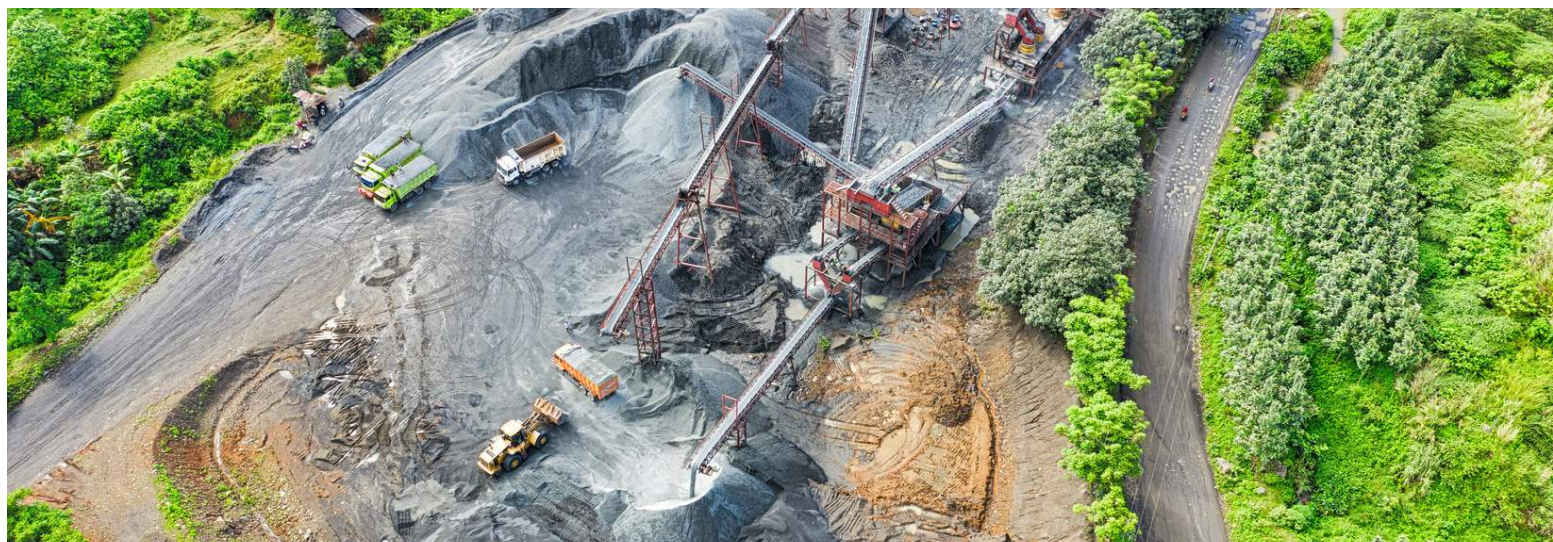
By March 2025, FSA will compile a comprehensive report based on the collected data. This report will be presented to key departments and stakeholders to drive urgent action. If necessary, FSA will also seek legal counsel to take action against government departments failing to address this serious safety risk effectively.

Visits to agricultural associations & ‘Earthranger’ imports

In 2025, FSA will focus on ensuring that crime incident entries are made on the EarthRanger software platform. Safety representatives from farmers’ associations as well as control rooms can handle their entries themselves, and where necessary, Peet Swanepoel can be contacted to assist. The use of the platform is very beneficial in order to observe crime trends, patterns and manifestations on a map in order to initiate preventive actions.

FSA’s Rural Safety Committee intends to visit high crime areas and provide training regarding imports on EarthRanger. Safety representatives will be contacted to schedule dates for visits and similar training.

For further inquiries contact [Peet Swanepoel](#), [Isabel Kruger](#) or [Jane Buys](#)



NATURAL RESOURCES

Rhino Oil & Gas public meetings, Nala & Tswelopele area

Free State Agriculture submitted its total opposition to the published draft regulations for fracking and underground coal gasification (UCD) in December 2024 in line with our mandate given to us by members during the 2019 congress.

Rhino Oil and Gas has begun their Environmental Authorization Process by applying to drill test holes for the first time on their 377 and 378 ER prospecting rights areas.

Public meetings will take place during 10-13 Feb as follows:

- Bothaville, Villa Sering Guesthouse, 10 February 2025 14:00-18:00
- Hoopstad, Tau Leralla Guest Lodge, 11 February 2025 14:00-18:00
- Kroonstad, Kroonstad Golf Club, 12 February 2025 14:00-18:00
- Edenville, Edenville Hall, 13 February 2025 14:00-18:00

FSA encourages affected landowners to participate in the public participation processes and ensure that their concerns are investigated in the environmental impact assessments and set out in the environmental management plans. Enquiries can be directed to Dr Jack Armour at jack@vslanbou.co.za

Jagersfontein Tailings Dam Disaster



The Jagersfontein tailings dam disaster was the result of a dam licence issued by the Department of Water & Sanitation for the storage of mine recovery sludge in the dam. The bank of a tailings dam gave way in the early morning hours of 11 September 2022, wreaking havoc.

Free State Agriculture has assisted affected farmers and several letters have been sent to the mining company, the MEC and the Minister of Agriculture requesting that the farmers be paid promptly for the land destroyed due to the disaster, while the legal process continues to bring the guilty party to justice. FSA is also in discussions with a law firm to pursue a class action before the opportunity to file a case within the 3-year limit expires.



COMMERCIAL

Eskom tariff increase 'unaffordable for agriculture'

“Free State farmers are extremely disappointed with the price increase approved by NERSA for ESKOM”, says Francois Wilken, president of Free State Agriculture (FSA), “Even if it was not the total increase that ESKOM asked for, it is still four times more than the current inflation rate!”

From 1 April 2025, ESKOM customers, of which farmers are almost all direct customers, will have to pay 12.7% more for their electricity.

The rates approved are:

- 2025-2026: 12.7% increase
- 2026-2027: 5.36% increase
- 2027- 2028: 6.19% increase

[Read more](#)

FSA Confronts Roads Department on Poor Service Delivery



Free State Agriculture (FSA) met with the top management of the Department of Roads on 31 January 2025. Although MEC Mbalula was unable to attend the meeting, the MEC of Agriculture, Ms Rockman, was present and, together with FSA chairperson, Francois Wilken, held the Department of Roads to account.

During the discussion, several systemic problems were highlighted that lead to the department's poor performance. The core problem is a budget deficit—almost the entire budget goes to salaries, which are increasing faster than the annual budget allocation, leaving little room for actual road works.

Wilken suggested that FSA draft a memorandum with specific questions to the department, with a deadline for official feedback. FSA will then brief the media on the facts received to expose the real reasons behind the department's poor service delivery.



COMMERCIAL (continue)

Traceability systems

AIMS is one of the traceability systems listed on the RMIS list to work with other voluntary traceability systems. The goal is to have a uniform set of basic fields so that these systems can easily share with the central RMIS system.

FSA supports RMIS's initiative to have all livestock farmers' production units registered under the GLN system free of charge. Visit <https://rmis.co.za/services/traceability/> to register your production unit – the foundation of any traceability system – for free.

Furthermore, FSA is currently negotiating with ID-Scan, a system through which a cattle's unique nose print ID can be linked to its AIMS Tag QR code (VID) or RFID (EID) tag. ID-Scan already has a similar agreement with SA Stud Book for stud animals.

We have unfortunately received confirmation from Allflex that prices of their ear tags will increase from 1 February 2025. FSA will adjust the prices accordingly on the AIMS website and all orders after this date will be processed at the new prices.



LABOUR

Employment of foreign nationals

The employment of foreign nationals is governed by the Immigration Act, Immigration Regulations and the Employment Services Act. An employer may not employ a foreign national whose status does not permit him/her to be employed, or in a capacity that differs from that provided for in his/her status. The employer bears the obligation to determine the status or citizenship of the person. The employer will commit an offence if a foreign national is employed in contravention of the Immigration Act which is punishable by a fine or imprisonment. Find guidelines for handling [here](#) provided by SEESA.

National Minimum wage from 1 March 2025

The Minister of Employment and Labour on 4 February 2025 adjusted the hourly rate for the National Minimum Wage to R28.79 per hour, which will come into effect on 1 March 2025. The schedule for calculating the wage in respect of an 8-hour working day is available [here](#).

Support our service providers & business providers

