



## So God made a farmer...

And on the 8th day, God looked down on his planned paradise and said, "I need a caretaker"

-- **so God made a Farmer.**

God said, "I need somebody willing to get up before dawn, milk cows, work all day in the fields, milk cows again, eat supper, then go to town and stay past midnight at a meeting of the school board"

-- **so God made a Farmer.**

"I need somebody with arms strong enough to rustle a calf and yet gentle enough to deliver his own grandchild; somebody to call hogs, tame cantankerous machinery, come home hungry, have to wait lunch until his wife's done feeding visiting ladies, then tell the ladies to be sure and come back real soon -- and mean it"

-- **so God made a Farmer.**

God said, "I need somebody willing to sit up all night with a newborn colt, and watch it die, then dry his eyes and say, 'Maybe next year.' I need somebody who can shape an ax handle from a persimmon sprout, shoe a horse with a hunk of car tire, who can make harness out of haywire, feed sacks and shoe scraps; who, planting time and harvest season, will finish his forty-hour week by Tuesday noon, and then pain'n from tractor back, put in another seventy-two hours"

-- **so God made a Farmer.**

God had to have somebody willing to ride the ruts at double speed to get the hay in ahead of the rain clouds, and yet stop in mid-field and race to help when he sees the first smoke from a neighbor's place

-- **so God made a Farmer.**

God said, "I need somebody strong enough to clear trees and heave bails, yet gentle enough to tame lambs and wean pigs and tend the pink-combed pullets, who will stop his mower for an hour to splint the broken leg of a meadow lark."

It had to be somebody who'd plow deep and straight and not cut corners; somebody to seed, weed, feed, breed and rake and disc and plow and plant and tie the fleece and strain the milk and replenish the self-feeder and finish a hard week's work with a five-mile drive to church; somebody who would bale a family together with the soft strong bonds of sharing, who would laugh, and then sigh, and then reply, with smiling eyes, when his son says that he wants to spend his life "doing what dad does"

-- **so God made a Farmer.** (Paul Harvey)





## RURAL SAFETY

### Festive Season Safety

In the run-up to the festive season, it is essential for farmers to pay attention to their safety plan, as well as their involvement in a safety structure in their area.

Taking the above into account, farmers are requested to go through their safety checklist again, pass on information regarding suspicious movement of persons and vehicles to the safety representative of the farmers' association and the Rural Safety coordinator of the SAPS, as well as to make sure that their communication networks are in place especially in relation to radios and mobile phone

[Read more](#)

### Safety & Livestock training-workshops



The Free State Agriculture Rural Safety Committee presented nine (9) safety and stock theft training workshops in various districts in the Free State from 4 September to 20 November 2024. The workshops were presented in collaboration with the Police's Rural Safety coordinators and Stock Theft units.

The workshops focus on, among others: the 8 core pillars and criteria for the effective implementation of the National Rural Safety Strategy; core legislation relating to stock theft; the burden of proof required in order to successfully prosecute stock theft cases through the courts and advice, guidance and information on how to address stock theft.

Various requests for workshops have already been received for 2025 and it remains a privilege for Free State Agriculture to empower our agricultural community.

For any enquiries regarding the workshops, Dr Jane Buys can be contacted at [\*\*jane@vslandbou.co.za\*\*](mailto:jane@vslandbou.co.za)



## RURAL SAFETY (continued)

### Summary: Crime analysis in the 2nd quarter of 2024 (1 Jul - 30 Sept)

- The analysis of the release of crime figures in the second quarter of 2024 shows that **murders** in the Free State decreased by 18.6% and that attempted murders increased by 14.9%, kidnappings decreased by 15.7%.
- **Armed robberies** (trio crimes) decreased in the Free State by 6.8%; while house robberies increased by 6.0%, and business robberies decreased by 22.2%.
- In the 3 month period (July to 30 September 2024) there were 9 **farm attacks** in the Free State including 5 farm murder incidents – high crime areas are Bloemspruit (smallholdings), Clarens, Parys, Theunissen, Tweeling, Virginia and Wesselsbron – in the same period last year (2023) there were 13 farm attacks which included 4 farm murder incidents in the Free State (2 murders of workers, 1 emerging farmer and 1 resident murdered on farm), there were 5 farm attacks where workers were attacked/robbed and 3 on producers and 1 emerging farmer.
- **Reported livestock theft cases** in RSA are 6 649 – a decrease of 4.1% (286 cases) most of which are in the Eastern Cape (1 819) followed by KwaZulu-Natal with 1 425 cases and North West with 745 cases - Free State is fourth in RSA with 726 cases, a decrease of 9.4% (75 cases).
- A total of 70 544 animals were stolen in the three month period (22 958 sheep, 16 895 chickens, 14 603 boer goats, 13 769 cattle, 1612 pigs, 439 game, 164 horses, 96 donkeys, and 8 ostriches) – no figures for recovered livestock or per province. Four (4) high crime towns in the Free State are Dewetsdorp, Zastron, Phuthaditjaba (QwaQwa area) and Selosesha - representing 113 cases (15.56%) of the Free State's reported stock theft figures. Large decreases in stock theft reporting from 11 to 15 cases can be seen in Harrismith (15 cases), Vrede (13 cases), Koppies (12 cases) and Ficksburg (11 cases).
- Large increases of 8 to 12 cases can be detected in the **reporting of stock theft** cases in Bainsvlei (12 cases), Hennenman (11 cases), Senekal and Koffiefontein with 8 cases each.
- The **13 border towns** represent 181 cases (24.93%) of the Free State's reported stock theft figure for the period – the Thabo Mofutsanyana district represents 274 cases (37.74%) of the Free State's reported stock theft cases for the period – although there was a decrease in that district of 49 cases.
- 15 police stations had no stock theft cases for a 3 month period, most of them are rural police stations namely Wanda, Viljoensdrif, Steunmekaar, Kommissiepoort, Heuningspruit, Garijepdam; and urban police stations such as Parkway, Heidedal, Kopanong, Batho, etc.
- In terms of **property-related crimes**, this has decreased in the Free State by 10.2%, this includes stock theft, housebreaking and Theft General including copper cable theft, solar panels, product theft, etc. Parkway police station in Bloemfontein is 4th in the RSA regarding the 17 priority crimes.





## NATURAL RESOURCES

### Gas Mining webinar

Free State Agriculture's Natural Resources Committee hosted a Gas Mining webinar on 7 November 2024 that focused on exploring the complexities and considerations of unconventional oil and gas mining in South Africa.

- *Dr. Surina Esterhuysen* highlighted environmental protection, the shift to hydraulic fracturing and the importance of baseline monitoring to prevent groundwater contamination. See her presentation [here](#).
- *Dr. Nola Redelinghuys* addressed the tension between government-backed energy projects aimed at job creation and energy security, and public and environmental concerns, noting the challenge of misinformation. See her presentation [here](#).
- *Derek Light* explained the regulatory framework, emphasizing landowner rights, public participation, and the need for credible scientific input.
- *Janse Rabie* raised concerns about water use and pollution risks and called for better community engagement.

The webinar aimed to promote informed discussions and collaboration between stakeholders.

### Satansbos Management: Update on Biological Control Insects

Landowners and managers are keen to obtain biological control insects to combat Satansbos. It is therefore gratifying to note that the Centre for Biological Control, Zoology and Entomology of Rhodes University reports that insects at the Kariega facility are likely to begin to emerge from dormancy between November and December. Ruth Scholtz, the implementation manager, will oversee the propagation of these insects. In the meantime, Anthony King and the ARC-PHP team will collect insects at Kariega and transfer them to a controlled environment in Roodeplaat for further cultivation.

It is hoped that the Department of Agriculture will approve funding to continue supporting the Kariega facility, ensuring that it can continue to rear and distribute insects. Researchers are investigating the possibility of using climate-controlled conditions to prevent dormancy of Satansbos insects. This will enable the ARC-PHP to make control agents available earlier in the season for effective control.

To keep landowners and managers informed, a **WhatsApp-group** has been created to share updates on insect availability. If you would like to join the group, please send your number to Philip Ivey (researcher at Rhodes University) on **082 443 0728**.

Finally, it can be mentioned that Slangbos, which is also a major invader in the province, has been brought under control and eradicated on farms in the Free State with ultra-high pressure grazing - as part of regenerative agriculture!





## **NATURAL RESOURCES (continued)**

### **Fracking regulations**

Free State Agriculture objects to the draft regulations published by the Department of Water and Sanitation, regarding Fracking and UCG (Underground Coalbed Gasification). FSA received a mandate during our 2024 Congress not to approve fracking. The objection is based on the impact that fracking can have on a farm's water resources, which can jeopardize the sustainability and economic viability of the farm.

The draft regulations were published in the Government Gazette No. 51642 on 22 November 2024, notice 5582, with a 30-day comment period expiring on 10 January 2025. The Government Gazette is available [here](#).

### **Natural Resources Committee activities**

#### **Ongoing office staff activities:**

- Attend quarterly meetings of the CCAW (Coordinating Committee for Agricultural Water) as well as bi-annual Orange and Vaal Status Report meetings, assist farmers in applying for new water rights.
- Assist members with problems related to water licenses and help protect their water rights.
- Manage various WhatsApp groups consisting of farmers' association representatives for irrigation farmers, catchment management forums, fire and locust control officers, disaster relief etc.
- Participate in activities of the provincial disaster management task force.
- Liaise with Fire Protection Associations (FPAs) and Eskom regarding fires.
- Assist members with invasive, migratory and problem species and help promote soil conservation.

#### **Campaigns and Special Projects:**

- Disaster relief campaigns – keep internal policy, finances and action plans up to date.
- Water – protect members' water rights, pressure DWS to complete valuation and verification, ensure productive, sustainable, fair and equitable water allocation reform. Engage water rights holders who are not members of water user associations.
- Implement mandate and protocol regarding mining and prospecting to best serve and assist affected members.

For any enquiries, Dr Jack Armour can be contacted at [jack@vslanbou.co.za](mailto:jack@vslanbou.co.za)





## COMMERCIAL

### NERSA public hearing on Eskom tariff increase

Free State Agriculture (FSA), which represents 2 500 commercial farming entities across 144 local farmers' associations, strongly objected to Eskom's proposed tariff increases at the NERSA public hearings held in Bloemfontein on 25 November.

FSA stressed that the agricultural sector, already struggling with rising costs and economic pressures, cannot sustain further electricity price increases.

[Read more](#)

### Carbon farming webinar

The Commercial Committee of FSA hosted a webinar on the opportunities of Carbon Farming on November 7. The webinar explored the role of carbon sequestration in agriculture and its potential benefits and challenges.

- Professors Linus Franke and Johan van Tol discussed the natural carbon storage capacity of soil, stressing that while sustainable practices can help, they may not fully match carbon levels found in natural areas. They stressed the importance of realistic carbon credit systems and the need for significant reductions in fossil fuel use to combat climate change. View the presentation [here](#).
- Farmer Angus McIntosh shared his experiences with regenerative practices, noting that while carbon farming can provide environmental benefits, financial returns alone may not drive significant changes in farming practices. He highlighted the value of direct consumer relationships and rotational grazing for soil health.
- Tony Knowles presented the 'Cultivating Carbon' initiative, which supports farmers who transition to conservation agriculture despite initial income challenges. See his presentation [here](#).

The meeting concluded with a shared commitment to sustainable farming, equitable distribution of carbon credits, and the critical role of family farms in building a resilient agricultural future.



## COMMERCIAL (continued)

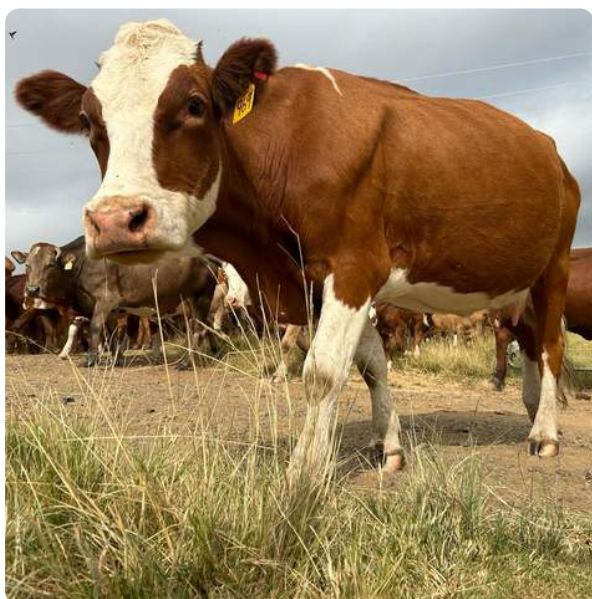
### More roads transferred to Sanral

After sustained pressure from Free State Agriculture and other organisations about the incompetence of the local roads department to maintain our core road network, especially those carrying heavy mining products (manganese trucks), more roads were transferred to SANRAL:

- R26 Rouxville to Zastron
- R26 Bethlehem-Reitz-Tweeling-Frankfort-Villiers
- R30 Odendaalsrus-Bothaville-NW border
- R704 Trompsburg-Jagersfontein-Koffiefontein
- R48-R705 Koffiefontein-Jacobsdal-NC border
- R59 Hertzogville-Hoopstad-Bothaville
- R64 Boshof-NC border



### National traceability



FSA encourages all livestock farmers to apply for their own unique GLN (Global Location Number) numbers free of charge as part of the RMIS national traceability system initiative.

The FS-AIMS system <https://aims.vslanbou.co.za/> is one of the many systems that RMIS collaborates with that will eventually all be able to talk to each other to achieve national traceability and have better national livestock statistics, without sharing any farmer's personal livestock information.

Get your Unique Production Unit Number here: <https://rmis.co.za/services/traceability/>

There are already a lot of farmers, abattoirs, auction houses and slaughterhouses that are already registered on <https://productionunit.rmis.co.za/>





## **AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT**

### **Extension on Security of Tenure**

It is essential that farmers maintain a list of occupants on each farm, as well as their rights in respect of grazing etc. in writing and monitor them so that the rights are not infringed and lead to tacit consent. Furthermore, agricultural associations are encouraged to make representatives available to serve on Land Rights Management Committees.

Also take note of mandatory mediation before any settlement applications can be initiated.

The following district managers of the Department of Land Affairs will provide you with the project officers in their respective districts:

- Mr. Olebogeng Aiseng: Deputy Director: Lejweleputswa and Fezile Dabi Districts 082 947 6099/  
Olebogeng.Aiseng@dalrrd.gov.za
- Mrs. Lorato Sedupane: Deputy/Acting Director: Thabo Mofutsanayane District 083 288 5818/  
Lorato.Sedupane@dalrrd.gov.za
- Mrs Nomonde Mokoena: Project Coordinator: Mangaung and Xhariep Districts 072 197 3763/  
Nomonde.Mokoena@dalrrd.gov.za

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

### **IDP process - Agriculture's participation critical**

The IDPs (Integrated Development Plans) and SDFs (Spatial Development Plans) of the local municipalities are now open for public input. This is the local government planning for the next 5 years and it is critical that agriculture as a sector provides insight to put plans on the table for planning and funding from National Treasury for various matters such as:

- the preservation of local roads,
- renovation of industrial areas to encourage industry/value addition in small towns for job creation,
- better governance and management/implementation of new technology for sewage treatment and landfill recycling/biogas production (as Climate Smart Actions),
- rezoning from agriculture to housing/industrial, etc.







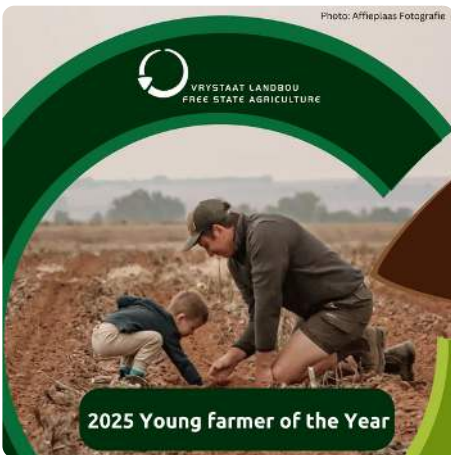
## LABOUR ISSUES

### Benefits payable i.t.o. the Compensation for Occupational Injuries & Diseases Act

A workshop of the Compensation Fund was recently held in Bloemfontein. Information that emerged from the workshop includes what benefits the employee / dependents are entitled to in certain cases. In this regard, see the summary of the benefits [here](#)

Regarding hospitals, some hospitals can be of assistance regarding on-duty injuries. See the information sheet [here](#)

## YOUNG FARMERS



### Entries for 2025 Young Farmer of the Year are open!

All young farmers between the ages of 18 - 40 years are invited to enter Free State Agriculture's 2025 Young Farmer of the Year competition.

The candidate is a farmer to the core, someone who is not afraid of challenges and who dreams big about the future. This is a young farmer who others look up to and who is always willing to lend a helping hand in his/her community.

Do you know such a young farmer? Then send them to our website immediately to enter because entries close on 31 January 2025!

The entry form is available [here](#)

## Support our service providers & business partners

