



RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Expropriation Bill - Free State Agriculture will not back down

"We cannot support the inclusion of 'nil compensation'."

Delegates from Free State Agriculture attended the public hearings of the Portfolio Committee for Infrastructure and Development on the Expropriation Bill from 24 - 31 May 2023 on behalf of our members, the farmers of the Free State, and made it clear once again that Free State Agriculture does not support the Expropriation Bill in its current form. form not supported.

Free State Agriculture is of the opinion that today's farmers are not solely responsible for historical events and therefore cannot be forced to bear the burden of addressing expropriation out of proportion. It is a collective responsibility.

[Read more](#)



The public hearing in Bethlehem on May 24.



The team of Free State Agriculture during the Bethlehem public hearing.



RURAL SAFETY

Tips to improve your safety

Safety remains one of Free State Agriculture's main focus areas.

Jakkals le Roux, chairman of the Rural Safety committee reminds members again of the most crucial points to take into account and according to which you should plan to improve your safety.

1. UPDATE SAFETY PLANS - make sure that contact numbers of sector leaders and other important contact persons are updated and maintained in a contingency/safety plan, especially in relation to important infrastructure that exists in the area where certain persons can be contacted.

2. NECESSITY OF A CONTROL ROOM - This is an important point that every farming community must look at and consider within the resources at their disposal. Each area/region/district should ideally have its own control room and monitor their cameras (in collaboration with whoever they see fit). Effective communication must be possible if the power grid goes down, especially with a simplex radio channel and connection.

3. COMMUNICATION - If the power grid goes down, mobile phones will probably no longer work within a short time. Only satellite connections may still have functionality. That is why two-way radios and a simplex radio channel with repeaters are of crucial importance.

4. INFORMATION - It is important that all information regarding any possible risk or threat regarding safety or crime is passed on to assigned persons/safety representatives of farmers' associations/area offices or FSA, for further liaison with law enforcement in the area for the necessary attention.

5. KNOWLEDGE / EMPOWERMENT - It is and remains important that all farmers and communities empower themselves with the necessary knowledge on how to address crime-related and security aspects within the framework of the law. Free State Agriculture, in collaboration with LGV, offers training courses to agricultural communities. Contact **Pieter Kemp** to obtain more information regarding the training.



RURAL SAFETY (continue)

Suspicious drones? How to act

In the past month, Free State Agriculture received complaints from 5 farming communities about drones flying over farms and homesteads during the night and early morning hours. Farmers are concerned that the flight patterns may be linked to the commission of certain crimes in their areas.

Dr Jane Buys from Free State Agriculture confirms that inquiries have been made to various companies and organizations that may have such drones. However, no positive results were produced.

The matter was therefore raised at Agri SA's Rural Safety meeting on 11 May 2023 where 4 more provinces are experiencing the same problem. It was decided that the issue will be brought to the attention of the police at provincial and national priority committee meetings for the necessary action.

How farmers must act:

Farmers are requested to take into account that drones flying during nighttime hours constitute a breach of the "South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA) Part 101" legislation and regulations, and that in February 2023 the police already received 19-20 complaints on their MAS system related to drone violations.

Safety representatives are requested to pass on where drones are spotted, including the time and GPS coordinates, as well as a possible photo. Farmers must report complaints to the police as well as record any problems that may arise with FSA. Any information can be emailed to [**Dr Jane Buys**](mailto:Dr Jane Buys).

Safety training

FSA's Rural Safety Committee and LGV, a private security company, have been effectively involved in the presentation of safety training for farming communities in the Free State for more than a year.

The 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.

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



COMMERCIAL AFFAIRS

Load shedding distorts meat prices

"Meat prices on store shelves are rising drastically, while the weanling calf prices farmers receive are at a five-year low." Dr Jack Armour, commercial manager of Free State Agriculture (FSA), says weaner calf prices are currently 20% lower than a year ago.

The implication of the current market environment is that farmers produce meat at a 2023 cost base, but at best receive an income equivalent to 2018 prices. The fact that the supply and demand for meat products is stable indicates that external factors are distorting the meat industry's pricing mechanism. One of these factors is load shedding. [Read more](#)

Identification and Traceability System (LITS)

Following the mandate given to FSA by members during the 2022 Free State Agriculture 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 stakeholders who provide hardware (tags, scanners and microchips) and software (farm management and enterprise level databases) solutions. Christo Doman, regional representative and Dr Jack Armour led the investigation with the careful monitoring and assistance of Francois Wilken (president) and Gernie Botha (CEO).

With a national Livestock Identification and Tracing System (LITS) still not available and a security 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.

After weighing up all the options, the ease of use, flow (interprovincial), backup, proof of concept and easy integration of smaller herds (affordability), it was decided to start with official negotiations to obtain a specific database.



COMMERCIAL AFFAIRS (continue)

Veld fires

Free State Agriculture is aware of two fires that already occurred during the beginning of the fire season. It appears that the fires in the Southern Free State were caused by ESKOM contractors.

FSA contacted ESKOM and insisted that the protocol for access to farms, fire awareness and preparedness be re-transmitted to all contractors.

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

- Equipment must be ready and in working condition;
- Workers must be trained and equipped with PPEs
- Involvement in your local Fire Protection Association

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

Proposed race quotas on water licences

Free State Agriculture is aware of the proposed water license regulations which require that 75% of shareholding must be transferred to black South African citizens.

Free State Agriculture and Agri SA are of the opinion that the proposed regulations will have a devastating effect on the commercial agriculture sector if the regulations are accepted in their current form.

"Free State Agriculture will participate in the comment process together with Agri SA and further steps are not excluded", says FSA CEO, Gernie Botha.



MEMBER AFFAIRS

2023 Annual Congress

"Who's going to fill the vacuum?"

Everyone is aware of and complains about the condition of roads, lack of electricity, crime, etc., but who is going to address it and turn the situation around?

These and other issues will come under scrutiny during the Free State Agricultural Congress on 2 & 3 August 2023 in Bloemfontein. Mr Jan Oberholzer, former chief operating officer of Eskom, acts as one of our speakers.



All members are welcome to attend the Congress.

Registration forms can be downloaded [here](#) and should be provided to your farmers' association. Contact cynthia@vslandbou.co.za if you have any queries.

2023 Agriculture Association of the Year

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

That is why we encourage all agricultural associations to participate in Free State Agriculture's Agriculture Association of the Year competition. Apart from good exposure, there is also a nice cash prize up for grabs!

The winners will be announced on 2 August during the Congress Evening Function. Entries close June 23.

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



LABOUR AFFAIRS

Occupational Injuries & Diseases Compensation Act

Members should note that the deadline for declaring wages to the Compensation Fund has been postponed to 30 June 2023. This is due to technical problems on the Department of Employment and Labour's website.

If you still have a problem submitting your return, try again after a few days or contact [Stephan Pietersen](#)

Beware of scammers!

We urge members to be vigilant when considering transactions with unknown suppliers.

Gernie Botha, chief executive officer of Free State Agriculture, says that information indicates that there are persons who take advantage of opportunities and are involved in activities that cause farmers damage. This is particularly the case with the sale and supply of diesel.

"Please make sure who you do business with to avoid being scammed by a supplier not being who they claim to be."

Please support our service providers and business partners



Friendly reminder that MEMBERSHIP FEES must be paid up by 31 July 2023.