



VRYSTAAT LANDBOU  
FREE STATE AGRICULTURE



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VRYSTAAT LANDBOU  
FREE STATE AGRICULTURE

**Blessed**  
*Planting season*  
**to all our farmers**



A photograph of a white metal fence with a sign that reads "KEEP OUT PRIVATE PROPERTY". The sign is white with a red border and black text. The fence is set against a background of green grass and trees.

## RURAL SAFETY

### Parliamentary committee on safety visits border areas

Free State Agriculture (FSA) pulled no punches in their presentation to Parliament's Select Committee on Safety and Justice during their visit to the border areas on 22 October 2025. The true state of stock theft, poor policing, etc. was clearly highlighted.

Dr. Jane Buys says that the committee has confirmed that they will launch an investigation into all the issues mentioned, after which a report will be compiled to be submitted to parliament.

### Increase in seed theft

According to Dr Jane Buys, Safety Risk Analyst, millions of rands worth of maize and sunflower seeds have been stolen from farms in the Free State since September 2025 and transported by vehicle to certain outlets.

Therefore, Free State Agriculture strongly advises farmers to equip their packing and storage areas for seeds, fertilizers, etc. with security technology such as lights, cameras and alarms to detect movement early. Farmers are further advised not to leave any large-scale agricultural products or implements on their fields during night hours, which will provide an opportunity for opportunistic criminals to target them and get away with it.

[Read more](#)

### Safety tips for the festive season

With the festive season around the corner, farmers are encouraged to re-evaluate their safety plans and ensure that they are actively involved in their local safety structures.

A survey by Free State Agriculture in January 2023 showed that crime increased during the December festive season in the form of:

- Theft of copper and power cables (Transnet/Eskom) and hubs
- Cell phone tower batteries
- Solar panels and solar pumps
- Seeds, fertiliser, diesel and plants
- Burglaries at hostels and warehouses
- Livestock theft, which accounted for 66% of all crimes
- Farm attacks, which tend to increase during the festive season

Farmers are reminded to review their safety checklists, report suspicious activities immediately to their farmers' association safety representative and the SAPS Rural Safety Coordinator, and ensure that communication networks and equipment (radios and cellphones) are functioning reliably.



## COMMERCIAL

### Farmers fill infrastructure vacuum

Free State Agriculture (FSA) has criticised the provincial government for prioritising job creation over essential road maintenance.

President of Free State Agriculture, Francois Wilken, warns that poor management, cadre deployment and failed contractor programmes are crippling infrastructure and harming farmers' productivity. FSA is calling for urgent reform and accountability to repair Free State roads and support economic growth.

[Read more](#)

### Foot-and-mouth disease: Collaboration between farmers and FSA remains key

Free State Agriculture (FSA) attends the Joint Operational Committee (JOC) reporting meetings weekly and is satisfied with the feedback received from the Department. There is also confidence in the ability of the state veterinarians to manage the cases in the Free State.

During the JOC meetings, FSA also provides feedback on problems and complaints received from members or on social platforms, and subsequently shares this with members and the media.

FSA continues to strongly appeal to all farmers to apply strict biosecurity on their farms and to monitor their livestock regularly. Any signs of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), such as drooling, poor appetite or lesions on the mouth, feet or udder, must be reported immediately to a veterinarian.



FSA has sent a letter to RMIS and AgriSA seeking clear answers on issues that are currently causing distrust and rumours in the sector, such as the efficacy and availability of vaccines, the delays at blood testing laboratories, and why vaccine production and testing services are not being made available to the open market. While biosecurity remains the responsibility of every farmer, traceability is essential for safe livestock transfers and for participation in export markets.

FSA therefore reminds members that AIMS ear tags are available to order online or by catalogue via WhatsApp at 071 672 0271. These tags, together with ID-Scan or similar biometric systems, assist with livestock security and the detection of stolen animals.



## COMMERCIAL (continued)

### New hope for better cellphone signal in border areas

#### Conversation with ICASA

Free State Agriculture (FSA) held an online meeting with Minister Malatsi of the Department of Telecommunications and Digital Technologies on 16 October to discuss issues surrounding rural connectivity and border area signal.

Dr. Jack Armour pointed out that the existing cellphone infrastructure should be sufficient to provide stronger signal in most border areas, but that the expired 2002 Memorandum of Understanding with Lesotho and ICASA's restrictions on signal overflow still result in poor or no connectivity along border areas. It was strongly emphasised that digital communication is essential for farm safety and coordination.

ICASA explained that service providers in Lesotho had expressed financial concerns about potential revenue losses if South African signals were to be routed through Lesotho, particularly between Ladybrand and Maseru, and Ficksburg and Maputsoe. The Department confirmed that a new agreement with Lesotho had been drafted and received legal approval, and should be finalised by the end of the year. It was also acknowledged that the so-called "no man's land service areas" – highlighted in the original agreement 22 years ago – had still not been resolved by the Cross-Border Coordination Forum.

#### Rural Cell Phone Signals

On rural network issues in general, ICASA reported feedback from Vodacom and MTN citing vandalism, theft and high maintenance costs as key challenges. Both service providers expressed appreciation for FSA's continued cooperation in reporting connectivity issues.

Members are reminded to report network faults directly to their service provider. If problems are not resolved, FSA may escalate them provided a list of at least ten telephone numbers with reference numbers is provided.

For more information, contact [jack@vslanbou.co.za](mailto:jack@vslanbou.co.za)





## NATURAL RESOURCES

### Locust reporting

**Report a swarm.**

Your eyes in the field protect our harvest.

If you notice locust swarms while travelling or working in the veld, please report them: **WhatsApp 079 467 0702** **AgriSA™**

With summer approaching and recent rains, farmers are being urged to be on the lookout for locusts.

Free State Agriculture is attending the bi-weekly Locust Control Meeting, which is coordinated by AgriSA along with other provinces. In October, runners were reported in Prieska, Poffadder and Marydale. More recently, runners were also sighted between Hopetown and Douglas! With the past few years of good rains, all indications are that this could be a season of major brown desert locust outbreaks.

To facilitate reporting, AgriSA has introduced a WhatsApp reporting number (079 467 0702). Once saved, tap 'MENU' and select PEST or DISEASE. An option for Desert Locust or Foot and Mouth Disease will appear after which you can follow the instructions.

The Reporting Number can also be used to report Safety or Security Incidents (Rural Safety Officers), or Road Conditions.



## AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT

Farmers should take note of recent developments regarding land reform and legislation:

- Expropriation Act - although promulgated are still awaiting regulations before the act can be implemented and hence the commencement date is not yet known
- Moladora Trust - Report and implications conveyed to affiliated members. In short, a written agreements between landowners and tenants is crucial that terminates with the term employment contract.
- An Equitable Access to Land Bill is Pending - Government aims to make it available for public comment by the end of 2025 and tabled in Parliament by Aug 2026. It aims to provide security of land tenure to communities in community areas and replace old apartheid legislation
- A Constitutional Amendment to Section 25 was again submitted to parliament and opposition immediately made by AgriSA.

The Equitable Access to Land Bill and the Communal Land Tenure and Administration Bill, to be introduced by the Department of Land Reform and Rural Development, are intend to serve as key mechanisms to address the Constitutional imperatives set out in sections 25(5) and 25(6), respectively, the legislative framework on access to land.

### Invest in the future of agriculture

The Future Farmers Foundation connects farmers with selected, motivated young people who are eager to gain practical experience in agriculture.

By hosting an intern or apprentice through the Future Farmers Foundation Agri-Partners Program, you will not only help shape the next generation of farmers, but also enjoy several direct benefits for your farm:

- Access to passionate, pre-screened workers: All Future Farmer apprentices are carefully interviewed, screened and committed to learning.
- No long-term employment commitment: You can train and mentor an apprentice without permanently employing them.
- Tax incentives: Claim the SARS Employment Tax Incentive (ETI) for hiring young job seekers.
- Tax deductible donations: Receive Section 18A certificates for any donations made to the program.
- Ongoing support: Each apprentice and farmer is supported by a dedicated Future Farmers mentor, ensuring smooth communication and guidance throughout the placement.

There is a growing demand among young people and recent graduates to gain real-world farming experience – and you can play a key role in meeting that need while adding value to your industry.

👉 Learn more about the Future Farmers Foundation Agri-Partners program at <https://futurefarmersfoundation.com>



# LABOUR

## Income Tax Numbers for Employers Filing Season

SARS has issued an important notice regarding the upcoming filing season for employers, and every employer should take note of this.

For several years, Income Tax Numbers have been a mandatory requirement in employee reconciliations. Until now, SARS has allowed some flexibility by only issuing a warning when an employee's tax number was missing. This has given employers the opportunity to adjust their internal processes without having their reconciliations rejected. However, this is about to change.

### What's changing?

From the February 2026 filing season, SARS will strictly enforce the rule that every employee included in the reconciliation must have an Income Tax Number. Filings submitted without tax numbers will not be accepted. In addition, administrative penalties may be imposed on employers who fail to comply with this requirement.

### What employers should do now

Employers are strongly advised to take action now to avoid disruptions and penalties later. SARS recommends the following steps:

- Obtain tax numbers for employees
- Use the ITREG/BundleReg process on eFiling or e@syFile to register employees or request tax numbers.
- Use the Tax Reference Number (TRN) Enquiry Services on eFiling to verify tax numbers.
- Encourage employees to register
- Employees who are not yet registered for tax can do so themselves on the SARS website:
- Go to the "Individuals" section on the SARS website.
- To register: Select "How do I register for tax".
- To obtain a tax number: Select "I need my tax number"

### Why is it important?

The enforcement of Income Tax Numbers aims to:

- Ensure a smoother and more efficient filing season for both employers and employees.
- Enable accurate auto-assessment and pre-filing of individual tax returns.
- Ensure compliance with SARS requirements and prevent unnecessary penalties.

The message from SARS is clear: do not delay collecting and updating employees' Income Tax Numbers. Employers should update their records and streamline processes now to ensure a smooth transition to the February 2026 filing season. Your cooperation will not only help to avoid penalties, but will also contribute to a more efficient filing season for everyone involved.

# MEMBER AFFAIRS

Free State Agriculture would like to inform you that membership fees are now also payable monthly.

The requirement for monthly payment of membership fees is that a debit order must be signed. There is an administrative fee applicable to monthly payments. The payment of annual membership fees (once-off) is still available as an option.

✦ For further enquiries, please contact Ms Cynthia Troost, membership officer, at [cynthia@vslandbou.co.za](mailto:cynthia@vslandbou.co.za)

**Free State Agriculture members qualify to receive discounts from the following service providers:**



*Insurance*  
[www.kingprice.co.za](http://www.kingprice.co.za)



*Legal Advice: Labour Law for the Agricultural Sector; Unemployment Insurance Fund; Occupational Health & Safety; Black Economic Empowerment*  
[www.seesa.co.za](http://www.seesa.co.za)



*Lubrication & Oil (Castrol Brand)*  
[sales.bloem@salubedist.co.za](mailto:sales.bloem@salubedist.co.za)



WORK ACCIDENT SUPPORT

*Coida Labor Consultant*  
[support@workaccident.co.za](mailto:support@workaccident.co.za)



*Water storage*  
[www.waterbladders.co.za](http://www.waterbladders.co.za)

**Support our service providers and business partners**