



agriculture, land reform  
& rural development

Department:  
Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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**DALRRD's response to service delivery issues raised during the public hearings on the National Veld and Forest Fire Amendment Bill [B24-2021]. Portfolio Committee meeting scheduled for Wednesday, 30 November 2022.**

No	Issue raised	Response
<b>5.2 Access to land</b>		
5.2.1	The DALRRD should work with municipalities, in consultation with farmers, to identify and secure land that can be used for farming. The land should preferably be far from national roads because that is where most fires start. The land application and allocation process should be fair, equitable, and transparent and prioritise local farmers and agriculture graduates.	The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural (DALRRD) developed a policy on beneficiary selection and land allocation and was approved and currently being implemented. DALRRD has further prioritize the programme on rapid release of state land and the Proactive Land Acquisition Strategy (PLAS) programme is also being implemented to accelerate the Redistribution programme and access to land.
5.2.2	High livestock density and the lack of alternative land results in overgrazing and soil erosion, and the government does nothing to reverse this environmental risk. The Department of Agriculture and the municipality should allocate alternative land after vegetation is destroyed by fire to eliminate erosion and further land degradation.	Consultations with relevant stakeholders on farm management plan regulations have been conducted and these regulations will be gazetted before the end of January 2023. These regulations empowers DALRRD to intervene in areas of overgrazing and where rangeland mismanagement takes place. These will help DALRRD to intervene in identified areas of overgrazing and soil erosion that result from over grazing.

No	Issue raised	Response
5.2.3	Mining operations in Northern Cape are displacing communities, in particular, farmers and there is no alternative land provided. The DALRRD should protect farmers and agricultural land from being displaced by mining companies.	DALRRD will only provide access to land to farmers under the Land redistribution programme and the Department of Mineral Resources will deal with issues of mining and environment.
5.2.4	The Khoi-San leadership in Olifantshoek (Gamagara Municipality) would like to continue living in the allocated land or be allocated a larger land parcel instead of being evicted without being allocated alternative land. The Khoi-San in the Stellenbosch municipality gets regularly removed by the municipality from any allocated land, including land that belongs to Public Works and Infrastructure Department. They are made to feel landless on their ancestral land.	DALRRD is currently working with the Department of Public works and Infrastructure (DPWI) in the Western Cape to address this challenge.
5.2.5	Farming land is scarce and there is no clear and transparent way of accessing farming land portions from the municipality or the province. Where land is available, lease agreements are not issued, and municipalities are unresponsive. The DALRRD should provide land reform beneficiaries with landownership documents specifying the landowners.	DALRRD through its current Land redistribution policies provides land to deserving applicants through a transparent application process however, the land under Municipalities is managed by Local government.
5.2.6	The Agriculture Department needs to update land restitution applicants on the progress of their applications, particularly those made in the late 90s. Outstanding land claims should be prioritised for urgent finalization before opening another round of land claims.	<p>The Commission on Restitution of Land Rights conducts quarterly district stakeholder engagement workshops to update claimants on the status of their claims lodged from 1995-1998, 90% of these claims have been settled to date:</p> <p>The Commission has a Backlog Reduction Strategy to deal with the outstanding 1998 outstanding claims and has been designed to ensure that the Commission deals with all the outstanding claims within a period of 5 years if approved. In order for the Backlog</p>

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		Reduction strategy to succeed an estimated cost of R65.53 billion over 5 years would be required for both the cost of settlement and human Resources.
5.2.7	The Agriculture Department should be responsive when asked questions and accessible when needed. More extension officers must be employed to ensure that services are delivered timeously without the need for endless follow-ups.	DALRRD through Extension and Recovery Programme is on annual basis allocating budget under Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme (CASP) conditional grants for Extension Officers. In addition, DALRRD is busy with shortlisting and interviews for appointment of 5 000 Assistant Agricultural Practitioners (AAPs) to enhance capacity. These APPs for now, will be on short term contract basis as the Department is busy with sourcing additional budget so that the contracts are extended to a longer term
5.2.9	Current land allocation to Black livestock and vegetable farmers is too small and results in overpopulation of land portions and overgrazing that limits growth.	DALRRD through its current Land redistribution policies provides land to deserving applicants through a transparent application process.
5.2.10	There should be legislation or mechanism that will enable the government to take over fallow agricultural land for redistribution or use among farmers.	DALRRD is currently working on the Land Redistribution policy and the Bill to address land redistribution challenges in compliance with section 25(5) of the Constitution.
5.2.14	The Department of Agriculture and the Land Rights Commission should expedite the process of handing over land with finalised claims.	Generally, the Commission transfers all land that has been approved immediately to the claimants and hands over title deeds to the communal property Institution formed to receive the land. It is only in situations where there are challenges either because there is conflict between the beneficiaries, or where the land has been invaded or the land belongs to another government entity where approval for release is still outstanding.
<b>5.3 Agricultural support and provision of inputs</b>		
5.3.1	Farmers need support through the provision of feeds and fodder during winter and when grazing land has been burnt.  Fencing of commonages and other land portions owned by the State will reduce the number of stray animals, livestock losses,	As part of normal livestock management, farmers must provide additional feed to sustain livestock in winter months. According to the National Veld and Forest Fire Act, 1998 (Act no.101 of 1998) the landowner has the responsibility of creating firebreaks to prevent the spread of veld fires. The creation of firebreaks around the grazing land by landowners will protect the veld from burning. In cases where grazing land has been burnt by veldfires, the Disaster Management Act, 2002 (Act no. 57 of 2002) will be invoked, and it takes into account measures that have been put in place for preventing and mitigating the disasters.

No	Issue raised	Response
	car accidents, loss of lives and conflicts among livestock and grain farmers.	Fencing infrastructure is provided for under the Infrastructure pillar of Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme (CASP). The department continues to prioritise fencing and further support through Animal and Veld Management programme (AVMP) implemented under Rural Development branch is also provided.
5.3.2	After veld fires, small-scale livestock farmers should be permitted to use overgrown open veld or roadside grass as grazing land for their livestock, which will also help in reducing fuel load.	Farmers must ensure that they keep the number of livestock in line with the available grazing. In cases where veld fires occur and there is no grazing, farmers must provide additional feed or reduce the number of livestock. Grazing along the roadside has been proven to be dangerous to both livestock and people due to accidents and as such it is discouraged in areas where there is no proper monitoring.
5.3.3	Support from the Government should be offered without consideration of political party affiliations or being favourites of officials. The lack of support for emerging farmers impedes agricultural development and job creation while resulting in the exit of Black farmers in the agricultural sector. The unintended consequence is that local farmers get replaced by 'outside' farmers who hire their people.	The Departmental producer support programmes are not offered on political affiliation. The department serves all farmers. DALRRD at national and at provincial level provides support to producers using various existing support instruments without any political considerations.
5.3.4	Agricultural inputs are often supplied at the wrong time, mostly when no longer needed or when no longer in good condition.	DALRRD endeavors to ensure timely supply and delivery of inputs in order not to miss planting seasons. Better advanced planning and approval of projects using the Results Management Office (RMO) tool recently introduced by the department will further assist in managing this crucial aspect.
5.3.5	Alternatively, the Government should subsidise farmers during the winter months to sustain their livelihoods. Alternatively, the Government should subsidise farmers during the winter months to sustain their livelihoods.	<p>DALRRD supports diversification of farming enterprises linked to sustaining livelihoods of small-scale farmers e.g land reform beneficiaries farming in state farms located in areas of rich biodiversity can participate in ecotourism enterprises whilst agricultural enterprises are still their core business. Land reform beneficiaries farming in state farms with wildlife species can be meaningful participants in the wildlife economy where they can derive economic benefit from initiatives such as trophy hunting, game ranging to name but a few.</p> <p>Veldfire preparedness and prevention is at the core of veldfire management and it is for this reason that the DALRRD continues to support farmers with services such as firebreak</p>

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	Another option is to have a policy to compensate farmers who suffer losses from fires.	<p>creation, provision of veldfire equipment and awareness creation, among others and these need to be accelerated to that the reach is to a wider scale.</p> <p>Disaster Management Act, 2002 (Act No. 57 of 2002) guides the implementation of disaster management including support in cases where disasters occurred. This Act does not make provision for compensation of losses but puts more emphasis on disaster risk reduction including insurance.</p>
5.3.7	In the past, the Agriculture Department would send qualified people to help farmers with vaccinations, ploughing, planting, etc. Such a programme needs to be reinstated and the Agriculture Department should work with municipalities to make fire breaks around camps in commonages.	DALRRD both at national and provincial level is providing this support to producers. The need against the available budget could be a reason that this issue is tabled but not that the support was stopped, it is still available.
5.3.8	Small-scale or small-holder farmers are always unsuccessful when they apply for grants from the Department of Agriculture. The application process should therefore be reviewed or training provided to farmers to correctly lodge their applications. There is too much red tape.	<p>Different programmes of DALRRD are designed for different categories of producers with different selection criteria. This is so with an understanding that subsistence producers are not at the same level as emerging or commercial ones. Simplification of the process continues to be introduced where subsistence producers are not asked for any business plan but only confirmation of farming practices. Presidential Employment Stimulus Initiative is a good example in this regard.</p> <p>Where some documents are needed, support is provided to guide producers. DALRRD notes a need to upscale this support to ensure increased access of available support by small-holder farmers.</p>
5.3.9	The DALRRD and provincial counterparts should conduct imbizos or awareness campaigns on available funding, support and services to farmers, as well as ways to access them. Such imbizos should consider the needs of farmers that live with disabilities. The imbizos should include awareness of how disaster relief funds or support can be accessed by farmers.	Platforms which can help achieve these training objectives are already available both Provincially and Nationally. DALRRD continues to make use of them. In provinces the Provincial Inter-Governmental Relations forums, National, Provincial, District and Local disaster management centers. For communal farmers in deep rural areas who are often forgotten when disaster relief funds are dispensed, we continue to work with forums set up by traditional authorities and managed by the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA).

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		DALRRD continually conducts awareness campaigns on matters related to the sector including disaster risk management such as risk reduction and disaster assistance as per the Disaster Management Act.
5.3.10	The Agriculture Department should provide resources to combat animal diseases and ensure that State Veterinarians have the resources they need to function fully. In the past, the Agriculture Department would send qualified people to help farmers with vaccinations, ploughing, planting, etc. Such a programme needs to be reinstated and the Agriculture Department should work with municipalities to make fire breaks around camps or villages.	All provinces have fully functional veterinary services under the Provincial Departments of Agriculture (PDAs), whose main purpose is to assist livestock farmers. Each Provincial Department has Animal Health Technicians who assist livestock owners and farmers with vaccination, branding and general animal husbandry practices. All big municipalities have Veterinarians and Animal Health Technicians allocated to them. There are also Agricultural Technicians at different offices of Provincial Departments of Agriculture to assist with all farming related training. If specific information could be supplied, we could conduct further investigations.
5.3.11	The Agriculture Department should resuscitate the animal dipping programme to control or manage animal health.	With regards to the process of rolling out dipping tanks and animal handling facilities; there is resuscitation process underway.
5.3.12	Government should empower youth with agriculture skills and provide them with start-up packages such as land and inputs.	The departmental programmes deliberately target youth. DALRRD has norms and standards for designated groups where youth is enjoying 40% of support programmes of the Department.
5.3.16	The Department of Agriculture should be a programme to compel local grocery and food shops to source their vegetables from local producers.	DALRRD does not have a mandate to compel retailers to source vegetables from local producers. It is through campaigns like Proudly SA or Buy South African that businesses may be encouraged, not compelled, to source supplies from local producers.
5.3.17	For large farms, it is impossible to prepare firebreaks around the farm because of the high costs involved and the inaccessibility of some high-risk areas, such as mountainous boundaries.	Geographic Information System (GIS) technology has been effective in uncovering such boundaries. However, there is still room for improvement in this regard as the DALRRD still needs to invest in the latest technology which will assist in the accessibility of such areas at a reduced cost.

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		<p>In addition, the DALRRD continues to encourage farmers to affiliate with FPAs in areas where they exist so that they can benefit from some of their services, which include the creation of “strategic firebreaks”, whereby there is no need to create firebreaks around each property that belongs to the FPA.</p> <p>The National Veld and Forest Fire Act, 1998 (Act No. 101 of 1998) still puts responsibility of creation of firebreaks on the landowners. Furthermore, farmers have option of sharing the resources through various structures such as Fire Protection Associations which assist members with creation of firebreaks and firefighting.</p>
5.3.18	The Bill places an extra compliance burden on emerging farmers, yet Government is not helping in developing farmers.	The Government has a number of capacity building programs aimed at developing farmers such as firefighting that is done through the involvement of Working on Fire.
5.3.19	The Department of Public Works and Infrastructure should strengthen the border fence as it is currently weak and facilitates stock theft.	The responsibility of maintaining the fence has always been that of Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI). The entire border fence and its management is moving to BMA from 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2023.
5.3.20	Some of the allocated mentors cheated the farmers of their livestock in Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal and the Agriculture Department is not responsive.	DALRRD further will appreciate details on this so that an investigation is conducted to establish facts and implement remedial actions.
5.3.21	The Department of Agriculture, provincial counterparts and municipalities need to find a better and more efficient way of supporting farmers to ensure the fertile land is productive instead of being overtaken by grasslands and alien invasive plants (Vaal area, and parts of the Free State and Eastern Cape provinces).	DALRRD is busy with the Bill on the Preservation and Development of Agricultural Land (PDALB). Once enacted prime agricultural land will be preserved to ensure food security for the country and economic growth.
5.3.22	The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development and the Municipality should help in the start-up of	DALRRD is providing this support, currently using (Presidential Employment Stimulus (PES) and Ilima/letsima programmes

No	Issue raised	Response
	community gardens by providing basic garden tools to encourage scalable farming.	
5.3.23	The Agriculture Department should intervene in helping the students who feel their future is being compromised by the management of Lichtenburg Agricultural College who ignore their pleas.	DALRRD will investigate this to establish facts and implement remedial actions.
5.3.24	The DFFE and the Agriculture Department should conduct public awareness on programmes and funds that can support aspirant fish farmers, including the facilitation of market access.	Fisheries is the competency of the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment (DFFE); as such, public awareness on programmes and funds to support aspirant fish farmers, including facilitation of market access is within their competence.
<b>5.5 Beneficiation</b>		
5.5.1	The Department of Agriculture needs to help local producers to get diverse market access and fair value for their products (poles, logs, crafts, etc.).	Forest Enterprise Development falls within the competency of DFFE.
<b>5.7 CPA Operations</b>		
5.7.1	The elite members of CPAs enter into agreements with mining companies to the exclusion of ordinary CPA members (benefits not reaching all members as supposed to). The elite and government allow mines not to contribute to the social, economic and infrastructure development of the communities surrounded by mines.	All Communal Property Associations (CPAs) are a creation of statute and any member has the right to request Director General to intervene on matters of the mismanagement of the assets of the entity. CPAs are private entities and in terms of the Act they have the right to enter into any transaction however they are obligated by Law to report all transactions of this nature to Director General (DG) and failure to do so DG can subpoena them.

No	Issue raised	Response
5.7.2	The CPAs also ignore traditional leadership and exclude some community members that were supposed to be <i>bona fide</i> beneficiaries of the CPA.	DALRRD has conducted a CPA audit to further identify these challenges in order to develop interventions to deal with challenges facing all CPAs.
5.7.3	CPAs do not serve the interest of their members and allow mines not to contribute to the social, economic and infrastructure development of the communities surrounded by mines.	As above under 5.7.2
5.7.4	CPAs were allocated land without training, equipment and other operational inputs and no plan for assistance from the national, provincial and municipal levels. Government should prioritise the support of CPAs so that they can be functional and achieve intended outcomes.	Training of CPA members and their executive is provided by the DALRRD on an ongoing basis and every year on governance and management of their entities. Support is also provided on bookkeeping, administration and mediations services through the Land Right Management Facility (LRMF).
5.7.5	CPAs are not functioning as constitutionally constituted and do not comply with governance guidelines of being democratic and advancing the interest of members. Infighting and conflicts are so regular that the lives of members are at risk	DALRRD has identified these challenges on all CPAs hence the audit was conducted and support is currently provided on a structured manner however, some CPAs are still not compliant due to infighting, disputes and mismanagement of assets by executive.
5.7.6	The CPAs suffer from poor leadership as they are given to inexperienced youths. Elderly people would like to be allowed to lead and fix CPAs to function as intended.	Same as above under 5.7.5

### 5.10 Hefty penalties for stray livestock

### 5.16 Management of commonages or municipal land

<b>No</b>	<b>Issue raised</b>	<b>Response</b>
5.16.4	There should be a fair and transparent mechanism for the advertisement, processing and allocation of available land parcels that do not overlook locals.	DALRRD through its current land redistribution policies provides land to deserving applicants through a transparent application process however, the land under Municipalities is managed by Local government.
5.16.6	Some farmers need land to create jobs for unemployed community members.	The department through its current land redistribution policies provides land to deserving applicants through a transparent application process.