**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 1034**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER [No 11-2022] SIXTH PARLIAMENT**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION: 18 MARCH 2022**

**1034. Mr M K Montwedi (EFF) to ask the Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development:**

What (a) has been the impact of the recent rainfalls on crop farmers who harvest their produce on a monthly basis and (b) measures has she put in place to assist farmers who may have been negatively affected? **NW1281E**

**THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT:**

1. The start of South Africa's 2021/22 summer crop production season was challenging for farmers and agricultural role players because of excessive rains that delayed planting in various regions and threatened crop yield prospects. But the past few weeks were calm with reasonably warm weather conditions in much of the country, thus supporting crops and easing concerns about the possibility of smaller yields due to excessive soil moisture. The data released by the Crop Estimates Committee on 28 February 2022 underscores this optimistic view of crop conditions. For example, while the 2021/22 first production estimate for maize is 14,5 million tons, down 11% year-on-year (previous season=16,3 million tons), this is well above the 10-year average harvest of 12,8 million tons and annual maize consumption of about 11,8 million tons. About 7,54 million tons is white maize, and 6,99 million tons is yellow maize. The yearly decline is mainly due to a reduction in area plantings, combined with expected lower yields in some districts. Importantly, this means that South Africa will likely remain a net exporter of maize in the 2022/23 marketing year, which starts in May (this corresponds with the 2021/22 production season). The exports for the 2022/23 marketing year is expected to be 2,8 million tons, which is 28% less than the 3,9 million tons of the 2021/22 marketing year.

The soybean's 2021/22 crop is estimated at 1,82 million tons, down by 4% year on year, and the second largest harvest on record. The expansion in area plantings, combined with expected better yields in some districts, are the major factors behind these expected relatively large harvests. On the upside, the 2021/22 sunflower seed production is forecasted at 914 350 tons, up by 35% year on year. This is the third-largest harvest on record, primarily due to an expansion in area plantings and expected better yields in some regions. Thus, there is enough supplies for South Africa and the neighboring Southern African Custom Union (SACU) countries for the foreseeable future, and therefore no need to panic that the country could experience shortages. We have benefitted from good harvests of a range of crops and fruits and have already imported a large share of products that we are import-dependent on, such as wheat and rice..

1. To date, the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations and the World Food Programme (WFP) have reached out to DALRRD for possible collaboration in formulating and implementing a food security response to the situation as follows:

* The FAO and WFP have availed immediate technical support towards strengthening the assessment of the impact to the agriculture sector. This support includes the rapid geospatial analysis that was undertaken by the FAO starting from the 11to 20 March 2022 and work on finalising the Geospatial analysis draft report on the likely impact;
* The WFP has also availed drones for conducting the assessment in areas that are not easily accessible. DALRRD is in the process of requesting the clearance from the Aviation Authority;
* Both organisations are keen to work with the national and provincial government in planning and implementing the mid to long term food security interventions that are aimed at restoring livelihoods that have been disrupted by this situation; and
* Task teams have been set up and response implementation plan developed and costed under National Disaster Management Centre to provide much needed support to affected farmers.

The following are the short-term interventions from DALRRD:

* Rehabilitation of infields roads to the amount of R23 083 100;
* Assistance to farm workers, dwellers and vulnerable households amounting to R56 930 000;
* Soil fertility soil PH balance support (soil testing, liming and fertiliser support scheme to farmers) amounting to R1 238 000;
* Supply household garden packages (household food security intervention): R5 million budgeted for this initiative;
* Soil liming for R6 484 000;
* Crop Maintenance to the value of R20 840 400;
* Support re-enforcement of Bio security measures of farms to the value of R10 million;
* R19 481 365 is budgeted for resuscitating livestock operations on affected farms; and
* Sugar cane support initiative amounting to R71 590 400.

The budget required for these interventions is R214 647 265 and the reprioritised budget amounts to R60 524 000, resulting in a shortfall of R154 123 265.

The medium to long term interventions are the following:

* Replanting programme (production input support for crop enterprises) 772 farmers to be assisted to the value of R75 257 000
* Expansion of household food security programme (household garden packages), 1500 households, amount required here is R15 million
* Rehabilitation of the tunnels, eight (08) projects with 35 tunnels to be erected to the value of R7 million
* Rehabilitation of the fencing, 26 projects to be fenced for the distance of 33,5km costing R3 224 000
* Rehabilitation of irrigation, 16 projects covering 57 hectares to the value of R5 670 000
* 14 animal housing projects amounting to R3 038 000
* 17 dipping tanks projects to the value of R2 707 300

It is envisaged that the above-mentioned projects will cost R111 896 300 in total.