**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 1306 / NW1407E**

**MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES:**

**Mr N Paulsen (EFF) to ask the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries:**

**QUESTION:**

(1)       What number of commercial agricultural farms (a) did South Africa have in 1994 and (b) does the country have currently;

(2)       has the total number of commercial farms declined; if so, what is the (a) cause of the decline and (b) average size of these commercial farms?            **NW1407E**

**REPLY:**

1. a) South Africa had 57 980 farming units in 1993 as reported by Statistics South Africa in Census of Agriculture of 1993.
2. The current farming units is reported in Census of Agriculture of 2007 being 39 965 farming units.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Item** | **Year** | | |
| **2007 Census** | **2002 Survey** | **1993 Census** |
| **Farming Units** | **39 965** | **45 818** | **57 980** |

(2) The number of commercial farming units declined substantially from 1993 to 2007 by 31%.

a) The reasons why number of farms has decreased overtime are the following:

* Agricultural production pre - 1994 was subsidised (prices received by farmers were guaranteed) and post – 1994 when subsidies fell away, a lot of smaller farming units could not survive as they were not ‘profitable’ any longer.
* Smaller farms have been bought over by large commercial farms (consolidation), to improve economies of scale.
* Urbanisation;
* Large farms were been bought over by mining companies.

b) The question on the average size of a farm was asked in the Survey 2002 but there was poor response rate on the question because of the sensitive nature of the question. Poorly answered questions from both Census/Survey are not reported on because the results will be skewed.