**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 1395**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER [No 14 - 2022 SIXTH PARLIAMENT]
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**1395. Mr N S Matiase (EFF) to ask the Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development:**

By what date will the Government implement initiatives on digital agriculture ecosystems that target rural areas for increased food production and security?  **NW1687E**

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

The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) has developed an electronic export certification system which already enables all farmers to apply for the inspection of orchards and of goods to determine if they adhere to the importing countries standards and food safety requirements, completely electronically. The system went live in November 2019, is used by more than 3000 agricultural sector clients throughout the country, including farmers or companies that do not have computer systems. This system is used by farmers, traders, logistics companies, Food Business Operators, Pack houses, exporters.

The Western Cape Provincial Department of Agriculture is collaborating with the eCert system in the development of the Export control office System (ECOS) system which is an animal meat export system which will enable the export of meat products. The system was tested in the Western Cape on 15 November 2021. The Northern Cape is busy with testing and piloting the system to be possibly rolled out later this year. The system focuses on the value chain from the abattoir onwards for meat and on the dairy milking parlour onwards. The system will work with/integrate with the Livestock Traceability System for South Africa (LITSA).

DALRRD in collaboration with the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) is busy developing a LITSA system which will manage the movement and traceability of cattle initially and later on all animals. This system affects all animal farmers but in particular the Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) affected provinces of South Africa and will help to manage the disease and facilitate trade in meat products once South Africa’s FMD free status has been re-instated. The system will integrate with the eCert System.

The Presidential Employment Stimulus Initiative has resulted in a system being developed that allowed rural farmers to get electronic vouchers which could be redeemed once they received their agricultural inputs from service providers. The survey 123 system also enables georeferencing of departmental projects.

The Western Cape and Free State Provincial Departments of Agriculture have been doing extensive research and development on the use of drones. The Free State is using them to manage stock theft. Western Cape mainly use them to monitor crops and apply precision arial spray, amongst others.