**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 1832**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER [No 17 - 2022 SIXTH PARLIAMENT]
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**1832. Mr M K Montwedi (EFF) to ask the Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development:**

What (a) invader species and/or trees that take up grazing spaces have been identified in each province and (b) plans have been put in place to deal with the identified invader species in each province? **NW2165E**

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

1. Invader species in terms of the Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act No 43 of 1983 (CARA), refers to both indigenous and alien invader species which have beneficial properties that warrant continued presence under certain circumstances. The objective of the Act with respect to invaders species that may lead to bush encroachment (indigenous species) on grazing areas, is not always aimed at eradication but the focus is on thinning and reducing them to normal and acceptable levels. Invader species that occur outside the demarcated areas are however eradicated to minimise undesirable species which may degrade the veld.The type of problematic invader plants that are found across the country covers the whole spectrum of declared species in terms of the Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act, 1983 (Act No. 43 of 1983). The occurrence of these species varies from province to province due to various factors including climatic conditions.

The invader species identified as dominant include the following:

**Table 1:** List of invader species per province**:**

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| **PROVINCE** | **DOMINANT INVADER SPECIES** |
| **EASTERN CAPE** | Stoebe vulgaris (Bankrupt bush-indigenous), Acacia mearnsii (Black wattle), Lantana camara (Lantana), and Opuntia species (prickle pear) and blue bush (recently identified and more work is being done to acquire information on this plant) |
| **KWAZULU-NATAL** | Stoebe vulgaris (Bankrupt bush-indigenous), Lantana Camara (Lantana), Silver dealbata (Silver wattle) and Acacia mearnsii (Black Wattle) |
| **MPUMALANGA** | Stoebe vulgaris (Bankrupt bush - indigenous), Lantana Camara (Lantana), Silver dealbata (Silver wattle) and Acacia mearnsii (Black Wattle) and Dichrostachys cineria (Sickle bush-Indigenous). |
| **GAUTENG** | Stoebe vulgaris (Bankrupt bush-indigenous), Dichrostachys cineria (Sickle bush-Indigenous), Silver dealbata (Silver wattle) and Acacia mearnsii (Black Wattle) and Cereus Jamacaru (Queen of the night)–Bio control agent has been released on it and it is found to be under control.  |
| **LIMPOPO** | Dichrostachys cineria (Sickle bush-Indigenous), Prosopis spp. (Mesquite) in communal grazing areas and Lopholaena coriifolia (small-leaved fluff-bush). |
| **NORTH WEST** | Seriphium plumosum-Stoebe vulgaris (Bankrupt bush - indigenous), Acacia Mellifera (Swarthaak) indigenous and Prosopis spp. (Mesquite). |
| **FREE STATE** | Seriphium plumosum - Stoebe vulgaris (Bankrupt bush), Cestrum laevigatum (Inkberry), Acacia mearnsii (Black wattle) and Opuntia species (Prickle pears) |
| **NORTHERN CAPE** | Acacia Mellifera (Swarthaak) and Prosopis spp. (Mesquite), Rhigozum trichotomum (Driedoring) |
| **WESTERN CAPE** | Acacia mearnsii (Black wattle), Acacia saligna (Port Jackson), Eucalyptus spp (Blue gum)Hakea spp and Pinus spp |

1. The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) has put in place the following measures to manage and control invader species and/or trees in all Provinces:
* A dedicated resource monitoring unit that audits veld infested by invader species in terms of the Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act, 1983 (Act No. 43 of 1983), CARA is in place. The mandate of the team is to assess the status of veld in collaboration with provinces to identify invader species that threaten the productivity of grazing areas. The team also provides advice on control measures to land users. Directives are only served to land users as a last resort to facilitate compliance with CARA legislation;
* Through its Landcare programme, the Department collaborates with relevant research institutions to support control of invader species across the country. Provincial Departments of Agriculture are also involved. Collaboration includes provision of technical and governance advice in areas affecting veld management for improved grazing and livestock production;
* Where applicable, partnership with relevant stakeholders are put in place to facilitate the control of Bankrupt Bush and Prosopis in various communities through the Landcare programme;
* Awareness campaigns have been conducted and DALRRD has coordinated the development of a database to record bush encroacher species in the veld. To date, surveys have been conducted where bankrupt bush encroachment was dominant in grazing areas. The strategy on management of invader indigenous species is currently being developed; and
* DALRRD will continue conducting capacity building sessions for land users and farmers on management of invader species per biome during the 2022/23 financial year. Guidelines on possible management of invader species and veld improvement will be developed and shared with relevant stakeholders.