**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 2047**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER [No 19-2023 SIXTH PARLIAMENT]
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**2047. Mr H C C Krüger (DA) to ask the Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development:**

Whether, given the imperative balance between economic development through mining activities and the preservation of land and agricultural viability in Mpumalanga, her department has accurate data indicating the extent of arable land compromised due to mining operations in the province; if not, does the absence of such data not point to a potential oversight in reconciling economic progress with sustainable land management; if so, what are the specific details on the land loss and its long-term implications for agriculture and rural development in the region? **NW2316E**

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

Yes. The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) has accurate data on the extent of loss of arable land due to mining in Mpumalanga. The information is based on recorded and considered applications lodged in terms of the Subdivision of Agricultural Land Act, 1970 (Act No. 70 of 1970). Based on analysis of applications reviewed for the 2020 and 2021 financial years, the extent of agricultural land in hectares lost to mining is as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Year** | **Hectares lost to mining** |
| 2020 | 3 445,254  |
| 2021 | 2769.784 |
| **Total** | **6215,038** |

Agricultural activities in the form of cropping and grazing land for livestock facilitate food security and provision of rural community income. The loss of mentioned agricultural land impacts negatively on the growth of the agricultural sector.

The loss of agriculture land in the long-term is being mitigated by the introduction of the Preservation and Development of Agricultural Land Bill (PDALB) which promotes planning between the various affected sectors in a coherent and transparent manner, but specifically to safeguard arable land for continued food security without compromising each sector’s economic contribution i.e. by delineating high potential farming land.