**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 2132**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER [NO 30-2016 FIFTH PARLIAMENT]
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**2132. Mr R A Lees (DA) to ask the Minister of Rural Development and Land Reform:**

1. Whether, with reference to Project DC23/KZ232/321, any (a) staff members of his department’s Ladysmith office in KwaZulu-Natal and/or (b) senior members of his department faced any disciplinary processes for allegedly entering into fraudulent land deals which relate to land commonly referred to as the Charnaud Farms in the Emnambithi-Ladysmith Local Municipality were suspended; if not, in each case, why not; if so, (i) for how long was each of the specified persons suspended and (ii) what is the total amount of remuneration that each of the specified persons received while on suspension;
2. whether any legal practitioners were implicated in any way in the alleged fraudulent transfer of assets; if so, what are the relevant details in each case;
3. (a) what is/are the name(s) of the current legal owners of the specified farms, (b) what happened to the movable assets of the specified farms, including livestock, farm equipment and household furniture and appliances during the alleged fraudulent land deals and (c) who is in control of the specified movable assets;
4. whether all of the specified movable assets that were originally purchased are accounted for; if not, why not; if so, where can the specified movable assets be inspected;

(5) whether any revenue from the sale of the specified movable assets has been received; if not, why not; if so, to whom has the specified income been paid? **NW2446E**

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

1. (a) Yes. Two staff members were suspended.
2. One staff member was suspended for 29 months and the other for 33 months.
3. Cost of remuneration was R1 342 291.59 and R1 026 838.97 respectively.

(b) No, since none were implicated.

1. The matter of legal practitioners who could be implicated was referred to the Special Investigating Unit (SIU) and HAWKS for further investigation.
2. (a) The Department is the current legal owner of the farms.

(b) Some of the cattle have been sold in order to keep operations going on the farm (purchase of cattle feed, licks, vaccine, fixing of tractor, maintenance of fences, paying wages and burning of firebreaks). Apart from the cattle, movable assets such as farm equipment, household furniture and appliances were accounted for and the assets are still on the farm except for one vehicle that was taken for repairs by the previous caretaker and has not been returned to the farm.

(c) Currently, there are two families of labour tenants occupying the farm houses, namely Mtshali and Mabaso families, who are also in control of the movable assets.

1. Yes, on 27 May 2013, when the farm was handed over from the curator to the Department, all movable assets were accounted for and are still on the farm except for one vehicle that was taken for repairs by the previous caretaker and has not been returned to the farm. The latest inspection was done on 24 August 2016 and all assets were accounted for. The Department will institute legal action against the caretaker for the vehicle since negotiations for the return of the vehicle have failed. The assets are available for inspection on the farm.
2. No movable assets were sold except for cattle to continue operations on the farm. The amount received was R443 825.82 paid over to the curator.