**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 2414**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER [No 25-2021 SIXTH PARLIAMENT]
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**2414. Mr N P Masipa (DA) to ask the Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development:**

1. What are the details of (a) the progress made with locust outbreak control operations in the Northern Cape since 2020, (b) the service providers who were responsible for the locust outbreak control operation and (c) the total cost of the operation;

(2) whether the service providers were paid within 30 days; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details?  **NW2789E**

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

(1)(a) The Department worked with Organised Agriculture and appointed Locust Control Contractors. Organised Agriculture submitted the names of the people to be appointed as locust control contractors for each locust district. All appointed Locust Control Contractors were trained and supplied with insecticide, spray pumps and protective clothing. Reimbursement of the Locus Control Contractors was informed by number of days worked and distance travelled.

The Helicopter Service Provider was appointed to supplement the ground control teams in reaching inaccessible areas.

The officials of the Department monitored and evaluated the locust control operations. The locust outbreak was successfully controlled in 45 locust districts in the Northern Cape Province from January 2020 to August 2021.

(b) The Department appointed a total number of 1076 Locust Control Contractors and Helicopter Service Provider to control the outbreak.

(c) The total cost of the operation for Eastern Cape, Free State, Northern Cape and Western Cape was R 74 667 464.14. It is not possible to give cost only for Northern Cape due to centralization of items such as insecticides, protective clothing, etc at the depot in the Northern Cape from where it is dispatched as required.

(2) Not all service providers were paid within 30 days. The reasons for not paying within 30 days were:

* closure of departmental buildings due to exposure to Covid-positive cases (processing of payments cannot be done remotely); and
* incorrect banking details of the service providers (which required another process of engaging the service provider).