**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 3814**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER [No 40-2022 SIXTH PARLIAMENT] DATE OF PUBLICATION: 21 OCTOBER 2022**

**3814. Mr N P Masipa (DA) to ask the Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development:**

1. What (a) are the (i) detailed estimates and (ii) all important variables of the long- term damage of the KwaZulu-Natal floods on the sugar sector and (b)(i) total number of farmers ceased operations and exited the market due to losses incurred in the floods and (ii) is her department doing to help them;
2. what (a) are the details of other crops that were affected by the KwaZulu-Natal floods and (b) actions are being taken to support affected farmers? **NW4708E**

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

(1)(a),(i) Information received from five of the Millers (Umfolozi, Malelane, Sezela, Eston and Noodsberg) indicates that the Small-Scale Growers (SSGs) deliveries against expected delivery estimates are behind the mill percentage as at the end of October 2022. Out of the five Millers, two Milling areas (Umfolozi and Malelane) have indicated that SSGs will catch-up with deliveries by the end of the season. The remaining Millers which are Sezela, Eston and Noodsberg plus Felixton, have indicated that SSGs will not deliver full season sugarcane estimates and will carryover cane into 2023/2024. Commercial growers are on track and will deliver the estimated tonnage.

(ii) The harvesting cycle of sugar cane in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) ranges from 12 to 24 months and the main affected areas are on the 16-month cycle. It should be noted that off farm infrastructure (i.e. local roads, access roads, bridges etc) and on farm infrastructure which broadly inhibits optimal operations, will take some time to repair. The latter is further dependent on the availability of resources that its anticipated to be reprioritised based on the disaster declaration process.

(b)(i) The April 2022 report issued by the SA Canegrowers, indicates that 308 producers across five regions in KZN have been affected. The report does not indicate ceasing of operation but indicated the inability to deliver to the market due to extensive on and off farm infrastructure damage. The report further indicates that 2516.65 hectors have experienced severe root damage and thus necessitates replating of the hectors. The estimated damage for infield is R 194, 9 million while the on-farm infrastructure is R 27, 9 million.

(ii) The KZN provincial Department of Agriculture is part of the response teams that are engaged in the assessment process and further ensuring that a speedy provision of support is in place and operation. It is however noted that a ratoon programme(replanting) with an estimated amount of R 7, 5 million has been secured to assist the small-scale sugar growers in the rural parts of the province.

(2)(a) The South African Farmers Development Association (SAFDA) report of April 2022 indicates that heavy rains in the province had devastating impact on several farmers who lost both cash crops and in the main livestock and the support infrastructure. A total of 5178.53 hectors of crops were damaged costing farmers a total of R 236 979 436. Livestock farmers were faced with a loss totalling R 61 686 150.

(b) The main income generating activities are supported through the ratoon programme while activities in terms of crops and livestock, will benefit through the provincial reprioritisation of allocated funds to ensure that the food security element for affected households is maintained. The latter stems from the fact that a disaster has been declared and thus allows for the reprioritisation of interventions or reassignment of funds to be implemented.