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**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 820 / NW943E**

**MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES:**

**Mr N Paulsen (EFF) to ask the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries:**

**QUESTION:**

(1) Are there any industrial producers of hemp in the Republic; if so, (a) what is the location of each producer, (b) how much is produced and (iii) what is the Rand value of what is currently being produced;

(2) whether there are plans to expand the hemp industry in the future; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what are the relevant details?  **NW943E**

**REPLY:**

1. Currently, hemp production is only authorised for research purposes under special conditions granted by the Director-General of the National Department of Health. The permit is issued in terms of Section 22A (9) (a) (i) of Medicine and Related Substances Act 101 of 1965. About nine permits are issued per annum. The majority of applications are from three provinces, namely KwaZulu Natal, Eastern Cape and Western Cape. Each site is largely confined to 2 hectares in size.

To date, the Department of Health has received and is still considering 36 applications for commercial hemp cultivation. The area to be cultivated ranges from 2ha to 20ha. The Department of Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries is therefore unable to respond on the tonnage produced and its estimated rand value.

Hemp is still regarded as a drug, and thus regulated by two pieces of legislation, namely, the Medicine and Related Substances Act 101 of 1965 administered by the Department of Health and the Drugs and Trafficking Act, 1992 administered by the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development and enforced by the South African Police Services.

1. Government is working on several measures aimed at facilitating the establishment of a hemp industry with the intension of diversifying the agricultural sector and to create jobs.

The Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries collaborates with the following departments, Health, Trade and Industry, Environmental Affairs, Justice and Constitutional Development, South African Police Services, Agricultural Research Council (ARC) and the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) towards developing a new regulatory framework for hemp. Much progress has been made in terms of dealing with technical matters regarding production of hemp, research and technology development, commercial feasibility and other related matters. The Departments of Healthas well as Justice and Constitutional Development have been requested to amend their respective legislation to facilitate commercial production of hemp and manufacturing of related products.

The Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and the Department of Health are also developing guidelines for regulating the cultivation and manufacturing of hemp and hemp products. The two departments will make pronouncements once this process has been concluded.