NEWS SNIPPETS APRIL 2023 I ISSUE 12

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Who will fill the vacuum?

“The good news is, the country is already destroyed. The bad news is that it will stay that way if the community of South Africa is going to leave it at that."

This was the core message of Francois Wilken, president of Free State Agriculture (FSA), during the recent regional meetings that took place during April and May.

Wilken assured members and non-members during the meetings that Free State Agriculture will always, as far as the organization is able, ensure that farmers stay on their farms. "However, we need strong ground-level structures! Each person also has to decide for himself how you will survive. On the farm you fight alone, but we (FSA) and your community are your 'back-up'."

Wilken confirmed that the value of our organization is in the support of our 3,000 members, but adds that "we can no longer survive on our own. We have to organize from the ground up."

Feel free to come and participate in the conversation during **FSA's Annual Congress** on 2 & 3 August 2023.

RURAL SAFETY

Communities are fighting back against livestock thieves

"More livestock thieves could lose their lives if the state security agencies do not fulfill their legal obligation in terms of the Constitution", warns Mr Francois Wilken, president of Free State Agriculture (FSA). Wilken referred to an incident on 5 April 2023 at Hobhouse where a suspected livestock thief who targeted emerging farmers was assaulted by community members and later succumbed to his injuries.

Wilken believes that the police's lack of will and inability to establish the necessary capacity leaves all farmers - commercial, emerging and subsistence farmers - with no choice but to group together and take matters into their own hands.

“Emerging and subsistence farmers have been complaining for years during Imbizos that they are suffering huge losses, that certain police officers are involved in cattle theft and have threatened to shoot the cattle thieves.

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Illegal hunting with dogs

Illegal hunting with dogs remains problematic in farming communities. Many farmers complain that this type of crime does not get the necessary response from the police and that in many cases a trespassing complaint is not even opened nor is a fine issued (J534) by the police.

Dr Jane Buys, Safety risk analyst of Free State Agriculture (FSA), recommends that farmers should take note of the content in the Agri SA's Legal Aspects information document which is also endorsed by certain lawyers and which is presented during training sessions by LGV/FSA with farming communities be promoted.

Furthermore, farmers must also follow up on what happens with the cases at the local police, so that any defects can be taken up by the police with the necessary structures.

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COMMERCIAL AFFAIRS

Private independent power supply is the only solution

"South Africa's core infrastructure is collapsing and it will remain so if active citizens and private initiatives do not stand up and make things work themselves!"

This is the opinion of Free State Agriculture in response to the partnership between Rural Maintenance and the Mafube Business Forum which, according to Francois Wilken, president of FSA, is the "most important example of a private and community solution to problems caused by the state ".

Wilken believes that even as citizens become disheartened by the collapse of our electricity infrastructure and other services, we must remember that there is a private solution. It can be implemented if the politicians stand aside. **Read more**

Fire and asset insurance

Free State Agriculture encourages members to speak to their insurance broker to ensure that there is sufficient cover to protect your assets. Also make sure you have the minimum SASRIA insurance in place to cover e.g. fires / damage caused by ensuring civil insurrection / political riots. With the massive Boshof fires in 2020, caused by a service delivery protest on public land, there were only two farmers who were paid out by SASRIA because they had SASRIA coverage for their farms.

Load shedding insurance

Are you protected against damage caused by load shedding?

Talk to your broker to determine if your current insurance company has put in a clause that they will not pay out for destroyed products / damage in the event of a total network collapse.

YOUNG FARMERS

2023 Young Farmer Conference

The Young Farmer Committee of Free State Agriculture presented their annual conference in Bloemfontein on 18 April and approximately 100 young farmers attended.

Rudo Opperman, chairman of the Young Farmer committee, says that this event offers young farmers the chance not only to make contact with other young farmers, but also to obtain information from experts to improve their farming business.

The theme of this year's conference was "The beauty of our product, REGARDLESS" and focused on getting young farmers to look at their farming and products with renewed passion.

Speakers who addressed the young farmers this year were Prof Frikkie Maré (UFS), Hester Vermeulen (BFAP) and Prof Fika Janse van Rensburg.

2023 Young Farmer of the Year

Free State Agriculture's 2023 Young Farmer of the Year is an optimistic young farmer who believes in looking for the positive in every situation.

Lukas Lessing (26) from Marquard was announced as the 27th winner of the competition on 18 April 2023 during a grand event in Bloemfontein.

Lukas has been farming for a decade and doesn't want to do anything else. He believes the fact that his father involved him in important decisions about farming from an early age is now producing positive results.

Lukas automatically advances to the National Young Farmer of the Year competition which takes place later this year.

LABOUR AFFAIRS

COIDA - 2022 Wage return

In terms of the Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act (COID), the agricultural industry is divided into 4 sub-classes and each sub-class is subject to a specific rate. This rate together with the wages declared is used by the Compensation Fund to issue the bill. The minimum assessment account is R1443 and when the payment is made the reference number must be used exactly as detailed on the account. Many businesses make the mistake of placing other information such as the farm's name with the reference number and the payment then does not appear on the business's profile.

All employers are reminded that the annual wage return must be declared electronically from 1 April 2023 to 31 May 2023. This includes wages of workers and working directors and applies to wages from 1 March 2022 to 28 Feb 2023 that were paid by a farm and the estimated wages from 1 March 2023 to 28 Feb 2024. Failure to do so will result in results in a 10% penalty being issued for late submission.

Stephan Pietersen offers his assistance to FSA members with enquiries regarding wage returns.

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Friendly reminder that MEMBERSHIP FEES must be paid up by 31 July 2023.