



agriculture, forestry & fisheries

Department:
Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Budget Vote Speech

By Honourable Dr Pieter Mulder

**Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and
Fisheries**

Date: 3 May 2012

Honourable Speaker,

Honourable Minister,

Honourable Members,

Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Speaker, we all know that the Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries sectors are of utmost importance and the backbone of socio-economic development in South Africa. However, these sectors are facing immense challenges. Their future will be shaped by the following critical factors:

- Climate change with the further implications of floods, droughts, changes in water supply, soil erosion and variation in the distribution patterns and prevalence of pests and diseases;
- The growth in population;
- Skills shortages;
- The changes in consumer needs and preference; and
- The shifts in the global economy and the markets.

The key priorities of the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries are thus aligned to ensure food safety and security amidst the ever changing environmental factors and increasing population.

Speaker, om hierdie prioriteite aan te spreek het die Minister onder andere vandag aangedui dat daar R 940 miljoen vir plant- en dierproduksie begroot is en ook 'n verdere R 935 miljoen vir landbounavorsing.

Ons durf nie toelaat dat Suid-Afrika vanweë 'n gebrek aan fondse met navorsing en tegnologie agter raak en verdere kundigheid verloor nie. Een voorbeeld:

Tydens my besoek verlede week aan die Kongo het ek gesprekke gevoer met die president van die Kongo asook met die Kongo se minister van Landbou. Die gesprekke het onder andere ook gehandel oor die Suid-Afrikaanse boere in die Kongo. Albei Kongolese leiers het met groot lof gepraat van wat die Suid-Afrikaanse boere in die Kongo regkry.

Binne enkele maande het die boere 1 200 ha ontbos en met mielies beplant. Hulle het die waterpompe en pype herstel met die gevolg dat die plaaslike bevolking nou ook kraanwater het. Waar die plaaslike bakker maar enkele brode 'n week verkoop het, bak

hy nou 200 brode per dag as gevolg van die nuwe werkgeleenthede en salarisse vir die plaaslike gemeenskap. Die projek is ook as 'n presidensiële projek verklaar.

Dit is met gemengde gevoelens dat 'n mens luister na die waardering wat die Kongolese politici vir die Suid-Afrikaanse boere se kundigheid en hardwerkendheid het. Dit is belangrik dat die Suid-Afrikaanse bevolking ook die waarde van hierdie boere moet begin besef. Eers dan sal almal saamwerk om die verlies aan sulke landboukundigheid te stop.

The Department will, in the 2012/13 financial year be taking various steps to respond to the mounting aforementioned challenges in order to minimize their impact on the South African economy and its people.

As a follow-up to the commitments made at COP 17, the Department will promote climate smart agriculture. This will entail promoting the adoption of sustainable production systems, namely organic farming, agro-ecology and conservation agriculture.

An organic farming policy is to be presented to Cabinet and the Portfolio Committee before December 2012. With regards to

conservation agriculture, pilot projects have been implemented in several provinces. This was accomplished in collaboration with the Agriculture Research Council (ARC) and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations.

Speaker, in order to respond comprehensively to the management of regulated plant pests and diseases, the Department in close collaboration with the South African fruit industries has developed an early warning surveillance programme in relation to quarantine fruit flies. Moreover, the technical forum, which include the industry, continue to identify, prioritise and manage quarantine pest risks such as the risk posed by the African Invader Fruit fly. This having maintained the country's lucrative fruit export markets thus far, production and exports are still under threat. Accordingly, imports of host fruit from countries where this pest has already been established must be appropriately managed, emphasising the importance of our border control and risk management responsibilities. To further strengthen contingency planning with regards to pests and diseases, an Emergency Plant Pest Response Plan is being developed for implementation in 2013/2014.

Speaker, in the global trade of food and food products, Veterinary Public Health and food safety aspects in relation to animal

products have received increasing attention. In particular, our organised industry role-players, consumers and producers have expressed serious concerns relating to the standard, quality and independence of Meat Inspection at our abattoirs.

To respond to the challenges, the Department is consulting widely with all stakeholders and role players. A policy on Independent Meat Inspection will be concluded during the present financial year. The Department will, in collaboration with Provinces, also embark on strengthening the monitoring of domestic and foreign meat processing plants. All these efforts will hopefully restore domestic and international consumer confidence in meat and meat products.

The skewed distribution of veterinary professionals, especially in rural provinces, remains a key challenge for South African Agriculture. Whilst the rural provinces require access to a range of veterinary services to support livestock production and livestock trade, the unavailability of accessible and affordable animal health care services remains a key constraint.

Speaker, R100 million has been set aside for the Primary Animal Health Care. The priority will be the major rehabilitation of existing infrastructure, as well as the building of new clinics, animal health

centres and other animal handling facilities. Mobile Veterinary Vehicles will also be considered for remote areas.

These efforts will support the creation of an enabling environment for the planned Compulsory Community Service for newly qualified veterinarians. Quite some progress has been made with the amendment of the Veterinary and Para-veterinary Act. The Cabinet has approved the Amendment Bill in September 2011 and the Bill is now in its processes for consideration by this House. The Bill aims at addressing the need for qualified vets in many of our rural areas.

With regards to the rest of the legislative mandate:

The Fertilizer and Feeds Bill is in the process of being certified by the State Law Advisor. Thereafter, it will be tabled in Parliament.

Further consultation with regards to the Plant Breeder's Rights Amendment Bill is currently underway. This Bill aims to strengthen the protection of intellectual property rights relevant to new varieties of plants. Such protection contributes to economic growth as it has a positive impact on the competitiveness of South Africa's agricultural sector.

A proposed Plant Health (Phytosanitary) Policy and Bill have already been prepared for public comment.

A great deal of progress has been made with the proposed Pounds Bill. This Bill will establish national norms and standards relating to pounds and the impounding of animals.

The Liquor Products Amendment Bill has been drafted after lengthy consultations with stakeholders and is currently being scrutinised by the State Law Advisor. We trust this bill will be tabled in the near future.

Subsequent to a tender process the University of Pretoria has been appointed as the service provider to assist the Department with the review of all its legislation.

The livestock industry is an important element within the agricultural sector, both in terms of food security and sustainable livelihoods. Animal production contributes approximately 41% to the agricultural GDP of South Africa. This includes at least 500 000 people who are employed by the livestock industry.

However, 40% of South Africa's livestock is owned by communal and small scale farmers in our rural villages. They are unable to utilize these assets for sustainable income generation; hence unable to ensure household food security. To resolve this dilemma, we will need to introduce new technologies and scientific farming methods to them.

The Agricultural Research Council (ARC), in partnership with all the Provincial Departments of Agriculture will be rolling out the implementation of the Livestock Development Programme. In this initiative, the ARC will introduce and expand on the dissemination of technologies such as artificial insemination and embryo transfer.

The National Agriculture Marketing Council (NAMC) is also actively engaged in a program to introduce farmers to the structure, operation and requirements of the formal red meat market. This is the National Red Meat Development Program (NRMDP) and works with emerging and communal farmers to increase the income earned from raising cattle through greater and more beneficial participation in formal red meat markets.

Onderstepoort Biological Products (OBP) is embarking on a new era of strategic alignment to government priorities more so to the strategic objectives of the Department. The quality of OBP vaccines is a critical issue. The quality control system has been accredited and this must ensure that no substandard batch of vaccines leave the plant. This can however not be the only way to ensure that the end user receives an effective vaccine. A system is now in place which ensures that the cold chain is maintained up to the point of sale. Profits are being invested in

new product development and replacing critical equipment to maintain manufacturing capacity over the short term.

During the MTEF the ARC will also be increasing their efforts towards improving animal health. This will include the development of diagnostic tools for Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), African Horse Sickness and other important diseases.

The Perishable Products Export Control Board (PPECB) has maintained very tight financial controls over its business in 2012. This is commendable given the difficult economic climate experienced. The PPECB collaborated closely with the Department in up-skilling smallholder farmers across the country. They reached 1569 smallholder farmers through 24 technology transfer days. Assisting smallholder farmers to become export ready and to export their product successfully is an important future priority.

Speaker, I am happy to announce that for the period of January to December 2011, compared to the same period in 2010, the value of exports to Singapore has increased by 78% for products such as grapes, apples, pears and avocados; to Hong Kong it increased by more than 5% and to Malaysia an increase of 20% was achieved. This is a clear indication that the NAMC model is working.

Ek wil alle rolspelers, insluitend georganiseerde landbou bedank vir hul volgehoue goedgesindheid en bereidwilligheid om saam te werk.

Nieteenstaande sommige mediaberigte stem ek en die minister oor baie landbousake saam. Natuurlik verskil ons ook oor sekere sake maar dit is ook normaal. Ek glo ons albei besef dat dit in belang van Landbou is dat al hierdie sake verantwoordelik hanteer moet word. Daarvoor bedank ek haar.

This is going to be a productive year, where the department, my office and our SOEs will work with the Minister to ensure success!

I thank you.