



Headlines

National

Gwanya wants more staff

Thozi Gwanya, land affairs director-general, said his Department urgently needs to create more than 1 000 jobs before it can implement and administer the provisions of the Communal Land Rights Act.

The implementation of the Act, which was signed into law by President Thabo Mbeki in 2004, has been held up by a legal challenge from the Legal Resources Centre (LRC). The law would deliver 13 million ha of land, formerly owned by the state, to communities in the former homelands.

The LRC's main objection to the law is that it leaves too much power in the hands of individual chiefs. Its challenge against the law is set to be heard in the Pretoria High Court in October. But despite the legal action, the Department is still preparing for the implementation of the Act, said Gwanya.

Traditional leaders comment on Act

Meanwhile the country's traditional leaders were given the opportunity to comment on the Communal Land Rights Act, before its

implementation by government this year. The traditional leaders gathered in Durban to discuss the regulations recently and made their recommendations.

The director-general for Land Affairs, Thozi Gwanya, said this would help the Department of Land Affairs to consult with traditional leaders about the new Act passed by Parliament in 2004. Gwanya said traditional leaders were given the opportunity to discuss, comment and make recommendations on the Act's regulations.

Beefing up production

Farmers in southern Africa can benefit from the global boom in the demand for meat, says the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) in a new research that suggests several options for ensuring that the "livestock revolution" does not pass them by.

The research says more effective ways of controlling foot-and-mouth disease (FMD), direct exports to large retailers in the European Union (EU) and targeting the emerging meat market in Asia, are some of the proposals suggested by the research that was undertaken in a

four-country study within the region.

Southern Africa has been hit by frequent FMD outbreaks, negatively affecting the region's trade with the EU, whose "zero-tolerance" policies insist on disease-free standards being maintained.

BEE deal concluded

Afrifresh, one of South Africa's leading fruit, wine and food exporters, and Vuwa Investments, led by the leading Johannesburg based businessman Bulelani Ngcuka, has announced a multi-million rand empowerment transaction in Cape Town, in what is a major development in the country's agricultural sector.

In terms of the transaction, a new operating company, Afrifresh Group (Pty) Limited, acquired all of Afrifresh's existing South African operations and business interests, while Vuwa purchased a 30% stake in the newly formed group. Vuwa also has dairy farming interests in the Eastern Cape.

Chris Conradie, chief executive officer, said the transaction would enable the group to contribute progressively in the land transformation process.

**Eastern Cape
MEC donates tractors**

The Eastern Cape Agriculture MEC, Gugile Nkwinti, has handed out five tractors and full equipment to farmers in Nkantolo village in the OR Tambo District Municipality. MEC Nkwinti handed over the tractors to farmers from Mthatha, Tsolo, Lusikisiki, Flagstaf and Libode.

Beneficiary farmers are those who have formed organised projects such as cooperatives or other structures, as advised by the Department of Agriculture, so as to create job opportunities and community development in their areas. The local councillors and communities identified the projects that benefited from this support.

The handing over of these tractors was aligned with the Department's Six-Peg Policy Framework which seeks to fast-track infrastructure installation such as fencing, tractors, dipping tanks, stock water dams, irrigation schemes and human capacitation.

Municipality accused of collusion

The municipality of the surfing village of Port St Johns on the Wild Coast, has been accused of engineering community divisions and rushing to settle a land claim to bail itself out of bankruptcy. The Minister of Agriculture and Land Affairs, Lulu Xingwana, recently signed off a R92,7 million compensation settlement.

Xingwana also put in place a restitution programme for 2 362 ha of the original 3 473 ha that the Caguba community in the Eastern Cape coastal village is claiming. The Caguba Community Development Trust (CCDT), representing about 2 260 claimant households, has been holding out for a land restitution settlement.

The trust claims that the national Land Affairs Ministry and regional Land Claims Commissioner, Linda Faleni, "at all material times colluded and assisted" the Port St Johns municipality in ensuring that the Caguba community was denied total restitution of the land that was progressively taken from it.

**KwaZulu-Natal
Mangosuthu warns of conflict**

IFP leader, Mangosuthu Buthelezi, has warned that ugly conflicts could erupt between traditional leaders and their subjects if a section of the Communal Land Rights Act was not scrapped. Buthelezi said traditional leaders in the country

and KwaZulu-Natal were opposed to the Act. "All amakhosi made clear two weeks ago when they met in Durban that they are against it," he said.

Section 4 of the Act rules that local committees in rural areas must have 60% community and 40% traditional council representation. It gives the committee the powers

to use their majority to discuss and dictate on the usage of a particular piece of land without consulting a local traditional leader.

Mike Mabuyakhulu, KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Local Government, Housing and Traditional Affairs, defended the Act, saying it was merely created to benefit the local people.

**Gauteng
MEC sets the record straight**

The Gauteng MEC for Agriculture, Conservation and Environment, Khabisi Mosunkutu, said the delusion of a few individuals should not cloud the media in their reporting. Mosunkutu was speaking following allegations levelled against him by the Democratic Alliance and Nicole Barlow of

the Environment Conservation Association, that the MEC had overruled his own officials in favour of developers who apparently had broken laws designed to protect ecologically sensitive areas.

The DA recently wrote to Premier Mbhazima Shilowa asking for an investigation, not only into the department's conduct, but also that of MEC Mosunkutu. "The

department is happy that the Premier has dismissed the call by the DA to establish a commission of inquiry, that would in essence subvert provisions of the National Environment Management Act," he said.

According to the MEC, in terms of the law, any parties or persons who feel aggrieved by the department's decisions, may approach the courts for relief.

**Mpumalanga
Provinces to cooperate**

The province of Mpumalanga and the Mozambican province of Maputo, have signed an agreement, in which they undertake to cooperate in the fields of agriculture, health, sport and culture. One of the agricultural projects will focus on the harvesting of sugarcane.

Farmers from both provinces will gain access to land, in order to plant sugarcane for purposes of commercial sugar production. The viability of the project is currently being investigated.

Bush pigs become a pest

Bush pigs have caused so much damage to maize fields in Mpumalanga and Limpopo, that

some farmers have decided that it is not economically viable for them to plant maize anymore. Farmers in the area between Roosenekal, Middelburg and Lydenburg, say that the problem has reached alarming proportions. Some 3 000 ha in the Middelburg and Lydenburg area is apparently being threatened by bush pigs. **NF**