

P91/624 Rural Areas Box No 63



PROCESSED

FARMWORKER RESEARCH & RESOURCE PROJECT
(DSRP)

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1. STATE + LEGAL

1.1. State - Control Boards:

Maize Board Levy:

A broiler producing company in Natal has taken steps to obtain maize without paying the Maize Board levy. The company does this by signing up local farmers to produce maize by agreeing to lease their farms to the company.

The move is receiving support from a variety of quarters, including the Natal Agricultural Union (NAU). The NAU president questions why the Board collects levies without supplying any service. A leading maize farmer, Mr Sam Knox of Eldoret in Richmond, feels that feedlots, egg producers and pig farms will follow the steps taken by the broiler company.

Mr Knox calls for deregulation of the whole industry, with the Board only responsible for the removal of surplus maize for export. The Board is aware of the arrangement between the poultry group and the maize farmers. It believes that nothing, legally, can be done if the poultry group has become a bona fide maize farmer.

(FW 30/6/89)

(see Natal under 21. REGIONS below)

Potato Board:

The Potato Board has commissioned the investigation of the advantages and disadvantages of privatisation. The investigation will cover aspects such as orderly marketing, free market mechanism, the gap between producer and consumer prices, research, export, the general activities of the board, the privatisation of certain board activities, deregulation etc.. This was prompted by confusion over areas of autonomy of the board.

(FW 5/5/89)

(see Potatoes under 19. VEGETABLES below)

1.2. State - Legal:

The amended Agricultural Pests Act imposes much stiffer sentences on people who illegally import controlled goods. The new law sets a sentence of a R20 000 fine and/or a maximum of five years imprisonment for first offenders. Subsequent offenders will be fined R50 000 in the case of a corporate body and 10 years imprisonment in the case of an individual.

In terms of the amendments controlled goods include any plant, plant product, seed, insect, pathogen, exotic animal, beeswax and second hand beekeeping equipment, honey, pollen gathered by a honey bee as well as any preparation or product containing honey or pollen, royal jelly, propolis and growth mediums.

(FW 2/6/89)

1.3. State - Income:

SA agricultural exports could earn the country R5,5b in 1989, compensating for foreign-exchange losses due to the drop in the gold price. Apart from that, high farm production and exports could add 1% to the 1989 GDP, according to Mr Bruce Donald of the SA Foreign Trade Association. Foreign exchange earnings from some sectors is expected as follows:

Maize - R1,5b (5m tons)

Wool - R900m

Deciduous Fruit - R750m

Citrus - R700m

Wheat - R400m

Sugar - Good prospects, prices rose up to 25%. Total industry earnings for 1988 was R1,4b

(FW 30/6/89, CT 30/5/89, BD 16/5/89 & WA 17/6/89)

1.4. State - Aid/Loans:

Thousands of farmers were saved from bankruptcy by the Department of Agriculture, says Minister Greyling Wentzel. He said in 1986/1987 2 741 farmers who would have been bankrupt were saved through the department's production aid scheme. The R111,7m they received as loans enabled them to get a crop in the ground, without which they would have gone under.

The debt consolidation scheme likewise helped about 2 000 farmers escape bankruptcy for the period 1983/1984 to 1986/1987.

(FW 26/5/89)

(see Co-ops get loans under BIG BUSINESS/CO-OPS below)

1.5. State - Local government:

The Minister of Local Government in the House of Delegates - Mr B. Dookie - has announced the introduction and extension of financial-aid measures for Indian sugar-cane and vegetable farmers in Natal. The measures are aimed at helping deserving cane farmers who suffered crop losses during the 1987 floods and adverse weather in the 1988/89, and vegetables farmers who suffered severe crop losses due to the floods.

(FW 16/6/89)

2. BIG BUSINESS/CO-OPS

Sanlam:

The chief executive of Sankorp - the industrial holding company of Sanlam, Mr Daling says agriculture showed an average productivity improvement of 2,1% a year between 1952 and 1985. Annual improvement in relation to other sectors for the same period stood as follows:

Agriculture -	2,8%
Mining -	1,9%
Industry -	1,7%
Trade and Finance -	1,5%

Mr Daling regretted that agriculture was not projected more positively. Attention should be drawn to positive contributions made by agriculture in the socio-economic areas. The farmers are providers of housing, schooling, food, clothing, transport, health services, training and a teacher of skills. It is these functions that lead to an understanding of the help that the industry needs, says Mr Daling.

(FW 2/6/89)

First National Bank (FNB):

Mr J. McKenzie of FNB has rejected feelings that the bank is withdrawing from farming by virtue of its down-sizing of the agricultural services division. He stated that the bank's business is based on agriculture. FNB is the greatest lender to farming and is even lending to the Land Bank. The restructuring was only meant to reduce the bank's overheads.

(FW 23/6/89)

No loans for black farmers:

The Land Bank had lent R2 774,7 million to 38 835 farmers, but none of the loans went to black farmers. For 1988 the loans were granted this way:

R509 100 000 -	3 156 white farmers
R 451 700 -	21 Coloured farmers
R 771 000 -	6 Indian farmers

(CT 5/4/89)

Land Bank auctions property:

The Land Bank had to attach and auction 88 properties in 1988. In 42 cases the proceeds covered the amount owing to the Bank, but in 46 cases the bids were insufficient to cover the Bank's claim and the Bank had to buy in these properties, according to the Land Bank's annual report.

At the end of December 1988 individual farmers in the Republic owed the Land Bank a total of R2 755m, which is R122m more than in 1987, on long- and intermediate term loans. In 1988 R462m in long-term loans was granted to 2 406 farmers, an average of R192 149 per loan. This is broken down this way:

Purchase of land	- R308m
Consolidation of debts	- R114m
Repayments of bonds	- R 21m
Purchase of stock and equipment	- R 11m
Fixed improvements	- R 7m

A total of R47,9m was granted on seasonal and intermediate-term loans to 776 farmers at an average of R61 832 per loan.

(FW 26/5/89)

Banks tighten up on farming credit:

Banks look at the farmer's character, reputation, integrity and intentions as reflected by his farming history, bank statements and references, before approval of the farmer's credit applications.

The farmer's ability to handle the production, price and risks of his operations, the size of his existing financial obligations and his repayment ability are measured by the productive value of his farm rather than the market value. This was said by Piet Steyn, Volkskas Bank's general manager for the Pretoria region, at a symposium on agriculture hosted at Bronkhorstspruit by TAU.

Mr Steyn said any farmer who intends applying for these facilities should come to the bank well prepared. New farmers and those in financial difficulties may have to turn to the Land Bank or Agricultural Credit Board in future.

He warned against the rumoured establishment of a Farmers' Bank as banking has become a highly elaborate and specialised industry. The long knives have been drawn in the industry and there will be the absorbing of smaller banks by big ones.

(FW 12/5/89)

Tongaat Hulett:

Improved contributions from the sugar, aluminium and building materials divisions lifted turnover by 21% to R3,1 billion. Tongaat's main operating divisions are sugar, building materials, foods, aluminium and textiles. The foods interests are diverse, but the major proportions of turnover in this area is derived from such products as maize and animal feeds, which are subject to fierce competition.

The sugar division remains the largest in the group, accounting for 25% of total profits. Domestic sugar production is expected to rise marginally this season, while exports should be boosted by weakness of the Rand.

(Star 30/5/89)

Mighty Meat:

Mighty Meat is to be restructured through the sale of existing operations by controlling shareholder - Ronny Ho - to John Limberopoulos, and the acquisition of Choice Meat. Subsidiaries of Mighty Meat will sold back to Mr HO.

(BD 24/4/89)

Kanhym innovates Enterprise:

Kanhym's management is confident that innovation in the company's processed meat division, Enterprise, and tight control of the group's cattle feedlots and pig stud-farm will broaden market share and increase profits. Enterprise's processed meat products have been endorsed by national slimming organisation - Weigh-Less. Also Enterprise has a contract with Weigh-Less which ensures that the slimming organisation will only endorse Enterprise processed meat.

(BD 17/4/89)

Sentraalwes:

Sentraalwes has just had the best year in its history with profits for the year ended February 28, 1989, a record R57,3 million.

Turnover - R815,3m
Financing income - R 40,9m
Grain-agency transactions - R953,6m,

Mr Loubser, chair of Sentraalwes says the above was achieved without an all-out effort to maximise profits. He further dispelled the myth that co-ops are not taxed the same way as other business concerns and that they enjoy the advantage of better interest rates from the state, and are therefore able to perform better. He says Sentraalwes pays R78,9m and R104,2m a year to its workers and capital providers respectively, and the state gets R9,2m a year in PAYE and R19,2m a year in GST.

(FW 26/5/89)

BKB objects to second co-op:

The wool industry co-operative - BKB - has voiced its strong opposition to the creation of the second co-operative in the wool industry. This was on the basis that the SAAU and BKB do not allow overlapping of services provided by co-operatives. The chairman of BKB - Commandant Piet Marais says BKB is on a sound financial footing with enough reserves and a good ratio of own funds as against borrowed money.

The reason for the co-operative's profit margin being low, was that BKB policy was to render service to farmers rather than to make money. 70% of farmers in the country are doing business with BKB which is the second element of the bigger structure of the wool industry. The first was the NWGA and the third was the Wool Board.

(FW 19/5/89)

Co-ops get aid:

Three co-ops received state aid and two benefitted from subsidies on interest repayments, the annual report of the Department of Agricultural Economics and Marketing for the year 1987/88 reveals. The Magaliesberg Grain Co-op received R93 000 to enable it to keep its branch in the border areas in operation.

The Umfolozi Sugar Co-op received R6m as partial compensation for repair costs caused by Cyclone Demonia. The Eastern Cape Agricultural Co-op received R312 2000 to help it meet its loan obligations for a grain silo at Peterson, which was underutilised as a result of the droughts.

The Langeberg Co-op received R7,1m to cover interest on a loan of R110m.

NTK received a subsidy of R6,9m to subsidies interest on loans totalling R140m which were used to finance losses it suffered due to the protracted drought. The same period also saw a drop in the number of agricultural co-ops by five, and that of trading co-ops by three.

(FW 21/4/89)

(see NTK under 18. GAME below)

Bokomo opens in Transvaal:

Wheat millers Bokomo have opened their first bakery in the Transvaal in a R2,2m conversion of the old Cerebos factory in Clayville.

(BD 25/4/89)

Co-op donates money to Rural Foundation:

SA's largest Citrus Exchange became the third agricultural co-operative to throw its weight behind the Rural Foundation. The Citrus Exchange donated R250 000 which it may be hoping will stall an expansion campaign by the NUF (a Nactu affiliate), while bolstering its PR battle against European boycotters of SA fruit. The Rural Foundation offers counselling to farmers on improving working conditions on farms to pre-empt union entrance.

(FM 2/6/89)

(see EMPLOYMENT/FARM CONDITIONS below)

3. FARMERS ASSOCIATION

SA Cane Growers Association:

A call for a moratorium on the purchase of farmland by major timber processors intending to plant it all trees has been made at the annual meeting of the SA Cane Growers Association. By this, said the chairperson Mr Tony Ardington, is meant the intrusions made by timber into high-potential agricultural land.

Mr Ardington said the decline of the rural economy and the disappearance of the family farm as more land fell into the hands of agribusiness was not in the long-term interests of the country.

(FW 30/6/89)

Natal Agricultural Union

NAU has reached an agreement with the Maize Board over the marketing of maize. The agreement provides for levies imposed by the Board to be phased in over a period of 3 years.

The agreement follows a total rejection of the levy by farmers in the Richmond and Swartberg areas in Natal.

(FW 30/6/89)

RPO awaits reactions:

The Red Meat Producers' Organisation (RPO) is keenly awaiting the National Marketing Council's and the Meat Board's reactions to important recommendations in the Grove Committee's report that Agriculture Minister

Greyling Wentzel has referred back to the committee for further evaluation.

Issues concerned include the supply of slaughter stock to abattoirs in controlled areas, the introduction of meat to controlled areas and the import and export of meat and meat products. The issue of meat imports causes concern to the RPO and the organisation sees the recommendations as having serious implications regarding local price-forming.
(FW 19/5/89)

Red-Meat Producers Organisation (RPO):

The ninth annual congress of the RPO heard Dr Meyn of the German Federation of Livestock Producers say that prospects were enormous for technical progress in meat production technology. Coupled with lower prices and leaner carcasses, red meat consumption will increase especially in the middle-income countries where red meat was seen as a luxury and not a health threat.

In another development the congress slammed the ceiling price system, calling for its abolition as it is contrary to the basic laws of supply and demand and therefore counteracts the free-market system. The congress also heard the outgoing chairman - Dr Schoeman - stressing the importance of producers holding a controlling interest in abattoirs if they are privatised. Should this fail then producers will be at the mercy of conglomerates or large companies.

To this effect close attention will have to be given to the definition of a producer so that control of abattoirs would always be in the hands of the individual producer. He further called for the retention of the floor price system.

(FW 30/6/89)

South African Agricultural Union (SAAU)

The president of the SAAU, Mr Kobus Jooste, lambasted the government for burdening agricultural production at the congress of the Red-Meat Producers Organisation. Mr Kooste put it this way:

1. The government continues to tax production, to increase the price of diesel, surcharges - especially on spare parts, the GST and continues 'unnecessary protection of certain industrial products'.
2. The government continues spending large sums on the Defence Force and arms industry. It is useless to have a soldier with a gun but an empty stomach. History teaches us that hungry people cause revolutions, he said.
3. Millions were spent on arms in South West Africa, but after all the battles were won, the war was lost.

Mr Jooste accused the few big monopolies for accumulating profits while the majority of farmers are deteriorating.
(FW 23/6/89)

South African Mohair Growers Association:

The 46th annual congress of the South African Mohair Growers Association decided in principle to privatise and form a company to move away from the present parastatal system. Steps will be taken to ensure that the company stays in the hands of the industry. This was welcomed by the Mohair Board president - Mr Gielie Grobler.

Mr Grobler said the main structural change would be that the new company will be totally free of restrictions imposed by the Marketing Act. One of the advantages of the conversion will be the ability to generate capital through share issues.

(FW 23/6/89)

National Wool Growers' Association (NWGA):

The wool growers are unhappy about the generous government gesture to the maize industry, in contrast to its firm refusal to help the wool industry in a similar way. The state has decided to write off the R460m maize debt and another R1,4b during the next 14 years. The wool industry needs state aid both on a foreign loan debt and the contributions made by the wool producers towards the funding of the International Wool Secretariat. This was among the most crucial issues that were discussed at the congress of the association.

The congress resolved to use the industry's Stabilisation Fund to settle the loan after the minister of agriculture made a sympathetic but emphatic no to their request. State refusal was based on the fact that the maize industry faced a difficult time of drought, input items such as machinery and chemicals imported at high expenses while the wool industry enjoyed price increases for the past three years.

1989 was the 60th anniversary of the NWGA and a record income year. Membership stands at 24 500 at present.

(FW 19/5/89 & CT 19/5/89)

Transvaal Agricultural Union (TAU):

South African farmers are floundering financially and the time has come for a new system of financing for them, says Wilco Beukes - TAU executive committee member. He said insufficient management skills, misapplication of resources and a low efficiency rate play an insignificant role compared to the effects of inflation, high interest rates and the drought.

Subsidies remained the most important stabilising instrument in agriculture. Here Mr Beukes speaks of subsidy for interest rates and an operational subsidy available in crisis situations.

He calls for the state to combat inflation, and for the abolition of estate duty, and says value added tax was not acceptable to agriculture. Interest subsidies should be continued and organised agriculture should negotiate with banks to ease the interest burden on farmers.

THE CAPE TOWN
TRADE UNION

LIBRARY

Production credit supply should be handled by the Land Bank, the Land Bank should introduce the provision of input subsidies, Land Bank Act should be extended to make the Land Bank the primary supplier of agricultural financing and also the Bank should be decentralised to bring decision-making closer to the farmer, says Mr Beukes.
(FW 12/5/89)

4. LABOUR RELATIONS/FARM CONDITIONS:

4.1. EMPLOYMENT CODE/FARM WORKERS & LAW:

SAAU's code of conduct:

A formal code of conduct covering all aspects of farm labourers' service contracts is being devised by the South African Agricultural Union. This is aimed at uplifting the working conditions of farm workers generally, and easing the strain on farmers. According to SAAU's deputy director of general services Kobus Kleynhans, such a document is likely to be far more effective in reaching farm workers's goals than could possibly be achieved through a trade union or other movement.

Mr Kleynhans says it is highly unlikely that trade unions will be able to organise themselves properly because of the vast geographic distances involved between farms in South Africa.

(FW 12/5/89)

State announces move towards law:

The Manpower Director-General Joel Fourie announced that the government had started to formulate legislation to protect farmworkers's basic rights. This occurs five years after the National Manpower Commission submitted its report after being commissioned to investigate working conditions of farm and domestic workers.

(ST 4/6/89)

Fruit industry slams anti-trade union advert:

The Johannesburg-based Liaison Bureau for Industrial Relations Services (LBIRS) has inserted a loose-leaf brochure in the June edition of the Deciduous Fruit Grower warning farmers against falling prey to trade unions. The brochure also warned farmers against inadvertent aid to the ANC in its power struggle. This leaflet was attacked by the fruit industry's PRO - Fred Meintjies as being uncalled for and showing lack of insight. Dr Kobus Slabbert of the LBIRS said this was meant to inform farmers of who their opponents were.
(CT 21/6/89)

Fruit workers oppose sanctions:

A poll commissioned by a german institute shows that most of SA fruit industry workers oppose sanctions and boycotts. This poll was carried out among 1 000 black and coloured workers in the SA fruit industry. Elements of the poll show that:

a. 13% of the workers believed sanctions were laudable,

- b. 17% would support sanctions only if their jobs were not endangered,
- c. Few of the workers had ever heard of the term 'sanctions.'
- d. 77% advocates power-sharing by all SA races.
- e. 21% supports black majority rule
- f. 91% saw correlation between job security and exports, and more fruit should be marketed overseas as such.

(BD 19/4/89)

4.2. STRIKES:

Farm workers score a first at Zebediela Citrus Estates

Farm workers at Zebediela Citrus Estate in the northern Transvaal have scored a first for South African farm workers by winning demands for wage increases and union recognition.

The 1 200 farm workers who were on strike for twenty days from the 3 May 1989, were demanding the recognition of their union - the National Union of Farmworkers, which is an affiliate of NACTU - as well an increase in wages of 45%.

The Zebediela Citrus Estate is owned by the SA Development Trust Corporation, a state body designed to promote investment in homelands. Zebediela is also the largest citrus estate in the world, producing oranges.

The strike was characterised by the dismissal, en masse, of the strikers, eviction of strikers from their residence, involvement of police that left 15 workers hospitalised after being bitten by police dogs and a court application restraining the company from evicting the workers as well as involving police.

It is the court application that set the stage for a meeting between the legal teams of both parties, which meeting produced the following agreement:

- a. Reinstatement of all dismissed strikers without loss of benefits.
- b. A monthly across the board increase of R30.
- c. Inception of negotiations over a draft recognition agreement by the parties.

(WM, Star, Sowetan, CT, 4/5 - 1/6/89)

Strikers thrown out of company's hostels:

120 members of the National Union of Farmworkers who have been on a wage strike for 2 weeks at Braaks Indoor Plants in Pretoria have been thrown out of the company's hostels. The union lowered its demand from R100 across-the-board increase to R50, while the company remained at R30, (CT 25/6/89)

4.3. HOUSING/LIVING CONDITIONS:

Farm workers' lot improved in Bothaville:

Fifteen Bothaville farmers have achieved remarkable success in improving

the quality of life of their farm workers within a period of five years. The Bothaville North Community Development Association which has been active on 15 farms spent R120 000 on housing for workers on five farms, with the result that 86% of the families are living in brick houses.

A primary school situated within easy reach from all farms in the area has been enjoying 100% attendance. Another one to cater for up to standard 7 is envisaged.

Close cooperation with supporting health services has limited the incidence of disease, child deaths and unplanned pregnancies to a large degree. Most farm workers have completed one formal course at either Boskop or Vetsak Training Centre. In cooperation with the Department of Manpower, 120 wives of farm workers have been trained in needlework and knitting.

Much is also being done to promote the spiritual well-being of farm workers, and lay preachers are specifically trained for this task during training sessions. The association whose chairman is Vrede Viljoen is affiliated to the Foundation for Rural Development.

(FW 19/5/89)

Housing plan for farmworkers:

A new housing plan for farm workers has been announced by National Health and Population Development Minister - Dr Willie Van Niekerk. This has 3 options. The first is a scheme whereby a farmer grants a servitude to workers he would like to house on his farm.

The second is where a group of farmers make a communal piece of land available to workers on their farms and create a "farm town." The third is where land is available for housing in an adjacent town.

The first farm town is to be built in Dr Van Niekerk's own parliamentary constituency - Ceres at Op-Die-Berg. This is an initiative by Dr Van Niekerk, SA Housing Trust and farmers in the Ceres area. Dr Van Niekerk explains that farm towns will not only provide housing, but churches, clinics, schools and shops.

(FW 5/5/89)

4.4. CHILD LABOUR:

A seven year old Lucas Makgokolo gets R2 a week for working as a sheep heard on a farm in the Vaal Triangle. This is despite the fact that the Employment Act prohibits the employment of children under the age of 15. Lucas was bitten by the farmer's dog and is now suffering from brain damage. The MSFAWU (then OVGWU) has taken up the matter.

At Vischgat farm in Vereeniging, the farmer employs 30 children aged between 8 and 18. Parents allow the farmer to use their children for fear of dismissal, also to supplement the family income with whatever pittance the children bring home.

(Star 24/6/89, Sowetan 19/6/89)

4.5. FARM SCHOOLING

Farm labourers children get money for schooling:

Pre-school education for children of farm labourers has been given R30 000 by the Friends of Fruit, an association of fruit industry companies. This was part of a total of R50 000 raised for the Rural Foundation. The remaining R20 000 will be spent on sports facilities and five tertiary education bursaries for school-leavers from deciduous fruit farms.

The Rural Foundation has built 499 farm creches with the help of funds from Friends of Fruit, says Herman Bailey, a foundation spokesman.
(Argus 1/6/89)

Dilapidated barn - a school for farm workers's children:

A disused barn on a farm at Rusoord near Vaal Dam is school for Mrs Sofe and her pupils. All the children from Sub A to Standard Five share the barn. Mrs Sofe, who obtained a Senior Primary Teacher's Certificate 10 years ago, says many of the children start their school very late in their lives. This is because the farmers employ them and decide when they should go to school. At her school there are 18 and 19 year old pupils in a Standard Five class.
(Sowetan 26/6/89)

4.6. FARM VIOLENCE

Synopsis of farm violence:

1. A farmer - Mr Jacobus Smith - and 2 farm workers of Mispan Farm near Heilbron appeared in the Heilbron Magistrate's Court on charges of murdering 15 year old Fanie Radebe on 4/3/89. All were released on a R1 000 bail each. (CP 30/4/89)
2. Two white farmers - Messrs Louis Venter and Peter Fouche - tied Stephen Mononye to a tree, then whipped, punched and kicked him to death because 2 cows escaped from a farm near Klerksdorp. The two were fined R1 200 or 4 months jail sentence. (CP 14/5/89)
3. Mr John Augustine Perreira, a spinach farmer in the East Rand, tied Molefe Tholi Nzima behind his bakkie and towed him for about 4 km on dirt and tar roads, driving at 10 km/h. Mr Nzima died of head injuries. Mr Perreira said he believed Nzima stole his chickens. The farmer was sentenced to 15 years imprisonment. (W/A 10/6/89; Star 9/6/89)
4. Towards the end of May '89, a 15 year old farmer's son shot dead a 16 year old black boy - Thabiso Mokwaledi, near Potchefstroom. The boy used his farther's 9 mm pistol. (WM 9-14/6/89)

A researcher at Wits - Andrew Ball - ascribed the brutality to inadequate legal protection for black farm workers and the insecurity of white farmers, who no longer enjoy state protection and subsidies.
(WM 9/6/89)

A Farm Violence Monitoring Committee had been established, consisting of farm workers unions, research bodies, human rights lawyers and other community structures. The committee organised a commemoration service for all victims of farm violence on the 15/7/89 in Johannesburg.
(CP 21/5/89; Sowetan 17/7/89)

4.7. POISONS/CHEMICALS:

Training in use of pesticides:

The Agricultural and Veterinary Chemical Association of South Africa (AVCASA) has launched a new training initiative to educate advisers, farmers and farm labourers in the use of pesticides. This is in conjunction with the SAAU and the programmes start this year.
(FW 19/5/89)

2,4-D Campaign hurts SA:

While some people wanted to use the anti-2,4D campaign to aid the cause of overseas boycotters of South African agricultural products, internationally experienced experts could find no abnormalities in certain vegetables on some of SA's markets, says Agriculture Minister - Mr Wentzel.

He said the whole situation was being investigated and his department has called in Dr Victor Breeze of England who is a leading authority on hormonal herbicides. SA cannot manage without chemical herbicides and 2,4-D has been in use for more than 30 years in SA. It had not been banned elsewhere in the world, he said.

He further said other factors such as plant disease, pests, and the occurrence of other chemicals in the air have not been eliminated as potentially responsible for the abnormalities.
(FW 5/5/89 & 12/5/89)

A mass poisoning highlights flaws in farm health codes:

The mass poisoning of migrant workers on a potato farm in the Free State this week has been linked to use of deadly pesticides in SA agriculture. 50 migrant workers from Transkei fell ill after drinking water from an empty pesticide drum. The poison - monocrotophos, which belongs to the organophosphate group of poisons - causes severe headaches, trembling, loss of speech, blurred vision, coma and death.

The farmer - Mr WT Oosthuisen claims to have warned the workers on the dangers of the poisons. Community workers and trade unionists dismissed this as victim blaming: Dave Cooper of the Environmental Development Agency (EDA) says there are no controls on the application of pesticides on the farms; Phillip Masia of the Municipal, State, Farm and Allied Workers Union (MSFAWU) said they have never come across a single case of health and safety reps elected on the farms.

The Paper, Printing, Wood and Allied Workers Union (PPWAWU) is involved

in a dispute with a sawmill company over 30 workers whose eyesight has been adversely affected by pesticides, according to organiser Ernest Masala. The forestry industry uses lindane, a chemical banned in many countries, to protect stockpiles of timber from pests.
(WM 13/4/89)

5. PRODUCTIVITY

Training: Boskop Training Centre offers training to both farmworkers and farmers. The most popular course is the 6M for farmworkers which focuses on the six elements vital to most businesses - men, management, money, materials, machines and market.

According to farmer Mr Christo Stadler, the owner of Brandvlei in the Middleburg district, an informed person is a happy person. Such a person will have a good attitude towards his employer and work. As a result Mr Stadler organised a special seminar for his employees on his farm.
(FW 30/6/89)

Fertiliser sales and prices set to rise:

Bumper wheat and maize crops in the past season promise the fertiliser industry a boost in sales this year. But because of rising raw material costs and disappearance of discounts, fertiliser prices are set to rise. Should America have a drought similar to last year's, grain prices could rise enabling SA exports to be profitable, in turn improving demand for fertiliser.

Fertiliser prices have risen following rationalisation in the industry after withdrawal of Sentrachem's Fedmis operation. The plant was sold to the 3 contenders - Kynoch, Sasol Fertilizer and Omnia.
(S/T 18/6/89)

Tyre Shortage:

Farmers are finding it totally unacceptable that tyres are exported with the help of extensive subsidies while they are facing serious shortages of tractor and other tyres. SAAU estimates the shortage to be standing at 23 000 tyres. Nampo identified 5 reasons for the shortage, viz :

1. The 'giant' subsidy on the export of tyres.
2. The mining industry needs more tyres due to change to mechanical ore handling.
3. The Defence Force needs more tyres.
4. Demand for agricultural tyres increased.
5. Tyre dealers reduced their stock while tyre manufacturers were not aware of the growing shortage.

Nampo engaged the Minister of Agriculture on this problem on the 23/11/88, and requested permission to import tyres duty free and also that the export subsidy on tyres be suspended until the backlog in tyres has been dissolved.
(FW 23/6/89)

6. MAIZE

Marketing system reviewed:

Rising input costs and the slow progressing land-conversion scheme have prompted a rethink of the single channel maize marketing system. According to a Nampo survey, the total production costs of maize per hectare for the 1988/89 season increased by 11% to R603,15.

The input costs include fertilizer and lime, fuel, repairs and parts of equipment, crop insurance and capital costs (which comprise of depreciation and interest on machinery and implements, land rental costs to compensate for land as a production factor etc.).

Estimated average yield for the total maize production area increased by 2,91 t/ha for the 1988/89 season, an increase of 60,8%, compared with 1987/88. Consequently the average cost per ton decreased by 30,8% from R299,99 to R207,53. The result is that within the announced prices of R212/t and R207/t for white and yellow maize respectively, most regions in the summer cropping area, with the exception of the eastern and northern Transvaal, will produce maize profitably this season. This season's profits cannot make good the losses of the previous two seasons, because the benefits of a larger crop are negated by a larger surplus, which has to be exported.

(FW 23/6/89)

Maize marketing costs:

It costs the Maize Board R1 000m to market a season's crop, says general manager Dr Hennie Davel. Of this, more than a third goes to SATS for transporting the maize to harbours and handling it there. This will cost the Maize Board R369 million this year. Farmers are paid on delivery but it often takes a long before the maize is sold. The maize is received from May in one year and sold until April (or sometimes even later) of the next year.

To pay farmers on delivery will cost the Maize Board an estimated R260 million this year in finance charges on borrowed money.

(FW 9/6/89)

Immediate privatisation a disaster for maize:

The strategic role played by the maize industry and its technical bankruptcy makes state aid to maize an obligation, and privatisation now would be a catastrophe, according to the chairman of the Maize Board - Mr Hennie de Jager. If the state withdrew its guarantees to the co-ops, the whole maize industry will collapse, which will cause the country to import yellow maize from America. Mr de Jager says that will cause the country's 14 000 maize farmers to negotiate sale of the domestic crop to only 8 buyers as they are the buyers of the 80% of the maize crop.

(FW 9/6/89)

Insufficient maize export facilities

Nampo is considering plans to develop Richards Bay into a major export

harbour for maize following calculations that the maize industry could lose up to R160m this year because of a lack of export facilities, says Nampo chief of Research and Development - Dr le Clus.

Though Durban is the only harbour that can accommodate shipments of maize, it has a limited capacity for maize because it is also an important harbour for other produce such as fruit and sugar.

(FW 2/6/89)

Maize price:

Without an increase in the selling price of maize this year, a future increase could have been as high as 30 to 40%, says the Maize Board in a memorandum on the reasons behind the recent maize-price structure. The prospects of an excellent crop and an unstable international market had to be dealt with. The production costs of maize, the expected market and the eventual producer price were not taken into account.

The selling price has deliberately been allowed to lag behind the inflation rate to help restore the domestic market for maize, and that had been achieved. The time has come to increase the price, says the Maize Board.

The Board then decided to increase the selling price of white maize by 9,9% to R354/t, with another increase envisaged for later in 1989. While NAMPO sees the increase as low and going to see the financial position of producers deteriorate, TAU said other sectors like pig production, poultry and feedlots will be affected by the increase.

(FW 12/5/89 & 5/5/89)

Japanese imports of SA maize likely to rise:

Japanese maize imports from SA are expected to soar by one million tons in 1989, despite international pressure on Tokyo to reduce trade. This would mean lower maize imports from the US. Japan came under international attack in 1987 when it replaced the US as Pretoria's main trading partner.

The government asked trading houses to restrict imports in line with Western sanctions against SA. Japanese steel industry responded by cutting coal and iron ore imports. There is no strict guidance on the maize trade. Japan, which is one of the world's biggest maize buyers, used about 72% of its 1988 maize imports of 16,56 million tons for livestock feed, the rest going for food use. China and Argentina are Japan's other main suppliers.

(STAR 17/5/89)

7. WHEAT

Wheat surplus is a massive 1,2-million tons:

The record wheat surplus from the 3,5-million ton 1988/89 crop, amounts to a massive 1,2m/t, says Wheat Board chairman W E Pienaar. 85% had already been sold under contract on the export market and on the local market for feed grains. Mr Pienaar said arrangements for the marketing of the remainder were now being made.

Surplus wheat had to be removed as quickly as possible to make room for another big crop in the coming season.
(BD 4/4/89 & CT 5/4/89)

8. MEAT

Beef:

Average beef production in South Africa is Shockingly low, according to the Director of Agriculture and Water Supply, Mr Tom Skinner. The average per cow production in South Africa stands at 90,5 kg while that of the US is at 140 kg per cow. He advises farmers to increase production per animal rather than production per hectare.
(FW 23/6/89)

Educate the meat consumer:

The meat consumer had to be educated regarding price forming in the meat industry, as well as on what they actually had to pay for when they buy their meat, says Dr M Schoeman of the RPO. Producers and consumers lose out because of the widening gap between producer prices and consumer prices. For instance producer prices for sheep were dropping while there was no downward change in consumer prices.
(CT 5/5/89)

(see RPO under FARMERS ASSOCIATION above)

9. FRUIT:

9.1. Deciduous Fruit:

Continued instability of production, markets and incomes in the deciduous fruit industry can be expected for the immediate future, says Professor D. K. Strydom of the University of Stellenbosch. The reason for the instability was that fruit was biologically based and subject to weather and natural hazards. Also that the production of some fruit crops had outstripped the market.

Professor Strydom says in order to capture and fill market niches products will increasingly have to be tailored to the specific needs of markets. Physical-fitness, health-food interest, eating on the run and less formal meal occasions are and will in the next 10 years be good news to fruit.
(FW 16/6/89)

Sanctions do more harm:

The sanctions policies applied against South Africa by some overseas companies have already led to a drop in the number of seasonal workers in the western Cape fruit industry, says Dr Anton Rupert, speaking at the South African Plant Improvement Organisation (SAPo). Dr Rupert said this was of concern because the fruit industry is the largest employer of black labour in the western Cape. Economically the industry is of importance with a foreign exchange earning of over R1 500m estimated for 1989.

Also this industry provides 44% of the European Economic Community's

fresh-fruit imports and generate some R2 billion in business for European institutions.

(FW 26/5/89)

10. SUGAR

Sugar has recently shown a decline in price from 13 cents a pound to 10,85. This is viewed by economists to be a correction in fundamental long-term bull market. Sugar is being influenced by two major players in the market - the Soviet Union and China. The Soviet Union has been a significant buyer in 1989 with about 2 million tons, while China imported 3 million tons of sugar last year.

While dealings and intentions of communist countries are difficult to ascertain, it seems likely that they have not completed their buying for the season, especially if sugar beet crop suffers from the predicted dry summer and its associated yield-harming pests. For China certainly there is a desperate demand for foodstuffs, as evidenced by its purchase of 1,85 million tons of wheat from the US. China is a price-sensitive buyer, emerging to a market when prices are relatively low. Lastly, the political situation in China seems to prevent significant policy decisions.

A positive tone emerges from a huge demand of refined white sugar from Mexico and Middle East countries. There is also the practice of producing countries like Brazil to import refined sugar while using the local refineries to produce higher-priced white sugar for export. Another bullish fundamental comes from India, whose sugar industry has asked for permission from the state to import 500 000t of sugar.

(FW 23/6/89)

Sugar Deregulation Plan Approved by State:

A deregulation and expansion plan for the sugar industry, which could pump as much as R600 million into the economy and create 24 000 new jobs, has been approved by the government.

The Minister of Economic Affairs and Technology - Mr George Bartlett - said that sugar production and marketing were highly regulated all over the world, something which makes it difficult for SA to act in isolation from the world sugar economy without harming its sugar industry.

The deregulation measures applied by the government include the following:

- Lifting of quantitative import control on sugar and molasses while retaining import tariff protection.
- Government control of the industrial price of sugar and molasses will be abolished and the industry will set its own price, subject to the parameters set by the state in consultation with the industry. Meanwhile the state is awaiting the completion of investigations into the socio-economic impact of constructing an ethanol plant

(FW 5/5/89 & FM 28/4/89)

Sugar markets should strengthen in the 1990's:

World food commodity markets, including sugar, should strengthen in the 1990's, provided new policy directions are pursued abroad which will

dramatically decrease protection of agricultural producers, says Tony Ardington of SA Cane Growers Association.

He said there are signs that the Uruguay round of GATT talks are leading the major players to review their domestic agricultural policies with the intent to reduce the extent of producer support programmes. The EEC Agricultural Commission has recently introduced a 5% cut in the sugar intervention price.

(Star 24/4/89)

(see SA Cane Growers Association under FARMERS ASSOCIATION above)

11. WOOL/MOHAIR

Mohair:

South Africa remains the world' top producer of mohair. Though the expected demand for mohair was not realised during the 1988/89 season, there was an increase in the total number of bales sold. More than 80% of the 6 026 000 bales auctioned were sold, compared to the 53% of the previous season. The National Marketing Board indicated that the 2,8m Angora goats not only assured a living for 7 000 producers, but placed South Africa in the top spot in the world production.

(FW 23/6/89)

12. WINE

New Liquor Act:

A new liquor Act - Liquor Products Act - has been passed to substitute the old difficult-to-read-and-comprehend Wine, Other Fermented Beverages and Spirits Act, No 25, of 1957. Seven distinctive liquor products are clearly defined in the new Act being - wine, alcoholic fruit drinks such as apple cider, spirits, grape-based liquors, spirit-based liquors, specially authorised liquor and other liquor not named above and for which a special import certificate has to be issued.

To qualify as a wine, the product has to be grape based. Independent producers who have been making so-called orange wine, for instance, will now be aware that their product is not wine, but can be classed under the specially authorised liquors. The new Act also provides for the creation of a Wine and Spirit Board on which private sector has representatives in accordance with state policy of privatisation.

(FW 23/6/89)

13. DAIRY

The prospects of the dairy industry are brighter than in most countries. There is constant growth in the consumption of fresh milk, butter, cheese and milk powder. As a result most products had to be imported. This was said by Dr Kraai van Niekerk, at the Western Cape Milk Producers Union meeting.

(FW 30/6/89)

Milk-Yield Booster:

British dairy farmers will be given a chance to use the milk-yield booster hormone bovine somatotrophin (BST), this year. This follows four years of trials by researchers at the internationally respected **Bernard Weitz Centre** at Reading, near London.

According to senior researcher, Dr Richard Phipps the BST boosted milk yields by an average of 4 kilograms a cow per day with no complications. Meanwhile South Africa has already permitted the use of BST by dairy farmers and Monsanto was given the green light to market BST as a "veterinary-prescription-only" product. The product has been used in the USSR and Czechoslovakia, and South Africa is the first Western country to permit its use.

(FW 16/6 & 23/6/89)

Homestead Dairy plans to enlarge market share:

The Homestead Independent Dairy has resolved to orientate itself more to small retailers including sphaza shops in order to increase their market share. Already they supply Michael Mjwambi, trading as Nyanga Dairy, which in spite of the name delivers mostly in Khayelitsha and Gugulethu.

Homestead spent R750 000 on new equipment (from West Germany) and enlarging its premises. The Dairy's MD - Mr John Jacobs - says they are presently producing 80 000 litres a day with the new equipment and have a capacity of 120 000 litres a day. Pick 'n Pay is still the only supermarket chain supplied by the Homestead.

(CT 10/6/89)

14. TIMBER/PAPER PRODUCTION:

Mixed feelings towards afforestation

Timber production received another bonus boost when Anglo-American-owned Mondi bought 3 farms in the Boston area of Natal. The South African Timber Growers' Association said the continued purchase of land for afforestation is engendered by the strong demand of timber and the anticipated future shortage.

Many farmers in the area have decried the move saying it would mean a loss of agricultural land important to the production of food, depopulation of the platteland and would impact on the flow of the Elands River and those who depend on it for irrigation. However, it is apparent that those farmers approached for sale of their land cannot resist the attractive financial offers from the large timber companies.

(FW 19/5/89)

15. LIVESTOCK

Livestock producers' losses through stock thefts amounted to R41 405 211 in 1988. According to a stock theft report compiled by the Red Meat Producers Organisation a total of 88 007 animals were reported stolen last

year. The breakdown of the loss in sectoral and financial terms is:

22 964	beef cattle	(R26 500 456)
6 900	dairy cattle	(R 7 962 600)
58 143	sheep	(R 6 942 155)

As a result of the loss the Red Meat Producers' Organisation (RPO) is to ask the Minister of Agriculture to amend the Livestock Brands Act, No 87 of 1962, to make the identification of livestock compulsory for all producers. The plan for identification will include branding of cattle, tattooing of sheep and possession of document of identification which has to be kept for a minimum period of 3 years.

(FW 30/6/89)

South American semen for SA Zebu breeds:

South African Zebu breeds will soon benefit from South American knowhow and semen, after a highly successful South American tour by 27 top South African Zebu breeders. The group included representatives of the Afrikaner, Bonsmara, Brahman and Nguni breeders' associations. Their itinerary included Brazil and Argentina.

The objectives of the tour included finalising arrangements for the export of Brazilian Zebu semen to South Africa (which cost R180 000 to finalise) and introducing indigenous South African beef breeds to South America. Closer and wider cooperation between South African and Argentine farmers was also worked out, and consequently South African breeders will exhibit beef breeds at the 1990 Buenos Aires agricultural show.

(FW 23/6/89)

16. FISH:

Gill nets banned in SA waters:

Use of gill nets (called walls of death) for catching fish is banned in SA, according to the Minister of Environment and Water Affairs - Mr Gert Kotze. This is a sequel to a complaint by local fishermen (who are now happy) that the nets decimate tuna stock and leave casualties in the ranks of mammals and reptiles like turtles. The nets were used by fishermen from Japan, South Korea and Taiwan.

(The Argus 16/5/89)

Fish quota increased:

Fishing companies have been officially informed that the 1989 anchovy quota has been revised upwards by a further 50 000t to top 350 000t. The increase in the quota will almost certainly result in the increase in total wholesale earnings which in 1988 passed the magical R1bn for a total harvest of 900 000t. Projections point to a repeat performance in 1989.

(BD 24/4/89)

Natrawl to expand fishing in Mozambique:

Natal Ocean Trawling (Natrawl) would be looking at further expansion of activities in Mozambican waters. Mozambique was only too keen to increase its income from fishing which in the case of Natrawl was a levy paid in

advance and based on the quota of crustaceans which it could catch, says says Natrawl chairman Jack Walsh.

The company has been in Mozambique since the signing of the Nkomati Accord and its authority to fish has been renewed each year.
(CT 30/6/89).

17. TEA/COFFEE

New coffee plantations:

The government has approved a programme to extend existing coffee plantations by 5 400 ha, which will increase the area under coffee to 7 000 ha. Of the new plantings about 5 000 ha will be in self-governing states and Venda, and 400 ha in South Africa, according to the *Chronicles*, the newsletter of the SA Development Trust Corporation.

The total plantations will yield about 9 000 t of coffee, which will enable SA to export surpluses of Arabica coffee. SA is a coffee importing country.
(FW 23/6/89)

18. GAME

A unique multimillion rand game centre has been opened by the Noord-Transvaalse Ko-op (NTK) on the 28 August 1989. Situated in the Melk River area, north of Vaalwater in the northern Transvaal, the new centre will trade as NTK-Waterberg Wildsentrum.

Facilities will include a workshop area, an auction area, administrative complex, veterinary services and game auctions and sales.
(FW 23/6/89)

Leisure group develop exclusive game farm:

One of SA's leading leisure groups - Vacation World - has entered into a contract to purchase a 70% share in a 6 000 ha game farm near Johannesburg. The game farm to be named Roan Lodge is situated near Loskop Dam, and its intended target market will consist of the large corporation and the A and B income groups of the PWV. A spokesman of the company said already there is an increased tendency of large corporations to invest in luxury game farms for the entertainment of overseas clients.
(Star 19/5/89)

19. VEGETABLES:

Potatoes:

The current potato glut will in no way make the Potato Board to use its removal fund of R32m. Rather the board has stepped up its supply to the adjacent Indian Ocean island markets, and it is buying potatoes on a big scale at R2 a pocket for free distribution in Mozambique.

An issue of concern here is that availing the fund will also benefit

newcomers who are not market directed but are looking at potatoes for a solution to problems with other crops.

(FW 12/5/89)

20. TOBACCO

Imports cut:

Tobacco imports have been cut by half, after improvements in the quality of tobacco produced locally. During drought the soil had developed a chlorine problem the tobacco had no marketable value and stocks had to be burned. Farmers concerned received a great measure of aid from the Tobacco Board's stabilisation fund.

(FW 12/5/89)

21. REGIONS:

Natal:

Mass meeting rejects levies:

The livelihood of many East Griqualand farmers could be in jeopardy as a result of a trade embargo imposed by the Transkei Government and because of the insistence of the Maize Board that the district be subjected to controls, with the imposition of the new B area levy. A mass meeting of the farmers in the area rejected the levy and passed a motion of no confidence in the Maize Board. Prior to the meeting, the farmers went on a protest tractor parade.

Mr Hein Odendaal of Cedarville said "it seems one has to set fire to things or throw stones before the authorities take notice and do anything about grievances". Earlier in the day Richmond farmers rejected levies and passed a no-confidence vote in the Maize Board after their fight to remain deregulated had failed. Underberg remained an open area because its production did not exceed 5 000t.

(FW 26/5/89)

22. SOURCES

The primary source for this document was the Farmers Weekly, with additional information from various national and local newspapers.

Argus / WA - The Argus / Weekend Argus
BD - Business Day
CT - Cape Times
CP - City Press
FW - Farmers Weekly
FM - Financial Mail
Sowetan
Star
ST - Sunday Times
WM - Weekly Mail

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