Agri SA

E-nuusbrief / E-newsletter

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Agri SA se E-Nuusbrief word saamgestel uit berigte en brokkies van die Algemene Sake-, Bedryfs- en Landboubesigheidskamers, vir u inligting en verspreiding
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Partners makeing a contribution in various fields within AGRI SA With their financial contributions, these partners have already demonstrated their support for the farmer and agriculture	AGRI SECURITAS TRUST FUND Partners These partners make a contribution towards the safety of the farming community
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Agri SA het groot waardering vir die vennote se betrokkenheid by die organisasie en die breë landbou	

Agri SA se reaksie op verhoogde elektrisiteitstariewe

Mediaverklaring deur Agri SA op 26 Junie 2009

Agri SA het sy ernstige kommer uitgespreek oor die negatiewe uitwerking wat die verhoogde elektrisiteitstariewe op voedselpryse en inflasie gaan meebring, te midde van die ekonomiese resessie waarin die land verkeer. Die reaksie volg op NERSA se aankondiging dat tariewe met gemiddeld 31.3% vanaf 1 Julie hierdie jaar tot 31 Maart 2010 gaan verhoog.

Agri SA president, Johannes Möller waarsku dat die skokaankondiging van NERSA 'n nadelige uitwerking op die bekostigbaarheid van voedsel vir die verbruiker gaan meebring en dat dit tot 'n spiraal van kostestygings in die voedselketting sal lei. Die feit dat die Suid-Afrikaanse Reserwebank die repo-koers onveranderd gelaat het kan ook direk toegeskryf word aan die styging in elektrisiteitstariewe, aangesien dit opwaartse druk op die inflasiekoers inhou. Voedselinflasie, wat hardnekkig hoog bly, is 'n groot bydraer tot algemene inflasie en 'n verdere

styging in voedselpryse as gevolg van die styging in die elektrisiteitstariewe sal die verbruiker verder onder druk plaas.

“Die primêre produsent gaan egter die ergste hieronder ly, aangesien verhoogde insetkoste nie summier in die pryse van landbouprodukte verhaal kan word nie.”

Landbou se huidige besteding aan elektrisiteit beloop nagenoeg R1,1 miljard per jaar. Die gemiddelde styging van 31.3% beteken dat landbou 'n addisionele ongeveer R338,8 miljoen gaan betaal vir elektrisiteit. Munisipaliteite het ook elkeen hulle eie marges en kan die landbou wat via hierdie strukture van elektrisiteit voorsien word, moontlik hoër stygings verwag.

‘n Woordvoerder van Eskom het by navraag aangedui dat die 2ckWh belasting op die verkope van elektrisiteit op die opwekking van nie-hernieubare energie wat in die vorige jaar se staatsbegroting aangekondig is, nou ook geïmplementeer gaan word. Die koste hiervan is gelukkig reeds by die 31.3% styging in berekening gebring.

Agri SA het reeds in ‘n vorige verklaring verwys na die skokgolwe van verlede jaar se kragonderbrekings en sedertdien die drastiese opwaartse aanpassings in Eskom se elektrisiteitstariewe. Die doelstelling van die Wet op die Bestuur van Openbare Finansies, wat ook op Eskom van toepassing is, is daarop gerig om die gesonde bestuur van inkomste, uitgawes, bates, ens. deur openbare ondernemings te verseker. “Dit is derhalwe in openbare belang dat die voldoening van Eskom se bestuur aan die doelstellings van bovermelde Wet asook aan die King-riglyne vir goeie korporatiewe bestuur op ‘n objektiewe wyse gemeet word”, het Möller bygevoeg.

Möller het ten slotte gesê dat die regering as alleen; aandeelhouer van Eskom ‘n groter verpligting het om die instansie met lenings finansieel te ondersteun en die las op die skouers van gebruikers met tariefverhogings te beperk. “Die elektrisiteitskrisis is nog lank nie verby nie en die grootmaatkraggebruikers is steeds verplig om ‘n 10% besparing op elektrisiteitsgebruik teweeg te bring, wat die potensiële groei in die ekonomie alreeds ernstig benadeel het.”

Begrotingpos toespraak deur die Minister van Arbeid in die Parlement

Elize van der Westhuizen, Bestuurder: Menslike Hulpbronne

Die Minister van Arbeid het op 9 Junie 2009 sy begroting aan die Parlement voorgelê en het sy toespraak gewy aan alle werkers wat hul lewens in die werkplek verloor het as gevolg van ongelukke wat vermy kon word.

Die Minister het in sy toespraak aangedui dat hy na maniere sal kyk om tydelike indiensname te hanteer. Die regering skep nie werksgeleenthede nie maar reageer wel op die vraag na arbeid deur bestaande werkgewers.

Hy het aangedui dat hy ook na maatskaplike sekuriteit sal kyk, by voorbeeld werkloosheidsversekering en voorsorgfondse, wat ‘n problem is vir talle werkers. Hierdie is aangeleenthede wat hy wil hanteer op ‘n wyse wat beskerming aan tydelike werkers bied en wat sal verseker dat hulle dieselfde regte geniet as ander in die werksituasie. Hy beoog om voor die einde van 2009 na die Kabinet te gaan met voorstelle vir die wysiging van die Wet op Arbeidsverhoudinge ten einde die saak aan te spreek.

Volgens die Minister mag dit ook nodig wees om ander arbeidswetgewing te wysig. Die implementering van die Wet op Gelyke Indiensneming moet verbeter word deur middel van verdere wysigings soos aanbeveel deur die Kommissie vir Gelyke Indiensneming (CEE). Die Department sal binnekort hersiende regulasies ten opsigte van die Gelyke Indiensnemingsplan en -verslag publiseer. Die Wet op Basiese Diensvoorwaardes kan ook moontlik gewysig word met die oog op groter beskerming van die diensverhouding, veral vir werkers in kwesbare sektore.

‘n Ander kwessie wat aandag verg is die impak wat dit op die landbousektor sal hê. Hy beoog om ‘n ondersoek te loods na die moontlikheid daarvan om ‘n voorsorgfonds by die sektorale vasstelling vir huis- en plaaswerkers in te lyf. Hy wil ook die vryheid van assosiasie vir plaaswerkers versterk om te verseker dat hulle die grondwetlike reg om aan die vakbond van hul keuse te behoort behoorlik kan uitoefen.

Agri SA se Beleidskomitee oor Arbeid sal die beskikbaar making van dokumentasie soos genoem deur die Minister, montior vir hantering.

Parlementêre verslag: 4 - 12 Junie 2009

Annelize Crosby, Agri SA Parlementêre verteenwoordiger, Adviseur: Regs- & Grondsake

Portefeuljekomitee op Landelike Ontwikkeling en Grondsake
Die nuwe Portefeuljekomitee op Landelike Ontwikkeling en Grondsake het op 4 Junie 2009 ‘n kort toeligting deur die Minister van Landelike Ontwikkeling en Grondsake, Mnr GE Nkwinti oor sy mandate, prioriteite en voorgenome benadering ten opsigte van die nuwe portefeulje. Hy het gesê dat die nuwe ministerie en departement die gevolg is van besluite wat in 2008 by die ANC se Polokwane konferensie geneem is.

Die ministerie en departement (voormaliglik bekend as Departement Grondsake – nou Landelike ontwikkeling en Grondsake) se mandaat sluit in: landelike hervorming, toegang tot grond, ‘n toename in produksie op grond, infrastruktuur, armoede-verligting, basiese opleiding, bystand aan plaasbewoners, toegang tot markte, agri-prosessering, landelike finansiering, kleinboer-ontwikkeling, waterhulpbronbestuur, vaardigheidsontwikkeling, toegang tot behuising en werkskepping.

Die ministerie se doelwitte sluit in: die bespoediging van die restitusie-proses, die bespoediging van besitreghervorming, die ondersteuning van grondhervormingsprogramme dmv behoorlike beplannings-inligting, ‘n toename in produksie, voedselsekuriteit, verbeterde ekonomiese infrastruktuur, waardigheid en verhoogte lewenskwaliteit vir landelike bewoners.

Die Minister het baie klem gelê op vennootskappe, eerstens met ander staatsdepartemente (veral landbou en waterwese), maar ook met die privaatsektor. Die begroting op die stadium vir die nuwe departement is relatief klein, maar die ministerie is tans in gesprek met die Tesourie oor meer fondse. Hy het ook klem geplaas op die belangrikheid van samewerking met tradisionele leiers wat ‘n groot invloed in die landelike gebied uitoefen.

Portefeuljekomitees op Landbou, Bosbou en Visserye en die Portefeuljekomitee op Landelike Ontwikkeling en Grondsake
Daar was 'n gesamentlike vergadering van die Portefeuljekomitees op Landbou, Bosbou en Visserye en die Portefeuljekomitee op Landelike Ontwikkeling en Grondsake op 9 Junie 2009. Die vergadering is bygewoon deur die Ministers van Landbou en Landelike Ontwikkeling, Tina Joematt-Pettersson en Mnr Nkwinti, asook deur die twee Adjunk-Ministers Pieter Mulder en Joe Phaala. Die doel van die vergadering was om die begrotingsredes van die twee staatsdepartemente, wat op 17 Junie gedebatteer sal word, te bespreek. Die Departement van Landbou, Bosbou en Visserye het eerste hul voorlegging gemaak. Die Direkteur-Generaal, Me Nduli het 'n oorsig gegee oor die Departement se kernfunksies en prioriteite vir die jaar. Die begroting is ook kortliks aan die Komitee voorgehou. Die DG moes vrae beantwoord oor siektebeheer, ramphulp, landbou-opleiding en die impak van mynaktiwiteite in Mpumalanga op die produksie van voedsel. Die Minister het in antwoord op 'n vraag oor die Land Bank gesê sy is in gesprek met die Minister van Finansies oor die Land Bank. Sy het aangedui dat die Land Bank se rentekoerse te hoog is en die terugbetalingsreelings dikwels onbillik. Ook dat die Land Bank veels te lank neem om lenings goed te keur.

Die Direkteur-Generaal van Grondsake het in sy voorlegging gesê dat daar 82 miljoen hoë kwaliteit landbougrond in die hande van blanke kommersiële boere is. Die teiken vir grondhervorming is om 30% van hierdie grond, dws 24,6 miljoen hektaar teen 2014 aan swartmense oor te dra. Dit beteken dat meer as 3 miljoen hektaar grond jaarliks tot 2014 oorgedra sal moet word. Hy het gesê dat grondpryse wat heeltyd styg in die opsig 'n groot

uitdaging bied. Die Departement het besluit om grondhervormings-begunstigdes nou in 4 kategorieë te verdeel, naamlik:

- Grondlose huishoudings;
- Kommersieël-gereed bestaansboere;
- Kommersiële kleiboere wat wil uitbrei / groter word; en
- Goed-gevestigde swart kommersiële boere.

Beleidsprioriteite van die Departement Grondsake en Landelike Ontwikkeling vir 2009/10, sluit in: 'n Beleid oor buitelandse eienaarskap van grond, gewillige-koper-verkoper beleidsopsies; 'n omvattende landelike ontwikkelingsprogram en die ontwikkeling van 'n Witskrif oor landelike ontwikkeling. Landelike ontwikkelingsverantwoordelikhede waarvoor die departement verantwoordelik sal wees, sluit in, verbeterde ekonomiese- en sosiale infrastruktuur, asook verbeterde institusionele infrastruktuur.

Nuttige skakels

Kontakbesonderhede van die Parlement, Presidensie, Ministers en Adjunk-Minsters, provinsiale- en plaaslike regering
http://www.gcis.gov.za/docs/directories

Begrotingsrede deur die Minister van Landbou, Bosbou en Visserye
http://www.nda.agric.za/doaDev/budget.html

Begrotingsrede deur die Minister van Landelike Ontwikkeling en Grondsake
http://www.dla.gov.za/Documents&Publications/Publications/2009/Minister%20G%20Nkwinti%20-%202009%20Budget%20Vote%20Speech%20-%20Final.pdf

Begrotingsrede deur die Minister van Waterwese en Omgewingsake
http://www.dwaf.gov.za/Communications/MinisterSpeeches/2009/BudgetVote2009.pdf

Begrotingsrede deur die Minister van Arbeid
http://www.labour.gov.za/media-desk/speeches/2009/budget-vote-speech-by-the-honourable-minister-of-labour-membathisi-mdladlana-parliament-cape-town

Agri SA verwerp Minister van Waterwese en Omgewingsake se beskuldigings

Agri SA mediaverklaring op 23 Junie 2009

Agri SA president, Johannes Möller het skerp gereageer op minister Buyelwa Sonjica se beskuldiging dat waterhulpbronne onder druk is as gevolg daarvan dat besproeiingsboere volgens haar in verskeie gevalle water onwettig gebruik. Möller het gesê dat die departement sedert 1999 nog nie daarin geslaag het om bestaande watergebruik te verifieer en te bevestig nie, ondanks hulp wat Agri SA in die verband aangebied het. “Die minister behoort haar eers van die feite te vergewis alvorens beskuldigings na een sektor van die ekonomie geslinger word”

Die minister se aanduiding dat sy met boere oor die aangeleentheid wil raadpleeg skop vanweë hierdie aantygings nie op ‘n goeie voet af nie, het Möller bygevoeg.

Agri SA vind ook die minister se bewering van vyandige verhoudings tussen boere en haar amptenary vreemd. “Agri SA het ‘n Plaasprotokol vir Toegang tot Plase met die regering onderhandel en dit sal goed wees as die minister haar daarvan vergewis. In die verlede het Agri SA se affiliasies bewys dat toegang tot plase op ‘n verantwoordelike wyse nie ‘n probleem is nie, daarvan kan onder andere Statistiek SA met hulle opnames getuig. Dit is egter so dat met inagneming van die veiligheidsituasie, boere nie sonder meer mense op plase sal toelaat nie,” aldus Möller”.

Die feit dat die besproeiingslandbou 62 persent van die beskikbare water gebruik dui verseker nie op ‘n oortreding van enige aard nie, terwyl dit ook nie enige stremming plaas op die beskikbaarstelling van water aan enige ander sektor van die ekonomie nie. Vir solank die water

wel vir besproeiing aangewend word dra dit by tot ekonomiese welvaart en spesifiek werkskepping en voedselsekerheid waarop die regering 'n premie op plaas. "Die landbousektor weier gewoon om hiervoor in die beskuldigdebank geplaas te word" sê Möller.

Vir ooglopende redes wil die landbousektor watervermorsing tot die minimum beperk en maak tewens reeds in watertariewe 'n finansiële bydrae tot waardevermindering van besproeiingsinfrastruktuur. Hierdie fondse behoort juis aangewend te word om die verouderde infrastruktuur waarna die minister verwys op te gradeer, volgens Möller.

Agri SA het reeds die minister versoek vir samesprekings om verbandhoudende probleme met die departement te bespreek wat sedert 2007 onafgehandel is, onder andere die beperking van die oordrag van watergebruiksregte en die gevolglike nadelige uitwerking op voedselsekerheid, werkskepping en die ekonomiese gebruik van 'n skaars hulpbron soos water. "Van hierdie aangeleenthede spruit juis voort uit boere se benutting van verbeterde tegnologie, 'n aspek waaraan die minister groter erkenning behoort te gee."

Möller doen 'n beroep op minister Sonjica om daadwerklik oplossings te soek vir die departement se onvermoë om die Nasionale Waterwet te implementeer. "Daarvoor is Agri SA beskikbaar om 'n konstruktiewe bydrae te lewer".

Eskom se tarief-aansoek kwel landbou

Agri SA mediaverklaring op 12 Junie 2009

Agri SA het kommer oor die impak wat die voorgestelde tariefverhoging van 34 persent deur Eskom sal hê op die land se voedselproduksie en –bekostigbaarheid. Die organisasie verlang ook die objektiewe evaluering van besluitneming wat tot die huidige toedrag van sake aanleiding gegee het.

Boere is gewoonlik in 'n swak posisie om kostestygings wat hulle ervaar, direk in die mark te verhaal. Oor die korttermyn lei verhoogde koste tot druk op hul winsmarges wat op sy beurt produksie kan beperk of tot aanpassings in produksiestelsels lei. Dié tariefverhoging wat deur Eskom aangevra word kan derhalwe die voordeel van 'n 2% jaar-op-jaar daling in die produsenteprysindeks van voedsel op primêre vlak, soos gemeet in April, neutraliseer. Dit het voorspelbare nadelige gevolge vir boere en verbruikers. Mettertyd sal hierdie koste in voedselpryse moet reflekteer wat juis reeds 'n hardnekkige bydraer tot die hoë verbruikersprysinflasie is.

Elektrisiteit is op plaasvlak sowel as in die voedselwaardeketting onontbeerlik. Besproeiingsboere en melkboere se produksiestelsels is besonder afhanklik van betroubare en bekostigbare voorsiening van elektrisiteit. Dit is ook die geval met die koel-opberging vir kwaliteitpreserveringsdoeleindes en vir prosessering van voedsel. Besproeiingsboere se dilemma kan as voorbeeld dien. Hulle word aangemoedig om te meganiseer om sodoende die land se beperkte waterbronne doeltreffender te benut, maar het nou die bykomende las van verhoogde energiekoste wat met sodanige meganisasie verband hou. 'n Terugbeweging na uitgediende stelsels soos vloedbesproeiing sal nie in nasionale belang wees nie. Dit sal noodwendig baie boere noop om versigtig te besin oor investering en toekomstige produksie, wat op sy beurt negatief op plaaslike voedselproduksie kan inwerk.

Agri SA is derhalwe van mening dat die Nasionale Energiereguleerder (Nersa) Eskom se aansoek baie krities moet oorweeg in terme van die land se vermoë om voedsel plaaslik te produseer, sowel as uit 'n voedselbekostigbaarheid en ekonomiese groei perspektief.

Wat Agri SA betref is die skokgolwe van verlede jaar se kragonderbrekings en sedertdien die drastiese opwaaartse aanpassings in Eskom se voorsieningstariewe aanduidend van swak beplanning. Die doelstelling van die Wet op die Bestuur van Openbare Finansies, wat ook op Eskom van toepassing is, is daarop gerig om die gesonde bestuur van inkomste, uitgawes, bates, ensovoorts deur openbare ondernemings te verseker. Die vraag ontstaan of die 34 persent tariefverhoging wat nou aangevra word nodig sou wees indien daar die afgelope paar jaar op strategiese bestuursvlak die regte keuses rondom infrastruktuur-instandhouding en -ontwikkeling geneem was. Dit is derhalwe in openbare belang dat die voldoening van Eskom se

bestuur aan die doelstellings van bovermelde Wet asook aan die King-riglyne vir goeie korporatiewe bestuur op 'n deursigtige en objektiewe wyse gemeet word.

CAIRNSgroep boere druk vir vordering met WHO onderhandelings

Mediaverklaring deur Agri SA op 9 Junie 2009

Pogings om die sukkelende onderhandelings binne die Wêreldhandelsorganisasie (WHO) weer op dreef te kry het die afgelope paar dae in Bali, Indonesië 'n hupstoot gekry tydens 'n ministeriële vergadering van die groep wat onder die leiding van Australië staan. Benewens Ministers van die Cairnsgroep is die vergadering ook bygewoon deur landbouleiers van deelnemende lande, senior VSA onderhandelaars, die Direkteur Generaal van die WHO, Pascal Lamy, en die Indiese handelsminister, Anand Sharma.

Hans van der Merwe, wat Agri SA by die vergadering verteenwoordig het, is van mening dat daar net politieke wil nodig is om die oorblywende gapings in die landbou-onderhandelings te oorbrug aangesien die meeste tegniese werk reeds gedoen is oor kwessies soos uitvoersubsidies, binnelandse ondersteuning en marktoegang. Van die uitstaande aspekte lê op die terreine van beskerming vir sensitiewe produkte van ontwikkelde lande, spesiale produkte van ontwikkelende lande, die aard en toepassing van die spesiale beskermingsmeganisme, tropiese produkte en katoen. Hiervoor is egter ook reeds genoeg inligting op die tafel op grond waarvan begin kan word om keuses te maak.

Volgens hom bly die VSA se posisie egter steeds tentatief en bepalend vir vordering. Dit was egter die konsensus van deelnemers aan die vergadering dat die VSA se leierskap rol toenemend bevraagteken kan word wat druk op die moondheid plaas om inhoud te gee aan President Obama se verbintenis tot 'n regverdiger en veiliger wêreldbedeling, ook op die terrein van handel en ekonomiese ontwikkeling. Ambassadeur Ron Kirk van die VSA het Cairnsgroep-lande egter daarvan verseker dat hy 'n ferm opdrag het om onderhandelings op koers te kry voor die somerreses (Augustus 2009) wat kan lei tot die voltooiing van die Doha-ontwikkelingsrondte.

Politieke inisiatiewe sal derhalwe die volgende paar maande volgehou word deur onder andere 'n parallelle handelsvergadering tydens die komende OECD-leierskap vergadering in Parys, 'n uitgebreide G8-leiersvergadering, 'n G20 vergadering en ander geleenthede wat daarop volg.

Van der Merwe sê dat met die opstel van die landbouleiersinset vir oorweging deur die Cairns Ministersgroep het die RSA veral met Indonesië saamgewerk aan die bewoording van die teks om te verseker dat genoegsame aandag aan die eiesoortige behoeftes van ontwikkelende lande gegee word. "Die Doha-rondte van die WHO maak spesifiek melding van ontwikkeling as 'n prioriteit en hierdie aspek moet 'n sentrale tema bly met die herskryf van die WHO se reëls. Te min raadpleging met en die ontoereikende akkommodering van ontwikkelende lande se behoeftes was tot nou toe ook een van die remskoene wat die finalisering van die onderhandelings vertraag het."

Daar was ook algemene ontevredenheid oor tekens van die hernude gebruik van beskermingsmaatreëls en uitvoersubsidies deur sommige lande te midde van die vraagstukke wat die heersende wêreldwye ekonomiese krisis skep. Die Cairnsgroep is van mening dat vryer handel, veral ten opsigte van landbouprodukte op hierdie tydstip voedselbekostigbaarheid kan verbeter, 'n stimulus wees vir ekonomiese ontwikkeling – veral vir lande wat deur die handelspraktyke van ontwikkelde lande benadeel was – en sodoende 'n positiewe bydrae lewer tot maatskaplike stabiliteit en wêreldwye ekonomiese herstel. Boereleiers het dus sterk standpunt ingeneem teen die hernude gebruik van suiwel-uitvoersubsidies deur die VSA en die EU wat 'n terugwaartse stap verteenwoordig.

Die Cairnsgroep se Ministers het 'n beroep op landbouleiers gedoen om druk vol te hou vir 'n ambisieuse en spoedige voltooiing van die Doha-ontwikkelingsrondte, veral deur interaksie met ondersteuningsgroepe in prominente lande wat vordering terughou.

Die dokument CAIRNS GROUP BALI COMMUNIQUÉ is beskikbaar op Agri SA se webblad http://www.agrisa.co.za/Dokumente/Cairns.pdf

AGRI SA'S RESPONSE TO ELECTRICTY TARIFF HIKE

Media release by Agri SA on 26 June 2009

Agri SA has expressed grave concern regarding the negative impact that the increased electricity tariff will have on food prices and inflation, amid the economic recession experienced at present. This reaction followed on Nersa's announcement that tariffs would increase by 31,3%, on average, effective from 1 July this year until 31 March 2010.

Agri SA President Johannes Möller warned that Nersa's shock announcement would have a negative effect on the affordability of food for the consumer and would lead to a spiral of cost increases within the food chain. The fact that the South African Reserve Bank had left the repo rate unchanged can also be directly attributed to the increase in electricity tariffs as it implies upward pressure on the inflation rate. Food inflation, which remains high, is a major contributor to general inflation, while a further increase in food prices, as a result of higher electricity tariffs, will place the consumer under even greater pressure.

"The primary producer will be worst affected, however, as increased input costs cannot be summarily recovered in the price of farm produce."

Agriculture currently spends approximately R1,1 billion a year on electricity. The average increase of 31,3% means that this sector will pay an additional R338,8 million for electricity. In addition, each municipality has its own margin, and agriculture, which in some cases is served via these structures, could expect further increases.

In response to enquiries, an Eskom spokesperson indicated that the 2ckWh tax on the sale of electricity from the generation on non-renewable energy announced in last year's national budget, would also now be implemented. Fortunately this cost has already been incorporated in the 31,3% increase.

Agri SA had in an earlier statement referred to the shock waves caused by last year's power disruptions, followed by the drastic upward adjustments in Eskom's electricity tariffs. The intention of the Public Finance Management Act, which also applies to Eskom, is to ensure sound management of income, expenditure, assets, etc. by public entities. "It is therefore in the public interest that Eskom management's compliance with the objectives of the Act as well as the King guidelines for good corporate governance be measured in an objective manner," said Möller.

In conclusion, Möller said the government, as sole shareholder of Eskom, has a greater obligation to support the entity financially and to limit the burden of tariff increases on consumers. "The electricity crisis is far from over and large-scale users are still obliged to show a 10% saving on electricity consumption, which has already seriously undermined potential economic growth."

BUDGET VOTE SPEECH BY THE MINISTER OF LABOUR IN PARLIAMENT

Elize van der Westhuizen, Manager: Human Resources

The Minister of Labour presented his budget vote speech in Parliament on 19 June 2009. He dedicated his speech to all the workers who had died at the workplace because of preventable accidents.

In his speech the Minister indicated that he would be looking at ways to deal with temporary employment services. He added that the government does not create jobs, but responds to the demands for labour by existing employers.

He said he would be looking at access to social security, for example unemployment insurance and provident funds, which was also a problem for many workers. These are issues that must be dealt with in a way that offers protection to temporary workers and ensures that they have the same rights as others in a work situation. He intends to go to Cabinet before the end of 2009 with proposed amendments to the Labour Relations Act to deal with this issue.

He said that amendments to other labour laws might also be necessary. Implementation of the Employment Equity Act should be improved by way of further amendments, as suggested by the Commission for Employment Equity (CEE). The department will soon be publishing revised regulations dealing with the employment equity plan and report. Changes may also be required to the Basic Conditions of Employment Act to further protect the employment relationship, especially for workers in vulnerable sectors.

Another issue that requires attention is the impact that this will have on the agricultural sector. He intends to initiate an investigation into the possible incorporation of a provident fund into the sectoral determination for domestic and farm workers. He will also consider strengthening freedom of association for farm workers to ensure that their constitutional right to belong to the trade union of their choice can be properly exercised.

Agri SA's Policy Commitee on Labour will monitor the release of documentation mentioned by the minister to deal with it.

PARLIAMENTARY REPORT: 4 - 12 JUNE 2009

Annelize Crosby, Agri SA Parliamentary representative, Adviser: Legal & Land Affairs

Portfolio Committee on Rural Development and Land Affairs

On 4 June 2009 the Minister of Rural Development and Land Affairs, Mr GE Nkwinti, provided elucidation on the mandates, priorities and proposed approach of the new portfolio to the Portfolio Committee on Rural Development and Land Affairs, in the form of a brief submission. He said the new ministry and department had been created as a result of decisions taken in 2008 at the ANC's Polokwane conference.

The mandate of the ministry and department (formerly known as the Department of Land Affairs, and now as the Department of Rural Development and Land Affairs) includes the following: rural reform, access to land, an increase in production on land, infrastructure, poverty relief, basic training, assistance to farm dwellers, access to markets, agri-processing, rural finance, small-farmer development, water resource management, skills development, access of housing and job creation.

The ministry's objectives are as follows: acceleration of the restitution process, acceleration of tenure reform, support to land reform programmes through proper planning information, an increase in production, food security, improved economic infrastructure, dignity and better quality of life for rural inhabitants.

The Minister placed strong emphasis on partnerships, firstly with other state departments (especially Agriculture and Fisheries) but also with the private sector. At this stage the budget available to the department is relatively small, but the ministry is in discussion with the Treasury regarding more funds. He also stressed the importance of co-operation with traditional leaders who exert considerable influence in rural areas.

Joint meeting of the Portfolio Committees on Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and the Portfolio Committee on Rural Development and Land Affairs

A joint meeting of the Portfolio Committees on Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and the Portfolio Committee on Rural Development and Land Affairs was held on 9 June 2009. The meeting was attended by the Ministers of Agriculture and Rural Development, Ms Tina Joematt-Pettersson and Mr Nkwinti, as well as the two Deputy Ministers, Dr Pieter Mulder and Mr Joe Phaala. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the budget votes of the two state departments, which will be debated on 17 June. The Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries made their submission first. The Director-General, Ms Nduli, provided an overview on the department's core functions and priorities for the year. The budget was also presented briefly to the Committee. The Director-General had to answer questions relating to disease control, disaster aid, agricultural training and the impact of mining activities in Mpumalanga in the production of food. With reference to a question regarding the Land Bank, the Minister said she was in discussion with the Minister of Finance regarding the bank. She indicated that the Land

Bank's interest rates were too high and that repayment arrangements were often unreasonable. Moreover, the bank took far to long to approve loans.

The Director-General of Land Affairs said in his presentation that there were 82 million hectares of high-quality agricultural land in the hands of white commercial farmers. The target for land reform was to transfer 30% of this land (24,6 million hectares) to black people by 2014. This means that more than 3 million hectares must be transferred to blacks annually before 2014. He said ever-increasing land prices posed a challenge in this regard. The department has now decided to divide land reform beneficiaries into the following categories:

- Landless households;
- Commercially-ready subsistence farmers;
- Small commercial farmers who wish to expand / grow; and
- Well-established black commercial farmers.

The Department of Land Affairs and Rural Development's policy priorities for 2009/10 include a policy on foreign ownership of land; willing buyer, willing seller policy options; a comprehensive rural development programme and the development of a White Paper on rural development. The department's rural development responsibilities include improved economic and social infrastructure as well as improved institutional infrastructure.

Useful links

Contact details on Parliament, Presidency, ministers, deputy ministers, provincial and local governments
http://www.gcis.gov.za/docs/directories

Budget vote by the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries
http://www.nda.agric.za/doaDev/budget.html

Budget vote by the Minister of Rural Development and Land Reform
http://www.dla.gov.za/Documents&Publications/Publications/2009/Minister%20G%20Nkwinti%20-%202009%20Budget%20Vote%20Speech%20-%20Final.pdf

Budget vote by the Minister of Water & Environmental Affairs
http://www.dwaf.gov.za/Communications/MinisterSpeeches/2009/BudgetVote2009.pdf

Budget vote by the Minister of Labour
http://www.labour.gov.za/media-desk/speeches/2009/budget-vote-speech-by-the-honourable-minister-of-labour-membathisi-mdladlana-parliament-cape-town

AGRI SA DISMISSES ALLEGATIONS BY MINISTER OF WATER & ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

Agri SA media release on 23 June 2009

Agri SA President Johannes Möller has responded sharply to Minister Buyelwa Sonjica's allegation that water resources are under pressure because irrigation farmers in various cases use water illegally. Möller said that the department had since 1999 not succeeded in verifying and confirming existing water use, despite the assistance offered by Agri SA in this regard. "The Minister should first make sure of her facts before hurling accusations at one sector of the economy."

Given these allegations, the Minister's indication that she would like to consult with farmers on the matter does not represent a good start, he added.

Agri SA also finds the Minister's claims regarding hostility between farmers and her officials very odd. Agri SA had negotiated a Farm Protocol for access to farms with the government and it would be good if the Minister could familiarise herself with it. In the past Agri SA's affiliates proved that access to farms in a responsible manner did not pose a problem, as shown by,

among others, by Statistics SA's surveys. It is true, however, that given the security situation, farmers will not allow people access to farms without good reason," said Möller.

The fact that irrigation for agricultural purposes accounts for 62% of available water is certainly not indicative of an offence of any nature, while it also does not reduce the availability of water for any other sector of the economy. For as long as water is used for irrigation purposes, it contributes to economic welfare and specifically job creation and food security, on which government places a premium. "The agricultural sector refuses to be blamed for this," said Möller.

For obvious reasons, the agricultural sector wants to confine water wastage to a minimum and is in fact already, by way of water tariffs, making a financial contribution to the depreciation of irrigation infrastructure. According to Möller, these funds should be used to upgrade the aging infrastructure to which the Minister refers.

Agri SA has already requested the Minister for a meeting to discuss relevant problems with the department which had remained unresolved since 2007, including restrictions on the transfer of water use entitlements and the resultant negative impact on food security, job creation and the economic use of a scarce resource such as water. "Some of these aspects in fact emanate from the improved technology used by farmers – an aspect to which the minister should give greater acknowledgment."

Möller called on Minister Sonjica to seek an effective solution to her department's failure to implement the National Water Act. "Agri SA is available to make a constructive contribution in this regard."

ESKOM TARIFF-APPLICATION CONCERNS AGRICULTURE

Agri SA media release on 12 June 2009

Agri SA is concerned about the impact of the recommended tariff increase of 34 percent by Eskom on the country's food production and food affordability. The organisation would also like an objective evaluation on the decisions that lead to the current situation.

Farmers are usually in a weak position to recover cost increases experience by them, directly from the market. Over the short term increasing costs lead to pressure on farmers' profit margins, which again can lead to decreasing production or an adjustment in production systems. The tariff increase requested by Eskom can therefore neutralise the benefit of the 2 percent year-on-year decrease of the produce price index, as measured in April. This will have a negative impact on farmers and consumers. With time this increasing costs will have to be reflected in food prices, which is still a sticky contributor to high consumer price inflation.

Electricity is on both farm level and in the food value chain an essential necessity. Irrigation and dairy farmers' production systems are heavily dependent on the reliable and affordable supply of electricity. This is also the case with the cold storage, for quality preservation, and processing of food. The dilemma of irrigation farmers can serve as an example. Irrigation farmers are encouraged to mechanise, in order to use the country's limited water sources more effectively, but now have the added burden of increasing energy costs associated with increased mechanisation. Reverting back to outdated systems such as flood irrigation will not be in the national interest. Farmers will then decide cautiously about investing and future production, which in turn will have a negative impact on the local production of food.

Agri SA is therefore of the opinion that the National Energy Regulator (Nersa) should consider Eskom's application carefully in terms of the country's ability to produce food locally, as well as from the perspective of affordable food and economic growth.

In Agri SA's opinion the shock waves of last year's disruptions in power supply and the resulting increases in Eskom's tariffs is the result of poor planning. The aim of the Public Finance Management Act, which is also applicable to Eskom, is to ensure the sound management of revenue, expenditure, assets etc by public institutions. The question can be asked if the 34 percent increase that is now being asked, would be necessary if the right decisions were made

on strategic level with regards to infrastructure maintenance and development. It is therefore in public interest that the management of Eskom is evaluated with regards of the abovementioned Act, and the also in respect of the King-guideline for good corporative management, in a transparent and objective manner.

CAIRNS GROUP PUSHES FOR PROGRESS WITH WTO NEGOTIATIONS

Media release by Agri SA on 9 June 2009

Attempts to get lagging World Trade Organisation (WTO) negotiations back on track have in recent days received a boost in Bali, Indonesia at a ministerial meeting of the group under chairmanship of Australia. Besides the Ministers of the Cairns group, the meeting was attended by farmer leaders of the participating countries, senior USA negotiators, the Director-General of the WTO, Pascal Lamy, and the Indian trade minister, Anand Sharma.

Hans van der Merwe, representing Agri SA, is of the opinion that it simply required a political will to resolve the outstanding gaps in agricultural negotiations as most technical work on aspects such as export subsidies, domestic support and market access, had already been completed. Some of the outstanding matters are in respect of the protection of sensitive products of developed countries, special products of developing countries, the nature and enforcement of the special safeguard mechanism, tropical products and cotton. However, enough information was already on the table to begin exercising choices in this regard.

According to Van der Merwe, the USA's position remains tentative and a determining factor for progress. There was, however, consensus among participants at the meeting that the USA's leadership role could be increasingly questioned, which brings pressure to bear on the USA to give substance to President Obama's commitment to a fairer and safer global dispensation, also in respect of trade and economic development. Ambassador Ron Kirk of the USA assured Cairns group countries that he had been given firm instructions for negotiations to get off the ground before the summer recess (August 2009), which could lead to the completion of the Doha development round.

Political initiatives will therefore continue during the next few months, including a parallel trade meeting during the coming OECD leadership meeting in Paris, an expanded G8 leadership meeting, a G20 meeting and other events to follow.

Van der Merwe said South Africa had, with the formulation of the agricultural leader input for consideration by the Cairns ministers group, co-operated in particular with Indonesia on the wording of the text to ensure that sufficient attention was given to the distinct needs of developing countries. "The Doha round of the WTO makes specific reference to development as a priority and this aspect must remain a central theme when the WTO rules are redrafted. Too little consultation and the inadequate accommodation of developing countries' needs have to date been inhibiting factors hampering finalisation of the negotiations."

There was also general unhappiness about indications of renewed use of protection measures and export subsidies by some countries amid issues that had created the current global economic crisis. The Cairns group was of the opinion that free trade, especially in respect of agricultural products, could at this point improve food affordability and serve as a stimulus for economic development – especially for countries negatively affected by the trade practices of developed countries – and so-doing make a positive contribution to social stability and global economic recovery. Farmer leaders have therefore adopted a strong stance against the renewed use of dairy export subsidies by the USA and EU, which represents a backward step.

The Cairns group's ministers urged agricultural leaders to continue exerting pressure for an ambitious and speedy completion of the Doha development round, especially through interaction with support groups in prominent countries which are hampering progress.

The document CAIRNS GROUP BALI COMMUNIQUÉ is available on Agri SA's website http://www.agrisa.co.za/Dokumente/Cairns.pdf

RSG Landbou-program

RSG Landbou bestaan uit aktualiteitsonderhoude en landbounuus wat van Maandae tot Donderdae van 12:30-12:44 uitgesaai word op RSG. Die aanbieder is Hennie Maas. Die hoofborge Agri SA, MPO, AgriBonus en Graan SA is verantwoordelik vir die verskaffing van die progamme se redaksionele inhoud. Die programinhoud en nuus word gekoördineer en saamgestel deur Agri Connect.

Landboufokus
Landboufokus word van Maandae-Vrydae van 4:45-4:55 op RSG uitgesaai. Die program bestaan uit interessante onderhoude oor verskillende landboubedrywe. Die program word aangebied deur Hennie Maas en word saamgestel deur Agri Connect.

Agriculture Today

SABC 2 Maandae – Vrydae 05:45
SABC Africa (kanaal 53) Sondae 12:30

Ons spreek oudergewoonte landboukwessies aan, kyk na die jongste markpryse.
We have a look at what the weather holds.
Lekker boer! / Enjoy your farming!

Hierdie nuusbrief word saamgestel en uitgereik deur Agri SA Korporatiewe Skakeling
This newsletter is compiled and issued by Agri SA Corporate Liaison