

PRESS RELEASE

Thursday 25 Aug 2011

Free State Fires, 22-24 August

Free State Agriculture response and actions

Free State Agriculture is addressing the immediate humanitarian and stock feed needs of farmers affected by fires in the last few days.

Our condolences go out to the 3 people who have died, and well wishes to those hospitalised as result of the recent fires.

Regional representatives in areas affected have been contacted to obtain the following information for the FSagri office to coordinate media, donations and logistics:

- 1) Local contact person for media liaison
- 2) Local contact person for humanitarian relief
- 3) Local contact person for organising fodder relief logistics (i.e. handling/sourcing donations and distribution to most affected framers)

Main actions:

- 1) **Emergency humanitarian relief** - data collection, needs assessment and coordination of actions
 - a. List of affected farmers / farmers family / farm workers / helpers
 - i. **Lives lost** (please provide to FSagri office, contact person – next of kin / local FA / church)
 - ii. **Hospitalised** (please provide to FSagri office, contact person – next of kin / local FA / church)
 - iii. **Other needs i.e. Homeless** (farmers and farm workers – relief required e.g. shelter, food, clothing)
- 2) **Emergency feed relief**
 - a. List of all affected farmers (indicate FSA members – 1st priority)
 - i. Extent of burning (% grazing destroyed)
 - ii. Physical infrastructure destroyed (animal shelter, fences, etc.)
 - iii. Ability to obtain alternative grazing / feed from Local / neighbouring Agricultural Association fodder bank
 - b. List of neighbouring FA's that have fodder-banks:
 - i. How many bales available (please suggest / arrange transport)
 - c. Gather and co-ordinate other donations

The RPO, MPO & NWGA will be working closely with the FS-Agriculture structures on the ground in collecting member information and coordinating fodder donations and distribution.

Donations:

Free State Agriculture has already obtained a donation from Voermol of a molasses product that makes old bales more palatable, as well as other offers of transport, fodder and grazing.

We wish to thank all who have already contacted us for their quick response and generosity.

We are still finalising figures of actual areas burnt that we can plan the main drop off points and logistics for the donations. Any offers of further donations will be welcomed.

Current estimates:

Current estimates of the area burnt in the Free State are **117 943 ha** so far.

Figure 1. below is a Map of the fires that have burnt in the Free State 19-24 August as obtained from the AFIS website <http://afis.meraka.org.za/> 11/08/24am (note boundaries are FPA and not municipal boundaries).

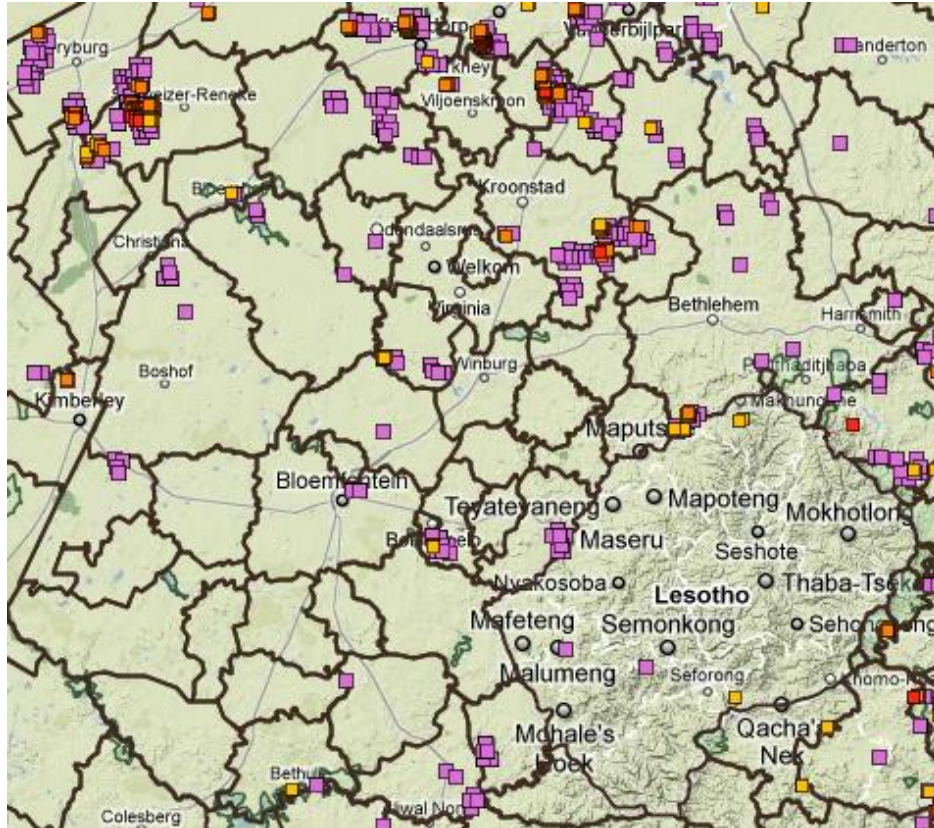


Figure 1. AFIS fire map of recent Free State Fires

Areas worst affected:

- Vredefort 22 000 ha
- Kroonstad 12 000 ha
- Memel 8 000 ha
- Koppies 7 000 ha
- Edenville 6 000 ha
- Zastron 10 000 ha (inc. Rouxville)
- Dewetsdorp 5 000 ha (mostly started on emerging farmers farms who were not present)

Cause of fires and precautions:

The main cause of the recent fires according to the DAFF Veld and Forest Fire Act compliance Manager, Malcolm Procter (076 498 3383 / ProcterM@dwa.gov.za) are the uncontrolled disposal of spent ashes by farm workers and commonage dwellers, fires spreading from municipal dump sites and ESKOM fires. Children also need to be sternly disciplined regarding the making and playing with fire.

Mr. Procter's National DAFF office in Bloemfontein together with the Provincial DAFF disaster Management Office will be gathering all fire statistics through the local Fire Protection Associations (FPA's). If an area is declared a disaster area, the longer term application forms for fire disaster relief

will be sent out through the local extension officer network in collaboration with the Farmers Associations for data collection and verification.

In the event of further fires:

In the event of further fires, immediately contact your local FPA who will, if necessary, dispatch Working on Fire (WoF). Please see attached RE the procedures for dispatching WoF.

Legal action:

Free State Agriculture is also advising its members to follow legal steps where they suspect in any way that a fire was started as a result of negligence / deliberate arson, in accordance with advice from DAFFs offices, following the guidelines issued by AgriSA below:

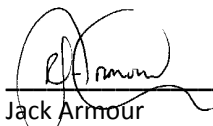
“Agri SA wil graag ‘n beroep op u doen om u lede aan te moedig en te adviseer om waar die vermoede bestaan dat brandstigting die oorsaak van ‘n veldbrand was,

- 1. dit onverwyld by hulle **plaaslike polisie aan te meld** en*
- 2. seker te maak dat ‘n **saaknommer** daarvoor ontvang word.*
- 3. Dit word ook aanbeveel dat **foto’s van die skade** geneem word wat as bewysstukke in ‘n moontlike ondersoek en hofsak gebruik kan word.*

Indien lede van mening is dat sodanige sake nie die nodige aandag van die plaaslike polisie kry nie, moet dit skriftelik met saaknommers aan provinsiale organisasies voorsien word vir verdere hantering op provinsiale vlak. Indien die prosedure nie die nodige uitwerking het nie, kan sodanige sake skriftelik gemotiveerd met saaknommers en ‘n beskrywing van die omvang van die skade aan Agri SA voorsien word wat sodanige sake op nasionale vlak sal bevorder.”

Offers of donations and logistics queries to please be directed to Carmen Frylinck at our offices on 051 444 4609 or carmen@vslandbou.co.za.

Issues by:



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