

## **IDC to support drought and flood affected farmers**

South Africa has allocated R750 million to assist farmers affected by floods and drought in some parts of the country, the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) said in a statement recently.

According to the statement R250 million would be allocated via financial provider Landbank for primary agriculture, while R500 million would be made available through the IDC directly for agro-processing companies.

The IDC said businesses have until February 2012 to apply for the relief, which comes in the form of a loan repayable over a 10-year period.

Industry officials say floods have cost the farming sector about R2,8 billion in damages this year, and farmers were hoping for a government bailout. This is part of the R750 million flood and drought relief fund announced by the IDC recently. – [www.idc.co.za](http://www.idc.co.za)

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## **Fewer people employed on farms**

A survey by the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) has found that the number of people employed on commercial farms has dropped by 27%.

Based on data sourced from Statistics South Africa, the number of people employed in commercial farms between 1993 and 2007 dropped from 1,1 million to 796 806.

The survey said all provinces, with the exception of Gauteng, saw a decrease in the number of people working on farms.

“In Gauteng, the number of people working on farms in 1993 was 34 302, increasing to 34 936 in 2007, or by 2%. In 2007, farm workers in Gauteng accounted for only 4% of all commercial farm workers in the country,” the SAIRR survey said.

The biggest drop was found to be in Mpumalanga, where the figure declined by 45%, with a decline of 39% in both the Free State and KwaZulu-Natal between 1993 and 2007.

“Also, a similar phenomenon was seen with regard to the number of farms, which declined from 57 987 in 1993 to 39 982 in 2007, a decrease of 31%,” the survey said. – *I-Net Bridge*

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## **Farm workers wage increased**

The Department of Labour’s amendment to the Sectoral Determination has brought smiles to more than 600 000 farm workers whose wages were increased when the changes were effected on 1 March 2011.

The Sectoral Determination categorises farm workers’ wages in three rates, being hourly, weekly and monthly. The hourly rate was increased from R6,74 to R7,04, while the weekly

rate rose from R303,84 to R317,51, and the monthly rate of R1 316,69 was increased to R1 375,94.

In a statement, Page Boikanyo, the department's spokesperson, said the wages in this sector are linked to the consumer price index (CPI) as the base, and at present it stands at 3,5%.

The wage increases are determined by utilising the CPI plus 1% and this means that the new minimum wage is 4,5% higher than the current rate. – [www.labourguide.co.za](http://www.labourguide.co.za)

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### **Avian flu virus detected in Western Cape**

A strain of the H5N2 avian flu virus has been detected in ostriches and chickens in the Western Cape, the department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) said in a recent press statement.

According to Western Cape Department of Agriculture spokesman Wouter Kriel, the H5N2 virus was initially detected on five farms with approximately 5 000 ostriches in the Oudtshoorn area.

“The birds will have to be destroyed as quickly as possible to prevent the further spread of the disease,” he said.

“This incident has been reported to the EU as our major trading partner, and the OIE. Unfortunately, this means that the export of ostrich meat, in accordance with the agreement with the EU, has been suspended until the situation can be resolved,” the department says.

The outbreak is being handled in partnership with the Western Cape veterinary authorities and the industry to ensure public health, food security and poultry health.

Movement of all ratites (ostrich family) is suspended with immediate effect, unless covered by a Red Cross permit.

“The public is hereby requested not to panic, as the department is effectively dealing with the outbreak. Relevant industry members and the poultry industry in general are requested to cooperate with departmental officials in dealing with the disease outbreak,” says Steve Galane, acting chief director: stakeholder relations and communication of DAFF. – [www.ncid.ac.za](http://www.ncid.ac.za)

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### **North West supports dairy transformation initiative**

The North West Department of Agriculture and Rural Development says it supports commitments to back the transformation of the dairy industry with the aim of further developing opportunities and increasing the participation of emerging farmers in the industry.

This emerged during the recently held Dairy Transformation Workshop, which was attended by the main role players in the dairy industry. The workshop was part of a consultative

process to jointly develop a strategy as a means of supporting the national dairy transformation programme.

The purpose of the workshop was to solicit inputs from all role players in the dairy industry, who include, among other farmer organisations, the Milk Producers' Organisation (MPO), the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA), municipalities, academic institutions, financial institutions and other government departments. The concept document on the envisaged dairy transformation strategy was presented by Milk South Africa.

Dr Poncho Mokaila, chief director for agricultural support services in the department, said this comes amid the global perspective of the recovering economy and climate change, which has impacted adversely on the fight against hunger.

Presenting the draft strategy, Godfrey Rathogwa of Milk South Africa said the document, which is centred on the transformation of the industry, is currently a multi-stakeholder responsibility, where all role players are expected to participate by making inputs and contributing for the advantage and development of emerging dairy farmers.

The North West province is expected to have concluded its final dairy strategy, which will form the development of the National Dairy Transformation Strategy by August this year.  
– *press release*

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### **Never use dettol to treat lumpy skin**

The North West MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development, Boitumelo Tshwene, cautioned farmers to never use Dettol or any other unauthorised treatment on their livestock as a way of curing lumpy skin disease.

This warning follows a number of sporadic outbreaks of the disease reported since the beginning of the heavy rains in December last year and early this year, and information on some farmers reported to be using Dettol to treat the condition.

“We refute with the strongest words possible, the popular belief that injecting animals with Dettol is effective and useful in treating the disease,” the MEC said, and he encouraged farmers to rely on their local veterinarians for accurate information or advice on the treatment of this disease.

Lumpy skin disease is a viral disease of cattle that is transmitted by mosquitoes. Once the disease is in existence, transmission is facilitated by close proximity of sick animals and is transmitted by saliva. Feeding from saliva contaminated grass can also transmit the disease.

Lumpy skin disease has a five to six year cycle and is usually preceded by heavy rainfalls and the upsurge in the mosquito population. The clinical sign of the disease in infected animals is usually fever. – [www.nwpg.gov.za](http://www.nwpg.gov.za) 