



Media release

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Announcement of release of state land for land reform purposes

Agri SA welcomed the announcement by Minister Thoko Didiza that 700 000 ha of state land will be made available for agricultural purposes. The organisation also welcomed the proposed inquiry into state land already occupied.

Willem de Chavonnes Vrugt, chair of Agri SA's Centre of Excellence: Land, cautioned against corruption and said it is important when selecting beneficiaries to ensure that land is used productively for farming purposes. "It is regrettable that district land reform committees in which organised agriculture had been represented are no longer in place. The private sector and organised agriculture can play a valuable role in the selection of beneficiaries and support for such beneficiaries. Agri SA would like to see district land committees making use of such expertise," added De Chavonnes Vrugt.

Agri SA also welcomed the option to purchase that will be afforded to beneficiaries. The department, however, has a poor track record when it comes to managing leases. The organisation took note of the Minister's intention to conclude written lease agreements with beneficiaries within 30 days. In the past, beneficiaries had often not received written agreements. Agri SA is in favour of awarding full title to beneficiaries.

The undertaking that the land would be managed productively for farming purposes, is also positive. De Chavonnes Vrugt reiterated that agricultural land was a scarce resource and that it was crucial that available land be used productively in a sustainable manner.

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