

Premier, provincial government and FSA wants to build relationship

Deep-seated concern about the country and South Africa's status as a Constitutional democracy was one of the main issues that Dan Kriek, president of Free State Agriculture (FSA), focused on during a meeting with Free State Premier, Ace Magashule, and a team of MECs and department heads on 18 June 2015. The meeting followed after the Premier indicated to FSA that he would like to meet with farmers on the 50/50 land reform model. As a first step, FSA suggested to him that he should meet with the organisation's executive management.



Constitutional crisis

Kriek focused on the founding provisions of the Constitution as well as on Article 83 of the Constitution that focuses on the obligations of the President of South Africa. He especially focused on the fact that according to the founding provisions South Africa as a democratic state is founded on the values of supremacy of the Constitution and the rule of law. Furthermore he focused on Article 83 a and b, according to which the President of the country must "uphold, defend and respect" the Constitution.

He indicated to Magashule that he is a very worried man, as with the events around Nkandla, the circumvention of the Public Protector as well as the events around Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir "government has lead South African into a full blown Constitutional crisis."

The meeting was very positively experienced by both parties. FSA's executive spoke directly about issues of concern and expressed the hope that more such talks will take place in future. Agriculture MEC, Msebenzi Zwane, remarked that he was grateful for the positive attitude he experienced and he committed himself to further operation of the advisory committee on agriculture of which FSA forms part.

Problems experienced with the Masilonyana and Mohakare municipalities with regards to evaluation rolls as well as land

taxes were taken up with the MEC for Cooperative Governance, Traditional Affairs and Human Settlements, Olly Mlamleli. The organisation is committed to use all mechanisms in place to address the disputes with municipalities. Mlamleli undertook that she will take the issue up with the municipalities. FSA also emphasized that good relationships exist with other municipalities in the province.

Better cooperation forms part of future plans

Regarding the 50/50 land reform model, Kriek indicated to Magashule that FSA as well as AgriSA are working on workable alternative proposals. Martin Detering, chairperson of FSA's Land Reform and BEE Committee, invited Magashule and his team on a tour of the many alternative projects that already exist in the province. Magashule accepted the invitation, and FSA hopes that the tour will take place soonest.

MEC for Social Development, Sisi Ntombela, remarked that she was very excited to see from FSA's agenda that FSA is in conversation with Afasa and that better cooperation forms part of future plans. He indicated to the executives that they were the key to address poverty in the province and she thanked farmers for all they do to help their local communities on a daily basis. Ntombela and FSA committed themselves to better cooperation and our Social Development Committee will meet with Ntombela in the near future to discuss planned projects. The positive cooperation that exists between farmers and the Police was also highlighted by Sandile Msibi, the Head of the Department of Transport, Police and Safety.

At the end of the meeting both Magashule and FSA's teams recognised that agriculture is the economic driver of the province, and that the sector should reside under the economic cluster of the province. It should thus be approached that way. FSA would like to express the hope that all the commitments that were made during the meeting, will be tended to speedily.

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