

## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

**Date: 24/07/07**

### **Commercial Agriculture Census gets underway**

Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) will conduct a comprehensive Commercial Agriculture Census from no less than 60 000 farming units in the formal agricultural business sector. Information will be collected by means of a questionnaire, which will be posted to respondents.

The Stats SA Business Register has been updated in conjunction with other role players in the industry, and it will be used as the population frame within the sector. This postal survey will commence in August and the preliminary results will be made available in June 2009. All farming units registered for Value Added Tax (VAT) and/or Income Tax (IT) will be included in the census.

The Agricultural sector remains one of the key contributors of economic growth of the country and the data collected will be effective in identifying areas of challenge within the farming fraternity which may assist in managing the interests of agriculture and of farmers at national and provincial level. The information generated will among others lay a basis for evaluation on the current status of production, labour, farming, expenditure, farming debt etc. It will additionally give indication on the developmental needs relating to infrastructure and resource capacity.

Stats SA collects, processes, analyses and disseminates agricultural statistics which assist stakeholders in key areas of policy formulation to amongst others:

- determine food security;
- measure the productive use of the land;
- measure contribution of the agricultural sector in the economy;
- calculate the GDP estimates;
- assess the level of farming debt; and
- address job security

Additionally, the information will assist users to plan, monitor and evaluate their work to enhance decision making and policy formulation.

As an agency responsible for collection, processing and dissemination of official statistics, Stats SA, works under the umbrella of the Statistics Act, (Act No. 6 of 1999). The collected data is based on size and use of the land, production, demographics,

employment and financial statistics. The information is collected and handled under section 17 of the Statistics Act where the supplied information remains confidential to Stats SA and may therefore not be disclosed to any individual, household, organ of state, business or any other organisation. This information may be disclosed by the Statistician General for statistical purposes. Also:

- the name, address or any other means by which the respondents may be identified is deleted;
- any person who is involved in the collection of, or who, may use, that information or data, must first take an oath of confidentiality irrespective of whether he or she has taken an oath of confidentiality in terms of any other law; and the Statistician-General is satisfied that the confidentiality of that information or data will not be impaired.

On successful completion of the survey, the size and contribution of the formal agricultural business sector to the South African economy will be determined. Furthermore, provincial information on agricultural activity of farm businesses operation in the business sector will be at the disposal of stakeholders who require it to advance their plans.

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