

AgriSA concerned about suspension of top official

Agri South Africa (AgriSA) is concerned about the impact that the suspension of the agriculture director-general will have on the industry, the farming body's president, Johannes Moller, said yesterday. The Agriculture Ministry said on Wednesday that director-general Mike Mlangana had been suspended with immediate effect, just under a year after he was appointed. The ministry did not disclose specific reasons for the suspension.



Image Source: [Farmer's Weekly](#)

Moller said Mlangana had told him on Tuesday that he was due to have a meeting with Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries Minister Senzeni Zokwana to discuss some issues.

"From an AgriSA view, whatever it is, we hope that the minister and the director-general resolve the issues as soon as possible, so we can give serious consideration to the issues that agriculture has," Moller said.

"About 25% of South Africa still has a serious drought. We need the department to work at full capacity to give attention to the crisis.

"It is a bad time for the department to be without a director-general."

Moller said the bird flu outbreak was also a big concern. "Onderstepoort (Veterinary Institute) should be working at full capacity to meet the challenge of the avian flu and there are serious challenges," he said.

The Department of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries on Tuesday revealed cases of bird flu on two more farms - all involved in commercial layer chickens - in Gauteng and Mpumalanga. The disease, first noted in June, had been confirmed at four farms.

Mlengana's suspension came as Onderstepoort tried to modernise its facilities to deal with industry challenges, such as developing local vaccines, Moller said. "That's something that needs to be resolved as soon as possible. We can import a lot of those vaccines, especially from Australia. But that is not what we really need," he said.

"There are unique vaccines that we need in some of our industries." - *TimesLIVE*

Source: Herald

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