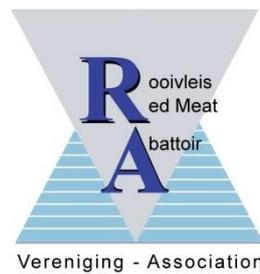


22 May 2015



MEDIA RELEASE

No Embargo

Abattoirs - water load shedding only 5 years away?

If efficient management of water resources and effluent water is not improved drastically South Africa will face water shedding within the next four to five years, said Prof Kobus van der Walt of the North West University.

At the 2015 Red Meat Abattoir Association (RMAA) conference which ended in Somerset West today van der Walt enlightened delegates with his in depth views on threats to the environment, energy and water supply to South Africa and the world.

He urged the South African abattoir industry to start thinking from an environmental perspective. “When it comes to its own high volume requirements for water and electricity the abattoir business has a huge responsibility. Waste products in abattoirs should instead of being washed away with liters of water be regarded as a self-generated energy resource,” van der Walt said.

He stated that current climate changes and the ineffective management of water as a scarce global resource need to be attended to as an urgent matter. Forty percent of effluent water in South Africa is already in a critical state and wasted as run-off into the oceans, van der Walt said.

At the conference Prof Mohammad Karaan, Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture at Stellenbosch University described the challenge of improved productivity in agricultural production, the related public service departments, entrepreneurial environment and the sector as an entity as an immediate challenge. “If we do not desire to see a much higher return on investment from labor in agriculture we may as well leave the industry,” he stated.

According to Karaan it is time for all stakeholders to trust one another and implement the effective plans already on the table successfully. “We have the plans and now need to determine how to roll them out to the benefit of sustainable growth to all who are involved in the new agricultural dispensation”, he said.

He mentioned that stakeholders in general agree on what to do to supply in the demand for affordable food. He suggested that the expectations of the “inconvenient youth on our university

campuses” should be considered seriously as the new way of participation in leadership to direct the future when the reality of the economy and politics exceed the goals of the economic growth plan.

Earlier at the conference Min Sensini Zokwana, minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries ensured delegates that government is seriously working towards solutions to counteract the impact of the current electricity crisis on productivity in agriculture and at red meat abattoirs.

Zokwana who opened the 2015 RMAA conference shared his concern about the negative trail of increasing stock theft problems around the country. He said that this is a drastic problem which is costing the industry and the country dearly and that urgent solutions need to be found in conjunction with the livestock industry and our safety and security departments.

Regarding the concerns of consumers about the safety of red meat on the shelves min Zokwana mentioned that issues surrounding deceiving labels which do not always describe sources of meat and quality control accurately are also attended to.

He said notwithstanding various challenges the future of the red meat industry seem to be bright and that various other countries are learning from South Africa, especially as far as the high veterinary and meat safety standards are concerned.

The RMAA elected a new executive management at its annual general meeting at the event. Ms Estelle van Reenen has again been appointed as chairperson, with Kabols le Riche vice chairperson. Other members are: Hennie Venter, Rupert Gerber, Laurie Terblanche, Anton Appleton, Dave Muller, Patrick Friend & Dirk Groenewald. Dr Gerhard Neethling will serve as General Manager.

PHOTO: The new executive management of the Red Meat Abattoir Association of South Africa as elected at the annual general meeting in Somerset West on 22 May are back left to right: Hennie Venter, Rupert Gerber, Laurie Terblanche , Dave Muller, Patrick Friend and Dirk Groenewald.

Front left to right: Albert Gründlingh, Estelle van Reenen (chairperson) Kabols le Riche (vice chairperson) and Dr Gerhard Neethling (General Manager).

Compiled and issued by Mega Media

MEDIA INQUIRIES & HIGH RESOLUTIONS PHOTOS: Jan Greyling on 082 556 8778 or media@agripromo.co.za