



agriculture, forestry & fisheries

Department:
Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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Statement: Marketing Information System

The South African agricultural sector operates in a deregulated marketing environment where marketing and trading of agricultural commodities is affected by a range of fundamentals at the domestic and international level. While open markets provide a range of opportunities for domestic commodities to be traded throughout the globe, this also creates a challenge for producers to make informed decisions everyday with regard to what to produce, where and when to sell. Given the above, information about markets and prices is more relevant and important to the producer today than ever before.

Marketing information is essential for producers, processors and traders of agricultural commodities who wish to become competitive and ensure that their products are in line with market demand. The availability of reliable, comparable and timely market information on a consistent basis can help producers to reduce risk associated with marketing, decide whether to sell their produce now or later, and check whether the prices they are offered are in line with the prevailing market prices.

In general the availability of marketing information such as price information can help improve market transparency and producers' bargaining power.

It is clear that the producers and other role-players within agricultural, forestry and fisheries sectors are in dire need for information now than they have ever been before. Realising the need to disseminate marketing information to role-players the Department launched the Marketing Information System (MIS) in 2007.

The MIS is used as a platform for gathering, analysing and disseminating information about prices and other information relevant to producers, traders, processors and other players involved in handling or trade agricultural commodities.

The MIS integrates and consolidates marketing information that would otherwise be scattered across different sources into a central information hub and disseminates the information to all role-players and the general public. The system currently consists of two components:

- The web-based system (<http://webapps.daff.gov.za/amis>); and
- Mobile Information system, normally referred to as USSD (*120*4040#).

One can access the web-based system by visiting the MIS website. The USSD can be accessed through any cellphone also by individuals who not have access to internet to ensure accessibility of the marketing information, mainly horticulture prices by targeted beneficiaries. Currently the Marketing Information System hosts and disseminates the following information:

- Daily prices for prices for horticultural products in the national fresh produce markets;
- JSE prices for grains;
- Commodity analysis reports such the Value Chain Roundtables, Early Warning Market Reports and Input Market Analysis Reports.
- Price trends for Fresh Produce, Livestock, Field crops and Industrial products.
- Role players in the Grain Industry.
- Information on the market Access programme such as SA GAP, Preferential Market Access, Marketing Infrastructure, Project Rebirth and Agro-logistics
- Contact details of markets; and
- Grading and standards information for various agricultural commodities, amongst others.

The department would like to thank all stakeholders who continuously contribute information for the daily running of the system and those who made it possible for the department to link MIS with their respective information systems, such as Red Meat Abattoirs Association and the JSE amongst others.

The MIS was established for the entire sector and all role-players are reminded of the existence of the system, and encouraged to take ownership of the system and use it to their own benefit. I also call on all commodity/producer associations, the private sector suppliers of information, and

all other value chain players to contribute marketing information to enable further enhancement of the system and assist the department to continuously improve on what we have already started.

During the MIS launch in 2007, the then Minister committed that the department will complement the web-based system by exploring means of ensuring that the same information is made available to farmers through other more accessible communication media. In addressing this challenge and noting that most households and farmers have access to cell-phones, the department linked the MIS to the cell-phone technology (USSD: Unstructured Supplementary Services Data) to ensure accessibility of the marketing information, mainly agricultural commodity prices to even smallholder producers in rural areas where internet access is generally a problem.

The MIS system can be accessed as follows:

Web-based system: <http://webapps.daff.gov.za/amis>

USSD: dial *120*4040# on your cell phone.

The web-based system can also be accessed through DAFF website under “links” and “DAFF systems”.

During the upcoming financial year the department will continue to rollout the MIS user education sessions, which are already being implemented within the government among economists and extension officers at the provincial level. The sessions will be extended in the new financial year in an effort to raise awareness about the MIS, to educate new users on how to use the system and to refresh those who already know how to use the system. All industry role-players are encouraged to respond positively to calls by the department to participate in the abovementioned information sessions during the course of the next financial year and beyond.

Presented by: Mr M. E Morokolo, Chief Director: Agro-Processing and Marketing

Tel: 012 319 8471/2

Email: MorokoloB@daff.gov.za