

PO Box 76297, Lynnwood Ridge, South Africa, 0040

Grain Building, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, 477 Witherite Street  
The Willows, Pretoria, South Africa, 0184

Tel. +27 12 807 6686, Fax. +27 12 807 5600  
admin@agbiz.co.za, www.agbiz.co.za

Vat nr. 4920204684

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Media statement  
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### **Stability in rural areas necessary for economies to thrive**

“Agbiz is alarmed at the high incidence of crime in South Africa, and in particular crime in the rural communities where food producers and many of our agribusinesses are operating,” says Agbiz CEO Dr John Purchase. “We strongly reject and condemn all forms of violence and criminality in all of our communities.”

"Crime in the rural areas leaves the whole farming community vulnerable, and it not only affects farmers, but also farmworkers and their families."

Dr Purchase noted that the criminal activity in rural communities is not only destroying lives, but also progressively destroying rural economies whose well-being is crucial to produce food for the country and attract investment into the sector. “We are at a time where the country is looking at agriculture as one of the sectors to contribute to economic growth and job creation, which would not be possible without stability in the rural areas.”

“Rural safety and security are of critical importance, and we urge government and all relevant stakeholders to work together to find workable solutions to ensure that law and order is upheld in rural communities in order for their economies to thrive.” Dr Purchase stressed that it is important to address these matters in a calm, cooperative and rational manner.

He called on the agricultural community to remain alert, take all necessary precautions and to become actively involved in their local organised agriculture and security structures. Agbiz also called on policymakers and political leaders to recognise crime in rural areas as a priority crime which deserves focused efforts from all law enforcement structures and the criminal justice system. Political will is necessary to turn this deteriorating situation around.

**Enquiries:**

Dr John Purchase

Agbiz CEO

[john@agbiz.co.za](mailto:john@agbiz.co.za)

Karen Grobler

Manager: Marketing and Communication

[karen@agbiz.co.za](mailto:karen@agbiz.co.za)

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