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Deur / By: Guillaum du Toit, Chairman PMF

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WORKSHOP PAVES WAY TO APPOINT MANAGER FOR PREDATION

The Predation Management Forum (PMF) held a workshop on 21 February at NMU to develop a framework that will give direction to research and training / extension, which will be practical for all to support and actively engage and participate in. The event was well attended by tertiary institutions, predation specialists, national departments of government (DEA & DAFF) as well as provincial conservation authorities.

After being briefed on research projects conducted on predation management by tertiary institutions such as Nelson Mandela University, UNISA and Universities of Free State, Cape Town, Mpumalanga and Fort Hare, the facilitator, Dr. John Purchase from AgBiz was extremely concerned by the evidence that predation losses are increasing!!

Mr. Hugh Campbell, General Manager for Hortgro Science elaborated on the research model that the Fruit industry use for setting priorities, funding models, stakeholder involvement etc. as an example to be considered for predation research. He concluded by saying that the organization is grower focused, expert based, addressing current and anticipating future challenges and that all the processes begins and ends with good communication. Sound communication to all stakeholders, including policymakers, was strongly supported throughout the workshop.

What is essentially required is a formalized structure that will address the gaps identified by producers, researchers (from the Scientific Assessment) and Government. These gaps should ultimately address environmental-, societal- and economic needs.

The steering committee of the PMF met the following day, where the recommendations and outcomes of the workshop were deliberated. A new constitution was adopted, paving the way for the forum to be registered as a legal entity.

Although each industry has its own structure in place to evaluate the merits of research projects, Prof. Graham Kerley of Nelson Mandela University has been tasked to summarise the knowledge gaps as already identified in the *Scientific Assessment for Livestock predation and its management in South Africa*.

Considering the new constitution and capacity within the new structure, the necessity for the appointment of a manager has become a priority. Responsibilities of such a position will include communication, training and policy issues.

PMF chairman, Guillaum du Toit is confident that the appointment of a dedicated person is an absolute necessity to communicate essential elements such as research, policy and training to stakeholders, policy makers and producers. The findings of the Scientific Assessment, aimed at improved approaches for reducing livestock predation, while at the same time contributing to the conservation of our natural predators, will form the basis of a communication strategy for the new appointment.

Contact Leon de Beer, PMF Secretariat on 082 890 6625 for further information.

The end.

