

Early warning issued for farmers to mitigate disaster impact

The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) has advised dryland farmers to prioritise drought-tolerant cultivars, and wait for sufficient moisture before planting and remain within the planting window.



Source: Oleksandr Ryzhkov via [Freepik](#)

This comes after the report that the majority of the country is currently experiencing poor to reasonable veld and livestock conditions.

The department noted that summer rainfall areas began receiving some rain, mostly later in October and farmers are preparing land for planting, while parts of the Western Cape, extreme western areas of the Northern Cape and the Sarah Baartman District of the Eastern Cape, continue to experience dry conditions.

The average level of major dams remains high in most provinces.



Drought threatens food security and collapse of industry

Michelle Verster 15 Nov 2019



According to the Seasonal Climate Watch issued by the South African Weather Service (SAWS), dated 1 November 2022, above-normal rainfall is expected for most parts of the country for the summer season.

The SAWS also reported that minimum temperatures are expected to be above normal countrywide, however, maximum temperatures are expected to be below normal over large parts of the country during the entire summer.

The department has also advised farmers in regions that are in reasonable condition to prepare in line with the expected conditions, in line with the seasonal forecast.

However, the department warned farmers against expanding planting land unnecessarily.

“Farmers should note that rainfall distribution remains a challenge, therefore not all areas might receive the anticipated above-normal rainfall that is well distributed. Farmers are also advised to put measures in place for pests and diseases associated with wet and hot conditions as above-normal rainfall is anticipated.

“Moreover, it is important for farmers to follow the weather forecast regularly so as to make informed decisions. Farmers using irrigation should comply with water restrictions in their areas and continually conserve resources in accordance with the Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act, 1983 (Act No. 43 of 1983),” the department said.

Keep livestock in balance with carrying capacity

The department has further advised farmers to keep livestock in balance with carrying capacity of the veld, and provide additional feed, including relevant licks.

The department said livestock should be provided with enough water points on the farm, as well as shelter during bad weather conditions.

“Winter rainfall areas are becoming drier, increasing favourable conditions for veld fires. Therefore, the creation and maintenance of fire belts through mechanical means should be prioritised along with adherence to veld fire warnings.

“Episodes of flooding resulting from rain-bearing weather systems have occurred and will continue; precautionary measures should be in place. Heat waves have been reported, and will occur during summer and therefore measures to combat these should be prepared,” the department said.

The department added that it will partner with all relevant stakeholders to continue raising awareness in the sector and capacitation of farmers on understanding, interpretation and utilisation of early-warning information for disaster risk mitigation and response.

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