



**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**TO: ALL MEDIA/NEWS EDITORS**

**DATE: 30 JULY 2021**

**SOUTH AFRICAN FARMERS DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION CONCERNED ABOUT THE IMPACT  
OF REJECT OF CANE**

The South African Farmers Development Association is gravely concerned about the impact that the recent riots have had on farmers, especially Black farmers who are emerging from a long history of oppression. For many small-scale sugarcane growers, farming is a matter of basic survival, with proceeds used to pay for essentials such as food, clothes and education. For land reform beneficiaries, farming is a novel activity in a sector that requires a lot of investment, and resilience.

With the disruption in the sugar supply chain during the riots, sugar mills in KwaZulu Natal had to be temporarily shut down. In the run-up to and during the shutdown, many farmers suffered arson. As a result, hundreds of hectares of cane were at risk of reaching inflexibility. Although the sugarmills were restarted when the riots subsided, attempts to transport arson cane and the expected hiccups of restarting a complicated piece of equipment meant that the Sezela Mill Board had to take a decision to reject a lot of the affected cane. This has a devastating effect on small-scale and land-reform farmers. It is more the case with small-scale farmers who only harvest once a year. Last year sugarcane farmers suffered greatly when a similar decision was taken due to runaway fires and other problems in the supply chain.

SAFDA hereby calls on government to work with partners in the industry to assist the affected farmers. Our officials are on the ground, collecting information on the extent of the effect of this decision. SAFDA will be approaching relevant government structures to ensure that affected farmers are assisted as the government's announcement on support for those affected by the riots. While SAFDA appreciates the interventions made in this industry, we call on government to continue efforts to shield this industry, which is not only labour-intensified but is also modelled on mass empowerment.

**ISSUED BY THE OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN**

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