



MEDIA STATEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TO: ALL MEDIA/NEWS EDITORS

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The Province KwaZulu-Natal recently experienced heavy rains, which resulted in many parts of the province being flooded. Farmers in the sugar commodity were not left out the flooding as many farmers are continuously reporting damages as the after effect of the flooding. The South African Farmers Development Association (SAFDA) has been collecting damage information from farmers as part of following up and monitoring the situation. This report is a preliminary report showing some of the effects the floods had on farmers since the start of the floods.

Damage to the crop:

Waterlogging has been experienced by most farmers resulting in damage to the root and leaching of inputs for farmers who had put fertilizer and chemicals on their crop. Other farmers experienced total loss of crop as soil erosion took place in their fields. The number of hectares eroded are indicated in each farmer's report. For these farmers the **appropriate intervention will be complete replant.**

Cash and subsistence crops such as vegetables were reported as destroyed for most farmers. Farmers depend on these kinds of crops for cash and consumption, especially for small scale farmers. This means therefore that such farmers lost not only on the business but household food. **Assistance with seedlings, fertilizer and food parcels** maybe considered as immediate appropriate interventions for farmers in this situation.

Farmers reported loss on farming inputs which were still kept on their storage facilities, waiting to be used. These include items such as fertilizer and chemicals.

Information comes throughout the day and everyday as the weather is clearing up and farmers are beginning to get access to assess actual damage to their fields. **To date we have recorded a total of 1 537,4 ha of cane and cash crops having been eroded. At an estimated cost of R32 000 of replant per hectare, this account for a total of R49 196 800 as we have confirmed that almost all affected field need to be replanted as a result of waterlogging killing the roots.**

South African Farmers Development Association
Registration number 163-564 NPO

KwaShukela, 170 Flanders Drive
Mt Edgecombe, KwaZulu-Natal
P.O. Box 1769
Mt Edgecombe Country Club, 4301

031 508 7283
info@sa-fda.org.za
www.sa-fda.org.za



Damage to roads, buildings and irrigation infrastructure:

Many farms experienced severe damages to access roads as well as infield roads. Bridges collapsed making driving into the farms and extracting produce impossible. This poses a serious threat which will last beyond the rains season. When the rain is over mills will open and farmers be expected to deliver their cane produce from crushing. This will not be possible before the collapsed **farm bridges and roads are repaired**.

A lot of farmers reported to have had their farm buildings damaged by the rain and others completely flooded. This means that there are no more farmhouses in other instances and farm workers shelter for some. The intervention required in this, and other similar instances is to **assist with rebuilding farmhouses and farm workers' quarters**.

Farmers in irrigated areas have experienced severe damages on irrigation infrastructure as pipes and pumps were eroded. To confirm the extent of the damage the services of engineers and technicians will be required before determining the cost of repairs. **The total estimated cost of repairing damaged infrastructure amounts to R42 000 000.**

Area of damage	Hectares	Cost
Crop	1 537,4 ha	R49 196 800
Roads, buildings and irrigation infrastructure	N/A	R42 000 000
Total Cost		R91 196 800

Data collection instrument was designed such that it allows individual farmers to capture the damage on their farms, while showing visible evidence of the extent of the damage. Grower identification has been included by use of grower names, ID numbers and grower codes, while evidence of data collected has been shown by use of pictures and GPS location coordinates to demonstrate data authenticity. The process of collecting information is still in progress. This report only shows a moving number of growers affected as information keeps coming all day and every day.

ISSUED BY: OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN, DR SIYABONGA MADLALA

**Media enquiries can be directed to: Media and Communications Practitioner
Nondumiso Mlondo, 073 296 5570**

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