

Agri SA and AfriForum to promote community safety

Agri SA and civil rights organisation, AfriForum have signed a cooperation agreement to promote community safety initiatives in rural and urban areas, without encroaching upon each other's work terrains...



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According to AfriForum's chief executive officer Kallie Kriel, the agreement represents a major step towards helping to ensure the safety of communities and areas of the country affected by crime. "This agreement between AfriForum and Agri SA was entered into because organisations within civil society have an obligation to the public to ensure that community safety actions are tackled as effectively as possible." Kriel said AfriForum was also in discussion with other role players involved in community safety with a view to concluding similar agreements.

Kobus Breytenbach, who chairs Agri SA's rural security committee, said: "With this agreement an attempt is made to eliminate confusion regarding the handling of security issues, especially within agricultural communities. Agri SA and its provincial organisations have a responsibility to deal with rural safety down to farmer association level and to clear such actions with the police within the priority committee system". He called on farming communities to deal with safety issues in close collaboration with their respective farmer associations.

The agreement entails, amongst others, that where the different parties have community safety structures adjacent to one another, communication channels should be established to combat crime in a coordinated manner. To avoid duplication, the parties undertake not to create competing structures in areas where one of the parties already has a well-functioning community safety structure in place. In practice this means that AfriForum would focus on urban areas and rural areas where no functioning community safety structures exist, while Agri SA will concentrate on rural communities.

The parties will also strive to join forces with other role players in creating community forums on an ad hoc basis where specific problems are experienced that affect a wide range of role players and where a joint strategy is needed to address such problems. The parties also acknowledge each other's roles and reasons for existence.

The agreement also states that Agri SA and AfriForum would meet at least twice a year on national as well as provincial

level to discuss matters of common interest.

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