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## **PRESS RELEASE**

(for immediate release)

### **LIVESTOCK THEFT AN ECONOMICAL AND EMOTIONAL CRIME**

The National Priority Committee : Rural Safety at a meeting held on 12 March 2019 requested the National Stock Theft Prevention Forum to once again urge all role players within the red meat industry to co-operate in the prevention of stock theft, which is a highly economical and emotional crime by abiding by existing laws. Research has proven that since the adoption of the Animal Identification Act, 2002 (Act 6 of 2002) stock theft decreased immensely.

Stock theft stripped the economy of R819 million during the 2017/2018 period with goats to the value of R65 million, sheep to the value of R143 million and cattle to the value of R610 million stolen. This scourge threatens both the commercial farming sector as well as the emergent farming sector in most of the country. Aspects that is not always taken into account when livestock is stolen is the impact of job security of workers and the dependence of people on the livestock for food and economic survival

In the current crime report year stock theft increased by 6.5% but no research to determine the reasons for the increase has been conducted. The prevalence of stock theft cannot be attributed only to the activities of SAPS, but also to the non-compliance by role-players in the red meat industry who do not see that livestock are

properly identified. Livestock buyers; such as farmers, speculators, stock-auctions, feedlots and abattoirs can be or are unknowingly recipients of stolen livestock as they do not ensure that the livestock they purchase comply with the provisions of the law. In the process the laws are transgressed, the law and heavy fines can be imposed or a perpetrator can be prosecuted.

The Animal Identification Act, 2002 (Act 6 of 2002), makes provision for the compulsory marking of livestock and the Stock theft Act, 1959 (Act 57 of 1959) controls the movement of livestock. Both these Acts have been put in place to support the industry and SAPS to combat stock theft and make it easier to recover stolen livestock. It appears that a large part of the livestock trade does not comply by the provisions of these Acts and does not comply with the basic requirements to prevent stock theft. With reference to the non-compliance with Section 6 "*Document of Identification*" the National Stock Theft Prevention Forum was very pleased to be informed that a Magistrate in the Free State found a perpetrator guilty of not being able to present proof of a *Document of Identification*. The fine imposed was R30 000 or 12 years imprisonment and it is becoming obvious that the judiciary in South Africa realises the economic and emotional impact of livestock theft.

The National Stock Theft Prevention Forum requests :-

- That all livestock owners register a unique brand mark in their name and to apply it to all livestock in their possession in the prescribed manner as described in the Animal Identification Act, 2002 (Act 6 of 2002).
- The completion and submission of the '*Document of Identification*' and '*Stock Removal Certificate*' with all transactions.
- That all livestock buyers, auctioneers, feedlots and abattoirs confirm livestock ownership and refuse to take ownership of livestock that are not marked or where the necessary '*Document of Identification*' and '*Stock Removal Certificate*' are not supplied.
- That all '*Documents of Identification*' be kept on record for 12 months.

The legislation is already in place for many years and many livestock owners did comply with the registration of identification marks. However, since the registration of

identification marks many things has changed in South Africa. The invention of the cell phone and the collapse of Telkom lines in rural areas resulted in many redundant phone numbers. The consequence is that when livestock is recovered by the SAPS the telephone number is obsolete and extreme efforts are required to make contact with owners.

The same applies to identification numbers of livestock owners. All identification numbers changed. In both scenarios the Registrar of Brand marks was never informed accordingly. Another problem experienced is the fact that when persons with registered identification marks stops being an owner of livestock or passes on, no one deregister the marks – this last issue does provide for criminals to abuse the system. Therefore the National Stock Theft Prevention Forum urges all livestock owners to contact the Registrar of Animal Identification and update personal information or deregister identification marks at tel: 012 319 6000 or e-mail: [sanetc@daff.gov.za](mailto:sanetc@daff.gov.za) The physical address is Delpen Building, Cnr Annie Botha Avenue and Union Street, Riviera, Pretoria. Or visit the following website for more information <http://www.gov.za/services/animal-improvement/register-animal-identification-mark>

The National Stock Theft Prevention Forum requests that all role players in the red meat industry to urgently play an active role in stock theft prevention.

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**DATE** : 9 May 2019

**ENQUIRIES**

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