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PRESS RELEASE

(for immediate release)

NON-REPORTING OF LIVESTOCK THEFT

*Your cattle are gone
My countrymen!
Go rescue them. Go rescue them
Leave the breechloader alone
And turn to the pen
Take paper and ink
For that is your shield
Your rights are going
So pick up your pen
Load it, load it with ink
Sit in your chair
Repair not to Hoho
But fire with your pen
IWW Citashe, 19th century*

The 19th century poem by Citashe focuses on losing everything valuable and explain a cultural perspective on the importance of livestock. The lesson, there is more power in the pen than the “gun” (breech loader), is a concept which people struggle with in the agricultural domain. It however, supports the notion that the reporting rate of livestock theft must increase.

During a strategic planning session of the National Stock Theft Prevention Forum, (NSTPF) an effort was made to determine where the problems are with the non-reporting of livestock theft, people, provinces, etc. as it was a burning issue during discussions.

The main sources used to determine crime rates and non-reporting of crime in South Africa is the Victim of Crime Survey (VOCS) compiled by Statistics SA for 2017/2018. The VOCS does not replace police statistics, but is a rich source of information in planning crime prevention and provides a holistic picture of livestock theft in South Africa. The main difference between SAPS statistics and VOCS are that SAPS statistics are based on the information from a database and the VOCS is statistical estimates.

In table 1 the number of livestock theft cases reported to the police and the estimates of the VOCS is compared per province and it is obvious that there is a difference between provinces.

Province	Number of Cases Reported (SAPS)	Estimated Number of Cases (VOCS)	Reporting Rate	Non-Reporting Rate
Western Cape	953	4120	23,13%	-76,87%
Northern Cape	1558	2639	59,04%	-40,96%
Free State	4032	12478	32,31%	-67,69%
Eastern Cape	6217	36007	17,27%	-82,73%
Kwa-Zulu Natal	6322	47610	13,28%	-86,72%
Mpumalanga	3135	22459	13,96%	-86,04%
Gauteng	998	8003	12,47%	-87,53%
North West	3447	15586	22,12%	-77,88%
Limpopo	2187	10519	20,79%	-79,21%
National	28849	159421	18,10%	-81,90%

Table 1: Comparative of number of livestock theft cases reported to the police and the estimates of the VOCS for 2017/2018

From Table 1 it is clear that 4 provinces are below the national average with 3 others Western Cape, North West, and Limpopo just on the brink. Free State is well ahead of the rest with Northern Cape flying the flag with a 59% reporting rate.

Before celebrating these results, serious caution should be taken as the estimates of Western Cape, Northern Cape and Gauteng are indicated as unreliable in the VOCS. The National Stock Theft Prevention Forum decided that the reporting rate must increase by 20% nationally within the next year.

Not only must the exceptions indicated above be considered but also reporting trends amongst gender and population groups. The information in Table 2 below indicates the percentage of reporting between males and females and the reporting rate between population groups – note that no data is available for coloured and Indian people suffering livestock theft.

Gender of the Household Head	Percentage in 2017/2018
Male	34%
Female	23%
Reporting by Population Group	
Black	28%
White	65%

Table 2: Percentage of livestock theft reported to police by gender and population group.

From Table 2 it is deduced that male victims are more prone to report livestock theft than women victims and that members of the white population are more eager to report livestock theft to the police.

In conclusion, the NSTPF is of the opinion that a victim who does not report a crime is equal to the criminal who committed the crime. If the agricultural fraternity wishes to receive better service from the criminal justice system, the only option is to report the crime to such an extent that the criminal justice system does not have a choice to improve service delivery and resources.

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