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DAFF budget cut is bad news for farmers – Agri SA

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By Staff Reporter

Cuts made to the budget allocation for the agriculture department will have an impact on the ability of state-owned entities to provide critical services to farmers.

This was according to Dan Kriek, deputy president of Agri SA, in his response to the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries' (DAFF) budget vote delivered by minister Senzeni Zokwana in Parliament recently.

DAFF's total budget allocation for 2016/2017 is R6,3 billion, R65,8 million less than in the previous year.

"Agriculture is such a crucial sector, not only for the economy, and for enduring food security, but also for ensuring social stability, and it needs more support because of the very severe drought, not less," said Kriek.

"The budget allocation to DAFF is completely disproportionate to what national policies expect from the sector [in terms of service delivery]. There was not enough appreciation of the role of agriculture and the food sector in the country's economy and society," he said.

Kriek said that the assistance from Land Bank and the Industrial Development Corporation, aimed at addressing the impact of the drought, was welcome, but it fell far short of Agri SA's estimates of the amount of support required to help the sector get back on its feet.

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