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## **Media Release**

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### **FSA demands more targeted police investigations to bring culprits to justice**

Free State Agriculture (FSA) demands from the Minister of Police as well as the Free State Commissioner of Police to investigate farm murders and attacks purposefully, so that the culprits can be brought before the court and successful prosecution can take place.

This reaction from FSA follows the verdict of the Brendin Horner murder where the two suspects were acquitted due to insufficient evidence to link them to the murder. Jakkals le Roux, chairman of FSA's Rural Safety Committee, says the organization requires the police to conduct an active and further investigation into who the perpetrators are in order to bring the culprits to justice.

According to le Roux, murders and serious crime on the general public are increasing, putting pressure on the criminal justice system.

Meanwhile, Dr Jane Buys, Safety Risk Analyst at FSA, confirmed that in the period 1 July to 30 September 2021, the Free State had already had 13 farm attacks and 3 farm murders that claimed the lives of 7 victims. The farm murders took place at Harrismith and Heilbron. In one case in Harrismith, an emerging farmer as well as his three children was killed. However, it would appear that there have been no arrests on any of the farm murders yet.

Dr Buys further mentions that during the reporting period there were five attacks on producers, four on farm workers, one on a livestock speculator and two on smallholding residents. The geographical areas in the Free State that are most affected by farm attacks and murders are Ficksburg (2 farm attacks), Bloemspruit (3 farm attacks), Harrismith (5 farm attacks), Steynsrus, Clocolan and Mafube with 1 each. In the Mafube farm attack, the attacker was fatally wounded. The high crime areas rel. farm attacks and killings are thus Harrismith with 7; Bloemspruit with 3, followed by Ficksburg with 2.

"When the same period is compared with that of 2019-2020, there is a decrease in farm attacks in the Free State. In the previous financial year there were 19 farm attacks, while this year there were 13, a decrease of 46.15%." says Buys. However, she points out that with regard to farm murders, there is an increase of one murder. "In the previous financial year,

there were two murders where a producer and an emerging farmer were killed, compared to this financial year where three farm murders have already taken place."

Free State Agriculture requires the police to be serious about rolling out the revised Rural Safety Strategy. Where shortcomings, defects and challenges with regard to manpower, equipment and vehicles have already been identified, it is required that the necessary interventions be launched so that high visibility, preventive actions and operations take place in order to provide rural areas with better policing services. FSA believes this is especially important in the run-up to the festive season which brings out greater crime in rural areas.

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