

'Amptelike stelsel vir bye-beheer benodig'

Daar moet dringend gekyk word na 'n stelsel met geregistreerde beamptes om toe te sien dat behoorlike beheer oor die verskuiwing of uitwissing van ongewenste bye-kolonies uitgeoefen word.

Dr. Gerhard Verdoorn, hoof van die Griffon-gifstof-inligting-sentrum, sê soos in die geval van plaagbestrydingsbeamptes moet lisensies uitgereik word aan mense om bye te bestuur. Hy het op die jaarlikse Beecon-byeenkoms gesê die publiek en onbehoorlike landboupraktyke hou 'n groot bedreiging vir bye in.

Aan die een kant het die publiek 'n onnodige vrees vir bye.

"Baie meer mense word deur

honde gebyt as deur bye gesteek, maar tog is daar mense wat hul bes probeer om bye uit te wis. Dit het nodig geword om bye weer gewild te maak."

Hy het ook gevra dat versekeringsmaatskappye die koste vir die verwydering van bye by hul huiseienaarsversekering moet insluit.

Verdoorn sê bye, as bestuiwers, is van die belangrikste elemente in die ekologiese stelsel. Sonder 'n behoorlike plant-ekologie kan diere ook nie bestaan nie. "Kenners meen dat as die bye verdwyn, sal mense ses maande later weens voedseltekorte begin doodgaan."

Hy sê renosters is nou weens stropery in die kollig, maar bye het net soveel reg op beskerming. Daar is geen wette wat bye beskerm nie, maar daar bestaan ook geen geregistreerde plaagdoder waarmee bye wettig doodgemaak mag word nie.

Miljoene bye vrek ook weens die onoordeelkundige gebruik van plaagdoders in die landbou.

Dit is gewoonlik net vrugteboere wat hul werklike waarde besef.

Hy sê alles moontlik moet gedoen word om te verseker boere gebruik chemiese middels reg en dat hulle aan die wetlike vereistes vir plaagbestryding voldoen.

Crop and stock chemical rules in spotlight

The dichotomous regulation of chemicals for animal and crop protection is hindering the agricultural industry and increasing the likelihood of farmers using unregistered products.

Speakers at the Association of Veterinary and Crop Associations of South Africa (AVCASA) made a plea to government to streamline the chemical and medicine registration process and provide better regulation.

Dr Peter Oberem, president of the SA Animal Health Association (SAAHA), said that it was the regulators' job to ensure that products reached the market. "But overlapping administrative issues ensure that a product takes years to reach the market," he said.

Oberem said that since most products in SA were developed and registered elsewhere in the world, it was unnecessary to go through a rigorous process of testing products and checking residues. "Why must we reinvent the wheel? Regulators should focus on the quality of manufacture rather than on retesting products."

Dr Bernhard Johnen, director of international regulatory policy at Crop Life International, added that regulation should be a stimulant and a safeguard for the introduction of crop protection products, not a hindrance.

"Farmers need to protect their crops and ensure a harvest. We need to improve yields and reduce waste, and crop protection is the solution to many problems facing food production and food security," said Johnen.

Speakers at AVCASA noted that a lack of capacity in government departments delayed registration, and led to farmers using unregistered products on their crops.

Kobus Hartman, business development and technical manager at Viking Marketing, gave an example of bud mite on grapes for which there is currently no registered active ingredient. "We are nearing the spraying season and farmers are going to resort to the use of unregistered products or face losing their crop."

He said that public-private partnerships were needed to compensate for the lack of capacity in the regulatory industry.

Hartman said that there were too few laws protecting the environment from harmful chemicals. "This area needs more regulation; there are too many things affecting the environment negatively."

Taking a firm stand with farmers who do not use chemicals as directed, Dr Gerhard Verdoorn, director of the Griffon Poison Information Centre, said that if farmers wanted to have crop protection tools at their disposal, they needed to use them properly. — *Lindi van Rooyen*