



ASSOCIATION OF VETERINARY AND CROP ASSOCIATIONS OF SOUTH AFRICA
VERENIGING VAN DIEREGESONDHEIDS- EN PLANTBESKERMINGSVERENIGINGS VAN SUID-AFRIKA
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MEDIA STATEMENT

CONSULTANTS NEED TO ADHERE TO THE PRINCIPLES OF ACT NO. 36 OF 1947

21 JULY 2009

EMBARGO: IMMEDIATE

STARTS

Modern agricultural production demands a wide range of expertise that is on offer from experts and consultants. One of the key areas of safe and sustainable food production is pest and disease management that often requires chemical intervention. This is a highly specialized field of expertise that requires knowledge about the crops, pests, diseases and remedies plus the status and articles of the Fertilizers, Farm Feeds, Agricultural Remedies and Crop Remedies Act, 1947 (Act no. 36 of 1947).

AVCASA has become aware that certain consultants recommend agrochemical products against what is indicated on the labels of such products. This has resulted in several cases over the past year where farmers and other users of agrochemicals applied products according to recommendations made by consultants with disastrous effects. Products were recommended for purposes other than what they were registered for and resulted in damage to crops, bowling greens and golf courses.

It is stated unambiguously in Regulation No. 1716 of 26 July 1991 that the acquisition, disposal, sale or use of an agricultural remedy or stock remedy for a purpose or in a manner other than that specified on the label on a container thereof or on such container, is an offense. According to the Act the word “sale” also means to recommend or to advertise. Recommending agrochemicals for applications other than those stated on the label is therefore clearly a contravention of this regulation.

Farmers and other managers need to take into account that the end-user of agrochemicals has the final responsibility for the effects caused by the application of any product that is registered under the Act. Consultants need to be aware that their recommendations may seriously jeopardise farmers' crops and put farmers at risk of being prosecuted for using products against registration. Invalid recommendations (also referred to as off-label recommendations) made by consultants can lead to prosecution and civil litigation against such individuals. A further complication is that off-label recommendations and application of agrochemicals may jeopardise South Africa's food safety situation and impact on the country's ability to export fresh produce.

AVCASA requests all producer organisations and farmers to ensure that consultants offering advice on pesticides adhere to label instructions and refrain from making off-label recommendations. AVCASA's agrochemical distribution association ACDASA also warns that no agrochemical

supplier or distributor will accept any responsibility for damage to crops that were caused by off-label recommendations and application. AVCASA will go as far as reporting such contraventions to the Inspectorate of Act No. 36 of 1947 and assist the Inspectorate to investigate and prosecute individuals that partake in such actions.

AVCASA recommends to all producers and producer organisations to consult their ACDASA certified agrochemical distributors for guidance on pest and disease management. AVCASA and its members are fully committed to sustainable food production with the proviso that safe food production can only be ensured if agrochemicals are used strictly according to label instructions as approved by the Registrar of Act No. 36 of 1947.

For further information please contact:

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