



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

AVCASA DECLARES WAR ON INDIVIDUALS WHO POISON GUINEAFOWL WITH PESTICIDES

13 August 2008

EMBARGO: IMMEDIATE

STARTS

AVCASA wants the names of individuals who poison guineafowl with pesticides. Helmeted guineafowl are falling prey to criminal intent of individuals who deliberately target the birds with pesticides. This information has very recently landed at the doors of the Association of Veterinary and Crop Associations of South Africa (AVCASA). AVCASA represents the agrochemical industry in South Africa and is appalled by the fact that individuals in the agricultural community are misusing pesticides against all principles and regulations to poison one of South Africa's most valuable game birds. According to information received by AVCASA guineafowl have been poisoned in the Free State close to Bloemfontein with monocrotophos and in Johannesburg with aldicarb. Sources also revealed threats by individuals in the Waterberg region of Limpopo and the Brits area of Northwest to poison guineafowl as retaliation for allegedly damaging cash crops and lucerne.

The helmeted guineafowl is regarded by the majority of farmers as an excellent ally in managing pest like stalk borer, black maize beetle and lucerne caterpillar. Most farmers allow limited take-off of helmeted guineafowl by game bird hunters and thereby contribute to the sustainable utilization of the species while maintaining healthy populations to assist with pest management on crop farms. Yet, despite the positive attitude of most crop farmers individuals wrongly accuse guineafowl for crop damage and threaten to poison the birds.

There are also cases of farm workers and illegal aliens that poison guineafowl to obtain protein. This dangerous practice has already resulted in human deaths after people ate the poisoned birds. Other birds like raptors and small predators are also at risk of secondary poisoning if they scavenge on poisoned guineafowl carcasses.

Products that are often misused to poison birds include monocrotophos that has been banned jointly by the Department of Agriculture, AVCASA, the agricultural community and conservation NGOs. Other products that feature in this unacceptable practice include methamidophos, aldicarb, carbofuran, fenamiphos, diazinon, fenthion, methomyl plus several others. According to the regulations of the Fertilizers, Farm Feeds, Agricultural Remedies and Stock Remedies Act, 1947 (Act No. 36 of 1947) it is an offense to use a pesticide for any purpose or in any manner other than that indicated on the label. It is also a transgression of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998) and all provincial conservation ordinances to poison wild animals.

AVCASA hereby issues a very strict warning to any person who misuses any pesticide to poison wildlife. We will make a concerted effort to find the culprits and report them to the law enforcement agencies. AVCASA will furthermore deny these individuals access to pesticides by requesting the pesticide manufacturers through CropLife South Africa, the South African Animal Health Association and the Agricultural Chemical Distribution Association of South Africa to refrain from supplying and supporting such individuals with pesticides. There is no more place in society for individuals who poison wildlife with pesticides and compromise the integrity of the agricultural community.

AVCASA calls on all farmers and members of the public to report any misuse of pesticides, especially the deliberate poisoning of wildlife to the Griffon Poison Information Centre at 082-446-8946. We are call on the conservation agencies, the Registrar of Act No. 36 of 1947 and the South African Police Service to impose the maximum penalties upon individuals who misuse pesticides to poison wild animals and offer our full support in this regard.

For further information please contact:

Mr Tom Mabesa, Executive Director AVCASA at 082-657-5329 or

Dr Gerhard Verdoorn, Griffon Poison Information Centre at 082-446-8946.

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