

South African farmers highlight deteriorating rural road infrastructure during Transport Month

During Transport Month in South Africa, the agricultural sector is raising awareness about the critical state of rural road infrastructure. Farmers, particularly those in remote areas, are facing challenges due to the poor conditions of roads, which are essential for the transportation of goods and overall economic health.

Lutendo Maumela, a macadamia nut farmer from Limpopo, points out the disparity in road maintenance, noting that while national roads like the N1 from Polokwane to the Western Cape are well-kept, local roads, especially from Polokwane to Musina, suffer from neglect. Maumela suggests that the issue lies not with the availability of government funds but with the execution and management of these funds by contractors.

Dr Jack Armour of Free State Agriculture comments on the slow progress in road development, attributing it to insufficient funding and lack of management capacity. He also mentions the negative impact of the 30% local procurement requirement and hints at possible interference by local political figures or the so-called construction mafia. Sanral's efforts, however, are acknowledged as effective in comparison.

The Free State's department of community safety, roads, and transport has reported to the national council of provinces, painting a grim outlook for road infrastructure development. Specific routes like the Marquard Clocolan Road and the R103 from Warden to Vrede are highlighted as particularly problematic for farmers. The report also mentions significant issues with project execution, leading to abandoned or delayed road projects.

Mapule Dhlamini, leader of the national council of provinces for the Free State, expresses dissatisfaction with the current state of road projects. The auditor general's office cites insufficient budgets, misalignment of budget allocation, and prioritization of operational expenses over capital investments as key reasons for

municipal underperformance in road infrastructure. Dhlamini emphasizes the need for accountability in project delays and abandonment to prevent wastage of taxpayers' money.

Source: foodformzansi (<https://www.foodformzansi.co.za/farmers-fed-up-as-bad-roads-slow-down-agriculture/>)

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