

North West farmers encouraged to apply for hemp permits

North West Agriculture and Rural Development (NWDARD) MEC Desbo Mohono has encouraged local farmers and manufacturers to apply for hemp permits, in order to participate in the hemp industry.



Source: herbalhemp via [Pixabay](#)

Mohono said the hemp permit process follows a Cabinet decision taken in 2019 to have a plan for industrialisation and commercialisation of Cannabis, in order to increase economic growth, create jobs and poverty alleviation.

The decision followed an establishment of a committee to guide the development of a Cannabis Masterplan.

Although the Masterplan is still in process, Mohono noted that the industrialisation of hemp has been identified as a low hanging fruit in terms of the establishment of the Cannabis industry in the country.

She encouraged farmers to seize the opportunity and apply for hemp permits, in order to reap economic opportunities in the industry.

"The legalisation and commercialisation of Cannabis Sativa (Cannabis) has been on the forefront of public debate and on top of the agenda of policymakers globally. As a role player, the NWDARD did organise a webinar last year to engage stakeholders in a collaborative effort to advance the Cannabis Masterplan Implementation process.

"In that webinar, we learned that only few farmers had permits and at the time of our engagement, their permits had expired. I know we have very passionate farmers in the province and I urge them to follow the process and to apply for Hemp Permits," Mohono said.

The Plant Improvement Act, 1976 (Act no 53 of 1976) and its regulations provide a legal framework for cultivation, distribution and sale of hemp propagating material in South Africa.

Any person who wants to engage in identified activities relating to hemp must be in possession of a hemp permit issued by the Registrar of the Plant Improvement Act.

Mohono noted that while the hemp application process is hosted by the National Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, the provincial department has identified a technical team meant to assist the local farmers with the application process.

The application process is opened to all interest groups and individuals, and application forms can be accessed through the National Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development [website](#).

Delivering the State of the Nation Address (SONA) last Thursday, President Cyril Ramaphosa announced that government will review the policy and regulatory framework for industrial hemp and cannabis to realise the huge potential for investment and job creation.

President Ramaphosa highlighted that the hemp and cannabis sector has the potential to create more than 130,000 new jobs.

"We are therefore streamlining the regulatory processes so that the hemp and cannabis sector can thrive like it is in other countries such as Lesotho," the President said.

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