



March 18, 2022

**MEDIA STATEMENT  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
18 MARCH 2022**

**HIGH COURT ORDERS EVICTION OF UNLAWFUL OCCUPANTS OF R19 MILLION  
GRAPE FARM IN THE WESTERN CAPE**

Unlawful occupants of the once profitable export table grape farm in the Western Cape, which was prematurely acquired by the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (the Department) for R19 million in 2012, have been ordered to vacate the farm within 60 days.

Big Five Farming Co-operative Limited (Big Five) as well as its five members in their personal capacity, were ordered by the Cape Town High Court to vacate Portions 53 and 71 of the Farm De La Haye in De Doorns, Western Cape.

On 04 March 2022, the Cape Town High Court found that the decision of the Department to appoint Big Five, Weziwe Dlwengu, Mpho Malaoa, Monelo Bongo, Vuyani Vanyaza and Mandluleli Mzayiya as land reform beneficiaries in respect of Farm De La Haye was unlawful.

In terms of the High Court order, Big Five and its members together with any other unknown unlawful occupants of the farm have been given two calendar months to vacate the property. In the event that the occupants refuse to vacate the farm, the High Court has authorised the Sheriff to evict the occupants. Once evicted, the respondents in the matter are interdicted and restrained from being upon the property for the purpose of unlawfully occupying or carrying on business at the property.

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The High Court order follows an intensive investigation into allegations of corruption and maladministration by the Special Investigating Unit (SIU) in the affairs of the Department, as directed by Proclamation R24 of 2017.

The SIU probe revealed that the acquisition of the farm by the Department in February 2012 was premature as no land reform beneficiary was identified prior to the purchase. The acquisition of the land was followed by the unlawful appointment of Big Five as the sole land reform beneficiary.

Fifteen candidates on the Department's land reform beneficiary list were ignored in favour of Big five and its members, despite them not meeting the qualification criteria for the farm. After the appointment, Big Five and its members refused to cooperate with the Department or follow the relevant processes required so that grants can be released to enable export grape farming to continue on the property. As a consequence, the strategic partner appointed by the Department withdrew and all farming activities and production ceased.

On the expiry of their caretaker agreement in May 2015, Big Five refused to hand the property over to the Department. As a result, the Department derived no income from farming activities on the property for more than two years and electricity and water supply to the property was cut off. The Department had to pay property rates and service charges which were in arrears, the farm workers had not been paid and the property had deteriorated into a dilapidated state.

In July 2018, the Department released funding in the sum of R7 million for maintenance of the property, implementation of a turnaround strategy for the farming operations and appointment of an accountant to manage financial affairs. Despite the payment of R7 million by the Department, farming operations were not re-established and the Department failed to regain control of the property.

The outcome of the High Court order is a continuation of implementation of the SIU investigation outcomes and consequence management to recover assets and financial losses suffered by State institutions and/or to prevent further losses.

Fraud and corruption allegations may be reported via the following platforms:  
siu@hotline.co.za / Hotline: 0800 037 774

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#### **ABOUT THE SIU:**

*The SIU is an independent statutory body with a primary mandate to investigate allegations of corruption, malpractice and maladministration in the affairs of government departments, municipalities and State Owned Entities, and to recover financial losses suffered by State institutions. The SIU was established in terms of the Special Investigating Units and Special Tribunal Act, Act No 74 of 1996 (SIU Act).*

*The SIU has powers to subpoena witnesses, bank statements and cellphone records, search, seize evidence and interrogate witnesses under oath. The SIU can take civil action to correct any wrongdoing it uncovers in its investigations.*

*Where criminal conduct is uncovered during investigations, the SIU will bring the matter to the attention of its partners Hawks in the South African Police Service (SAPS), as well as the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) for further action.*



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