

## William Mullins - President, Natal Agricultural Union (NAU)



"WE are willing to listen to other people's claims, if necessary. The most important human right is the right to a full stomach. Whatever process takes place must ensure that there is enough food production. And I ask that you see my presentation against this background.

"The NAU believes that there should be a judicial process, if necessary a land claims court. We also believe that all legal costs should be borne by the state, so that everyone can have access to this judicial process. Regarding this judicial process, we must bear the following in mind:

- How far back should we go in history? We believe that claims should not go further back than 1913, which we see as the start of racial landownership.
- Was there compensation when expropriation occurred? If there was, then it should have been market oriented. It is

important to remember that the 500 000 hectares of land available in Natal was expropriated from white farmers.

- Who qualifies to make a claim? Original landowners? How far down the family tree do you go?
- Which claimants have proof of legitimacy - who can prove that they possessed land?
- What will happen to the land once the claim is settled?

"The NAU recognises the rights of people who were expropriated under racial laws. We believe these claims must be addressed by a judicial process or land claims court. According to the NAU, farmworkers and labour tenants do not qualify as potential claimants. We don't recognise their right just because they have been living on the land.

"We believe there is a bright future for the rural areas of Natal, provided we don't destroy the present infrastructure. We believe there is a place for the commercial farmer and the smaller farmer, who, through the free market system, will also develop into big commercial farmers in a few years time."

## Disposing of our future

A LAND claims court could play a key role in speedily addressing one of the main aspects of a future land reform process - land claims. But while debate continues around various options for land reform, the government is speedily implementing measures, which, if left unchecked, will severely limit future land reform possibilities. The government is aware that state land is one of the few categories of land which is relatively non-contentious and therefore most suited to meeting immediate and pressing land reform needs.

Besides pressing ahead with the current transfer of about 1.2 million hectares of state land to the homelands, the government transferred 3 million hectares of state land to the homelands in March this year. In addition, the government is quietly selling off state land. Examples of sales this year are:

- about 7 885 hectares of land in the Trichardtsdal District, near Lebowa
- about 6 000 hectares of land. The land is being claimed by the Majeng community.
- 1 759 properties in Cape Town, sold by the House of Representatives over the past year. The properties were originally bought from owners who were forced to move in terms of the Group Areas Act.