

Media Statement



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TO: ALL MEDIA

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RE: FREE STATE FARMER SENTENCED TO 25 YEARS FOR THEFT AND FRAUD

A 37 year-old farmer was on Friday sentenced to a total of 427 years imprisonment after he was convicted on 20 counts of theft and six counts of fraud by the Free State High Court sitting in Kroonstad. Cornelius Andries Loggenberg will effectively serve 25 years in prison after the judge ordered the sentences to run concurrently.

According to evidence presented in court, Loggenberg farmed on the farm Kirkdale in Koppies and part of his farming activities was the maintenance of a herd of dairy cattle for milking purposes. During the course of expanding his dairy farming activities, he leased 2 136 Holstein cattle, to the value of R25 million from various farmers between 2009 and 2013.

The condition of the contract specified that the ownership of the cattle would remain vested in the farmers (lessors) and that in the event of death or expropriation of cattle, the accused would substitute the cattle with the cattle of similar stature, breed and age at his expense. Upon termination of the lease period, the accused was to return cattle of similar type and quality to those hired at the start of the agreements.

At first, Loggenberg honoured the terms of the lease contracts and made the required payments of the lease to the complainants. However, in June 2013 the accused failed to make any payments to any of the complainants. It was discovered that he had sold most of the cattle and utilised the proceeds for his personal expenses.

An investigation revealed that the proceeds of the sale of the cattle were paid into a specific bank account of the accused and subsequently transferred to various accounts belonging to the accused. Some of the complainants invested large amounts of money agreeing that the accused could utilise it to buy Holstein cattle on behalf of the

complainants and then lease the said cattle from the complainants. The accused did not buy any cattle with the money but he utilised it for his own expenses.

Arguing in aggravation of sentence, State Prosecutor, Advocate Jacques Harrington, stated that the accused skilfully convinced the complainants that their herds were thriving under his care whereas he was utilising their cattle for his benefit.

“The accused sold and misappropriated the cattle to such an extent that the business collapsed and the complainants suffered severe losses. He ran into enormous debt to buy feed for the cattle and when the situation worsened, he lured more farmers into his business. This was just a ‘get-rich-quick scheme’ where he duped seasoned farmers who ended up being the victims of theft and fraud”, said Harrington.

The judge sentenced Loggenberg to an effective 25 years imprisonment of which 10 years was suspended for five years on condition that he is not convicted of theft or fraud during the period of suspension. He was also, in terms of Section 10(3) of the Financial Institution Act, declared unfit to serve as a director, member, partner or manager of any financial institution until the court, on application by the accused, ruled otherwise.

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Regional Spokesperson: DPP Free State

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