

Talk more At Night for Less

Dial *100#, use EcoCash and WhatsApp to buy now

Ts & Cs Apply

(Daily)

(3-day)

(Weekly)

M2 =	50
M5 =	150
M15 =	420

Minutes

Night bundles active from 10pm – 5am



66 100 100

ECONET
Telecom Lesotho

Inspired to change your world



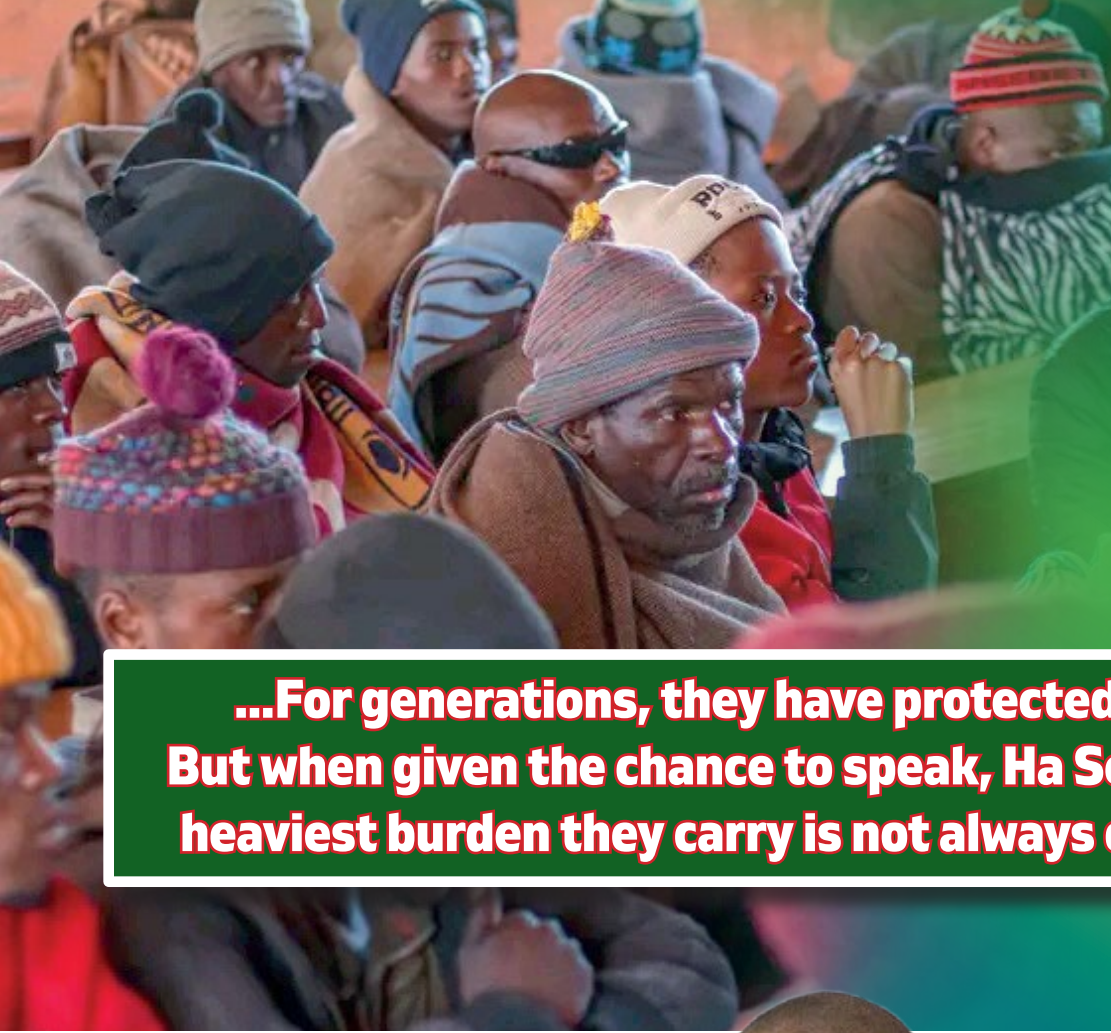
SEAHLOLO

We are Turning 3

Vol. 4 Issue 1

31|07|2026 - 27|08|2026

NOT FOR SALE



The Silent Burden of Herd Boys

...For generations, they have protected the nation's livestock in silence. But when given the chance to speak, Ha Seeiso's herders revealed that the heaviest burden they carry is not always on their backs but in their minds.

Page 2

FARMERS GET GREEN LIGHT TO IMPORT BREEDING LIVESTOCK

Page 3



CHINA REOPENS WOOL AND MOHAIR MARKET

Page 4





FARMERS PITSO AWARDS

AGRICULTURAL & EXCELLENCE

MANTHABISENG CONVENTION CENTRE

11 & 12 SEPTEMBER 2026

FRIDAY SCHOOLS EXHIBITIONS & COMPETITIONS	SATURDAY FARMERS AWARD CEREMONY	SATURDAY GALA DINNER (BLACK TIE)
---	---------------------------------------	--

PRIZES TO BE WON | FOOD | MUSIC | AWARDS





OUR TEAM

Managing Editor
Lerato Matheka

Production
Bataung Monaheng
Khosi Matheka

Reporters
Ntsoaki Motaung
Seabata Mahao
Thoboloko Ntšonyane
Lungile Maseela
Topollo Tlali

Sales & Marketing
Tefa Sello
Tumelo Ramots'oane

Videographer
Tumelo Taole
Khosi Matheka

IT & Innovation
Fusi Hlaoli

Distribution And Admin
Lehlohonolo Mantsoe

Reach Us
(+266) 2231 4267
6242 5157
(WhatsApp)
5092 0676
admin@seahlolo.co.ls

Website
www.seahlolo.co.ls

Publisher
Newsday Media
Printers
RISING SUN PRINTERS

The Silent Burden of Herd Boys

...For generations, they have protected the nation's livestock in silence. But when given the chance to speak, Ha Seeiso's herders revealed that the heaviest burden they carry is not always on their backs but in their minds.

By Topollo Tlali

“People think herding is only about watching animals, but in reality it is a job that takes a lot from your mind.”

When Lempe Cheeke finally spoke, the room fell silent.

For years, he had spent his days walking mountains, watching sheep and cattle, measuring changing weather, protecting animals that did not belong to him and carrying responsibilities that few people ever stop to consider. Yet the greatest burden he described was not the physical demands of the job.

It was loneliness.

It was constant pressure.

It was living with the knowledge that one missing animal could cost him his livelihood.

Around him, dozens of herders from inside the hall of Ha Seeiso nodded in agreement.

The gathering at Ha Seeiso in Thaba-Bosiu, in Maseru district, had been organised as a mental health awareness campaign by EarthCare Alliance, a local NGO, but it quickly became something much deeper.

Men who are often expected to endure hardship without complaint found themselves speaking openly about stress, fear, rejection, exhaustion and the emotional cost of a profession that remains one of the least understood in agriculture.

For perhaps the first time, the conversation was not about livestock. It was about the people who care for them.

Livestock remains one of the pillars of Lesotho's agricultural economy.

Thousands of rural households depend on cattle, sheep and goats for income, food security and cultural identity. The country's internationally recognised wool and mohair industries rely on healthy flocks, while livestock continues to provide financial security for countless farming families.

Yet behind every healthy herd stands a herder whose contribution is often overlooked.

Long before sunrise, they leave villages for distant grazing lands. They spend long hours exposed to harsh weather, monitor sick animals, protect livestock from predators and thieves and carry the responsibility of returning every animal safely to the kraal.

Despite the importance of their work, many say they remain largely invisible.

“They classify us as tools,” said Lebohang Matsie.

“They give us decayed food. They do not allow their own children to participate in agricultural work because they say that is why they hired us.”

He paused before describing a reality many other herders quietly acknowledged.

“Some tell you that as a herder you should stay at the kraal and never enter the house. Yet we are key players in producing food for those same families.”

For Matsie, the emotional burden often comes not from the mountains but from the way society treats the people who work there.

“It is hard to approach an employer about poor treatment because sometimes speaking up means losing your job.”

Alone with responsibility, Carrying blame that is not always yours

Many people see a herder walking across the mountains wrapped in a blanket and carrying a stick. Few consider what occupies his mind.

“As a herder, you are always thinking about the animals, the weather, your safety and your family,” Cheeke said.

“Sometimes you are out there alone for many hours, and that loneliness becomes difficult to carry.”

Unlike many occupations, herding offers few opportunities to share daily frustrations with colleagues or supervisors.

The mountains are often quiet.

The work is solitary.



Yet every decision carries consequences.

“You can look after someone's livestock from morning until evening, and when something happens, the first thing you hear is blame,” Cheeke said.

“People forget that we also get tired, we also get hungry, and we also get hurt by words.”

The appreciation, he said, rarely matches the responsibility.

“Sometimes the person who hires you is the same person who never thanks you, even when you have done your best.

Seabata Phohleli's greatest source of stress is the fear of failing someone else's expectations.

“When animals become sick or when one goes missing, it affects us deeply,” he said.

“I ask myself whether I did enough, whether I failed the herd, whether I will go home with bad news.”

He believes many employers underestimate the realities herders face.

“There are farmers who expect us to perform miracles. If one animal is missing, they speak as if we have committed a crime, even when the weather was bad, or thieves were around.”

Those words, he said, stay with herders long after the conversation has ended.

“In different fields and pastures, animals are not the only ones that suffer. The herders suffer too.”

Growing up before your time

Now 27 years old, Khotso Rasekoala's entire understanding of manhood was shaped by the hardships of herding animals.

“For some of us who started herding at a young age, people expect us to become men immediately because we can take care of animals.”

The expectation, he says, leaves little room for vulnerability.

“Herders are seen as people who should not complain, should not cry and should not talk about being tired. It is not just a boy's job. It tests our hearts, our patience and our minds.”

During the session, Rasekoala discovered that others shared many of the struggles he had carried alone.

“I am grateful to be here with people who do the same work. Hearing that we all face similar challenges has helped me to cope and realise I am not alone.”

He smiled before adding quietly, “If a herder says they are tired, society says you are weak. That is why many of us keep quiet.”

When silence becomes the greatest burden

Tlotlisang Molise believes that silence has become one of the biggest challenges facing men working in agriculture.

“Sometimes a herder may look strong outside, but inside he is tired, confused or discouraged. We are taught not to show weakness, but that teaching has hurt many of us.”

He also pointed to another pressure rarely discussed: the changing environmental conditions have made herding increasingly difficult.

“When pastures become dry, and animals lose weight, people blame the herder without understanding the real causes.”

Climate change, degraded grazing land and de-



herders in mental health awareness campaign

clining pasture quality continue to place additional pressure on those responsible for caring for livestock.

“We are the people taking care of the environment,” Molise said, “but decisions are often made by people who do not work where we work, and when conflicts arise, the consequences affect us.”

A room that finally found its voice

As the discussions continued, something remarkable happened.

The room changed. The guarded expressions softened. Shoulders relaxed.

Some men lowered their heads as they listened. Others nodded quietly.

A few wiped away tears.

What had begun as a mental health awareness campaign gradually became a space where hurt-shells of years of unspoken scars cracked.

Many admitted they had never before spoken openly about the emotional demands of herding.

For social workers Libuseng Malitsi and Tsoarelo Phakanyane, that willingness to speak represented an important first step.

“We have heard different situations that challenge your work as herders, and we have concluded that you already understand what stress is,” Phakanyane said.

He described stress as mental tension that develops when people feel overwhelmed by situations beyond their ability to cope.

Malitsi encouraged the men not to carry those burdens alone.

“When people keep their problems inside, the load grows. We want herders to know that speaking out is not a sign of failure but a sign that you are taking your wellbeing seriously,” she said.

She reminded the herders that difficult emotions deserve attention before they become something more serious.

“We are not here to tell herders that work will become easy. We are here to remind them that they should never face pressure alone. Talking to someone is often the first step toward healing.”

The social workers encouraged the herders to develop healthy ways of coping with stress, including talking to trusted friends, singing, gardening, writing, seeking counselling and building stronger community support networks.

More than a mental Awareness Campaign

Organising the gathering was not easy, Earthcare Alliance co-founder Malefane Masele said, noting many herders feared taking time away from work because they worried about how employers might respond.

“Our core people are full-time workers, and the fact that they came here shows they wanted to be heard. Some attended despite fears that employers might question their absence, while others made arrangements to ensure livestock would still be cared for while they participated.

By the end of the day, Masele believed something important had changed.

“We saw people who now feel empowered, seen, heard and appreciated.”



Farmers Get Green Light to Import Breeding Livestock

By Lungile Maseela

Lesotho is gradually easing restrictions imposed after the Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) outbreak, with livestock farmers now permitted to import breeding rams and other live sheep from South Africa under strict veterinary conditions. This marks one of the first significant steps toward restoring livestock trade.

Minister of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition, Selibe Mochoboroane, announced that the phased reopening of breeding livestock imports follows ongoing discussions between veterinary authorities in Lesotho and South Africa. These engagements aim to resume trade while maintaining stringent disease control measures.

Addressing farmer concerns about cross-border movement of breeding animals, Mochoboroane confirmed that imports have recommenced on a controlled basis, provided farmers meet all veterinary requirements.

“Farmers must comply with import permits, veterinary inspections, and animal health certification before animals can cross the border,” he stated.

He emphasised that South Africa continues to enforce strict biosecurity measures due to active FMD outbreaks in several provinces, making adherence to veterinary regulations crucial.

This reopening is expected to bring relief to livestock farmers who depend on imported breeding stock to enhance flock genetics and productivity. The FMD outbreak had disrupted trade for months.

Following the detection of FMD, veterinary authorities implemented movement controls and trade restrictions to prevent the virus’s spread. These measures severely impacted livestock production, halted imports of breeding animals, and affected various sectors of the livestock industry, including wool and mohair.

“The outbreak affected farmers severely,” Mochoboroane said. “Production had to be put on hold, some farmers lost their animals, while others could not sell their products because it was not safe to trade products from infected animals.”

He added that the disease also hindered farmers’ efforts to improve herd quality by disrupting the importation of breeding live-

stock from South

Africa. “Foot-and-Mouth Disease not only affected wool and mohair trade, but also the buying of breeding animals from South Africa. The importation of rams and other livestock was put on hold. The pig industry was also affected, but efforts are underway to allow the sector to continue trading safely,” he explained.

FMD is a highly contagious viral disease affecting cloven-hoofed animals such as cattle, sheep, goats, and pigs. While it rarely causes high mortality in adult animals, it significantly reduces livestock productivity and often leads to movement and trade restrictions to limit the spread of infection.

Despite the easing of breeding livestock imports, Mochoboroane cautioned that the outbreak has not been eradicated. He urged farmers to continue observing all veterinary regulations and to report any suspected cases to veterinary officials immediately, rather than attempting self-treatment.

“Farmers should not try to treat animals on their own. They should inform veterinary officials so they can receive the necessary assistance and guidance,” he advised.

Senior Veterinary Officer Dr Paballo Nonyane noted that while the outbreak shows signs of slowing, veterinary authorities are closely monitoring the

situation. “The outbreak is reducing, but it is still active,” she said. “We continue working with other veterinary officers and the national Foot-and-Mouth Disease task team to educate farmers on how to manage the disease and reduce its spread.”

She clarified that while the disease typically doesn’t cause widespread animal deaths, approximately three to five per cent of infected animals may die, its primary impact is on livestock production and the resulting economic losses for farmers, affecting milk, meat, wool, and mohair yields.

Dr Nonyane urged farmers to promptly notify veterinary officers if animals exhibit symptoms such as excessive salivation, blisters around the mouth, tongue, or feet, lameness, loss of appetite, or sudden declines in production.

She also reminded livestock owners that movement permits remain mandatory for transporting livestock or engaging in animal trade, emphasising that these measures are crucial for preventing new outbreaks.

Six Months On, Lesotho Still Waits for FMD Vaccines

By Topollo Tlali

Six months after Lesotho confirmed its first case of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD), the country is still waiting for vaccines, leaving hundreds of livestock farmers without what veterinary officials describe as one of the most important tools needed to contain the disease and protect recovering animals.

Although surveillance, movement controls and public awareness campaigns have been rolled out since the outbreak was confirmed in February, the anticipated vaccines have yet to arrive, prolonging uncertainty for farmers whose livelihoods continue to be affected by the outbreak.

The first confirmed case was detected on 18 February in Mahlasela, Butha-Buthe, where six out of 17 cattle sampled tested positive for the highly contagious viral disease. The outbreak occurred near the South African border, where FMD had already spread through neighbouring provinces.

Veterinary officer Dr Mookho Ntiea said while veterinary teams have managed to track the disease through continuous surveillance, the delayed arrival of vaccines remains a major challenge in the country’s response.

“As veterinarians, we have travelled throughout the country collecting blood samples from animals in different kraals before testing them in the Ministry’s laboratory,” she said.

“When further analysis is required, the samples are sent to Botswana for additional testing.”

According to Dr Ntiea, more than 400 confirmed cases have been recorded across the country since the outbreak began. She said 102 cases were confirmed in Qacha’s Nek and Mokhotlong during February, followed by 168 in Leribe, 111 in April, 32 in May and 24 in June.

Although the number of new infections has declined over the past three months, she warned that the absence of vaccines continues to leave livestock vulnerable.

“Because of the delay in the arrival of the vaccine, I do not think Foot-and-Mouth Disease has disappeared. Instead, farmers have become tired of reporting sick animals without receiving the vaccine,” she said.

Dr Ntiea said the government placed vaccine orders months ago, but regional demand has delayed deliveries as several southern African countries continue battling outbreaks.

“The government ordered the vaccine long ago. Unfortunately, many countries are currently battling Foot-and-Mouth Disease, resulting in long waiting periods.”

To help address the shortage, Botswana pledged to donate 100,000 doses of FMD vaccine to Lesotho following discussions during the inaugural Lesotho-Botswana Bi-National Commission meeting.

However, Dr Ntiea said the donated vaccines have not yet reached the country.

“The 100,000 doses from Botswana have not yet arrived in Lesotho, and even when they do, they will only be enough for a district with a relatively small livestock population such as Butha-Buthe,” she said.

She explained that each animal requires a three-millilitre dose and follow-up vaccinations, meaning Lesotho will still need to

procure additional vaccines if it hopes to protect livestock nationwide.

In the meantime, infected animals continue to be quarantined on farms because Lesotho has no dedicated quarantine facilities.

“The animals have recovered from the visible symptoms, but their immune systems remain weak, and they still require vaccination,” Dr Ntiea said.

While waiting for the vaccines, the Ministry of Agriculture has focused on strengthening disease surveillance and public education.

Ministry Public Relations Officer Lereko Masupha said roadshows conducted across the country have improved farmers’ understanding of Foot-and-Mouth Disease and encouraged compliance with movement restrictions and reporting procedures.

“Through the roadshows, Basotho now understand Foot-and-Mouth Disease and can follow the regulations,” he said.

The prolonged wait for vaccines has also extended the economic impact of the outbreak.

Restrictions on livestock movement disrupted cattle sales, interrupted breeding programmes and affected the wool, mohair and cattle industries, leaving many farming households without an important source of income.

Minister of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition Selibe Mochoboroane said the outbreak had affected both farmers and the broader livestock economy.

“Agricultural production was interrupted. Some farmers lost livestock, while others could not sell their products because Foot-and-Mouth Disease affected the market,” he said.

He added that the suspension of breeding livestock imports, including rams from South Africa, had further slowed efforts to improve herd quality.

“Recovering from these setbacks will take time, but we are working to restore trade and reopen export opportunities,” the Minister said.

For farmers, however, the continued wait for vaccines has become increasingly frustrating.

Lebohang Mosaola of Leseli la Lihoi said many livestock owners feel they have been left on the sidelines of the country’s response.

“I have seen the Ministry working in isolation since the disease was declared,” he said.

“Some of us are not fully informed about issues affecting our livestock, yet we are the people responsible for raising these animals.”

He said farmers expected closer collaboration between government and farming organisations throughout the outbreak.

“The only time I heard about the vaccine was when the Minister announced Botswana’s donation.”

Although veterinary authorities believe surveillance and movement controls have slowed the spread of the disease, they say vaccination remains a critical missing component of Lesotho’s response. Until vaccines arrive, farmers will continue relying on biosecurity measures and movement restrictions to protect their livestock while waiting for the country’s next line of defence.



China Reopens Wool and Mohair Market

By Lungile Maseela

China has approved the resumption of wool and mohair imports from Lesotho, paving the way for the country's most valuable livestock export industry to resume trade after months of disruption caused by the Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) outbreak.

Minister of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition Selibe Mochoboroane said the approval follows months of negotiations between the Lesotho Government, Chinese authorities and South African counterparts to develop export conditions that comply with international animal health standards.

"We recently agreed on the terms under which trade will continue. We have held meetings with the Chinese Embassy and engaged with China's customs authorities, and an announcement has now been made confirming that China has approved the continuation of trade," Mochoboroane said.

He said veterinary officials are now finalising the remaining documentation before consignments can begin moving through the Port Elizabeth export route.

"The signing of the protocol shows that everything is now in order. What remains is for farmers to secure buyers so that trade can resume," he said.

The Minister said the reopening of the Chinese market is an important milestone for an industry that contributes significantly to Lesotho's economy.

"I recently visited Port Elizabeth, where I learned that the wool and mohair sector generates approximately M900 million in revenue. Working together with brokers and all stakeholders, we believe the industry has the potential to generate even more than that. That shows just how important this sector is to Lesotho," he said.

Despite the reopening of trade, farmers will still be required to comply with strict veterinary requirements designed to prevent the spread of Foot-and-Mouth Disease.

Mochoboroane said every farmer intending to market wool and mohair must first obtain veterinary clearance before products can be accepted for auction or export.

"For farmers to sell their wool and mohair, they will need a permit from a veterinarian. Without that permit, there will be no auction or sale," he said.

He stressed that the requirements are intended to protect Lesotho's export reputation rather than restrict farmers' access to markets.

"The ministry is not trying to stand in farmers' way. Farmers have the right to choose whichever licensed broker they wish to work with, and that choice remains theirs."

Senior Veterinary Officer Dr Pabolo Nonyane said one of the conditions agreed between Lesotho and China is that wool and mohair destined for export must undergo treatment to eliminate any risk of transmitting the Foot-and-Mouth Disease virus.

"Foot-and-Mouth Disease is caused by a virus, and that virus can be inactivated

through heat treatment. This is one of the methods that has been agreed upon to allow the continuation of trade with China," she said.

Dr Nonyane said the treatment process has not yet begun because exporters and brokers must first complete the required veterinary and administrative procedures.

"We have not yet started heating the wool and mohair. We are still waiting for farmers and brokers to submit all the required documents and follow the agreed procedures before exports can begin."

She added that the Ministry is working closely with licensed wool and mohair brokers to ensure all export conditions are met before shipments leave the country.

Dr Nonyane reminded farmers that they must obtain an AV63 movement permit before wool, mohair or livestock can legally be transported for commercial purposes.

"It is entirely up to each farmer to decide which licensed broker they want to work with. That decision belongs to the farmer."

While farmers welcomed China's decision to reopen its market, many said they are still waiting to be paid for wool and mohair sold before exports were suspended.

Wool and mohair farmer Khotsang Mo-shoeshoe said delayed payments remain a major concern for producers.

"What we are looking forward to most as wool and mohair farmers is getting paid for the wool and mohair we have already sold," he said.

"There are farmers who had already sold



Sheep farming remains at the heart of Lesotho's wool and mohair economy

their products but failed to receive their payments because they did not have a permit from the veterinary authorities."

He said many farming households depend almost entirely on wool and mohair income and urged stakeholders to ensure outstanding payments are processed as trade resumes.

"Due payments are what we really need as farmers. Once farmers receive the money they are owed, the rest will follow. Many families are waiting for that income before they can continue investing in their livestock and prepare for the next production season."

The reopening of the Chinese market marks one of the most significant milestones in Lesotho's recovery from the Foot-and-Mouth Disease outbreak and is expected to restore confidence in one of the country's largest agricultural export industries.

Lumpy Skin Outbreak Leaves Lasting Lessons for Livestock Farmers

By Lungile Maseela

Six months after Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD) swept through Lesotho's cattle population, veterinary officials say the outbreak has largely been brought under control. For many livestock farmers, however, the economic and production losses continue to shape their recovery.

The disease, first detected in January this year, spread rapidly across several districts, infecting more than 1,000 cattle and claiming dozens of animals before emergency interventions and the onset of winter slowed transmission.

While new infections have declined significantly, the outbreak exposed weaknesses in emergency disease preparedness, veterinary service delivery and farmer awareness, prompting renewed calls for stronger prevention systems before the next warm season.

For the Lesotho National Farmers' Union (LENAFU), the outbreak was unlike anything farmers had anticipated.

"The outbreak came at a time when we did not expect it, and its magnitude was also greater than what we anticipated. It affected farmers greatly by negatively affecting their production, their herds and their finances," said LENAFU Executive Director Khotso Lepheana.

Beyond losing animals, many farmers were forced to absorb the cost of treatment while production declined.

"When the outbreak happened, farmers had to use their own resources to get medication for their animals. Although the Ministry did intervene and provide assistance to contain the disease and support farmers, there were challenges that affected how quickly some farmers could access these

services," he said.

One of the greatest obstacles, Lepheana explained, was that many cattle had already been moved to remote cattle posts by the time vaccination campaigns were rolled out.

"Many animals were already at cattle posts when the outbreak occurred. For farmers to access vaccination services, they had to bring their animals to where the vaccinations were taking place. However, sick animals cannot travel long distances, and this meant some farmers were unable to access assistance immediately."

The disruption extended beyond beef production. Dairy farmers supplying milk collection centres also saw production fall sharply as infected cattle became weak and unproductive.

"Farmers who were supplying milk to collection centres lost their means of income because production declined. They only managed to return to normal production once they had contained the disease and their animals had recovered," Lepheana said.

He cautioned against assuming that all livestock producers have recovered equally.

"The magnitude of the impact was different from farm to farm due to challenges such as limited information dissemination and difficulties accessing services. Recovery is going to be different for every farmer."

"Some farmers have already recovered because they had easier access to services and



resources, or because they were not badly affected. For others, recovery will take longer because they experienced greater losses or could not access support at the right time."

From the government's perspective, the disease is no longer spreading at the rate seen during the summer outbreak.

Director of Veterinary Field Operations Dr Mookho Ntiea said the arrival of winter played an important role in reducing transmission because the insects responsible for spreading the virus became less active.

"Since the winter season began, we have noticed that the number of cases has declined. The outbreak was mainly associated with biting insects, including mosquitoes, which are more active during warmer seasons."

She confirmed that the last reported cases were recorded in April, signalling that emergency control measures had succeeded in containing the outbreak.

Dr Ntiea said the experience demonstrated that routine livestock management alone is not always sufficient when highly infectious diseases emerge unexpectedly.

"The outbreak caught us by surprise and spread very quickly. Normally farmers vaccinate their animals as part of livestock management, but because this outbreak spread rapidly, the Ministry had to intervene through emergency disease control

measures, including supporting affected farmers."

Looking ahead, she urged farmers to strengthen preventative measures rather than waiting until another outbreak occurs.

"The best way to prepare for the next outbreak and prevent future cases is to prepare before the warm season begins. Farmers must control biting insects such as mosquitoes and ensure that their animals are vaccinated as part of routine disease prevention."

The experience has reinforced the value of early vaccination and close cooperation with veterinary officers for farmers who lived through the outbreak and loss.

Thabo Masiu, whose herd was affected by the disease, said government support helped restore the health of his cattle.

"After my cattle were vaccinated against Lumpy Skin Disease, some of the animals developed mild swelling at the injection site and appeared less active for a short period." Although initially concerned, he said the animals recovered quickly.

"The signs gradually disappeared within a few days. The cattle returned to grazing normally and showed no further signs of illness. This gave me confidence that they had recovered well after the vaccination campaign."

Despite that positive outcome, the emotional and financial toll remains vivid.

"It was a very tough time for me as a farmer. Seeing your animals affected by a disease is stressful because livestock is not only an investment but also a source of livelihood. Going forward, we need to do better by ensuring that our animals are vaccinated and that we take preventative measures seriously."



WHO ARE WE

Contract Farming: A Pathway to a Stronger Poultry Industry in Lesotho

Lesotho's poultry sector continues to present significant opportunities for economic growth, job creation and improved national food security. However, increasing local production while ensuring farmers have reliable markets remains one of the sector's biggest challenges.

To address this, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC), Standard Bank Lesotho and FinMark Trust, hosted a Poultry Aggregator Model Workshop on 16 July 2026 at Lancers Inn in Maseru.

The workshop brought together poultry farmers, agribusinesses and industry stakeholders to share knowledge on contract farming and the aggregator model as practical approaches to strengthening Lesotho's poultry value chain.

What is Contract Farming?

Contract farming is a formal agreement between farmers and buyers that outlines the responsibilities of both parties before production begins. The agreement clearly specifies important aspects such as the quantity and quality of products to be supplied, pricing arrangements, delivery schedules and other terms and conditions.

When properly implemented, contract farming provides farmers with a guaranteed market while giving buyers confidence that products will meet agreed standards.

It also helps reduce uncertainty for both producers and buyers by creating a structured and transparent business relationship.

Different Contract Farming Models

Farmers participating in the workshop were introduced to several contract farming models commonly used in agriculture. These include:

- **Centralised Model** – A buyer directly contracts a large number of farmers and manages production, processing and marketing.
- **Nucleus (Out-grower) Model** – A company operates its own production unit while also sourcing products from surrounding contracted farmers.
- **Multipartite Model** – Government institutions, financial organisations, private companies and farmers work together under one contractual arrangement.
- **Intermediary Model** – A buyer works through farmer groups, co-



Farmers gathered to learn about contract farming market access and business opportunities under the Lesotho Suppliers Development Programme (LSDP)

operatives or agents who coordinate production.

- **Informal Model** – Simple seasonal agreements between individual buyers and farmers, usually for smaller-scale production.

Selecting the most appropriate model depends on the farmer's production capacity, available resources and target market.

What Should Farmers Consider Before Signing a Contract?

Before entering any agreement, farmers should carefully assess whether they have the capacity to meet the contract requirements.

Important considerations include:

- Production capacity and productivity.
- Availability of capital and financial resources.
- Ability to consistently supply the agreed quantities.
- Access to quality inputs.
- Market demand.
- Competitiveness within the poultry sector.
- Existing or potential buyers.
- Commercialisation opportunities.
- Value chain structure.
- Import substitution opportunities.

Understanding these factors helps farmers avoid signing contracts that are either too demanding or unsuitable for their operations.

Managing Production Risks

Agriculture is exposed to several risks that can affect production and profitability.

Some of the major risks discussed during

the workshop included:

- Animal diseases.
- Climate-related challenges.
- Market fluctuations.
- Input shortages.
- Unexpected production losses.

Farmers were encouraged to minimise these risks by adopting improved farming technologies, strengthening biosecurity measures and exploring agricultural insurance where available.

Understanding the Poultry Contract

The Ministry of Agriculture's Poultry Marketing Office guided farmers through the key clauses commonly found in poultry production contracts.

These include:

- Product pricing.
- Product quality requirements.
- Inspection procedures.
- Delivery arrangements.
- Responsibilities of both parties.
- Management of unforeseen circumstances.
- Dispute resolution mechanisms.
- Contract duration.
- Contract termination.
- Signatures of all parties.

Understanding every clause before signing helps protect both farmers and buyers while building long-term business relationships.

The Aggregator Model

The aggregator model links many individual poultry farmers to a single market.

Under this approach, farmers focus on pro-

ducing quality chickens, while the aggregator purchases the chockens, packages them and identifies suitable markets.

This model reduces marketing challenges for farmers, improves efficiency throughout the value chain and allows producers to concentrate on increasing production.

It also creates a more organised poultry industry capable of supplying larger markets consistently.

Reducing Poultry Imports

One of the long-term objectives of the initiative is to increase local poultry production and gradually reduce imports.

Lesotho has already demonstrated that import substitution is possible through the egg production sector, where increased local production has significantly reduced dependence on imported eggs.

Stakeholders believe that with greater investment, improved production systems and stronger partnerships, the broiler industry can achieve similar success.

Building a Sustainable Poultry Industry

Contract farming and the aggregator model represent practical solutions for strengthening Lesotho's poultry sector.

By connecting farmers to reliable markets, improving business planning and encouraging collaboration between government, financial institutions, development partners and the private sector, these initiatives have the potential to increase farmer incomes, improve food security, create employment and build a more competitive poultry industry for the future.



School Feeding Plan Targets 80% Local Food Procurement

By Topollo Tlali

The Government aims to source 80 per cent of food for the national school feeding programme from Basotho farmers within the next 18 months, as it moves to implement the National School Feeding Policy approved in 2024. During a stakeholder meeting held under the theme, Accelerating Home-Grown School Feeding Through Local Procurement, representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition, the Ministry of Education and Training, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP), the Lesotho National Farmers Union (LENAFU) and other stakeholders discussed how the country can achieve the target.

Opening the meeting, Ministry of Agriculture’s Director of Marketing , Lekhooe Makhate, urged stakeholders to work together to ensure that the programme benefits both learners and local farmers.

“Feeding the children, increase classroom participation. When learners are not hungry, attendance goes up, grades go up, and communities grow stronger. This meeting is our chance to turn that belief into a feeding programme that works for every school,” Makhate said.

“We are not serving food, but we are serving opportunities. If we get this right, we fulfil potential. Let us use today to design a programme that delivers on its promises.”

The discussions focused on whether Lesotho has the capacity to source 80 per cent of food for schools from local farmers within 18 months.

Stakeholders agreed that while the target presents an opportunity to create a stable market for farmers, several challenges must first be addressed.

One of the major concerns raised was inconsistent agricultural production caused by climate change and erratic weather patterns.

“Farmers cannot meet demand if production itself is unreliable,” said Jubilee Ntloana, a school feeding coordinator, noting droughts, delayed rains

and soil degradation are affecting yields.

“Without climate-smart support, this target will remain impossible.”

Participants also identified limited agricultural knowledge among some farmers as another factor affecting productivity.

Another major issue raised was the lack of organised supply chains capable of linking farmers with schools.

“We have farmers producing, but no structured system to collect, store and distribute food. That is the biggest problem,” said FAO Agricultural Officer Mohlophahi Maope.

“School feeding needs consistency, but farmers are disjointed.”

Maope said if farmers’ production challenges are addressed, the programme has the potential to succeed.

“There are policies already in place that now need to be implemented,” he said.

He noted that many schools continue relying on external suppliers because local farmers cannot guarantee consistent volumes or timely deliveries.

“Poor rural road networks and high transport costs further complicate the movement of goods, particularly from remote mountain areas.”

Food quality and safety also featured prominently during the discussions, with Livestock Marketing Manager, Kefuoe Malehloanela Thakabanna, stressing that increasing local procurement should never compromise food safety.

“We cannot compromise on the health of learners. Local sourcing must go hand in hand with strict adherence to food safety standards,” she said.

She pointed that farmers and suppliers require training in post-harvest handling, storage, packaging and compliance with health regulations before they can reliably supply schools.

Limited access to finance was identified as another major obstacle.

“Farmers need inputs, seeds, fertilisers and equipment, but most cannot afford them,” said Crops



school feeding workshop

Marketing Officer Vuka Tsabo.

“Without financial support, production will remain low.”

Stakeholders recommended expanding agricultural subsidies, improving access to credit and introducing insurance schemes to protect farmers against climate-related losses.

They also proposed increased investment in irrigation infrastructure, training farmers in climate-smart agriculture and post-harvest management, establishing aggregation centres, reforming procurement systems to favour local suppliers and strengthening coordination among government ministries, farmers, schools and development partners.

Young poultry farmer Paseka Majara of Maggie Produce Farm welcomed the government’s intention to prioritise local farmers, saying their inclusion in the discussions would help producers prepare for future demand.

“As a poultry farmer, I am already supplying some schools with eggs. I wish other farmers could also look at school feeding as an opportunity because there is high demand for home-grown food,” Ma-

jara said.

“As farmers, we need to work hard to reach the target of 80 per cent, but we are faced with many problems such as climate change, which has harsh effects on our production. My plea is for those implementing this target within 18 months also to introduce measures that will enable farmers to produce higher yields.”

Thakabanna encouraged farmers to take advantage of the market opportunities created by the school feeding programme.

“We are all farmers here, and we need to work harder in production so that children in our schools eat organic food,” she said.

“The market is there. Farmers need to improve the way they maintain production to meet demand, and many organisations are willing to invest in farmers who are serious about increasing production.”

Despite the challenges identified during the meeting, stakeholders agreed that the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme has the potential to transform Lesotho’s agricultural sector by creating reliable markets for farmers, improving household incomes and strengthening national food security.

Dead Animals, Living Risks

By Topollo Tlali

As Lesotho grapples with a surge in livestock disease outbreaks, health experts are cautioning against the long-standing practice of consuming animals that die from unknown causes. This tradition, they warn, could expose communities to dangerous zoonotic diseases—illnesses transmissible from animals to humans.

For generations, many Basotho have adhered to the proverb “Lebitla la khomo ke molomo” (literally, “the grave of a cow is the mouth”). This saying reflects a cultural value where every part of an animal is utilised, minimising waste.

However, veterinarians and nutrition specialists now contend that this tradition is clashing with a new reality.

The country is currently battling outbreaks of Foot-and-Mouth Disease, Lumpy Skin Disease, and rabies, while veterinary authorities monitor other livestock diseases threatening both animal production and public health. In this context, experts view the consumption of meat from animals that die without veterinary inspection as a growing public health concern.

Makamohelo Semoli, Director of Nutrition and Home Economics, emphasises that evolving disease patterns necessitate a reevaluation of practices once deemed acceptable.

“There are rising animal diseases that are not always visible to the eye but can seriously affect human life,” she said

She charged that food should promote health, not become a source of illness; thus, anything that causes illness is a threat.

“Protecting our families starts with the food choices we make. We eat food to live and to be healthy. Consuming meat from dead animals can have many side effects. If certain diseases are harmful to animals, imagine what they can do to the human body.”

Semoli believes that sustained public education is crucial for changing attitudes.

“Public health messages should spread nationwide through radio, television, newspapers, and all platforms that can enable communities to understand the harmfulness of improper food consumption.”

Health officials highlight that a significant challenge is the inability to detect many diseases simply by examining an animal carcass.

Farmers, particularly in remote areas with limited veterinary services, often rely solely on appearance to determine if meat is safe. Yet, experts warn that an apparently healthy carcass can still harbour dangerous pathogens capable of causing human illness.

Dr Pabolo Muso, Senior Veterinary Officer, advises communities never to consume animals that die before veterinary officers can ascertain the cause of death.

“Many diseases cannot affect human life immediately, but their effects may only become visible later. It is therefore important for farmers to report cases of dead animals before attempting to consume the meat.”

She acknowledges that access to veterinary services remains a challenge in some parts of the country due to limited personnel.

“As veterinarians are few in the country, trained

district administration officers are working in communities to assist farmers with cases of dead animals.”

Dr Muso stresses that veterinary inspection remains one of the most effective safeguards against disease transmission.

“Under normal circumstances, where abattoirs sell meat on a large scale, veterinarians should inspect the state of the meat being sold.”

“It is very important to look deeply into health because some diseases may not appear immediately but may manifest later in a person’s life.”

However, for many rural households, this decision is rarely simple.

“The loss of a cow, sheep, or goat in this country represents a significant financial blow. Rather than burying or safely disposing of the carcass, families often choose to recover some value by consuming or sharing the meat with neighbours; this economic reality is further reinforced by cultural practices.

“In many communities, sharing meat from an animal that has died unexpectedly is considered an act of solidarity. Refusing such meat can be seen as wasteful or even disrespectful. This practice often stems from the belief that thorough cooking eliminates all harmful organisms, a notion that is both outdated and dangerous,” Dr Muso said.

Khotso Lepheana, Executive Director of the Lesotho National Farmers’ Union (LENAFU), stated that the organisation continues to urge farmers to report livestock deaths before making any decisions about the carcass.

“Some farmers still report to veterinarians but then proceed to eat the meat,” Lepheana explained. “Later, through tracing, these communities are found to be experiencing disease outbreaks associated with consuming unsafe meat, with some individuals becoming seriously ill.”

Lepheana noted that delayed responses from veterinary services can discourage farmers from reporting livestock deaths.

“Some farmers get discouraged from reporting because reports take a long time, and veterinarians delay their response.”

He added that staffing shortages remain a major obstacle, with some districts relying on only one veterinarian to serve large farming communities.

Despite these challenges, Lepheana commended local councils and health workers for their ongoing efforts to educate communities about safe livestock management.

“I would like to acknowledge councils and health workers for their ongoing public health awareness campaigns, often conducted during community gatherings,” he said.

Lepheana emphasised that reducing risks will require stronger veterinary outreach, faster disease reporting systems, and closer cooperation between farming communities and government institutions. “Strengthening veterinary outreach services, improving livestock disease surveillance, and building trust between communities and authorities are critical steps, as well as encouraging the safe disposal of animal carcasses and ensuring farmers can easily report livestock deaths with immediate responses are equally important measures,” he said.

The World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) has repeatedly warned that diseases transmitted from animals to people cannot be managed by the health sector alone.

Instead, WOAH advocates a One Health approach, which recognises the close relationship between human health, animal health, and the environment. Under this approach, preventing livestock diseases is considered not only an agricultural responsibility but also a public health priority.



MECHANIZATION PARTNER

FARMERS
PITSO
AWARDS

AGRICULTURAL
& EXCELLENCE

'MANTHABISENG CONVENTION CENTRE

Exhibition



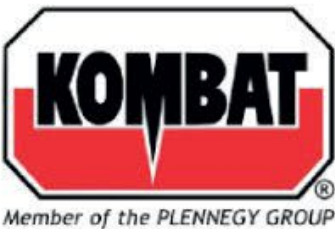
PRIZES

5 PRIZES TO BE WON BY
OUR LUCKY CUSTOMERS!

Visit our stand, explore our
products and stand a chance to WIN!

11th & 12th SEPTEMBER 2026

MEET
OUR
TRUSTED
SUPPLIERS:





FARMERS PITSO AGRICULTURAL & EXCELLENCE AWARDS EXHIBITIONS

Exhibition Overview

The Farmers Pitso Agricultural Exhibition is a national agricultural marketplace running alongside the Farmers Pitso Agri-cultural & Excellence Awards. The exhibition is open to the public through a single Entry/Exit via the Deal N Drive entrance, while the Awards Ceremony inside the Manthabiseng Convention Centre is reserved for ticket holders.

The Exhibition Experience

- The exhibition is built around two anchor experiences and a central public activation area:
- **Anchor 1: Jandrell Mechanisation Experience** – Official Mechanisation Partner and exhibition centrepiece.
 - **Anchor 2: Royal Nutrition Village** – Supporting His Majesty King Letsie III's Nutrition Agenda.
 - **Farmers Square** – Central activation space for announcements, demonstrations, interviews, lucky draws, performances and sponsor activations.
 - **Agribusiness Village** - Home to seed companies, fertiliser suppliers, animal health, financial institutions, ICT providers, insurers, government agencies and agribusiness service providers

Exhibition Participation Packages

The existing pricing structure remains unchanged. The update focuses on strengthening the identity of each exhibition section rather than introducing new pricing categories.

1.Royal Nutrition Village

Showcases nutrition, food systems, agro-processing, value addition and healthy diets in support of His Majesty's Nutrition Agenda.

PACKAGE TYPE	APPROXIMATE SIZE	PRICE
Small Gazebo Stall	3m x 3m (9m ²)	M600
Standard Stall	6m X 3m (18m ²)	M1,800
Premium Corner Stall	6m X 6m (36m ²)	M3,500

2.Jandrell Mechanisation Experience & Innovation Village

Centred around the Jandrell Mechanisation Experience, this village hosts innovation, irrigation, machinery, tools and technology. Jandrell's centrepiece activation is reserved exclusively for the Official Mechanisation Partner. Surrounding spaces remain available under the published packages.

PACKAGE TYPE	APPROXIMATE SIZE	PRICE
Machinery Display Bay	6m x 6m (36m ²)	M1,200
Large Equipment Stall	9m X 9m (81m ²)	M3,500
Premium Marquee Showcase	12m X 12m (36m ²)	M7,500

3.Agribusiness Village

Home to seed companies, fertiliser suppliers, animal health, financial institutions, ICT providers, insurers, government agencies and agribusiness service providers.

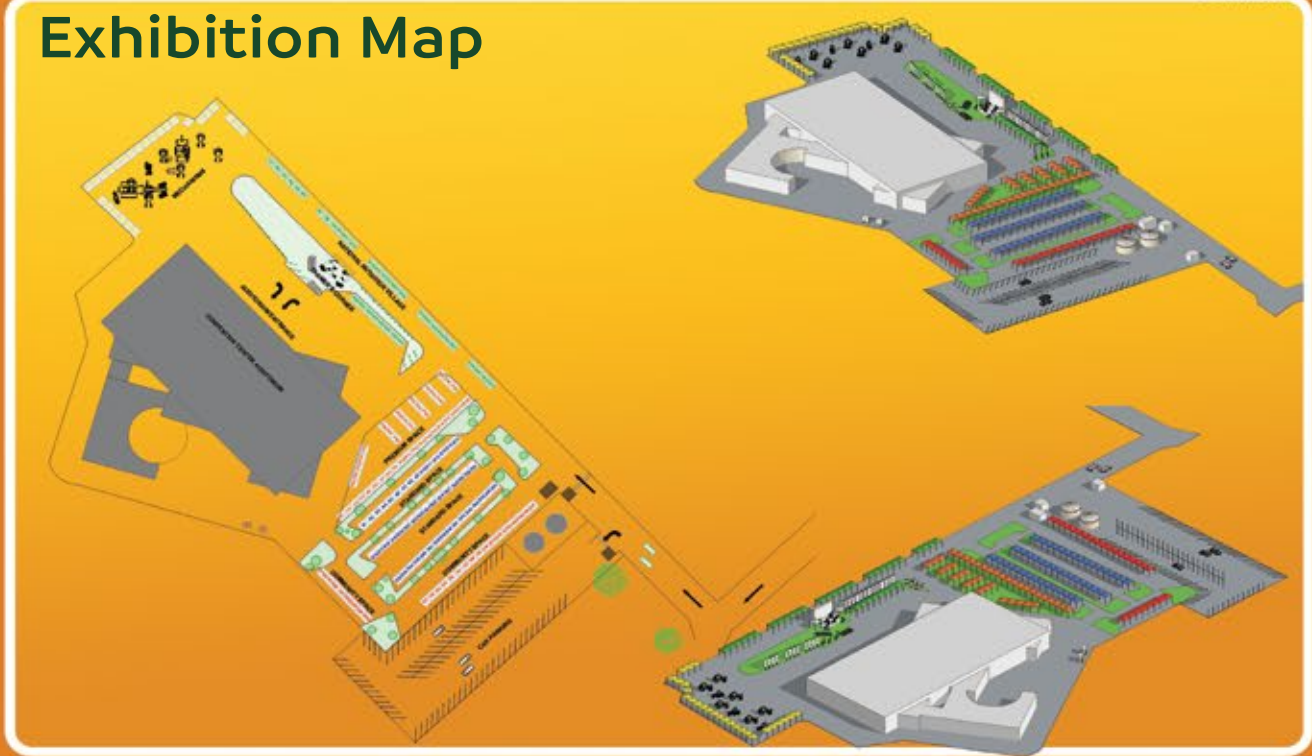
PACKAGE TYPE	APPROXIMATE SIZE	PRICE
Small Farmer Stall	3m x 3m (9m ²)	M600
Standard agribusiness stall	6m X 3m (18m ²)	M1,200
Premium Pavillion Space	6m X 6m (36m ²)	M2,500

4.Farmers Square

Farmers Square is not an exhibition package. It is the exhibition's central activation space where MC announcements, lucky draws, media interviews, cultural performances, school performances, product launches and live demonstrations take place throughout the event.

What Every Exhibitor Receives

1.	Exhibition space allocation.
2.	Branding visibility within exhibition grounds.
3.	Access to farmers, agribusinesses, financiers, & policymakers
4.	Inclusion in event marketing and publicity
5.	Opportunity for product demonstrations & activations
6.	Networking opportunities during the two-day event.



11TH & 12TH SEPT. 2026

Apply Using the Link:

<https://seahlolo.co.ls/home/farmers-pitso-awards-2026-exhibition-portal/>

5092 0676



Government of Lesotho

COMPETITIVENESS AND FINANCIAL INCLUSION (CAFI) PROJECT

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

MSME RESILIENCE BUILDING AND PREPAREDNESS SUPPORT

BACKGROUND

The Government of Lesotho has received financing from the International Development Association (IDA) of the World Bank to implement the Lesotho Competitiveness and Financial Inclusion (CAFI) Project. The Project Development Objective (PDO) is to increase access to business support services and financial products targeted at Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and entrepreneurs, particularly women and youth.

Under Subcomponent 1.3, *Strengthening the Resilience of MSMEs to Climatic Shocks and Disasters*, the CAFI Project provides targeted support to enhance the preparedness and resilience of MSMEs against climate-induced shocks and disasters.

The support aims to strengthen business continuity by reducing the vulnerability of MSMEs to climate-related risks and disasters, protecting productive assets, improving operational resilience, and promoting sustainable enterprise growth. The Government of Lesotho, through the CAFI Project, therefore invites eligible Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to apply for Resilience Building and Preparedness Support. Successful applicants will receive assistance designed to strengthen their capacity to prepare for and withstand climate-induced shocks and disasters.

Eligibility criteria

- Enterprises that meet the following eligibility criteria can apply:
- Enterprise must be a formal entity registered with relevant authorities.
 - Enterprise must be located in an area where shock/s are likely to occur.
 - Enterprises must clearly demonstrate how the expected shock/s are likely to affect their business operations.
 - Enterprises must have valid tax clearance, indicating good standing with their tax obligations.
 - The enterprises must provide financial statements.

- Enterprises must provide three (3) quotations from three (3) reputable suppliers.
- The application forms must be accompanied by the following documents:
- Proof of business registration.
 - Business identification certificates, where applicable.
 - Up-to-date tax clearance certificate.
 - Three quotations from three (3) reputable suppliers.

Note: A list of predefined equipment and minor works that are supported by CAFI is available on the following CAFI website: <https://www.cafi.org.ls>

Application Process

Application forms can be accessed on the following CAFI website <https://www.cafi.org.ls>

Submission

Complete Application Forms must be e-sent to procurement@cafi.org.ls with a copy to mmokone@cafi.org.ls as a single attachment.

Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours [08h00 to 17h00 local time].

Lesotho Competitiveness and Financial Inclusion Project
House No. 252, Maseru West
Corner Kingsway and Tona-Kholo Road
P.O. Box 747,
Maseru 100
Lesotho
Tel: (+266) 22 315 100



Government of Lesotho

COMPETITIVENESS AND FINANCIAL INCLUSION (CAFI) PROJECT

KHOELEHETSO EA LIKOPO

TŠEHETSO EA LIKHOBEO TSE NYANE, TSE MAHARENG LE TSE NTSENG LI THUTHUOA MALEBANA LE BOITŠEMATLELO LE BOITOKISETSO KHAHLANONG LE PHETOHO EA LEHOLIMO

Selelekela

'Muso oa Lesotho o fumane tšehetso ea chelete ho tsoa Bankeng e Kholo ea Lefatše ho phethahatsa morero o tšehetsang likhoebo tse ikemetseng (CAFI Project). Sepheo sa morero ona ke ho ho eketsa litšebeletso tsa ntšetsopele ea likhoebo le lihlahisoa tsa lichelete bakeng sa likhoebo, haholo-holo likhoebo tsa basali le bacha.

Tlase Karoloana ea 1.3, e shebaneng le ho matlafatsa Boitšematlelo ba Likhoebo tse Nyane, tse Mahareng le tse ntseng li thuthua khahlanong le Litlamorao tsa Phetoho ea boemo ba Leholimo le Likoluo, Morero oa CAFI o fana ka tšehetso e khethehileng ho thusa likhoebo ho ntlafatsa boitokisetso le boitšematlelo ba tsona khahlanong le maemo a ka bakoang ke litla-morao tsa phetoho ea leholimo.

Tšehetso ena e reretsoe ho ntlafatsa kholo ea likhoebo tse nyane, tse mahareng le tse ntseng li thuthua ka ho li sireletsa le thepa ea tsona khahlanong le litla-morao tsa maemo a mabe a leholimo, le ho li tšehetsa hore li tsoelepele ho hoeba le maemong ao li anngoeng ke phetoho ea boemo ba leholimo.

'Muso oa Lesotho ka morero oa CAFI o mema likhoebo tse nyane, tse mahareng le tse ntseng li thuthua ho etsa likopo tsa tšehetso ea ho matlafatsa boitšematlelo le boitokisetso ba tsona khahlanong le litla-morao tsa maemo a ka bakoang ke phetoho ea leholimo. Likhoebo tse tla atleha li tla thusoa ka thepa e tla li sireletsa khahlanong le phetoho ea leholimo.

Lintlha tse lebelletsoeng ho hlaha kahara likopo

- Likhoebo tse tla etsa likopo li lebelletsoe ho ba le tse latelang:
- E be khoebo e ngolisitsoeng ka molao le litsi tse amehang.

- E be khoebo e fumanehang sebakeng seo tlókotsi e ka hlahang.
- Khoebo e joalo e lebelletsoe ho hlakisa hantle hore na e ka angoa ke tlókotsi ea mofuta ofe, le hore na tlókotsi e joalo e ka ama khoebo joang.
- E be khoebo e nang le lengolo la khafa le ntseng le le nakong (valid tax clearance certificate).
- Khoebo e joalo e lebelletsoe ho fana ka tlaleho ea tsamaiso ea lichelete.
- Khoebo e lebelletsoe ho fana ka likhakanyo tsa thepa eo e kopang ho thusoa ka eona ho tsoa likhoebong tse tharo tse fapaneng (3 quotations).

Lenane la thepa le mesebetsi e menyane e tšehetsoang ke CAFI ka tlase morero ona le fumaneha leqhepeng le latelang la marangrang a CAFI: <https://www.cafi.org.ls>

Mokhoa oa ho kenya likopo

Liforomo tsa likopo li ea fumaneha leqhepeng la marangrang a CAFI . Liforomo tsa likopo tse tlatsitsoeng le litokomane li ka romelloa ka marangrang ho procurement@cafi.org.ls e be kopi e romelloa ho mmokone@cafi.org.ls

Lintlha tse ling li ka fumaneha atereseng e ka tlase nakong ea lihora tsa mosebetsi [08:00 ho isa ho 17:00]

Lesotho Competitiveness and Financial Inclusion Project
House No. 252, Maseru West
Corner Kingsway and Tona-Kholo Road
P.O. Box 747,
Maseru 100
Lesotho
Tel: (+266) 22 315 100



BID NOTICE UNDER OPEN COMPETITIVE TENDERING

[LAA ICT/Internet Services: 08/07/2026]

The Land Administration Authority has allocated funds be used for the acquisition of *supply and delivery of Internet Services*.

- 1. The Entity invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the provision of the above supplies.
- 2. Bidding will be conducted in accordance with the open national bidding method contained in the Public Procurement Act and is open to all bidders.
- 3. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information and inspect the bidding documents at the address given below at 7(a) from [08;00am to 05:00pm].
- 4. Bids must be delivered to the address below at 8(c) at or before [12:00 Noon]. Late bids shall be rejected. Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders’ representatives who choose to attend at the address below at 7(d) at [21/08/2026]
- 5. There shall NOT be a pre – bid meeting as indicated in the proposed schedule in this notice.
- 6. (a) Documents may be inspected at: Land Administration Authority
- (b) Documents will be issued from: Land Administration Authority
- (c) Bids must be delivered to: Director General and Chief Executive Officer
- (d) Address of bid opening: P.O. Box 11856, Maseru, Lesotho. Lerotholi Road Opposite, The Royal Palace

9. The planned procurement schedule (subject to changes) is as follows:

Activity	Date
a. Publish bid notice	08/07/2026
b. Pre-bidmeeting where applicable	N/A
c. Bid closing date	21/08/2026
d. Evaluation process	(24th August to 31st August 2026)
e. Display and communication of best evaluated bidder notice	(01st to 14th September 2026)
f. Contract signature	(15th to 21st September 2026)

[LAA HRA/ Two (2) SUV Vehicles/08/07/2026]

- 1. The Land Administration Authority has allocated funds be used for the acquisition of *supply and delivery of Two (2) SUV Vehicles*.
- 2. The Entity invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the provision of the above supplies.
- 3. Bidding will be conducted in accordance with the open national bidding method contained in the Public Procurement Act and is open to all bidders.
- 4. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information and inspect the bidding documents at the address given below at 7(a) from [08;00am to 05:00pm].
- 5. Bids must be delivered to the address below at 8(c) at or before [12:00 Noon 08/07/2026]. Late bids shall be rejected. Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders’ representatives who choose to attend at the address below at 7(d) at [21/08/2026]
- 6. There shall NOT be a pre – bid meeting as indicated in the proposed schedule in this notice.
- 7. (a) Documents may be inspected at: Land Administration Authority
- (b) Documents will be issued from: Land Administration Authority
- (c) Bids must be delivered to: Director General and Chief Executive Officer
- (d) Address of bid opening: P.O. Box 11856, Maseru, Lesotho. Lerotholi Road Opposite, The Royal Palace

9. The planned procurement schedule (subject to changes) is as follows:

Activity	Date
a. Publish bid notice	08/07/2026
b. Pre-bidmeeting where applicable	N/A
c. Bid closing date	21/08/2026
d. Evaluation process	(24th August to 31st August 2026)
e. Display and communication of best evaluated bidder notice	(01st to 14th September 2026)
f. Contract signature	(15th to 21st September 2026)



Invitation for Bids

Maseru, Lesotho
08 JULY 2026

Re: Procurement and Distribution of Field Crop Inputs to Support Vulnerable HHS-LSO-2000002340-0240-G-NCB

The Government of Lesotho has received financing from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Global Environment Facility (GEF), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID) and intends to apply a part of the proceeds of the financing to this purchase. The use of any IFAD financing shall be subject to IFAD’s approval, pursuant to the terms and conditions of the financing agreement, as well as IFAD’s rules, policies and procedures. IFAD and its officials, agents and employees shall be held harmless from and against all suits, proceedings, claims, demands, losses and liability of any kind or nature brought by any party in connection with **Regeneration of Landscapes and Livelihoods**.

- 1. The *Regeneration of Landscapes and Livelihoods* includes rehabilitation of sixteen identified landscapes in Lesotho and improvement of the livelihoods of the people in the rural areas, within a period of eight years.
- 2. This invitation for bids (IFB) follows the general procurement notice that appeared on IFAD website on the **21st April 2026**, Lesotho Times newspaper on the **23rd April 2026** and Public eye newspaper on **24th April 2026** and **Informative on 29 April 2026**
- 3. The purchaser now invites sealed bids from eligible entities (bidders) for the **Procurement and Distribution of Field Crop Inputs to Support Vulnerable HHS** More details on these goods and related services are provided in the schedule of requirements in this bidding document.
- 4. This IFB is open to all eligible bidders who wish to respond. Subject to restrictions noted in the bidding document, eligible entities may associate with other bidders to enhance their capacity to successfully carry out the procurement.
- 5. Bidding will be conducted using the **National Competitive Bidding (NCB)** method, the evaluation procedure for which is described in this bidding document, in accordance with the IFAD Procurement Handbook which is provided at www.ifad.org/project-procurement. The NCB process, as described, will include a review and verification of qualifications and past performance, including a reference check, prior to the contract award.
- 6. Please note that a pre-bid conference **will not be** held as described in the bid data sheet

(BDS), Section III of the bidding document.

- 7. Bidders interested in submitting a bid shall download the bidding document from the following website: www.rollproject.gov.ls and complete the registration form available on the website

Attn: Procurement Manager ROLL Project
Ministry of Environment & Forestry
Industrial Area, Plot no. 12281-609,
Maseru 100
Lesotho

Tel: (+266) 58730763/ (+266) 58757203

E-mail: procurement.roll@gov.ls and copy to morakanyane.mafatle@gov.ls

- 8. Bids must be delivered to the address and in the manner specified in the bid data sheet– instructions to bidders 23.2, no later than **10:00** local time on the **10 August 2026**.
- 9. Bidders shall be aware that late bids will not be accepted under any circumstance and will be returned unopened at the written request and cost of the bidder. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security or bid-securing declaration (as required) in the manner and amount specified in the bid data sheet.
- 10. Please note that electronic bids **shall not** be accepted.

Yours sincerely,
Procurement Manager
Regeneration of Landscapes and Livelihoods Project Ministry of Environment and Forestry
Industrial Area, Plot no.12281-609, Maseru 100, Lesotho
Tel: (+266) 58730763/ (+266) 58757203
E-mail: procurement.roll@gov.ls





FARMERS PITSO AWARDS

AGRICULTURE
& EXCELLENCE

‘MANTHABISENG CONVENTION CENTRE

SATURDAY
FARMERS
AWARD
CEREMONY

TICKET
M200
PLUS A
FREE
M100
FOOD
COUPON

PRIZES TO BE WON | FOOD | MUSIC | AWARDS

12 SEPTEMBER 2026



SADP II



Bata



AVANI
Maseru





FARMERS PITSO AWARDS GALA DINNER

AVANI MASERU

12th SEPTEMBER 2026 | 6:00PM

THEME | BLACK TIE

TICKETS

GENERAL

Single = **M700** | Couple = **M1 300** |

VIP

Single = **M900** | Couple = **M1 700** |

Table | **Normal**
M6 800

Table | **VIP**
M8 800

Tickets available at <https://etickets.co.ls> or via Ecocash/ Mpesa | send “HALO” on whatsapp: (+266) 5746 5752



AVANI
Maseru



Beyond Stock Theft: Can The New Livestock Bill Transform the Future of Farming?

...As the government reviews the Livestock Identification and Theft Prevention Bill, farmers welcome stronger protection but question the practicality, affordability, and efficacy of the proposed system in delivering the sector's much-needed transformation.

By **Thoboloko Ntšonyane**
& **Topollo Tlali**

“If the government wants us to implant microchips in our livestock, who is going to pay?” Motsamai Ralejoe from Alet Farm posed this question, cutting through the room during a national stakeholder consultation on the proposed Livestock Identification and Theft Prevention Bill.

His question wasn't from an economist or policymaker; it came from a livestock farmer contemplating the everyday realities beyond legislation.

“I understand the idea of microchips, but who is going to pay for them? If the government wants us to adopt this system, there must be subsidies or assistance.”

Around him, stakeholders discussed traceability, livestock registration, disease surveillance and modern identification technologies. However, farmers consistently returned to more immediate concerns: Would the new system be affordable? Would services finally reach rural communities? Could technology succeed where previous efforts had struggled? And, most importantly, would it stop stock thieves?

Ralejoe articulated these frustrations: “These types of events are hosted in Maseru, where a few farmers make decisions for many in rural areas. How are these beneficial for the country's farming? In districts, farmers are always challenged when we require services; we are told to wait for Maseru offices. Services need to be decentralised.”

“Also, thieves will always be ahead of us. Once they noticed we mark our animals in their ears, they found ways to circumvent it, often selling meat to abattoirs without proper procedures. The mere act of Police officers asking for animal documents is highly insufficient and meaningless since marked heads and skins are often discarded,” Ralejoe charged.

These questions reflect a much larger national conversation.

For many Basotho, livestock is more than just an agricultural commodity; Pitso Ramokoatsi, National Livestock Registrar with the Ministry of Home Affairs, notes that it represents a family's savings account, a source of school fees, a retirement plan, a cultural asset, and often the only reliable form of wealth in rural communities.

“...Yet, every year, this investment remains vulnerable to stock theft, disease outbreaks, and weak livestock information systems.”

Ramokoatsi explained that the proposed Livestock Identification and Theft Prevention Bill seeks to change this.



Tattooing process

While much public attention has focused on its potential to reduce stock theft, experts from the Ministry of Home Affairs say the legislation could also become one of the most significant reforms in Lesotho's livestock sector.

“The Bill aims to strengthen disease control, improve national livestock statistics, support commercialisation, and position farmers for better access to domestic and international markets,” Ramokoatsi explained.

The challenge now is to ensure that the law works not only on paper but also for the farmers whose livelihoods depend on it.

Livestock at the Heart of Rural Livelihoods Although agriculture contributes less than 10 per cent of Lesotho's Gross Domestic Product, its importance extends far beyond economic statistics.

According to the Agriculture Public Expenditure Review, agriculture contributed approximately 5.2 per cent of Lesotho's GDP in 2016. Yet, more than half of Lesotho's population lives in rural areas and depends directly or indirectly on agriculture for survival.

Within the agricultural sector itself, the review noted that livestock is the dominant contributor, accounting for approximately 52 per cent of agricultural GDP, compared to crops at 28 per cent and forestry at 20 per cent.

Most rural households farm on less than one hectare of land, making livestock one of the few productive assets capable of generating cash income. Sheep and goats remain particularly important due to Lesotho's internationally recognised wool and mohair industry.

Pitso Ramokoatsi, National Livestock Registrar with the Ministry of Home Affairs, states that approximately 80 per cent of rural

households keep livestock.

Historically, agriculture was the backbone of Lesotho's economy.

“In the 1960s, agriculture contributed around 88 per cent of the country's GDP,” Ramokoatsi stated.

Today, however, the sector faces significant challenges, including land degradation, climate change, outdated production systems, limited irrigation access, inadequate extension services, poor rural infrastructure, and restricted access to finance.

The Agriculture Public Expenditure Review highlights that Lesotho imports nearly ten times more agro-food products than it exports, despite agriculture's crucial role in rural livelihoods and poverty reduction.

Against this backdrop, protecting livestock has evolved beyond merely preventing theft. It is now seen as integral to a broader strategy to restore agricultural productivity and strengthen rural economies.

A Crime Affecting the Entire Economy Stock theft has long been recognised as a major challenge for the livestock sector.

The 1999 National Livestock Development Study Phase I described stock theft as having reached epidemic proportions, warning that it threatened livelihoods, fueled community conflict, and discouraged investment in livestock production.

Historical records show that in 1993 alone, approximately 15,000 sheep, 5,000 cattle, and thousands of goats were stolen.

Although these figures are decades old, farmers report that the problem remains widespread.

According to the 2025-2026 Lesotho Mounted Police Service Livestock Theft Unit report, Lesotho recorded over 1900 cases of

stolen animals.

Reports of stolen livestock regularly appear in police reports and radio broadcasts, particularly in communities bordering South Africa.

For individual farmers in the room, the loss of even one animal can erase years of investment, and nationally, as per Ramokoatsi, repeated theft erodes confidence in livestock farming and weakens industries dependent on a reliable supply of sheep, goats, and cattle.

Ramokoatsi believes the consequences extend far beyond individual farmers.

“When livestock is protected, agriculture and the nation become stronger,” he affirmed, warning that continued stock theft directly undermines the government's ambition to commercialise agriculture.

“Can we realise the Ministry of Agriculture's vision for commercialisation if livestock theft persists?” he questioned.

A Bill Beyond Stock Theft Advocate Fumane Tholoana Mareli from the Ministry of Home Affairs noted that the government believes the solution lies in establishing a modern livestock identification system.

“The proposed Livestock Identification and Theft Prevention Bill aims to create a comprehensive livestock registration, marking, and information system capable of identifying every registered animal and linking it to its rightful owner.

“Under the proposed legislation, anyone acquiring livestock would be required to notify the local chief within seven days before registering ownership with the National Livestock Registrar.”

Advocate Mareli said the Bill further provides for the registration of livestock owners and other livestock actors, licensing of livestock identification technology service providers, and tighter regulation of livestock movement nationwide.

“Modern identification technologies, including electronic identification systems, could also be introduced to improve traceability.”

To date, 3 million animals have already been registered under the existing system.

“We are moving to where an internet search will reveal who the owner of the animal is,” Ramokoatsi stated, noting he believes stronger traceability would improve police investigations while simultaneously strengthening disease surveillance, livestock planning, and national agricultural data.

“Without reliable data, our ability to respond to animal health threats is limited. This Bill will help establish a more robust and traceable livestock database,” he concluded.

Continues in page 15



Continued from page 14

Beyond Stock Theft: Can The New Livestock Bill Transform the Future of Farming?

Veterinary experts believe the proposed reforms could also strengthen disease management.

Dr Pabalo Monyane, from the Department of Livestock Services within the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security, and Nutrition, said proper identification would enhance the country's ability to manage livestock movement during disease outbreaks.

She emphasised the need for "zoning" the country, where animals would bear marks indicating they do not belong to a specific area.

Such systems are increasingly becoming international requirements for livestock trade, food safety and animal health management.

Farmers Support Reform—But Not at Any Cost

Despite broad agreement on the necessity of stronger livestock protection, farmers repeatedly challenged aspects of the proposed legislation during consultations.

One of the most debated issues was the government's suggestion that private companies could play a role in livestock identification, with the government retaining responsibility for regulation and oversight.

Minister of Home Affairs and Police, Voeswa Tseka, explained that the government was exploring different delivery models.

"I would like to know whether it would be good to invite the private sector to work in livestock identification, with the government acting as the monitoring and assessing body," she said.

She clarified that the consultation process aimed to gather farmers' views before final decisions were made.

The Minister also acknowledged concerns about the inaccessibility of legislation to ordinary citizens.

"I have heard many complaints from Basotho about the law being written in English, yet it is for Basotho farmers," she stated.

She announced that once the Bill is finalised, it will also be made available in Sesotho.

"This Bill must therefore be practical, accessible, and responsive to the needs of farmers on the ground."

However, many farmers questioned whether involving private companies would improve the situation.

Sebatso Makoanyane, founder of Phallo Beef Limited and president of the Thabeng ea Senai Breeders' Community, asked whether private sector participation would create another tender-driven process.

"If private sector involvement becomes approved, will that transition come in the form of tenders?" he asked.

He also questioned whether the proposed law adequately addresses practical challenges



experienced during livestock disease outbreaks, when responsibility for controlling animal movement was often unclear.

Makoanyane recounted, "Animal movement during foot and mouth has been a big challenge for the task team working on foot

and mouth issues. It was difficult to manage the movement of animals in the presence of the Lesotho Mounted Police, NSS, Livestock Department, and Home Affairs, as none of them took responsibility for the movement of livestock during the pandemic. Can these kinds of issues be addressed?"

He added, "Lack of mabeisi (registration documents) is a big issue; may the responsible body act upon it?"

Makoanyane further noted farmers' worries about stock theft, particularly as police officers, whom the nation is told to trust, are often implicated.

Other farmers expressed concerns about affordability.

Dairy farmer Tumisang Lesesa highlighted existing resistance to animal marking systems among livestock owners in Mokhotlong.

"If the private sector becomes involved and each farmer has to pay for their animal, I don't see them doing that at all," he stated.

Lesesa elaborated, "I do not know how other communities are, but where I come from, farmers already hesitate to mark and tattoo their animals freely. I highly doubt they would comply if the private sector were involved and required payment for each animal."

He urged, "Before we consider certain decisions, let's think about real Basotho men in the mountains and their way of thinking."

Commercial farmer Rantelane Shela argued that introducing private companies could increase costs without improving services, asserting that private sector involvement in livestock identification would not be equitable.

"Entrepreneurs involved in politics will be the ones who get such offers, and they will not change the situation at all," he claimed.

Shela strongly recommended, "May we completely remove the idea of the private sector; it will cause more challenges for us as farmers. Farmers already bear many service costs. I highly encourage the ministry to limit services requiring expenditure while prioritising efficient and accessible options.

Modernisation Must Include Farmers

The consultations revealed that farmers are not resisting change; rather, they question whether the proposed reforms reflect the realities of livestock production in Lesotho.

Recurring concerns throughout the discussions included affordability, service delivery, veterinary support, infrastructure, and trust. These issues mirror broader challenges al-

ready identified within the agricultural sector.

The Agriculture Public Expenditure Review highlights outdated farming technologies, weak extension services, inadequate investment in agricultural research, environmental degradation, and climate change as major barriers to agricultural transformation.

Therefore, improving livestock identification alone will not solve every challenge facing the sector.

However, experts argue it could become an important building block.

A reliable identification system would improve traceability, strengthen disease surveillance, generate better livestock statistics, support market access, and foster greater confidence among farmers, buyers, and investors.

Monethi Mafetha from Mafetha Farm pointed out that farmers experience long waits for services. "Sometimes our lives stand still as the ministry fails to provide us with livestock services," he said. "Our plea is for these kinds of things to be resolved and implemented."

Mafetha also questioned, "Before deciding on tattooing animals, did the ministry ever consider those of us who do business by selling animal skin? Was such a thing looked at

before implementing tattooing?"

Alice Adotsi emphasised that Lesotho, as a member of world organisations, should adhere to all rules. "We should align with livestock registration and veterinary committee rules."

She stated, "We should correct the bill, looking at all sides for the better. If we only focus on livestock marking and stock theft, leaving veterinary services out, the country will be poor for too long as there are rising diseases."

Mamariha Mohale from the Lesotho Wool and Mohair Growers Association noted that the bill primarily addresses stock theft.

"There is a rising tendency of animals being slaughtered along the way, making them difficult to trace as the skin and heads will be removed. Will the bill involve the resolution of meat being eaten without being traced?" Mohale challenged.

The deliberations uncovered sectoral challenges which Ramokoatsi stressed would be solved by the proposed Bill.

The day ended with all stakeholders' views recorded, and the Ministry of Home Affairs promised to have more decentralised sessions at district level.

What's Changing Under the Livestock Identification and Theft Prevention Bill?

The proposed Livestock Identification and Theft Prevention Bill, 2026 introduces one of the biggest overhauls of livestock management in Lesotho in more than two decades. If passed by Parliament, it will replace the Stock Theft Act of 2000 with a modern livestock registration and traceability system designed to combat stock theft, strengthen disease control and improve access to export markets.

A National Livestock Database

At the heart of the Bill is the establishment of the Livestock Registration, Marking and Information System (LRMIS) — a national electronic database that will record every registered livestock owner and every registered animal in the country.

The system will allow authorities to track livestock ownership, transfers and movements more efficiently than the current paper-based system.

Every Livestock Owner Must Register

Under the proposed law, every person who owns livestock must register with the National Livestock Registrar. Livestock owners will receive:

- A livestock identification card;
- A registration certificate; and
- A livestock registration booklet.

Livestock that is not registered and officially marked may not be legally owned, sold or transferred.

Modern Identification Technologies

While traditional branding and earmarks will remain recognised forms of identification, the Bill also allows farmers to use modern technologies such as electronic identification devices and microchips to improve livestock traceability.

These technologies will be supplied only by licensed service providers and must be

registered with government.

Tougher Controls on Animal Movement

The Bill introduces stricter rules governing the movement of livestock.

Animals may not be transported from one chief's jurisdiction to another without an official movement permit, while livestock may not legally be moved between 7:00 p.m. and 5:00 a.m.

Farmers relocating animals under the mafisa system will also be required to obtain a mafisa permit.

Stronger Documentation for Sales

Every sale or transfer of livestock must be supported by an official babeisi document confirming lawful ownership.

Chiefs will continue playing an important role by verifying ownership before documents are issued and maintaining master stock registers within their areas of jurisdiction.

Commercial Slaughter Tightened

The Bill provides that livestock intended for commercial purposes may only be slaughtered at registered abattoirs or slaughter facilities.

Operators will be required to keep records of all slaughtered livestock, while livestock presented for slaughter must be properly identified and accompanied by the prescribed documentation.

Tougher Penalties for Stock Theft

The proposed legislation significantly increases penalties for livestock-related crimes.

A person convicted of livestock or livestock produce theft could face fines of up to M60,000 or 30 years' imprisonment for a first offence, with even harsher penalties for repeat offenders or theft involving violence.

New App Brings Extension Officers Within Reach of Basotho Farmers

By Topollo Tlali

A new locally developed digital platform could transform the way Basotho farmers access agricultural advice by bringing extension officers just a click away.

Developed by three Lerotholi Polytechnic students, Lemoha AI is designed to bridge the long-standing communication gap between farmers and extension officers by providing instant access to technical guidance, production support and market information through a single mobile platform. The application enables farmers to consult extension officers remotely, receive advice tailored to their crops and farming conditions, and upload photographs or videos of crop problems for quicker diagnosis and recommendations. The innovation is expected to complement Lesotho’s extension services, where limited personnel often struggle to reach farmers spread across the country’s remote communities.

Co-founder Seeiso Moilola said the idea behind Lemoha AI was to make agricultural support more accessible to every farmer. “The idea behind Lemoha AI is to support small-scale farmers with practical advice that fits their specific conditions.”

He said the platform allows extension officers to engage with farmers remotely while providing production guidance throughout the farming season.

“Within the app, there is also a section

where extension officers can connect with farmers and provide services from the comfort of their homes.”

Beyond improving communication, the developers say the platform helps farmers make better production decisions, strengthen quality management and prepare their produce for formal markets.

Co-founder Polumo Tlebere said many Basotho farmers have the capacity to produce but often lack continuous technical support to consistently meet market standards.

“Extension officers cannot be everywhere at once to monitor every farmer. Lemoha AI is meant to complement this gap by helping farmers identify problems early and maintain quality throughout the production process.”

The application also encourages farmers to think beyond production and focus on supplying quality produce that meets both local and international market requirements.

To make the platform more accessible, the developers incorporated picture and video upload features, enabling farmers to report crop problems visually instead of relying solely on written descriptions.

“We wanted the app to be inclusive for farmers who may struggle to explain crop problems in words,” said co-founder Mosebatho Kolobe.

Entrepreneurship lecturer Chakela Thaba described the innovation as a timely response to the growing challenges facing agriculture, particularly as climate change



Seeiso moilola, co founder of Lemoha ai

continues to disrupt farming.

He said Lerotholi Polytechnic is working with government ministries to protect the students’ innovation and explore opportunities for its adoption.

The developers have also called on the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition to partner with them by integrating the platform into existing extension services.

Lemoha AI was developed during an 18-month innovation programme at Lerot-

holi Polytechnic in partnership with Unico Create and Black Wolf. The programme produced three digital solutions addressing entrepreneurship, education and agriculture.

As Lesotho looks to modernise its agricultural sector, Lemoha AI offers a home-grown solution that could make expert agricultural advice more accessible, helping farmers respond more quickly to production challenges and improve their competitiveness.

New ReLiF Project Targets Climate-Smart Farming and Rural Livelihoods

By Lungile Maseela

A new three-year programme aimed at helping Basotho farmers adapt to climate change while improving food production and rural livelihoods has been launched, bringing fresh hope to communities increasingly affected by drought, land degradation and unpredictable rainfall.

The Building Climate Resilient Livelihoods and Food Systems (ReLiF) project, launched by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition, will run from April 2026 to April 2029 and initially be implemented in Leribe, Maseru, Mohale’s Hoek and Quthing.

The initiative seeks to strengthen climate-smart agriculture through improved water management, natural resource conservation and sustainable livelihood opportunities, particularly for vulnerable rural communities.

Launching the project, Principal Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture, Dr Khothatso Ts’oana, said building resilience was no longer optional as climate change continued to threaten food production across the country.

“Climate change continues to affect agricultural production, and this project presents an opportunity to improve the livelihoods of Basotho while protecting our natural resources.”

He said the project’s success would depend on collaboration between government ministries, development partners and farming



RELIF project implimentation

communities.

“We want this project to benefit the nation. Communities must take advantage of the opportunities it provides, make better use of available water resources and use this support to fight poverty,” he said.

ReLiF Project Director ‘Masechaba Ramphoko said the programme was designed to address the twin challenges of climate change and rural poverty by helping communities build sustainable sources of income while protecting the country’s natural resources.

She said implementation would focus on communities located near water catchments, where reliable water supplies can support climate-smart agricultural production and environmental restoration.

“The project will concentrate on areas close to water catchments because many

of its interventions depend on sustainable water use.”

Ramphoko said the inception workshop marked the beginning of implementation and introduced stakeholders to the project’s objectives, implementation strategy and expected outcomes.

While government sees ReLiF as an investment in climate resilience, farmers believe its success will depend on whether it addresses the practical challenges limiting agricultural productivity.

Maseru farmer Ntone Mohale welcomed the initiative, saying it could encourage more young people to see agriculture as a viable business.

“Projects like this are exactly what young people need. At the same time, the youth also have to be willing to work hard because farming requires commitment.”

However, he urged project implementers to ensure support reaches farmers across the country rather than a limited number of communities.

“I expect this project to benefit every farmer. The Ministry also needs to improve the way it communicates with farmers and involve them more in programmes that are meant for them,” he said.

Mohale said access to reliable markets remains one of the biggest obstacles facing producers.

“Sometimes we deliberately reduce production because we know we will struggle to sell what we harvest. Without reliable buyers, farmers end up making losses.”

He also called for greater investment in farmer training, particularly in climate-smart agriculture, saying many producers continue to rely on traditional farming methods despite changing weather patterns.

“Farmers should always be consulted because we know the realities we face every day. If projects are designed with farmers instead of for farmers, they are more likely to succeed,” he added.

As implementation begins, ReLiF will be judged not by the number of workshops it holds, but by whether it helps farmers increase production, strengthen their incomes and become more resilient to climate change. If successfully implemented, the initiative could become an important step towards building a more food-secure and climate-resilient Lesotho.