

'Property rights must be protected while expanding ownership'

KAMOGELO SEEKOEI

THE debate on land expropriation without compensation should not be discussed by those who do not understand its sensitive nature, Free State Agric (FSA) said.

The organisation said it continuously strived to follow an economic and constitutionally founded approach in terms of land reform.

On Tuesday, Parliament voted 261 to 33 against the expropriation without

compensation bill. During the debate EFF leader Julius Malema said South Africa remained a conquered nation because white monopoly capital still owned the means of production and at the centre of that was the land question.

In reaction, the FSA said the essence of the debate had its origin in the historical withholding of basic human rights, specifically the right to own land.

FSA president Dan Kriel said rec-

ognition of this fact, coupled with a firm belief that the land question can be addressed economically and constitutionally, must form part of this sensitive debate.

He said the challenge was to protect property rights while expanding the right of new entrants.

"Millions of South Africans own property today and they will protect their hard earned constitutional rights. We will take part in this," he said.

The organisation said it was a given

that the way the government is implementing land reforms contributes to a loss in food production.

"FSA has reacted on this several times and we are negotiating with the rural development and land reform department to get more than 200 farms in the province that have fallen into disuse back into production," Kriel said.

Last month, chairperson of the parliamentary portfolio committee on human settlements Ncawu Mafu told

the Free State legislature that backlogs in providing houses were largely caused by the unavailability of land to build new houses.

She said there were different areas of challenges in the human settlements department, from acquisition of land to discovering that the land made available for new projects is not suitable to build houses.

Mafu said in the Free State about 80% of available land for use is still in the hands of white people and the

government always had to negotiate to get the land.

"Land is not in the hands of the state, 80% of it is still in the hands of white people and we have to negotiate to get the land and make it available for projects and thus our people," Mafu said.

She said Parliament was looking at all the bottlenecks and backlogs and would assist the province to fast track service delivery.

kamogelos@thenewage.co.za