



Publication: Witness - Main

Title: AFASA WARNS FUEL HIKE AND STOCK THEFT THREATEN FOOD SECURITY IN KZN

Publish date: 08 Jun 2026

Page: 3

Reach: 6180

AVE: R 16557.26

Author: CLIVE
NDOU



(Front row, from left) African Farmers Association of South Africa (Afasa) in KwaZulu-Natal deputy chairperson Lloyd Hadebe, chairperson Thubelihle Zondi, (back row, from left) treasurer Studo Shoji, deputy secretary Samkelo Zitha and secretary Nikeziwe Nhlangothi raised concerns over escalating food prices and persistent stock theft, warning that both issues are placing enormous pressure on farmers and struggling communities during a media briefing held at the Department of Public Works offices in Prince Alfred Street, Pietermaritzburg, last Thursday. **PHOTO: MOEKETSI MAMANE**

AFASA WARNS FUEL HIKE AND STOCK THEFT THREATEN FOOD SECURITY IN KZN

ANDISWA MCHUNU

The African Farmers Association of South Africa (Afasa) in KwaZulu-Natal has warned that soaring food prices and rampant stock theft are placing growing pressure on farmers and vulnerable communities across the province.

The organisation raised the concerns during a media briefing at the Department of Public Works offices in Prince Alfred Street, Pietermaritzburg, last Thursday. The briefing also marked Afasa's renewed drive following the death of its former provincial chairperson, Mbonjeni Sikhakhane, who was shot and killed in December last year.

Afasa deputy chairperson and spokesperson Lloyd Hadebe said rising food costs had become a major concern for both consumers and small-scale farmers. "The alarming food prices are a serious challenge to society and small-scale farmers who transport their goods daily," said Hadebe.

His comments come as motorists brace for a sharp increase in fuel prices this month. Petrol users will pay R1,43 more per litre for both 93- and 95-octane grades, although diesel prices have fallen substantially.

Hadebe said the fuel increase would raise production and transport costs throughout the agricultural sector.

"The fuel increase will negatively affect the agricultural sector and ordinary people on the ground. Higher transport costs eventually translate into higher food prices for consumers," he said.

He warned that rising food prices were already having severe consequences for struggling households. "Soaring food prices deeply damage communities by eroding purchasing power, forcing families to buy cheaper and less nutritious food, and widening the gap between income and basic survival. This crisis often leads to increased debt, stunted childhood development and heightened socio-economic unrest," said Hadebe.

He said Afasa planned to engage government departments and other stakeholders to explore interventions

“According to our research, some local shisanyama and inhloko outlets in our townships are contributing factors to stock theft.”

aimed at easing the burden on farmers and consumers.

The organisation also identified stock theft as one of the biggest threats facing livestock farmers in KwaZulu-Natal.

Hadebe said Afasa was working with law enforcement agencies to tackle the crime, which continues to cause significant financial losses.

"We cannot sit and do nothing when our small-scale farmers continue to suffer due to stock theft," he said.

Afasa intends writing to KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Police Commissioner Lieutenant-General Nhlanihla Mkhwanazi to request intensified operations and tougher action against stock theft syndicates.

Hadebe also alleged that some informal meat traders and food outlets were helping to sustain the illegal market by purchasing stolen livestock and meat without verifying its source. "According to our research, some local shisanyama and inhloko outlets in our townships are contributing factors to stock theft. They purchase meat through back-door channels without considering the rightful owners of that cattle," he said.

He called for stricter regulation and monitoring of meat traders to curb the market for stolen livestock.

Afasa said combating stock theft and addressing rising food costs would remain key priorities as it seeks to protect farmers and strengthen food security in the province.