



agriculture

Department:
Agriculture
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



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MEDIA STATEMENT

1 December 2025

COMMENCEMENT OF THE PLANT IMPROVEMENT ACT, 2018 (ACT NO. 11 OF 2018) AND ITS REGULATIONS

The Department of Agriculture (DoA) announces with pleasure the commencement of the new Plant Improvement Act, 2018 (Act No. 11 of 2018) and its regulations from 1 December 2025. President Cyril Matamela Ramaphosa signed the proclamation of the new Plant Improvement Act following the approval of the regulations by the Minister of Agriculture, Mr John Steenhuisen. The Plant Improvement Act, (Act No. 11 of 2018) is the repeal of the Plant Improvement Act, 1976 (Act No. 53 of 1976). The proclamation of this Act and its regulations were both published in the *Government Gazette* No. 53707 on 21 November 2025.

This Act provides systems for the registration of certain types of business relating to plants and propagating material intended for cultivation and sale; the registration of premises on or from which that business is conducted; quality standards for plants and propagating material intended for cultivation and sale and conditions of sale of plants and propagating material; a system for National Listing of plant varieties; the evaluation of plant varieties in order to ensure value if there is doubt in respect of the value for cultivation and use of plant varieties intended for cultivation and sale; import and export control of plants and propagating material and a system for different types of certification schemes for plants and propagating material.

The new Act makes provisions for the following that were not provided for in the old Act:

- the cultivation of *Cannabis sativa* L. (hemp) varieties in South Africa in accordance with the revised definition which means “low tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) plants or parts of plants of *Cannabis sativa* L. cultivated for agricultural or industrial purposes, of which the leaves and flowering heads do not contain more than 2% (-)-transdelta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol, and no longer 0,2% THC as per the definition under the old Act;
- the publication of a National Varietal List Journal; and

- the hearing of objections lodged with the Registrar in respect of an application for National Listing of a plant variety.

The Act also provides for the establishment of an advisory committee that may provide advice to the Registrar on any technical matters arising from the provisions of the Act and any other matter relating to the administration of the Act.

The Plant Improvement Act provides a legal framework for the production and sale of good quality, true-to-type seed and vegetative propagating material which contributes to the overall productivity and sustainability of food production in the country. The new Plant Improvement Act and its regulations will be available on the DoA website on: <https://www.nda.gov.za>

For technical enquiries, please contact the Director: Plant Production, Mr Joseph Mahlabe, or Ms Ashika Kistnasamy, Registrar: Plant Improvement Act, in the Department of Agriculture on 012 319 6072 or e-mail JosephMa@nda.gov.za or AshikaK@nda.gov.za.

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