**Mediaverklaring**

5 Julie 2018

# Tabakboere word deur onwettige sigaret-handel bedreig

Agri SA doen 'n beroep op die regering om dringend te reageer op die skokbevindings van ‘n studie oor sluikhandel in sigarette wat vandag vrygestel is. Die Ipsos-studie het bevind dat 'n aansienlike persentasie sigarette onwettig verkoop word - waarop geen aksynsbelasting betaal word nie. Die studie wys ook op 'n duidelike verband tussen sluikhandel en buitelandse tabak. Suid-Afrikaanse tabakboere loop die risiko om, indien die tendens voortduur, uit die waardeketting gesny te word.

**"Die implikasie van die bevindings strek verder as tabak," sê Pietman Roos, hoof van Korporatiewe Sake by Agri SA. "As kriminele organisasies elke jaar miljarde Rande verdien deur aksynsbelasting te omseil, is die volgende stap om die waardekettings van ander kommoditeite te infiltreer. Onwettige handel maak reeds plaaslike tabakboere en die Suid-Afrikaanse dorpe wat van hierdie arbeidsintensiewe gewas afhanklik is, seer. Stel jou voor dat dit regoor die land gebeur."**

Volgens die Ipsos-studie, wat in opdrag van die Tabakinstituut van Suidelike Afrika (TISA) gedoen is, word 26,8% van sigarette in Suid-Afrika onder die R17.85-minimum – wat betaalbare aksynsbelasting en BTW is - verkoop. Die verantwoordelikheid is op die sigaret-vervaardigers - die maatskappy wat die handelsmerke besit - om die aksynsbelasting en BTW op elke pakkie sigarette te betaal. Deur hul volumes nie behoorlik te verklaar nie en dus nie die volle belasting te betaal nie, kan hulle die mark met onwettige goedere oorstroom.

**"Die Ipsos-navorsing toon dat byna 8 miljard sigarette vanjaar onwettig verkoop sal word, wat tot ‘n verlies van meer as R7 miljard aan die fiskus sal lei," sê Francois van der Merwe, die voorsitter van TISA. "Dit is ‘n skande in ag genome die land se finansies en die wankelrige ekonomiese herstel."**

Die tabakbedryf ondersteun meer as 108 000 werksgeleenthede, insluitend 8 000 - 10 000 plaaswerkers. Tabak word in Noordwes, Limpopo en Mpumalanga gekweek en het bewys dat dit 'n uitstekende gewas is om transformasie in die landbou te dryf. TISA is 'n lid van Agri SA.

Agri SA versoek die betrokke staatsdepartemente om in te gryp en konsekwente wetstoepassing te verseker.

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**Media release**

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# Tobacco farmers threatened by illicit cigarette trade

Agri SA calls on government to urgently respond to the shocking findings of the study into illicit tobacco trade that was released today. The Ipsos study finds that a significant percentage of cigarettes are sold illicitly – with no excise duty being paid – with a clear correlation to foreign-sourced tobacco. South African tobacco farmers risk being cut out of the value chain if this trend continues.

**"The implication of the findings extends beyond tobacco," said Pietman Roos, Head of Corporate Affairs at Agri SA. "If criminal organisations can earn billions each year through bypassing simple excise taxes, the next step is to infiltrate the value chains of other commodities. Illicit trade already hurts local tobacco farmers and the South African towns that are dependent on this labour-intensive crop. Imagine this happening across the country."**

According to the Ipsos study commissioned by the Tobacco Institute of South Africa (TISA), 26.8% of cigarettes in South Africa are sold below the R17.85 minimum in tax payable. The responsibility is on the cigarette manufacturers – the company who owns the brands – to pay the excise and VAT on each packet of cigarettes. By drastically under-declaring their volumes and not paying the full tax, they are able to flood the market with illegal goods.

**"The Ipsos research shows that almost 8bn cigarettes this year will be sold illegally, which translates to more than R7bn loss to the fiscus," said Francois van der Merwe, the chairman of TISA. "This is an outrage considering the country's public finances and the fragile economic recovery."**

The tobacco industry supports more than 108 000 jobs, including 8 000 – 10 000 farm workers. Tobacco is farmed in North West, Limpopo and Mpumalanga and has proven to be an excellent crop to drive transformation in agriculture. TISA is an Agri SA member.
Agri SA calls on the relevant government departments to intervene and ensure consistent law enforcement.

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