



# agriculture, forestry & fisheries

Department:  
Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

## **Directorate: Land Use and Soil Management**

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**File reference number: WC 30/5/1/2/3/2/1(401) EM**

**RE: COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT SCOPING REPORT ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORISATION  
FOR AN EXTENSION OF DOLOMITIC LIMESTONE MINE AND CONSTRUCTION OF LIME  
KILNS ON FARM WELVERDIEND NEAR VANRHYNSDORP, WESTERN CAPE PROVINCE.**

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry Directorate: Land Use and Soil Management administer and implement the Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act, (CARA) 43 of 1983). The Act is regarded as one of the principal Acts governing the protection of agricultural and other natural resources. The main aim of the Act is to control the utilization of natural agricultural resources to ensure the conservation of soil, water and vegetation, as well as the combating of alien and invasive plants. According to Section 1 of the Act, conservation of natural agricultural resources includes the protection, restoration as well as the reclamation thereof.

The objectives of CARA are to provide for the conservation of the natural agricultural resources through maintaining the production potential of the land, combating and prevention of erosion, preventing the weakening or destruction of the water resources, protecting the vegetation and combating weeds and invader plants.

In order to achieve the objectives, certain control measures may be prescribed which shall be complied with by the land users and which may relate to:

- All slopes and degraded areas should be rehabilitated prior to the onset of the rainy season to prevent surface water run-off and top soil should be utilize as much possible in these areas. According to Regulation 3, sub-regulation 3 (1) "Except on authority of a written permission by the executive officer, no land user shall cultivate any land if it"
  - (a) has a slope of more than 20 per cent; or
  - (b) has a slope of more than 12 per cent, is situated in an area specified in column 1 of Table 1, consist mainly of soil of a soil form and soil series respectively specified in columns 2 and 3 of the said Table opposite the area concerned and, if applicable, has such physical properties as may be specified in column 4 of the said Table opposite the soil series concerned."
- Topsoil comprises the soil-cover including all the vegetation, organic matter and etc. Soil that will be removed must be kept separate for later re-use. It should be done in a manner to retain any suitable vegetation on the land concerned in order to expedite the restoration and reclamation thereof and prevent wind and water erosion throughout the period. To improve the soil health of the area, the bare areas should be re-seeded with annual grass and pioneer plant species which have been found to establish in these soils and in the area.
- The land owner/user must protect the cultivated land before/during/after the cultivation of the proposed sites effectively against excessive soil loss as a result of erosion through the action of water and wind.
- Monitoring and evaluation procedures should be put in place to determine if there is any improvement and to ascertain if more rehabilitation initiatives are needed or if the area should be left to spontaneously rehabilitate. However the continuous rehabilitation program will attempt the area to an acceptable standard to accommodate agricultural activities.
- Applicant or land owner must protect all areas susceptible to erosion by preventing storm water. Develop producers to minimize surface water run-off and soil erosion.
- According to Regulation 4, sub-regulation 1 (a) "Every land user shall by means of as many of the following measures as are necessary in his situation, protect the cultivated land on his farm unit effectively against excessive soil loss as a result of erosion through the action of water":

- (a) A suitable soil conservation work shall be constructed and thereafter be maintained in order to divert run-off water from other land or to restrict the run-off speed of run-off water.”
- According to Regulation 5, sub-regulation 1 (a) (j) “Every land user shall by means of as many of the following measures as are necessary in his situation, protect the cultivated land on his farm unit effectively against excessive soil loss as a result of erosion through the action of wind”:
    - (a) The land concerned shall be cultivated in accordance with such method or be laid out in such manner that the surface movement of soil particles through the action of wind is restricted.
    - (j) A suitable soil conservation work shall be constructed and thereafter be maintained in order to restrict the surface movement of soil particles through the action of wind.”
  - According to regulation 7 sub-regulation (1) “Subject to the provisions of the water Act 1956 (Act 54 of 1956), and sub-regulation (2) of this regulation, no land user shall utilize the vegetation in vlei, marsh or water sponge or within the flood area of a water course or within 10 metres horizontally outside flood area in a manner that causes or may cause the deterioration of or damage to the natural agricultural resources”. It is recommended that a **32m buffer** zone is kept in a natural condition.
  - The restoration or reclamation of eroded land; Regulation 13, sub-regulation 1 & 2. (1) “Every land user shall by means of as many of the measures set out in regulations 4,5 and 9 as area necessary in his situation, effectively restore and reclaim the land on his farm unit on which excessive soil loss due to erosion occurs or has occurred”.
    - (2) If the executive officer is satisfied that the measures applied by a land user in a particular case in terms of sub-regulation (1) are not sufficient to restore or reclaim land on which excessive soil loss due to erosion occurs or has occurred, he may direct such land user in writing to apply such additional measures as the executive officer may determine.”
  - Regulation 14 “If a land user disturbs or denudes any land on his farm unit for purposes other than prospecting or mining activities”; (c) such land user shall by means of as many of the following measures as are necessary in his situation, effectively restore and reclaim that disturbed or denuded land. (i) Topsoil shall be removed and kept separate with a view to replacing it later on the disturbed or denuded land. (ii)Topsoil shall be used to stabilise the sides of a hollow that has been caused by the exploitation or removal of material and, where possible, to reclaim part of the disturbed or denuded

land. (iv) The flow pattern of run-off water, the topography and the slope shall, depending on the volume of material exploited or removed, be restored as closely as possible to the original condition. (v) Suitable vegetation shall be established on the land concerned in order to expedite the restoration and reclamation thereof. (vi) The land concerned shall be fenced off and withdrawn from grazing until such time as vegetation has been sufficiently restored or established. (vii) A suitable soil conservation work shall be constructed and thereafter be maintained in order to protect the land concerned against excessive soil loss through the action of water or wind or in order to collect sediment from run-off water.

- It is stated in the report that alien species recorded include *Limonium sinuatum*, *Prosopis glandulosa* and *Nerium oleander* are declared as alien invader, such plants need to be controlled and removed annually (on going clearing programs) as they can cause damage to the surrounding natural vegetation. According to Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act, (Act 43 of 1983) , Regulation 15E methods of controlling alien plants are as follow:
  - Uprooting; felling; cutting or burning
  - Treatment with a weed killer that is registered for use in connection with such plants in accordance with the directions for the use of such
  - Biological control carried out in accordance with the stipulations of the Agricultural Pests Act,(Act no 36 of 1983)

Combination of one or more methods mentioned above, and any action taken to control alien plants shall be executed with caution and in a manner that will cause least possible damage to the environment.

The Department reserves the right to revise its initial comments and request further information from you based on any new or revised information received.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "M. L. Baker", is written above a horizontal line.

**pp. EXECUTIVE OFFICER: Act No 43 OF 1983**

**Director: Land Use and Soil Management**