

PRODUCTION SYSTEMS: WILDLIFE AND WILDLIFE PRODUCTS

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The history and factors that hamper the wildlife industry are discussed and recommendations are made that can possibly improve the industry. A major problem faced is the fragmentation of the wildlife industry into a production camp (agriculture) and a conservation camp (environmental). The fact that the nine decentralized South African (SA) provinces that govern Provincial governments' nature conservation departments do not have a tool in place to coordinate the industry further complicates this fragmentation. The following regulatory bodies are involved; nature conservation/environmental affairs, agriculture and veterinary, which, spread across nine provinces gives a total of 27 independent regulatory bodies that must communicate with the private sector. The shortage of information because of fragmentation leads to following questions that must be answered on a national level to manage a National asset:

- What area of land is utilized for game ranching and wildlife reserves respectively?
- Does an accurate vegetation classification exist for SA that can be used to identify suitable land for keeping various wildlife species?
- What is the distribution of different game species in SA?
- What is the distribution of endemic wildlife diseases in SA?
- What is the potential risk of epidemic spread of diseases in wildlife in SA?
- Which are the species of wildlife kept in wildlife reserves and wildlife ranches, respectively?
- How many game animals and of which species are sold alive every year?
- How many game animals and of which species are hunted every year?
- How many people work in the game ranch industry?
- How many game animals and of which species are culled for meat every year?

The role of a central data repository / information system, managed under independent trust, is discussed as a potential solution to these questions.

