



REGISTRATION NUMBER 2018/271465/07

CASE STUDY ON HILLVIEW FARM TO ILLUSTRATE CHALLENGES FACED BY SMALL-SCALE FARMERS IN LAND REFORM AND PRODUCER SUPPORT

The Hillview farm is a PLAS farm acquired in 2018, but the lease was signed in 2020.

11 April 2026

We, Bafo and Busi Organic Farming (Pty) Ltd, received an expression of interest call for a vacant farm that was abandoned by the previous beneficiary (who was a lawyer which was a first red flag). The call came in 2018 at the beginning of the year and was extended to farmers who were already on the DALRRD database for piggery farming (we had applied in 2014).

Processes like viewing, interviews and selection were followed and we became preferred candidates for this 48hectare farm around June 2018. However, due to mal-administration and corruption which would take pages to explain (suffice to say that the Chief Director was colluding with another person who illegally occupied the farm after it was already allocated to us), we ended up getting a signed 40-year lease agreement only in March 2020.

When we finally got access the situation at the farm was very very bad: farmhouse dilapidated, infrastructure vandalised, electricity stripped, roof leaking and the walls full of mould.

Calls to Department to assist fell on deaf ears and these depended on the Chief director's approval; the same chief director who wanted his people on the farm, so it was obvious that we were not going to get any assistance from him. He even said he will not sign and neither will his staff sign a letter to Public Works to ask for the fixing farm access roads and the buildings to be fixed (something which could have been looked at by Public Works but needed a written request from DALRRD officials).

Up to now the status quo remains. We have to put buckets and basins when it rains, and we live with walls that have mould.

Farming activities are not at all supported by Land Reform. Only the Department of Agriculture answered our fencing request for the entire farm in 2025 for which we are grateful because we were able to see our farming career starting. There are no visits from the senior officials to the farm despite numerous written requests, except for junior officials who only come for data collection because the present title deeds talk on the PLAS farms. To our surprise the reports given still do not correctly depict what is actually happening at the farm. This we heard when we went to check how far they had gone with title deeds application. We got to know that there was a lot of misrepresentation. We even then asked why they could not come and see what we are saying is happening at the farm against what their official is reporting. Up to now, even the District Director responsible for PLAS farms does not know Hillview Farm; she only knows what is reported. Hillview Farm is in East London,



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and about a 20 minutes' drive from the office of the Director, yet since 2020 she had never visited us after all the saga with illegal occupation to date. Her knowing about progress from written communications had not motivated her to come and see what was happening at the farm herself, to be able to discuss what she had seen when pitching to her seniors.

There is a lot wrong happening at Land Reform: no caring for these farms, no caring for beneficiaries' health and safety, and no caring for the development of farming enterprises for business and food and nutrition security. All they care about is their salaries at the end of the month.

There is an association that was formed by PLAS farmers nationally due to huge problems that needed collective bargaining. It is called National PLAS Farmers' Association and has a national structure that consists of representatives from provinces. This was because the problems faced by PLAS farmers are the same in all the provinces. Due to lack of support so much redistributed land is not productive at all or is less productive and not yielding the expected results.

Having voiced these challenges, we as farmers from the association acknowledge that there are farmers who were funded well but mismanaged the funding and some colluded with officials in that mismanagement and did not do what the funding was meant for. Officials also did a lot of allocating of farms to their favourites, ignoring policy for allocation, and that is where most corrupt deeds happened. Why did they allocate a farm to a lawyer (in the case of Hillview farm- our farm)? We suffered because the lawyer was funded using the RECAP funding which he mismanaged. This caused Hillview Farm to not be considered for any funding. Officials at the Province linked that to the RECAP that was given to the previous owner, and we were deemed to be owing huge amounts of Rands as debt due to the RECAP money that was given to the lawyer, the previous owner. We only were exempted from that in 2024 when national Land Reform officials visited the Eastern Cape and were made to understand it was not us who received the funds and the debt was erased from Hillview Farm and transferred to the lawyer because it funded his business. There is no indication of how that money was used at Hillview Farm because of the state we found the farm in and the many problems that would need 2 chapters of a book to describe.

Sincerely,

Busisiwe Mgangxela

[I grant you permission to use this information to prove land and spatial injustices that our Country is facing.]



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