

(4 October 1996 – to date)

[This is the **current** version and applies as from **4 October 1996**, i.e. the date of commencement of the General Law Amendment Act 49 of 1996 – to date]

SUBDIVISION OF AGRICULTURAL LAND ACT 70 OF 1970

(Government Notice 1698 in Government Gazette 2867 dated 9 October 1970. Commencement date: 2 January 1971 [Proc. No. 329, Gazette No. 2950 dated 18 December 1970])

As amended by:

Subdivision of Agricultural Land Amendment Act 55 of 1972 - Government Notice 924 in Government Gazette 3531 dated 2 June 1972. Commencement date: 2 June 1972.

Subdivision of Agricultural Land Amendment Act 19 of 1974 – Government Notice 368 in Government Gazette 4210 dated 13 March 1974. Commencement date: 13 March 1974.

Subdivision of Agricultural Land Amendment Act 18 of 1977 – Government Notice 391 in Government Gazette 5450 dated 16 March 1977. Commencement date: 16 March 1977.

Subdivision of Agricultural Land Amendment Act 12 of 1979 – Government Notice 502 in Government Gazette 6345 dated 14 March 1979. Commencement date: 14 March 1979.

Subdivision of Agricultural Land Amendment Act 18 of 1981 – Government Notice 421 in Government Gazette 7447 dated 4 March 1981. Commencement date: 4 March 1981.

Subdivision of Agricultural Land Amendment Act 33 of 1984 – Government Notice 695 in Government Gazette 9170 dated 11 April 1984. Commencement date: 11 April 1984.

Agricultural Laws Amendment Proclamation, 1994 – Proclamation No. R 116 in Government Gazette 15808 dated 24 June 1994. Commencement date: 24 June 1994.

Proclamation No. R100 in Government Gazette 16785 dated 31 October 1995. Commencement date: 31 October 1995.

General Law Amendment Act 49 of 1996 – Government Notice 1601 in Government Gazette 17477 dated 4 October 1996. Commencement date: 4 October 1996.

ACT

To control the subdivision and, in connection therewith, the use of agricultural land.

Prepared by:

In partnership with:

(Long title substituted by section 9 of Act 55 of 1972)

(English text signed by the State President.)

(Assented to 28th September, 1970.)

BE IT ENACTED by the State President, the Senate and the House of Assembly of the Republic of South Africa, as follows: -

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Definitions
2. Actions which are excluded from application of Act
3. Prohibition of certain actions regarding agricultural land
4. Application for consent of Minister, and imposition, enforcement or withdrawal of conditions by him
5. Succession
6. Duties of Surveyor-General and Registrar of Deeds in application of Act
- 6A. Registration of servitudes
7. Entry upon and investigations on land
8. Delegation of Powers
9. Payment of duties or fees
10. Regulations
11. Offences and penalties
12. Insertion of section 3A in Act 10 of 1944
13. Validity of permits
14. ...
15. Short title and commencement

1. Definitions

In this Act, unless the context otherwise indicates -

“advertise” means to distribute to members of the public or bring to their notice in any other manner any written illustrated, visual or other descriptive material or oral statement, communication, representation or reference;

(Definition of “advertise: inserted by section 1(a) of Act 18 of 1977)

“agricultural land” means any land, except-

- (a) land situated in the area of jurisdiction of a municipal council, city council, town council, village council, village management board, village management council, local board, health board or

health committee, and land forming part of, in the province of the Cape of Good Hope, a local area established under section 6(1)(i) of the Divisional Councils Ordinance, 1952 (Ordinance No. 15 of 1952 of that province), and, in the province of Natal, a development area as defined in section 1 of the Development and Services Board Ordinance, 1941 (Ordinance No. 20 of 1941 of the last-mentioned province), and in the province of the Transvaal, an area in respect of which a local area committee has been established under section 21(1) of the Transvaal Board for the Development of Peri-Urban Areas Ordinance, 1943 (Ordinance No. 20 of 1943 of the Transvaal), but excluding any such land declared by the Minister after consultation with the executive committee concerned and by notice in the *Gazette* to be agricultural land for the purposes of this Act;

(Paragraph (a) of the definition of "agricultural land" amended by section 1(a) of Act 33 of 1984)

(Paragraph (a) of the definition of "agricultural land" amended by section 1 (Schedule) of Act 49 of 1996)

(b) land-

(i) which forms part of any area subdivided in terms of the Agricultural Holdings (Transvaal) Registration Act, 1919 (Act No. 22 of 1919); or

(ii) which is a township as defined in section 102(1) of the Deeds Registries Act, 1937 (Act No. 47 of 1937), but excluding a private township as defined in section 1 of the Town Planning Ordinance, 1949 (Ordinance No. 27 of 1949 of Natal), not situated in an area of jurisdiction or a development area referred to in paragraph (a);

(Paragraph (b) of the definition of "agricultural land" substituted by section 1(b) of Act 18 of 1977)

(Paragraph (b) of the definition of "agricultural land" substituted by section 1(a) of Act 18 of 1981)

(Paragraph (b)(ii) of the definition of "agricultural land" amended by section 1(b) of Act 33 of 1984)

(c) land of which the State is the owner or which is held in trust by the State or a Minister for any person;

(Paragraph (c) of the definition of "agricultural land" amended by section 1 (Schedule) of Act 49 of 1996)

(d) ...

(Paragraph (d) of the definition of "agricultural land" deleted by item 4 of Proc. No. R116 in Government Gazette No. 15808)

(e) ...

(Paragraph (e) of the definition of "agricultural land" deleted by item 4 of Proc. No. R116 in Government Gazette No. 15808)

(f) land which the Minister after consultation with the executive committee concerned and by notice in the *Gazette* excludes from the provisions of this Act;

Provided that land situated in the area of jurisdiction of a transitional council as defined in section 1 of the Local Government Transition Act, 1993 (Act No. 209 of 1993), which immediately prior to the first election of the members of such transitional council was classified as agricultural land, shall remain classified as such;

(Proviso to the definition of “agricultural land” added by Proclamation No. R100 in Government Gazette 16785 dated 31 October 1995)

(Definition of “agricultural land” substituted by section 1(a) of Act 55 of 1972)

“**building**” means any building erected or used for any purpose whatsoever, and includes any other structure, whether of a temporary or permanent nature and irrespective of the materials used in the erection thereof, so erected or used;

(Definition of “building” inserted by section 1 of Act 12 of 1979)

“**executive committee**” means the executive committee of a province;

(Definition of “executive committee” inserted by section 1(b) of act 55 of 1972)

(Definition of “executive committee” amended by section 1 (Schedule) of Act 49 of 1996)

“**local authority**” means any institution or body referred to in section 84(1)(f) of the Republic of South Africa Constitution Act, 1961 (Act No. 32 of 1961);

“**Minister**” means the Minister of Agriculture;

(Definition of “Minister” substituted by section 1(b) of Act 18 of 1981)

(Definition of “Minister” substituted by section 1(c) of Act 33 of 1984)

“**prescribed**” means prescribed by regulation;

(Definition of “prescribed” inserted by section 1(c) of Act 18 of 1977)

“**right**”, in relation to agricultural land, does not include any right to minerals or a prospecting or mining right;

(Definition of “right” inserted by section 1(c) of Act 18 of 1977)

“**sale**” includes a sale subject to a suspensive condition; and “**sold**” shall have a corresponding meaning;

(Definition of “sale” inserted by section 1(c) of Act 18 of 1981)

“**scheme**” means a town-planning scheme prepared in terms of a provincial ordinance by an authority referred to in paragraph (a) of the definition of “agricultural land”, envisaging the co-ordinated and harmonious development of the area to which such scheme relates;

(Definition of “scheme” inserted by section 1(c) of Act 18 of 1977)

(Definition of “scheme” amended by section 1 (Schedule) of Act 49 of 1996)

"Secretary" ...

(Definition of "Secretary" deleted by section 1(d) of Act 18 of 1981)

"statutory body" means -

- (a) any board or body which has been established by or under any law and whose funds consist wholly or partly of moneys appropriated by Parliament in aid of such board or body;
- (b) any local authority;
- (c) any other board or body, or any board or body belonging to a class of boards or bodies, which the Minister may by notice in the *Gazette* declare to be a statutory board or body or statutory boards or bodies for the purposes of this Act.

2. Actions which are excluded from application of Act

The provisions of this Act shall not apply in respect of -

- (a)
 - (i) any subdivision of land for the purpose of transferring a portion thereof to the State or a statutory body;
 - (ii) the transfer of an undivided share in land to the State or a statutory body;
 - (iii) the sale or grant of any right to any portion of agricultural land to the State or a statutory body;
(Section 2(a) substituted by section 2(a) of Act 55 of 1972)
(Section 2(a) substituted by section 2 of Act 18 of 1977)
(Section 2(a) amended by section 1 (Schedule) of Act 49 of 1996)
- (b) any subdivision of, or the passing of an undivided share in, any land in accordance with a testamentary disposition or intestate succession, if the testator died before the commencement of this Act;
- (c) the passing of an undivided share in any land in accordance with a contract entered into prior to the commencement of this Act;
- (d) any subdivision of any land in connection with which a surveyor has completed the relevant survey and has submitted the relevant sub-divisional diagram and survey records for examination and approval to the surveyor-general concerned prior to the commencement of this Act.

- (e) the registration of a lease referred to in section 3(d) in respect of a portion of agricultural land, concluded in writing prior to the commencement of the Subdivision of Agricultural Land Amendment Act, 1974.

(Section 2(e) added by section 2(b) of Act 55 of 1972)

(Section 2(e) substituted by section 1 of Act 19 of 1974)

3. Prohibition of certain actions regarding agricultural land

Subject to the provisions of section 2 –

- (a) agricultural land shall not be subdivided;
- (b) no undivided share in agricultural land not already held by any person, shall vest in any person;
- (c) no part of any undivided share in agricultural land shall vest in any person, if such part is not already held by any person;
- (d) no lease in respect of a portion of agricultural land of which the period is 10 years or longer, or is the natural life of the lessee or any other person mentioned in the lease, or which is renewable from time to time at the will of the lessee, either by the continuation of the original lease or by entering into a new lease, indefinitely or for periods which together with the first period of the lease amount in all to not less than 10 years, shall be entered into;
- (e)
- (i) no portion of agricultural land, whether surveyed or not, and whether there is any building thereon or not, shall be sold or advertised for sale, except for the purposes of a mine as defined in section 1 of the Mines and Works Act, 1956 (Act No. 27 of 1956); and
- (ii) no right to such portion shall be sold or granted for a period of more than 10 years or for the natural life of any person or to the same person for periods aggregating more than 10 years, or advertised for sale or with a view to any such granting, except for the purposes of a mine as defined in section 1 of the Mines and Works Act, 1956;
- (Section 3(e) substituted by section 2 of Act 12 of 1979)*
(Section 3(e) substituted by section 2(1)(a) of Act 33 of 1984 with effect from 4 March 1981)
- (f) no area of jurisdiction, local area, development area, peri-urban area or other area referred to in paragraph (a) or (b) of the definition of “agricultural land” in section 1, shall be established on, or enlarged so as to include, any land which is agricultural land;
- (Section 3(f) amended by section 2(1)(b) of Act 33 of 1984)*
- (g) no public notice to the effect that a scheme relating to agricultural land or any portion thereof has been prepared or submitted under the ordinance in question, shall be given,

unless the Minister has consented in writing.

(Section 3 substituted by section 3 of Act 55 of 1972)

(Section 3 substituted by section 2 of Act 19 of 1974)

(Section 3 substituted by section 3 of Act 18 of 1977)

4. Application for consent of Minister, and imposition, enforcement or withdrawal of conditions by him

(1)

(a) Any application for the consent of the Minister for the purposes of section 3 shall-

- (i) in the case where any act referred to in paragraphs (a) to (e) of that section is contemplated, be made by the owner of the land concerned;
- (ii) be lodged in such place and be in such form and be accompanied by such plans, documents and information as may be determined by the Minister.

(b) For the purposes of paragraph (a) "owner" shall have the meaning assigned to it in section 102 of the Deeds Registries Act, 1937 (Act No. 47 of 1937)

(Section 4(1) substituted by section 2 of Act 18 of 1981)

(2) The Minister may in his discretion refuse or –

- (a) on such conditions, including conditions as to the purpose for or manner in which the land in question may be used, as he deems fit, grant any such application;
- (b) if he is satisfied that the land in question is not to be used for agricultural purposes and after consultation with the Administrator of the province in which such land is situated, on such conditions as such Administrator may determine in regard to the purpose for or manner in which such land may be used, grant any such application.

(Section 4(2)(b) amended by section 1 (Schedule) of Act 49 of 1996)

(Section 4(2) substituted by section 4 of Act 55 of 1972)

(Section 4(2) substituted by section 4(a) of Act 18 of 1977)

(3) The Minister or, in the case of a condition referred to in subsection (2)(b), the Administrator concerned may enforce any such condition..

(Section 4(3) substituted by section 4(b) of Act 18 of 1977)

- (4) The Minister or, in the case of a condition referred to in subsection (2)(b), the Administrator concerned after consultation with the Minister may vary or withdraw any such condition and, if it has been registered against the title deed of the land, the Minister may direct that it be varied or cancelled.

(Section 4(4) substituted by section 4(c) of Act 18 of 1977)

5. Succession

- (1) If the Minister does not in terms of section 4 consent to the subdivision of any particular agricultural land in accordance with any testamentary disposition or intestate succession or to the vesting of any undivided share in such land in accordance therewith, and no agreement is reached as to a subdivision or vesting in respect of which the Minister grants his consent in terms of the said section 4, the executor of the estate concerned shall realize the land or undivided share concerned, as the case may be, and dispose of the nett proceeds thereof in accordance with the said testamentary disposition or intestate succession, as the case may be.
- (2) The provisions of section 12 of the Expropriation Act, 1965 (Act No. 55 of 1965), shall *mutatis mutandis* apply in respect of any such proceeds of land or an undivided share in any land, and in such application of the said section a reference therein to a Minister shall be deemed to be a reference to an executor referred to in subsection (1) of this section.

6. Duties of Surveyor-General and Registrar of Deeds in application of Act

- (1) Subject to the provisions of section 2 a Surveyor-General shall only approve a general plan or diagram relating to a subdivision of agricultural land, and a Registrar of Deeds shall only register the vesting of an undivided share in agricultural land referred to in section 3(b), or a part of any such share referred to in section 3(c), or a lease referred to in section 3(d) or, if applicable, a right referred to in section 3(e) in respect of a portion of agricultural land, if the written consent of the Minister in terms of this Act has been submitted to him.

(Section 6(1) substituted by section 5 of Act 55 of 1972)

(Section 6(1) substituted by section 3 of Act 19 of 1974)

Section 6(1) substituted by section 5 of Act 18 of 1977)

- (2) If such consent has been granted subject to a registrable condition, such condition shall, on such approval or registration, be endorsed on the title deed of the land concerned.

6A. Registration of servitudes

- (1) Subject to the provisions of the Water Act, 1956 (Act No. 54 of 1956), a servitude in respect of agricultural land, except -

- (a) a right of way, aqueduct, pipe line or conducting of electricity with a width not exceeding 15 metres;
- (aA) a servitude which is supplementary to a servitude referred to in paragraph (a), and which has a servitude area not exceeding 225 square metres which adjoins the area of the last-mentioned servitude;

(Section 6A(aA) inserted by section 3 of Act 18 of 1981)

- (b) a usufruct over the whole of agricultural land in favour of one person or in favour of such person and his spouse or the survivor of them if they are married in community of property,

shall not be registered by a Registrar of Deeds without the written consent of the Minister.

(Section 6A(1) substituted by section 6 of Act 18 of 1977)

- (2) The provisions of section 4 and 6(2) shall *mutatis mutandis* apply in respect of the granting of consent for the purposes of subsection (1) of this section and in respect of such consent.

(Section 6A inserted by section 6 of Act 55 of 1972)

7. Entry upon and investigations on land

The Minister may either generally or in any particular case authorize any person to enter upon any land at all reasonable times and to carry out thereon such investigations or to perform thereon such other acts as are necessary or expedient for achieving the objects of this Act.

(Section 7 amended by section 4 of Act 18 of 1981)

8. Delegation of Powers

- (1) The Minister may delegate to any officer in the Public Service any power conferred upon him by this Act, excluding a power referred to in section 10, but shall not be divested of any power delegated by him, and may vary or withdraw any decision of any such officer upon application by any person affected and feeling aggrieved by such decision.

(Section 8(1) substituted by section 5(a) of Act 18 of 1981)

- (2) The Minister may under subsection (1) delegate the same power to more than one officer or different powers to different officers or in respect of different areas the same or different powers to different officers.

(Section 8(2) added by section 7 of Act 55 of 1972)

(Section 8(2) substituted by section 7 of Act 18 of 1977)

- (3)

- (a) An application referred to in subsection (1) shall be made within the period and in the manner prescribed, and shall be accompanied by the prescribed fee.
- (b) If the Minister withdraws any decision of the officer concerned, the prescribed fee paid by the applicant shall be refunded to him, or if the Minister varies any such decision, he may in the discretion direct that the whole or any part of such fee be refunded to the applicant.

(Section 8(3) added by section 7 of Act 18 of 1977)

(Section 8(3) amended by section 5(b) of Act 18 of 1981)

9. Payment of duties or fees

No duties or fees of office shall be payable in respect of any document drawn up for the purposes of this Act and lodged in a registration office for registration or filing.

10. Regulations

- (1) Subject to the provisions of subsection (2) the Minister may make regulations with reference to any matter which may be prescribed under this Act, or in respect of which, in his opinion, it is necessary or expedient to make regulations for achieving the objects of this Act.
- (2) Any such regulation which relates to State revenue or expenditure shall be made after consultation with the Minister of Finance.
- (3) Regulations made under subsection (1) may provide that any person who contravenes or fails to comply with any provision thereof shall be guilty of an offence and on conviction liable to such fine, not exceeding two hundred rand, or to imprisonment for such period, not exceeding six months, as may be prescribed therein.

11. Offences and penalties

Any person who -

- (a) in any application for the purposes of this Act makes any statement which is false in any material respect, knowing it to be false, or fails to disclose any information with intent to deceive;
- (b) hinders or obstructs in the performance of his functions any person acting under an authority in terms of section 7;

(Section 11(b) substituted by section 6 of Act 18 of 1981)

- (c) contravenes or fails to comply with a condition imposed in terms of section 4(2);

(cA) contravenes the provisions of section 3(d) with regard to the entering into of a lease contemplated therein;

(Section 11(cA) inserted by section 4 of Act 19 of 1974)

(d) contravenes the provisions of section 3(e),

shall be guilty of an offence and on conviction liable to a fine not exceeding R1 000 or to imprisonment for a period not exceeding 2 years, and in addition, in the case of an offence contemplated in paragraph (c) or (d), to a fine not exceeding R50 in respect of each day on which the offence continues.

(Words following paragraph (d) of section 11 substituted by section 8 of Act 18 of 1977)

(Section 11 substituted by section 8 of Act 55 of 1972)

12. Insertion of section 3A in Act 10 of 1944

The following section is hereby inserted in the Provincial Powers Extension Act, 1944, after section 3:

“Application of Act

3A. The provisions of sections 1, 2 and 3 shall not apply in respect of agricultural land as defined in section 1 of the Subdivision of Agricultural Land Act, 1970: Provided that the provisions of this section shall not affect any condition contemplated in subsection (2) of the said section 3.”

13. Validity of permits

(1) A permit issued under section 8(1)(a)(ii) or (iii) of the Environment Planning Act, 1967 (Act No. 88 of 1967), or a similar document issued under a provincial ordinance, prior to the commencement of this Act and still of force and effect at such commencement, shall be deemed to be a written consent granted by the Minister in terms of section 3 of this Act, and the conditions (if any) subject to which such permit or document was issued in terms of the first-mentioned Act or the ordinance in question, shall be deemed to be conditions imposed by the Minister in terms of section 4(2) of this Act in connection with such consent.

(Section 13(1) amended by section 1 (Schedule) of Act 49 of 1996)

(2) A restrictive condition, in favour of the State, a Minister of State, an Administrator, an officer, the general public or any person, in connection with the use of agricultural land or the manner in which such land may be dealt with, which has by virtue of a permit or similar document referred to in subsection (1) been noted on the title deed of the land, shall for the purposes of the variation or cancellation of that condition be deemed to have been so noted in favour of the Minister.

(Section 13(2) added by section 7 of Act 18 of 1981)

(Section 13(2) amended by section 1 (Schedule) of Act 49 of 1996)

(Section 13 substituted by section 9 of Act 18 of 1977)

14. ...

(Section 14 repealed by section 1 (Schedule) of Act 49 of 1996)

15. Short title and commencement

This Act shall be called the Subdivision of Agricultural Land Act, 1970, and shall come into operation on a date fixed by the State President by proclamation in the *Gazette*.