

Financial implications of methods used to control livestock theft

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Research focus area: Livestock theft prevention

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Full Title of the project

The financial implications of methods used to control livestock theft in the Free State, Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal.

Aims of the project

- To Determine different methods farmers are currently using to control stock theft in different areas of the Free State (2015), Eastern Cape (2016) and Kwazulu-Natal (2017).
- To Evaluate the success of the methods used to control stock theft.
- To Quantify the financial implications of methods used to control stock theft.

Executive summary

The first year of the project (Part I, 2015) focused on the Free State province of South Africa. The project was successful in identifying the methods and actions that farmers use against stock theft, determining the direct and indirect cost of livestock theft and investigation of the variables affecting stock theft in the Free State Province.

The second year (Part II, 2016) focus on the Eastern Cape province of South Africa as in the first year the methods and actions taken by livestock farmers to control livestock theft were identified, the direct as well as the indirect cost livestock theft was calculated and variables affecting livestock theft in the Eastern Cape province were investigated.

In the third year (Part III, 2017) livestock theft in KwaZulu-Natal was investigated. The direct and indirect cost of stock theft was determined and variables affecting stock theft was investigated.

The methods used and actions taken by livestock farmers in the three provinces were also identified. The success of these methods and actions to control stock theft according to livestock farmers in the three provinces are also reported.

This study has shed some light on the severe financial impact (direct and indirect) that stock theft has on the Free State, Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal Provinces. A difference was found between the total annual cost of stock theft between the provinces. The Free State has a total annual cost of approximately R 304 million (R247 million direct cost + R 57 million indirect cost) while the Eastern Cape experiences total annual losses of approximately R 196 million (R 119 million direct cost + R 77 million indirect cost). According to the study KwaZulu-Natal had the lowest total annual cost valued at R 144 million (R112 million direct cost + R 32 million indirect cost).

It was found that there is a significant difference between official stock theft statistics and the losses reported by farmers in the study. This difference is much bigger for the Free State than found in the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal. It is clear from the findings thus far that stock theft is not dealt with seriously enough and if this situation does not receive urgent attention it could threaten South Africa's red meat industry.