

LAND REFORM

Keep emotions out of land reform debate – role players

There was a call for 'cool heads' rather than 'heated emotions' when it came to issues around land reform from speakers at the recent quarterly agricultural markets outlook workshop, presented by agricultural economist Prof Johan Willemse in Bloemfontein.

Speakers on the land issue included North-West University political analyst, Theo Venter, Agri SA's head of land affairs, Annelize Crosby, and general manager of the Banking Association of South Africa, Pierre Venter.

Although Crosby said nothing would happen overnight, she concurred with Theo Venter that the Constitutional Review Committee report-back to Parliament on whether or not Constitutional changes

were warranted or feasible could be postponed. (The committee is scheduled to report back to Parliament at the end of August.)

President Cyril Ramaphosa needed at least a year to consolidate his power within the party, said Theo Venter, adding that this was why he believed the report-back would be postponed until after the election.

It was also important to note the caveats on which the ANC had insisted, he said.

According to Crosby, too much negativity was emerging from discussions held around braais.

"I think it's really necessary to look carefully at the facts and see what it is that the ANC actually decided," she said.

She pointed out that there was an important difference between the motion placed before Parliament by the ANC and the original motion brought by the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF).

The ANC made changes that removed the fast-track approach the EFF had pursued by requesting an *ad hoc* committee be set up; it changed the focus from all property to land; and instead of saying Section 25 of the Constitution 'must' be reviewed and amended, the ANC used the words 'where necessary'.

However, as lenders, banks were very concerned about the potential erosion of property rights, said Pierre Venter. – *Sabrina Dean*