

## **FREE STATE TO HOST GAME AUCTION**

5 April 2013

The Free State Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs will host the 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Game Auction from the 12<sup>th</sup> until 13<sup>th</sup> April 2013 at the Willem Pretorius Nature Reserve.

The Game Auction is a part of the game management plan which manages game population. Currently the department has livestock of 24 348 animals in the reserves. With the absence of predators in the reserves, game auction remains the most viable method of controlling game population.

During this two-day event, a total of 865 animals will be sold to the highest bidder. On the first day, 80 hunting packages will be auctioned off at 14h00. The packages consist of 46 trophy hunts, 34 biltong hunts and 9 buffalo bulls. The hunt will take place on 9 of the 14 different Nature Reserves. On the second day from 11h00, 485 live games of 106 different species including 42 diseases free buffalo and 1 white rhino will be sold. All sales will be per catalogue.

The department is working tirelessly to transform the game industry. Four (4) black game farmers around the Free State Province have been loaned game to make sure that the previously disadvantage communities are involved in this industry.

In his 2013/14 budget vote speech the MEC for Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs Mosebenzi Zwani pleaded with the farm owners to comply with norms and standards for large predators. However the challenge is game farmers who keep more that specified number of lions on their farms resulting in escapes.

Subsequently, numerous incidents were lion have escaped and threatened the lives of our people have necessitated that permit conditions for keeping large predators be reviewed. Our enforcement unit is working around the clock with the SAPS to identify any illegal activities in this regard and other environmental crimes.

The game auction is a family affair as there will be a marathon and bicycle race on Saturday 8h00 as well as numerous vendor stalls, beer garden and different food outlets.

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