

## **Pro forma for New Entrant to Commercial Agriculture 2026**

Nominations must be made according to the pro forma to ensure uniformity and to enable the judges to make meaningful comparisons of the candidates. Each division will be limited to three written pages of information, with the total nomination no longer than 19 pages. You may use bullet points and include links to online articles to substantiate your point.

Nominations with deviations will not be accepted.

The aim of the new pro forma is to evaluate candidates according to sustainability. This refers to farming practices that ensure environmental and financial sustainability to ensure long term viability, so that the operation can continue across future generations.

### **The following must accompany the nomination:**

- At least 10 good quality photos of the nominated person in his/her working environment. One of these must be a good head and shoulder photo of the nominated candidate.
- Include the full home and work address, email, and cell number.
- Provide website address and social media handles where applicable.
- A 300-word summary of the candidate's nomination.

### **The criteria for adjudication**

**Important: These criteria must be used and followed when doing the nomination.**

The total score: 120

The New Entrant into Commercial Agriculture cannot be a project whose funding is dependent on grants, or where the overwhelming majority of decisions are taken by mentors or extension officers – it must be an individual or family or farming partners.

**Point 1 (20 points)**

**Describe the candidate's farming operation.**

Briefly describe the entire operation. As background fully describe the nature and extent of the farming enterprise to enable the judges to focus on the candidates' distinctiveness.

You must give an overview of the farmer – who they are, what they farm, where, and why.

Mention how long the candidate has been farming.

Briefly list his/her qualifications, e.g. degrees/diplomas or other courses and in-service training to better equip him/her for farming.

If he/she has done something outstanding, mention that.

**2. Biological productivity (20 points)**

Although this might be on a smaller scale than in the case of a commercial farmer, the principles will be the same.

Describe the manner in which the candidate maintains and increases the farming operation's biological productivity, in other words, how successfully the candidate uses the available land and resources to produce crops.

In the case of a stock or game farmer it refers to, among others, calving percentage, weaning mass, intercalving period and mortalities. Do this by using percentages and comparing these with the acceptable limits.

In the case of a crop, fruit, or vegetable farmer the nominator has to refer to the yields per hectare and other relevant norms for the industry, comparing these with the acceptable norms for the industry. Compare his/her yields with that of a commercial farmer and what the candidate is doing to improve productivity.

Look at aspects such as inter alia.:

- The use of genetics including growth rate, yield, and plant / animal health. What is being done to improve yield and productivity.

- Environmental conditions – how does the candidate use their particular environment in their favour to produce what they do
- Nutritional programmes – use of fertilisers, fertigation, feed programmes in animals etc. How does the candidate manage the required levels of nutrients.
- Pest and disease management.
- Management practices: Management practices such as irrigation, fertilization, pruning, feeding programmes, etc. can improve yield/productivity. Describe how these are used.
- In the case of vegetable farming – is it open field production (and why) or under nets or in tunnels (why).

### **3. Hedging against all forms of risk (20 points)**

Identify all the risk factors that could have an impact on the enterprise and describe how the farmer mitigate/address these risks.

- What steps are being taken by the candidate to lower the risks to provide greater security to the farming enterprise?
- Is he/she a risk taker or avoider of risks?
- Does he/she act reactively or proactively?
- How does the candidate adapt to changing circumstances?
- Describe the steps taken to stay abreast of change and the manner in which the farmer transforms challenges into opportunities.
- How does the candidate identify opportunities?

### **4. Maintenance and management of the natural resources (20 points)**

- How does the candidate go about maintaining and improving the natural resources? In the case of communal land – what does the candidate do to improve his/her allocated land.
- In the case of a stock farmer, how is carrying capacity determined, measured and applied?

- In the case of a crop farmer which cultivation processes are followed? And why?
- Motivate and describe how the farmer establishes cultivation methods, and why.
- How does the farmer determine land-use patterns, use of mentors, extension officers, soil analysis and the use of satellite technology (GPS, GIS, etc.)?
- Refer to soil health.

### **5. Economic sustainability (20 points)**

Describe the candidate's *modus operandi* to ensure financial and economic sustainability.

- Describe the candidate's development into a farmer, in other words, how he/she has extended and improved the enterprise since getting involved with it. In the case of a farmer inheriting the farm, how has value addition and growth occurred? Emphasis must be placed on farming successes.
- Fully describe his/her financial management system and principles and results.
- What are the strategic objectives? Describe how regularly these are re-evaluated and redefined.
- Which forms of diversification occur in the enterprise?
- Is the candidate involved in the value chain?
- How are financial risks hedged?
- Refer to management structure of the business and how this aids financial health.
- Refer to advisors used.

### **6. Social responsibility and trusteeship (20 points)**

What steps are being taken by the candidate to ensure that the farming enterprise is socially acceptable and justifiable? This involves, among others, own and workers' remuneration, support to workers and their families at social level, community empowerment and support.

- Describe the candidates' value to organised agriculture. (study groups etc)
- Describe the extent of his/her community involvement?
- Indicate the level of acceptance by fellow farmers as mentors.

- What community projects have been started by him/her and what is the impact of these?
- How does the farmer share knowledge?
- Fully describe the farmer's relations with his/her workers, labour practices, remuneration structure, housing and assistance concerning personal and community matters.
- Refer to the acknowledgement already received and achievements.