

Concerns over high prices and feeding schemes

Cabinet is concerned that the worst US drought in 30 years will have an adverse effect on South African food security by pushing up the prices of cereals and meat, says Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries communications director Steve Galane.

Speaking during the post-Cabinet media briefing, Galane said Cabinet would be looking at a range of measures to mitigate the rise in international food prices that could include extending the daily school feeding scheme to times when the pupils were on holiday.

Galane said Cabinet and the department monitored food prices on a regular basis and both were growing increasingly concerned over the price rise.

He said there was increased demand for biofuels and internationally food stocks were low and, to make matters worse, the US drought had contributed to the price rises.

"What we have been talking about are short-term measures such as the school feeding schemes that give daily meals and whether or not this should be extended to the school holidays," he said.

Galane said Cabinet's objective was to ensure that those who would be most affected by the higher food prices would still be able to feed themselves.

The idea is how to expand these food bank initiatives," he said.

South Africa has more than 12 million children attending school with estimates that up to 90% of them are dependent on the meals they receive through the school feeding scheme.