

FIREARMS CONTROL ACT

AgriSA's position

AgriSA supports effective firearm regulation that enhances public safety while recognising the realities of rural South Africa. Policy must distinguish between illegal firearms, which drive crime, and lawful ownership, which supports on-farm safety and asset protection. Overly restrictive or unclear measures risk undermining rural security and confidence. A balanced, evidence-based approach is essential to protect both public safety and agricultural sustainability.

AgriSA therefore advocates for a policy approach that:

- **Protects lawful firearm ownership** within a clear and enforceable regulatory framework;
- **Targets illegal firearms and criminal networks** as the primary source of violence;
- Ensures **legal certainty and administrative feasibility**, avoiding undue discretion and system backlogs;
- Reflects the **realities of rural South Africa**, including infrastructure constraints and security risks; and
- Is developed through **transparent, inclusive consultation processes**.

As the legislative process advances, AgriSA remains committed to constructive engagement to ensure that outcomes support both **public safety objectives and the sustainability of agricultural operations**.

Implications for Agriculture

The emerging policy direction has **direct relevance for the sector**:

1 Rural safety

Firearms remain a critical component of on-farm risk management.

Any restrictions must account for:

- response times of law enforcement
- geographic isolation
- livestock and infrastructure protection

2 Operational and compliance burden

Increased regulatory complexity may:

- raise costs of compliance
- create administrative risk for producers
- impact security arrangements on farms

3 Investment and confidence

Perceived erosion of lawful protections may:

- affect farmer confidence
- influence investment decisions in high-risk areas

2000 - 2006

Legislative Foundation

- Firearms Control Act (Act 60 of 2000) was enacted
- Full implementation and early amendments
- Establishes licensing, competency, and control framework

Policy Shift Emerges

- Increasing focus on firearm-related crime
- Early internal reviews of firearm policy
- Shift towards tighter civilian firearm control

2015 - 2018

2022 - 2023

Process Slows

- Bill not tabled in Parliament
- Policy reconsideration and stakeholder engagement continue
- Shift toward structured negotiation platform

Amendment Bill Introduced

- Draft Firearms Control Amendment Bill published
- Key proposal: removal/limitation of self-defence as a reason for ownership
- Extensive public comment process
- Strongly contested across sectors

2020 - 2021

2024 - 2025

NEDLAC Process Initiated

- Bill formally enters National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC)
- Establishment of Task Team
- Development of Bill Matrix (multi-constituency inputs)

Structured Engagement Begins

- Dialogue sessions held (Dec 2025)
- Key policy disagreements formally recorded
- Additional written inputs requested

Late 2025

2026

March

- Ongoing Task Team engagements (incl. 19 March meeting)
- Engagements based on existing submissions only
- Clause-by-clause review (Sections 1-50 underway)
- Process expected to conclude within the financial year

Early 2026: Technical Negotiation Phase

- Line-by-line engagement of Bill begins
- Focus shifts to definitions and core provisions
- Evidence disputes emerge (e.g., Wits report)

NEXT STEPS

- 1 Finalise NEDLAC report
- 2 Submit to Cabinet
- 3 Table in Parliament
- 4 Public hearings
- 5 Enactment

Legislative Pathway

