



Directorate of Economy, Nature & Infrastructure
Directie Economie Natuur en Infrastructuur





**Written
questions
members**

Islandcouncil for the Executive Council/ Government Commissioners.
(art.159, lid 1 WolBES/ art. 46 RvO Islandcouncil)

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Issue : Roaming animal project
Date question : 8th April 2021
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Date answer : **Before 23rd April**
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QUESTIONS:

On December 3rd 2020 a technical briefing has been given to the Central Committee pertaining to the roaming animal project. In that briefing it has been explained that there had been a grace period introduced within which animal owners were given the opportunity to carry their animals/goats from the Boven/Venus Bay area to the slaughterhouse. After this grace period it was the intention that professional hunters were to shoot the animals. I understand that in the meantime this grace period has been extended until May this year.

The above has led me to ask the following questions.M

Correction: the grace period was extended until the end of the first quarter which is March.

1. I have learned that in principle animal owners were very cooperative and all have signed an agreement whereby they expressed their cooperation to the project.
 - With whom have the animal owners signed these agreements and what is the legal status of such an agreement? **The OLE has met with three main families. One of the family has the majority of the goats in the boven area and the other two have the majority of Cows in the urban area. There is an initial consensus on the terms of the agreement. The agreement are now been revised by Dir Eni and the legal department before they are submitted to the BC.**
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 - How many animal owners have signed such an agreement? **Agreements are not signed as yet.**
 - Are there animal owners with goats in the Boven/Venus Bay area who have not signed the agreement, and if so, how many? **The discussion was done with representatives of one family that had claimed the animals in Boven. Those were the only ones that came forward as owners of the animals in the national park. See above remark.**
 - Can I receive a copy of such an agreement? **I will consult with the executive council to verify how to handle these agreements once they are signed.**

2. During the grace period animal owners are receiving \$ 8.00 instead of the customary \$ 6.00 per kilo for each goat they bring to the slaughterhouse. For a cow this is \$ 6.00 instead of \$ 4.00 and for a pig \$ 7.00 instead of \$ 5.00
 - How much money in total has been paid out to animal owners thus far? **From October 2020 to April 23rd 2021 total of \$ 49 910 usd dollars were paid out,-.**
 - Can I receive an overview per animal owner of the number of animals/kilos of meat turned in and the compensation received? **Due to respect of personal privacy we are unable to submit the personal financial data, the overall annual data is available if necessary.**
 - Were all those animals tagged to proof that the one who collected the compensation was also the legal owner? **Not all. some animals came in tagged or had a personal marking made by animal owners.**

3. After their initial cooperation with the removal project, it appears that some animal owners have become reluctant and less cooperative.





- Is this observation correct, and if so, what are the reasons for this change? At this moment I am unable to make such a conclusion on the contrary we have seen the willingness from the farmers to cooperate.
4. Hunters/shooters have arrived on the island some time ago. However, it appears that guns and ammunition is still not available.
- What are the reasons for this delay? The delay of the guns and ammunition has to do with the permitting process and the transportation. It is a tedious and detail process
 - The official hunters/shooters did not arrive on Statia as yet as we are not at that stage of the removal process as yet. We hired an experienced ranger from Staatsbosbeheer Nederland to come assist the animal owners and Gershon Lopes with getting their animals during these grace period. Also his expertise in building catchments and fencing in the wild for these projects were needed and are of great asset for us. He is in charge of building the fencing and catchments in the park before the hunters can come.
 - How much money has already been spent for hunters/shooters while guns/ammunition has not yet arrived on Statia?
 - There is no money spent specifically for Hunters, the ranger from staatsbosbeheer can hunt but he also has other functions as mentioned above.
 - What consequences does this situation have for the entire project budget and for the timeline in which the projects should be completed? One of the main reason why it was decided not to bring in the hunters were to ensure that we receive value for money. We will only bring the hunters when we are absolutely ready.
5. Clearing crucial areas of roaming animals and reducing the number of livestock on the island is only part of the project. The other goal is to create alternatives for livestock owners.
- What alternatives are being worked on and what is the status of this part of the project? We are working on an agriculture vision plan where animal husbandry is also taken in consideration. The draft vision plan will be shared. Some of the point of departure are as follows.
 - The development of the sustainable animal husbandry
 - Product diversification eg dairy and milk production
 - Value chain development eg The development of products such as cheese, sausages,
 - The development of artesian products such as leather from animal skins, and other products from bones etc.
 - The development of the meat industry
 - Special famers who focuses on fodder production.
 - Can the executive council provide a realistic timeline within which this goal will be achieved? The timelines will be specified in the vision plan after a adequate consultation is done.
6. At the moment the main focus of the roaming animal project is on Boven/Venus Bay area. The situation of the Quill, our other national park, is just as worrisome. Since the Quill is pictured as one of our main tourist attractions, the roaming animal situation also diminishes our appeal to tourists. The latter is obstructing the realization of the goals in our strategic development plan and may have serious economic consequences.
- When is it the intention that the roaming animals will be removed from The Quill? The planning is to work in phases. We will begin with the urban areas and then we branch out into the other areas and districts.
7. There is clear proof that the status of nature on Statia is very poor and fast deteriorating. It is also evident that roaming animals are one of the main reasons for this.
- When is the intention of the executive council for the roaming animal project to be completed? There is no hard deadline for the completion of the project, But the executive





council wants to ensure that the removal process is sustainable and that the island does not revert to the current situation of free grazing animals after the initial removal.

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- 8. Next to the negative impact roaming animals have on nature there is also a price tag that can be put on the (future) loss of income from tourism. The same counts even for fisheries as the erosion caused by roaming animals is damaging our reefs, which are the habitat of the fish.
 - What is the annual economic value of the products derived from roaming animals? Currently we are unable to give an accurate overview of the total annual economic value of the roaming animals on the island; this is due to the fact that the sector is split into three main groups and there is not enough financial data from on all groups.
 - **Group one:** The informal sector: This is an unregulated sector with very little financial data as animals are slaughtered sold and consumed without informally.
 - **Formal sector:**
 - **Group two:** Animals that are slaughtered at the slaughterhouse but are sold without and consumed independently
 - **Group three:** animals slaughtered and sold at the slaughterhouse or exported. (what we do have is the total amount paid out to farmers and collected from the sale of meat on an annual basis)
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 - Can the executive council compare this with the loss of economic value due to erosion and destructions of our nature and the potential loss of tourism income from nature tourism and diving? Even though we do not have all the financial data for the annual economic value of the roaming animals it can be concluded that the economic loss associated with the roaming animals exceeds that which is generated from the animals.
- 9. Part of the erosion problem is also caused by the numerous loose roaming chickens.
 - Is this acknowledged by the executive council? This is also acknowledged by the executive council.
 - What measures will be taken to take care of this problem? We also have planned to do a massive catching and eradication program for chickens. At the moment the veterinary service is running a pilot project by farmers to feed some catch chickens layer feed and monitor their egg laying potential.

