

MP critical of biological products company

The Onderstepoort Biological Products Company (OBP) received a qualified report from the Auditor-General (AG), and faced a stern warning from MPs to get its house in order. OBP is responsible for the prevention and control of animal diseases which impact on food security, human health and the livelihood in the country. The company falls under the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

OBP presented its annual report to Parliament's Portfolio Committee on Agriculture. OBP's internal audit, procurement, expenditure, internal control and governance reports were qualified, prompting MPs to voice their concern and to demand to see an improvement. ANC MP Salam Abram said these were "serious matters" and asked OBP to provide a detailed report on how they planned to turn the situation around.

Theresa Smit, OBP acting chief executive, said that they were busy addressing issues identified by the AG, for example, by stocking enough vaccines to meet the country's needs in the event of an outbreak of animal disease. However, Smit feared that the current R75 million earmarked for equipment-upgrade was far below the R200 million over three years they need for that purpose.

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