



INTERNET ARTICLE

The Department successfully interdicts an abattoir from pumping cattle blood into a river

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The Department of Water and Sanitation has interdicted a Vrede abattoir in Free State from pumping cattle blood into Spruitsonderdrift River. The Bloemfontein High Court has ruled that KW Slagpale should stop its illegal practice immediately and comply with the requirements of National Water Act.

This came after the public blew a whistle on illegal Slagpale activities that resulted in a number of manholes being blocked and sewage flowing uncontrollably in the streets of Thembalihle township. South Africa's rivers are increasingly becoming dumping grounds for blood of slaughtered cattle by unscrupulous abattoirs who open their businesses next to streams deliberately for the convenience of their unlawful practices.

Acting head of the Blue Scorpions, Thandi Mopai, is seeing red over the malpractice and has declared war on the culprits. The latest trend of river pollution, according to Thandi, is to pump raw blood into the rivers while the culprits are using municipal facilities after paying them a fee.

Following the court ruling, it is incumbent upon the Blue Scorpions to monitor compliance by the abattoir and the municipality. Non-compliance may result in the enforcement unit returning to court to press charges against the culprits that may carry heavy fines. Action against KW Slagpale came after members of the public blew a whistle on Phumelela Local Municipality in Vrede, a short distance from Villiers about sewage that formed rivers of stench in the area. Residents of Thembalihle township had grown tired of a dysfunctional Vrede Waste Water Treatment Works whose sewage was seeping into Spruitsonderdrift, a tributary of the Vaal River.

On investigation the Blue Scorpions found a whole range of environmental infringements that posed the lives of locals at risk. Among these were that pump station A- Extension 3 in Thembalihle was not operating as the TN Molofe Construction (a service provider to the municipality) team workers were on site refurbishing it. It was reported that the pollution was on and off for seven years. The raw sewage that was supposed to be received by the pump station was overflowing into the nearby Spruitsonderdrift stream as the existing sump was full. The scope of work covers the building of channel muncher that will be munching the solid preventing it from going into the sump.

The sewer pipeline was built next to the stream. It went into the abattoir which was only 500m away from the stream. The abattoir was causing the pipeline blockage. It was further reported that the service provider would build a new pipeline that would spill into the Vrede waste water treatment plant.

The enforcement unit also found that there were new houses approximately 2 km from the stream called extension 4. It was reported that the sewer reticulation system was not properly done resulting in the sewage overflowing into the stream. Litres of blood were seen discharged from the abattoir through the submersible pipe into the stream.



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It was also found that there was no electricity power connection to the pump station; as soon as the construction is complete the electricity will be connected. There was a nearby manhole blockage that was overflowing. It was reported that there were many of the overflowing manholes in different parts of the township that were caused by the flat slope which resulted in no gravitation of sewer. The other cause of manhole overflow was due to some community members dumping objects into the manholes. The scope of the service provider covers building of new manholes and unblocking the existing blocked ones.

As part of its intervention, the department an emergency dam to help during moments of power failure. Furthermore, the department the planned dam will be allocated a mobile pump to stop waste from flowing into the Spruitsonderdrift. The pump will pump back to the big manhole. Another finding was that Pump B station was not operating as the workers who are employed by the service provider were on site refurbishing it. The sewer challenge was caused by a small sump and the non-operating submersible pumps. The situation was pushing back the sewer into three township houses, which resulted in them being disconnected to the sewer line. The disconnected houses would be connected to the pump station A line. The submersible pumps will be replaced with two new and bigger pumps. The refurbishment construction project was finished at the end of last month.

In another case in 2014, the Blue Scorpions pounced on the premises of Chris Le Roux in Villiers (Free State) where they dismantled pumping facilities of his abattoir that was operating without a water use license.

Abattoirs are required in terms of the National Water Act to obtain a water use licence to dispense their unwanted sludge in an environmentally accepted standards. The Blue Scorpions, an enforcement arm of the department of water and sanitation, has intensified its efforts to curb the illegal practice in order to keep the country's rivers clean. With the scarcity of water in the country, rivers have become a vital source of the precious resource and they must be protected from polluters at all times.

Themba Khumalo