

## **Media Releases 2010**

### **Free State farmer faces jail sentence after failing to pay VAT to SARS**

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**Bloemfontein, 27 July 2010** - Michael George Burgess from the Tweespruit district in the Free State was sentenced to 18 months imprisonment for failure to pay over Value Added Tax to the South African Revenue Service (SARS).

Burgess (49) was initially ordered by the court in June 2007 to pay R910 000 to SARS or face prison.

At the time of the initial sentencing in 2007, Burgess, who was a partner in large pig farm responsible for around 10% of all slaughtered pigs in the province, pleaded guilty to 13 counts of contravening the VAT Act in terms of a plea bargain reached with the State. He had submitted 13 VAT returns without making payment to SARS between 2004 and 2006.

Conditions of his sentencing stated that he would not face prison provided that he pays SARS the outstanding amount in monthly instalments of R35 000. However failure to comply resulted in Mr Burgess appearing before the courts seven times prior to his sentencing on Tuesday this week.

Magistrate J.B Koekemoer sentenced Burgess to serve his 18 month prison sentence on Tuesday 26 July 2010

**ENDS**