

In order to ensure that these surplus Agriculture and Food staff are redeployed as quickly as possible, all Departments and Offices are now directed to take the following steps:

- a. Where vacancies occur in *existing provincial locations* which are in a town where there are surplus staff, such vacancies must be filled in the first instance by the redeployment of these staff (this must take place before considering staff on Central or local transfer lists, taking staff from interdepartmental panels, etc).
- b. Where vacancies occur in *existing provincial locations* which is near a location where there are surplus staff, such vacancies must be filled in the first instance by offering the position to these surplus staff (this must again take place before considering staff on Central or local transfer lists, taking staff from interdepartmental panels, etc). In the event that there are no surplus staff in a position to take up the post, the post may then be filled in accordance with normal procedures.
- c. Where Departments have staff in provincial offices who have applied for transfers under the CAF system, these staff should be released immediately where they can be replaced by surplus staff from the Department of Agriculture and Food.
- d. In a number of instances the staff in the Department of Agriculture and Food will not become available for redeployment for some months, in these cases the vacancies must be held until these staff are available to take up duty.
- e. The selection of surplus staff will be in accordance with the protocol agreed between the Department of Agriculture and Food and staff unions. (Copy attached – essentially volunteers will be sought and where these are not forthcoming, a ‘last-in-first-out’ principle will apply.) It should be noted that these staff will in all instances carry their seniority in grade with them. Transfers will be subject to an assessment of the sick leave and performance records of staff according to existing standards and procedures. Departments/Offices will have the right, at their discretion, to refuse to allow a particular transfer to proceed if this assessment indicates that this is necessary in the interests of the proper management of the service.
- f. Where a Department/Office is due to decentralise under the Government’s Decentralisation Programme to a location which has such surplus staff, consideration must be given to the utilisation of these surplus staff to form an ‘advance party’ for the decentralising business unit(s). Where it is proposed to proceed on this basis, Departments/Offices must consult with this Department on how the proposed staff transfers will be reconciled with their authorised numbers.
- g. Where Departments/Offices have short term or long term blocks of work which could be discharged by surplus Agriculture and Food staff who would remain in their regional locations, they are invited to bring forward proposals to this Department for consideration.