

## PEST CONTROL

# Pest-control operators face regulation

NEW REGULATIONS THAT WILL tighten control over pest-control operators (PCOs), by forcing them to register and have the necessary qualifications, are awaiting signature by the minister of agriculture.

So said Gerhard Verdoorn of the Griffon Poison Information Centre, speaking at the Pest Biz Convention held recently in Somerset West.

The new regulations would help curb fraud and illegal practices in the pesticide industry. Verdoorn said the agricultural industry is swamped by unregistered PCOs that don't necessarily have the equipment, skills or resources to effectively apply pesticides.

Some also don't store, transport or use pesticides according to product specifications, with dire consequences

for human and animal health, as well as the environment and crop production.

Currently, PCOs can be registered at the agriculture department by submitting a sworn affidavit of their work experience. Verdoorn hopes the new regulations will be signed and implemented by September. PCOs will then have to provide proof of qualifications such as certificates, diplomas or degrees.

Verdoorn said PCOs should be members of associations that can implement self-administration and regulation, like the SA Pest Control Association or the Aerial Applicators Association of South Africa. He said government doesn't have the manpower, skills or resources to do everything for the industry – *Glennis Kriel*