

SA farmers join in Mozambican land rush

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LONDON — South African farmers are rushing to take up rich, fertile tracts of land in Mozambique following the lifting of rigid State control.

Already more than 18 000 ha in the Moamba region has been made available to South African farmers and applications for a further 5 000 ha in the Sabie region are awaiting government approval.

Most of the bids have come from South Africans already farming in Natal. They are hoping to follow the success of Zimbabwean farmers who have acquired large areas of land along the 290 km Beira Corridor.

News of the new land rush in southern Africa comes from the fortnightly information bulletin Africa Analysis, which reports the development on the front page of its latest edition.

Africa Analysis says there has been a flood of applications for land attribution permits, especially along the Ressano Garcia-Moamba route.

It quotes a Mozambican Agriculture Ministry spokesman as saying more than 2 500 applications have been received from South Africans in the past few months.

Such has been the rush to move in and the government's

readiness to agree to the influx, that local farmers are protesting against the favourable treatment given to outsiders. Of the 80 applications filed by local farmers, only 10 have met the criteria for land titles.

Africa Analysis reports that the government is also supporting original property ownership claims dating back to the period before Mozambique became a Marxist-Leninist state.