PROTECTING ECOSYSTEMS BY WAY OF BIOLOGICAL CONTROL: CURSORY REFLECTIONS ON THE MAIN REGULATORY INSTRUMENTS FOR BIOLOGICAL CONTROL AGENTS, PRESENT AND FUTURE

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SUMMARY

Although there are numerous threats to ecosystems and the resultant ecosystem services, alien and invasive plants (AIP) have been identified as being one of the major causes of ecosystem destruction. In addressing the threat of alien and invasive plants through the use of various mechanisms, the regulatory framework imposed by legislation is key in ensuring that that controlling AIPs does in fact not do more harm than good. One such control mechanism, which has the potential to do wonders or wreak havoc if not adroitly implemented, is that of using biological control agents. This contribution provides a brief overview on the three main regulatory instruments used to control biological control agents in South Africa, namely the *Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act* 43 of 1983, the *Agricultural Pests Act* 36 of 1983 and the *National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act* 10 of 2004. It also considers possible future developments on the regulation of biological control agents.

KEYWORDS: Biological control and regulation, alien and invasive plants, alien and invasive species, ecosystem, ecosystem services, biodiversity, Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act, Agricultural Pests Act, National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act

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