



PROVINCIAL ANTI-THEFT OF LIVESTOCK AWARENESS PROGRAMME

No room left for stock thieves as the KZN Department of Agriculture and Rural Development introduces specialised livestock branding

Hope has been restored for Loskop livestock farmers who had fallen victim to stock theft as the KZN Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (KZN DARD) introduced unique branding marks for each district. These will enable the process to reunite lost stock with owners, a simple and an easy one.

Livestock identification remains an effective means to curb stock theft and KZN DARD MEC, Mr. Super Zuma, has vowed that he would not rest until all perpetrators working in syndicates, including their networks, are behind bars.

The Department visited Inkosi Langalibalele Local Municipality on Thursday to create awareness as well as to hand over branding kits.

Sibusiso Ndlovu from the Bolohweni Dip Tank, a Loskop livestock association, has fallen victim to stock theft several times, losing thousands of Rand in livestock.

Recalling the events of the last two attacks where thieves invaded his kraal and got away with his investment, Ndlovu said his family now lived in fear but he was hopeful that the Department's interventions would put a stop to the criminality.

"In 2022 they took 12 cattle. Last year in August and in November, I lost goats and 7 cattle respectively. It was heart-breaking and discouraging seeing my cattle being taken away from me. I spent many years trying to save to be able to buy cattle, but in a moment I lost everything. I am encouraged by the Department's efforts to curb stock theft and I am looking forward to growing my business to be able to provide for my family. As farmers, we want to see more of these thieves being dealt with," said Ngcobo.

General Khumalo, from the Upper Tugela Police Station, said levels of stock theft within the region were worrying and that some cases had led to murder.

Khumalo said some of the perpetrators were known to the farming community and that it was of utmost importance for individuals to come forward to assist the police. He said the most affected areas included Bergville, Upper Tugela and Ntabamhlophe.

"It is disheartening and disappointing to witness the determination of these criminals. There have been times where theft had led to farmers being killed and it has to stop. I believe that senseless murders would not occur if we were working together. In all our successful cases, we were assisted by members of the community who provided positive leads. We need more people to come forward so that we can defeat these

criminals. We are grateful for the Department's efforts and we will work together to end stock theft, said Khumalo.

Inkosi Sifiso Shinga, Chairperson of the KZN Provincial House of Traditional and Khoi-San Leaders, said he was proud to be part of such a monumental event. He strongly condemned stock theft emphasizing that there was no blessing for thieving hands.

"They are robbing generations of their inheritance. The entire province is suffering and it is painful to see families losing their wealth. These criminals are brutal, so we fully support the Government in their efforts to stop this criminality. I urge the community to work closely with authorities to ensure that thieves are brought to book," said Inkosi Shinga.

KZN Department of Agriculture and Rural Development MEC, Mr. Super Zuma, encouraged livestock association members and livestock owners to apply for brand mark certificates and to not waste any time in legally branding their livestock.

While handing over branding kits to 13 provincial livestock associations, MEC Zuma said it was crucial for livestock associations to invite SAPS Stock Theft Units to monthly meetings.

"Over and above the district branding marks, we are looking at employing herdsmen through the EPWP program who will be deployed to assist communities to herd communal branded cattle to solve the problem of unattended livestock in communities. Steps need to be taken by the Department of Justice to increase the fines or mandatory prison sentences for stock theft as a more serious deterrent for thieves. The Department, in conjunction with the Road Traffic Inspectorate and the SAPS Stock Theft Unit, will conduct more roadblocks during peak stock theft periods and we will be teaming up with existing structures such as the Provincial Task Team on Municipality pounds in awareness and training campaigns," said MEC Super Zuma.













