



KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE
AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

PREMIER DUBE-NCUBE LAUNCHES SMART FARMING PROJECT TO BENEFIT OVER 3000 UNEMPLOYED YOUTH GRADUATES AND BOOST FOOD SECURITY AMID CLIMATE CHALLENGES

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KZN Premier Nomusa Dube-Ncube together with MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development, launched Ukulinga Smart Farming Project in Mkhondeni in Pietermaritzburg. This smart farming includes the App that assist in monitoring the greenhouse conditions and remote control the greenhouse functions. Other key part of smart farming includes smart sensors, automated irrigation, crop monitoring and automated harvesting.

The farm has been the site of unique and groundbreaking research in several agricultural disciplines, providing an invaluable resource for close to 5000-smallholder farmers in the region. The innovative solution incorporates state-of-the-art technology, such as Smart Sensors, Automated Irrigation, Crop Monitoring, Automated Harvesting and many more.

In her remarks, Premier Dube-Ncube emphasized the importance of investing in the province and the role of technology in farming. "We are proud to launch this ground-breaking Smart Farming technology solution that combines innovation, efficiency and sustainability. Investing in technology is key to growing our economy and ensuring sustainable food production in the region. We need to embrace the concept of smart farming and the use of technology, to ensure that many more people are employed in the value chain and we have resilient farming," said Premier Dube-Ncube.

The Smart Farming system is designed to integrate seamlessly into any farming operation, regardless of the size of the farm. Key components include a smart greenhouse, which incorporates smart automated irrigation systems, sustainable energy generation, and a mobile app for real-time insights and remote control of greenhouse functions.

The importance of smart farming technologies to upskill and capacitate residents in the province, particularly rural women and youth was highlighted; to improve the quality of life for rural communities by reducing the need for manual labour and providing new opportunities for economic development.

The Premier said government investment through UIF Funded Projects will ensure that 14 771 food handlers are to be trained and employed by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education. "With an average of five members per Cooperative, each supporting an average of three family members – this Fuze Institute Smart Farming initiative will uplift close to 80 000 lives out of poverty and boost family incomes. Over and above that, more than 3 000 Unemployed Youth Graduates will be trained in Smart Farming including agricultural drone operators," said Premier Dube-Ncube.





