

LAUNCH OF AGRICULTURAL COMMUNAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

The community of KwaMpumuza came out in their numbers to be part of a transformative experience on Tuesday, when the KZN Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (KZN DARD) launched its Agricultural Communal Investment Programme at the Blackburn Sports Stadium.

As economic growth remains the most powerful instrument for poverty reduction, the new programme is designed to increase farm productivity by upgrading and rehabilitating communal infrastructure. Under the programme, improved agricultural establishments will also be constructed to boost profits. The communities in Wards 1, 2 and 40 now have five fully functioning dip tanks, three grazing camps and two community gardens have also been fenced. Livestock associations received Bonsmara breeding bulls which will assist with improvement of existing meat quality and will enhance the economic value of local cattle.

Accompanied by traditional and community leaders, MEC Super Zuma visited the Khothi and Mbubu diptanks, the Phayiphini grazing camp, the Zayeka crush pen and Indalo Garden. Handover certificates were awarded to chairpersons and leaders of projects indicating the beginning of a new era of success for local farmers. Inkosi Zondi, KwaMpumuza senior traditional leader, said the ancestors of his people were dancing in their graves, celebrating the deeds of a government that cares for its people. He expressed extreme gratitude saying the community projects would afford a number of farmers and their households an opportunity to be self-sufficient. "We are proud of the work continuously being done by MEC Zuma and his determination to change our story. I urge those who have in the past stolen fencing materials to refrain from being enemies of progress. A curse will follow those who will be working against all these efforts. I implore all of you to be good stewards over all that has been given to us. Let us be responsible and make sure that we take care of what is ours. Let us work the land and create generational wealth for our children," said Inkosi Zondi.

Umgungundlovu District Municipality speaker, Councillor MM Gabela, said they welcomed the Department's interventions as they were the hope needed. She said the future was bright for farmers who had been robbed of their wealth decades ago, adding that the upgraded infrastructure and the donated breeding bulls would open doors to the creation of a sustainable economy. "Women farmers in particular are highly appreciative as we are faced with high levels of unemployment. If our projects grow, we will create jobs. The standard has been raised and all that has been provided for our communities will ensure food security. We have hope that the wealth which was taken from us will soon return to the rightful hands," said Gabela.

MEC Super Zuma encouraged farmers to work to the best of their ability as the goal was to create rural agricultural firms that would change the narrative of those who were previously disadvantaged. MEC Zuma shared that the Department would soon be establishing Agri hubs in Eston, abattoirs for sheep and pigs which would greatly assist local farmers to meet market demands. "Ours is to ensure that we deal with poverty and hunger while creating agricultural businesses. We have provided all that our farmers were lacking and we will be scooping dams in the near future. We have traditional land, let us use it to change our lives," said MEC Zuma.







