



KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE

AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEC'S STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development Thembeni kaMadlopha-Mthethwa had instructed the officials of the Department to bring about solutions to many challenges faced by the small-scale to commercial farmers. The two-day visit on Friday, 06 September 2024 to Hluhluwe and Jozini with the councillors and farmers respectively, helped assist the Department take stock of the challenges of the farming community and find ways and means to addressing their concerns.

Councillors and farming communities of Hluhluwe and Jozini lamented the lack and non-functional dip tanks, access to market, lack of dams and water infrastructure, dipping material and the outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease in previous years as impediment that continue to hold back their growth in the sector. Having brought in experts from Veterinary Services to marketing gurus, MEC KaMadlopha-Mthethwa has called upon all the staff of the Department, Senior Management and Extension Officers to make sure that all hands are on deck and change the current situation of Agriculture in the province. The MEC commented after listening attentively to the concerns raised by the farming communities.

KaMadlopha-Mthethwa has committed her Department to strengthening its monitoring of its services that assists affected communities with planting and farming services. "The Human Sciences Research Council report which revealed that uMkhanyakude and Zululand districts have low participation of households involved in agricultural activities, has guided us to keep on holding such engagement to sift the views of the locals with an aim of understanding their concerns. We have to change to change the way we have been conducting ourselves to ensuring that there's great service delivery being felt by the people on the ground and listening to their concerns regarding the lack of water, dipping material and lack of access to market. We came to grips with their concerns and this will help us reprioritise our services toward farmer development."

During the engagement, the MEC outlined the Department's strategic objectives, highlighting programmes focused on:

- Sustainable farming practices
- Livestock development
- Irrigation infrastructure development
- Support for small-scale farmers
- Youth and women empowerment in agriculture

The meeting provided a platform for stakeholders to share their insights, concerns and suggestions on how to improve agricultural development in the region. The MEC emphasized the importance of collective effort and cooperation in achieving the sector's goals.











