



agriculture & rural development

Department:
agriculture
& rural development
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

MEDIA STATEMENT: KZN DARD HAS AVALIED A RELIEF FUND FOR FARMERS AFFECTED BY DROUGHT

THE Province of KwaZulu-Natal is experiencing a severe drought due to the shortage of rainfall. The drought has negatively affected livestock and crop production farmers particularly in the northern part of the province. Affected districts includes uMkhanyakude, Amajuba, uThukela and Zululand.

As means to lessen the burden on farmers the KZN Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) has set aside a R20 million emergency relief fund for livestock farmers currently affected by drought following reports of large numbers of rural livestock dying of malnutrition due to prolonged dry conditions that has existed across the province from August into November, this year.

Of the proposed emergency intervention, R 17 million will be used for procurement of livestock feed and R3 million for medicine and vaccines to be distributed to the affected farmers from land reform farms, communal livestock owners and farmers and livestock projects supported by DARD.

According to DARD MEC Bongi Sithole-Moloi, since August this year, ‘livestock have been losing condition running after the green regrowth leaving the old grass. The result has been that the weakened animals get stuck in the mud, tire out quickly resulting in death.’ MEC Sithole-Moloi said, while the department is currently conducting an agricultural drought impact assessment to quantify the losses on the ground that are drought incidents, farmers must seriously think about selling their livestock in the rural set auctions to mitigate against terrible capital losses.

“In honesty, the emergency fund is not going to cover every single affected farmer. It is, therefore, wise for livestock owners to begin selling at auctions, bank the money or buy fodder for a little number of cattle that may have left while they wait out the drought,” Sithole-Moloi said.

The MEC said that as a drought mitigation effort and enlivening the culture of livestock trade through auctions, the department will be hosting sale events in Jozini, Rosboom, Besters, Ntabamhlophe, Madadeni and St Paul Feedlot, in November and December 2019. Sithole-Moloi said the drought impact assessment will be concluded by the end of November 2019 and the outcome will establish if the Department needs to start the process of requesting for the declaration of a disaster.

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