



## agriculture & rural development

Department:  
agriculture & rural development  
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

**To all media houses**

**20 March 2020**

### **AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION ACTIVITIES TO CONTINUE DESPITE COVID-19 SPREAD IN KWAZULU NATAL**

Despite the clear and present threat of the spread of corona virus, the captains of the KZN farming sector and the provincial government have resolved that agricultural activities will not be suspended, as food – safe, quality food - is a basic human need and right.

The captains had gathered in a stakeholder engagement meeting convened by KZN DARD MEC, Mrs Bongive Sithole-Moloi at Cedara yesterday, to brief and discuss the practical implications of the President's announcement on corona virus spread in the agricultural sector.

In the meeting, the provincial government acknowledged its obligation to respect the right to food by not interfering with individuals' efforts to provide for themselves.

Sithole-Moloi stressed the need for farmers to implement bio security measures on their farms for the security of their families and farm workers adding that the Department is available to assist farmers to fight the scourge of the corona virus.

She also urged agricultural industries with more than 100 employees to consider employing work shift systems during this critical time of the corona virus spread, so that people do not lose jobs and crucial food production activities are not stopped.

“We are of one opinion that - food is a basic human need and therefore the responsibility to produce it cannot be shifted. If farmers are unable to produce food, there will be hunger.

The advent of corona virus happens against the background of South Africa being the net importer of food, some neighbouring countries have closed their borders due to the spread of the virus, therefore, suspension of food production activities in the province is not even considered yet.

We are expecting farmers to start organizing work in ways that enables production units to be run on a more intensive basis,” she said.

At the meeting, Sithole-Moloi, also unveiled the first batches of sanitizers developed by the department's scientists based at Provincial Veterinary Laboratory (PVL) in Allerton, Pietermaritzburg.

These will be dispensed at all 11 districts and 44 local agricultural offices to be utilized during the corona virus awareness meetings organized in collaboration with health practitioners working amongst the farmers.

The stakeholder meeting is part of series of engagements in response to the provincial government's decision to involve all sectors in cascading the presidential pronouncements on corona virus down to the lowest levels of society using OSS structures.



agriculture  
& rural development

Department:  
agriculture & rural development  
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

**For more information, contact Mack Makhathini on 071 360 9017 or Vusi Zuma on 082 419 2887 or Buyani Mkhulise on 082 782 8847.**

