



MEDIA STATEMENT

25 April 2024

THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE LIES IN THE HANDS OF GRADUATES WHO WILL BRING INNOVATION AND HIGH LEVEL SKILLS TOWARDS THE BUILDING OF A RESILIENT AND PROFITABLE SECTOR

A total of 180 students, the class of 2023, reached a significant milestone on 25 April 2024 during a joint graduation ceremony held at the Olive Convention Centre in Durban.

These young minds from the Cedara and Inkosi Owen Sithole Colleges of Agriculture, have been entrusted with the future of the sector. Knowledge gained is sufficient to ignite agricultural transformation within the province.

KZN Department of Agriculture and Rural Development MEC, Mr. Super Zuma, encouraged graduates to be brave and to take risks as they go forward. He emphasized that the agricultural sector was central to fostering economic growth, in reducing poverty and improving food security.

“The rich knowledge that our students have accumulated over the past few years will afford each one the ability to start their own businesses and become employers instead of employees,”

MEC Zuma went on to acknowledge leaders of both colleges saying there would not be a celebration if the colleges were without the quality of academic staff that it had.

“We have the best colleges that offer unique and high level agricultural qualifications. I would also like to remind our graduates that this is not the end for them but the Department has a fair share of development programmes that our graduates can benefit from. These are in tune with our objective of growing rural economies and most importantly, job creation” said MEC Zuma.

Tadiwa Mhonda, the 2023 Dux from the Cedara College of Agriculture, said her success was made possible by her supportive parents.

Mhonda received 8 academic awards and her plan is to work within the beef production industry.

“It feels amazing to finally graduate and I am looking forward to the next phase of my life. I am passionate about agriculture and I encourage other young people to consider entering the sector,” she said.



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Lwazi Phakathi who graduated with a Diploma in Agriculture said he grew up with a grandfather who was a passionate farmer and sparked his curiosity on crop and livestock production.

Phakathi said he was ready to start his own business using the world class knowledge that he now had.

“I am hoping to eventually reach a level where I will be exporting good quality beef,” said Phakathi.

Some of the top achievers will be joining the Unemployed Youth Graduate Programme in the next two weeks. They will be enrolled into farms where they will receive further specialised training and an opportunity to apply for funding directly from the Department.

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