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Food security drive takes root in Ulundi.

The launch comes as the province seeks to make agriculture a more significant contributor to household food security and rural economic activity.

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Agriculture Mec Thembeni kaMadlopha Mthethwa during the handover of fencing materials in Pongola Photo: Supplied.

KwaZulu-Natal has intensified its drive to strengthen food security and support small-scale farmers, with the provincial government launching the 2026/27 Multi-Planting Season in the Dlebe area of Ulundi on Saturday.

Premier Thamsanqa Ntuli, accompanied by Agriculture and Rural Development MEC Thembeni kaMadlopha-Mthethwa and members of the provincial Cabinet, used the launch to highlight the importance of expanding agricultural production while helping rural communities withstand climate-related challenges.

The provincial multi-planting programme is aimed at accelerating food production through co-ordinated summer cropping, with government support including mechanisation, production inputs and extension services for household and smallholder farmers.



The launch also showcased projects already being cultivated by rural communities, including the Vukuzakhe Co-operative at KwaGuqu, where 20 women are producing vegetables including onions, cabbages, potatoes and tomatoes on a two-hectare plot.

The co-operative members welcomed Ntuli and kaMadlopha-Mthethwa as they visited the project, which the department has identified for further support.

KaMadlopha-Mthethwa said the department would assist the cooperative with fencing, irrigation and production inputs such as seeds and fertiliser, while also helping the farmers access markets for their produce.

The launch comes as the province seeks to make agriculture a more significant contributor to household food security and rural economic activity.

For livestock farmers in the area, government support was also marked by the official handover of the newly constructed KwaNgqindi Dip Tank.

Small-scale livestock farmers welcomed the facility, saying it would make a significant difference to communities that previously had to travel long distances to access the nearest dip tank.

Local farmer Sizwe Mbatha said the community had long raised concerns about the distance to the nearest facility, which made it difficult for some farmers to regularly dip their cattle.

Mbatha welcomed the intervention by the KZN Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, saying bringing the facility closer to farmers in the KwaGoqo area would make livestock health services more accessible.

The new dip tank is expected to support disease prevention and improve the health of livestock in the farming community.

KaMadlopha-Mthethwa said the facility would help prevent animal diseases while bringing government veterinary and livestock services closer to farming communities.

The provincial programme is also expected to include the development of new irrigated sites and the intake of young people into agriculture.

A key component of this year's planting season is climate preparedness, with farmers being equipped with information about El Niño and its potential impact on rainfall, grazing and food security.



Government officials are expected to provide farmers with early-warning information and mitigation measures to help them plan their production in the face of changing weather conditions.

Ntuli and KaMadlopha-Mthethwa also led a ceremonial planting as part of the launch, while engaging with beneficiaries cultivating land earmarked for the programme, including a 50-hectare site in the area.

The provincial government said the programme was intended to go beyond a ceremonial planting season by creating practical support for farmers, improving production and strengthening rural livelihoods.