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## **AGRICULTURE MEC LEADS FRUIT TREE PLANTING IN UMZINYATHI DISTRICT TO BOOST FOOD SECURITY AND FIGHTING CLIMATE CHANGE**

The MEC for Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Mrs. Thembeni kaMadlopha-Mthethwa, has encouraged the public to consider planting fruit trees as part of efforts to mitigate the effects of climate change while also contributing to addressing food insecurity through 'One Home One Garden' initiative.

This also aims to increase access to nutritious food. KaMadlopha-Mthethwa launched the Citrus Programme at Amajuba TVET College's Dundee Campus by handing over 80 fruit trees, including naartjies and oranges. These are part of the department's three thousand fruit trees earmarked for the province, with over 250 citrus trees allocated to each district. The programme is being rolled out with each district allocated fruit trees that are compatible with the local environment. "We are not only promoting wild trees or trees for shade, we are promoting fruit trees that strengthen your immune system and improve the health of your skin, like lemons, oranges, and naartjies," she said.

Addressing about a hundred beneficiaries from uMzinyathi District, MEC kaMadlopha-Mthethwa expressed her belief that the programme will yield positive results and stressed the importance of involving young people in fruit tree projects. 'As a department, we are proud to drive this campaign, helping people eat food that promotes healthy lives. Having declared this year to be of the young people, we want them to be part of tree planting as well.'

KaMadlopha-Mthethwa says fruit business is another great idea with handsome benefits, "We also encourage those who want to do fruit business because the profits are huge, especially if you trade with overseas countries. South Africa is second in the world for citrus production with 24%, after Spain at 25%. This means if you see fruit like lemons, naartjies, oranges, and grapefruits overseas, there is a high chance it comes from South Africa."

"Even though we are affected by the U.S tariffs and rising oil prices due to ongoing wars in the Gulf region, we are relieved to hear that oranges will be exempted from the 30% tariff when trading with America," said KaMadlopha-Mthethwa.

### **FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE VACCINATION UPDATE**

Yesterday, Monday (20 April 2026) the veterinary services started its vaccination campaign against foot-and-mouth disease in the Zululand District. The teams are busy in Pongola and eDumbe, where they have inoculated 11 500 doses. MEC KaMadlopha-Mthethwa has reiterated her call for communities to present their cattle to the facilities for the lifesaving vaccines. "We ask you, the community of Endumeni and areas around uMzinyathi, to respond to our call of bringing your cattle to our dip tanks when you are scheduled to do so, and you can start preparing for the vaccine."

"We have finished vaccinating in Ugu, Harry Gwala, and uMkhanyakude, where we finished last week, having vaccinated more than 172 thousand cattle. The whole province has now vaccinated more than 666 thousand livestock, which means we have covered over 27% of the work as we aim for 80% vaccination of all cattle herds in the province," concludes kaMadlopha-Mthethwa.

ENDS.

**ISSUED BY THE KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT.**