



**MEDIA STATEMENT**

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**KZN AGRICULTURE MEC SUPPORTS YOUTH-LED AGRI-INITIATIVES WITH FUNDING, JOBS AND LAND**

The KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development, Mrs. Thembeni kaMadlopha-Mthethwa, has called on emerging black farmers to break new ground in the dairy industry, where black producers are few. Speaking to thousands of up-and-coming farmers at the Youth Farmers' Day Commemoration in eMobeni area of eMpangeni, kaMadlopha-Mthethwa linked today's event to the legacy of the 1976 Soweto youth uprising. "Just as the youth of 1976 stood up to shape South Africa's future, today's young farmers are standing up to secure our food future," she said.

The event celebrated young farmers already working the land and showcased the impact of early department interventions. It also marked progress under the MEC's declaration of 2026 as the Year of Youth.

"We are putting our money where our mouth is," kaMadlopha-Mthethwa said. "One of the biggest challenges for young farmers is access to funding and credit. Banks want collateral that youth don't have. In this department, we don't ask how old you are or who you know. If you're farming, we back you."

Earlier this year, MEC kaMadlopha-Mthethwa employed hundreds of young people as part of the department's commitment to youth empowerment. They include;

- Assistant Agricultural Practitioners
- Unemployed agricultural youth graduates
- Graduate interns
- Animal Health Technicians

And soon the department will also be employing data capturers and administration clerks.

"In the previous financial year, we supported youth with about R17 million across various projects. In the same year, we also supported youth under the Unemployed Graduates program with R6 million, funding 15 of their agricultural companies. When we release the next funding call for all farmers later this year, we will set aside about R6 million to support 14 youth-led companies," concludes MEC kaMadlopha-Mthethwa.

MEC kaMadlopha-Mthethwa also announced that the department has a programme to provide goats that will benefit 181 people, including 105 women, 45 youth, and 15 people with disabilities. All of this is valued at R9.1 million.

One of the highlights of the programme was the inclusion of expert-led discussions on key topics, where young farmers were taken through a wide range of agricultural topics.

**ENDS.**

**MEDIA ENQUIRIES**  
**VUSI KHUMALO**

**ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT**