



KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE

AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

AGRICULTURE MEC URGES GRADUATES TO JOIN THE DAIRY INDUSTRY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The KwaZulu-Natal MEC for the Department Agriculture and Rural Development, Mrs. kaMadlopha-Mthethwa, has voiced her concern about the shortage of dairy farmers among previously disadvantaged communities. She expressed this when delivering a keynote address at the qualification conferment ceremony for 98 graduates at Cedara College of Agriculture in Howick, within the uMngeni Local Municipality.

The graduating class included 170 students who were awarded diplomas and learnership certificates, including those from Inkosi Owen Sithole College of Agriculture earlier in the week. These also included University of KwaZulu-Natal students who were awarded Celebration Certificates toward the completion of their Bachelor's Degrees at their institution of higher learning.

Since its establishment in 1905, the institution has maintained its high standards in producing exceptional students, and as the flagship agricultural institute, it continues to excel by producing students who have become renowned experts in the sector, including veterinarians, agronomists, and agricultural scientists.

Addressing the students, mainly young graduates, MEC kaMadlopha-Mthethwa said she had noted that since the country's transition to democracy in 1994, the sector has had a scarcity of representation of the previously disadvantaged communities in the dairy industry "I challenge you to explore the milk-producing industry. You need to tap into the expertise of commercial farmers and use them as your mentors. I also encourage former students to act as guides for newly graduated students. You also need to make sure that from here, you see to it that you meet our extension officers to guide you all the way."

On the departmental front, kaMadlopha-Mthethwa stressed the need for the head office to delegate some specific roles and functions to the district offices, as a way to empower them to strengthen their day-to-day operations.

The event concluded with the MEC issuing directives to the officials to offer employment to the top two performers of the 2025 class. The top-achieving student, known as Dux, was Sithembiso Mgenge from Mandeni located on the province's north coast, who received 10



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academic awards and one for service above self. Alexandra Pettit, from Camperdown in the midlands, was the second-highest achiever, receiving six academic awards.

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