



THE FORMER EDUCATOR'S DECISION TO TRANSITION FROM TEACHING TO AGRICULTURE HAS YIELDED GREEN RESULTS

Meet Nozuko Cezula, a black female farmer who now owns a thousand hectares of land, whose remarkable journey of a thousand miles began with a single step into the world of agriculture. Forty-nine year-old Nozuko hails from Kokstad in Greater Kokstad under the Harry Gwala District, is a former educator/teacher who had to leave her profession and pursued her passion, enduring turbulent periods that forced her to grow resilience and confidence in her, later in life.

She started her agricultural empire - Tafelkop Farm trading under the name Nozuko Farming, rather sheepishly. Apart from lacking capital and resources to run a successful agribusiness, she had little confidence in turning her sheep business idea into a thriving business, which has since grown to include the sale of male lambs and cattle as well as grain production - yellow maize.

She is now the owner of Nozuko Farming, a thriving agribusiness venture whose success was punctuated by challenges ranging from lacking access to markets to inadequate silos for maize. The latter still being a challenge for her and many other farmers in her region. However, her strong determination, after having forecast a potential for success, saw her get a lifeline from the KZN Department of Agriculture and Rural Development with funding and later from the Department's entity, the Agribusiness Development Agency (ADA). For two years, 2022 to 2024, her 93-hectares of land received mechanization support through cultivation services while ADA provided financial support amounting to R2.2 million for the purchase of beef master, open heifers, bulls and a storage shed.

She now has a staff complement of 21, with six being permanent employees, all with Unemployment Insurance Fund coverage and remunerated according to the country's labour laws.

The farm supplies 1500 tons of yellow maize to Kokstad Milling each season and an additional 1 500 tons to international markets through an agent. The farm sells 50 live weaners annually to Karan Beef during the weaning season and 100 male lambs to East Griqualand Meat Supply.

Another milestone in her life occurred when lady luck smiled upon her twice as the Department of Agriculture, led by MEC Thembeni kaMadlopha-Mthethwa, hosted the Phezukomkhono Female Farmer Awards, where Nozuko Farming emerged as the biggest winner of the night.

Nozuko Farming walked away with the first prize under the best export category - R100 thousand. In addition, she bagged the overall winner award - R100 000, all summing up her winnings to R200 000.

The Awards sought to uplift and reward hard work and dedication showcased by women involved in agriculture.

kaMadlopha-Mthethwa congratulated all the award winners, paying a particular reference to Nozuko Farming as an exemplary model for aspiring female farmers. "You are all the winners tonight. However, I would like to single out the overall winner, Nozuko Farming, for it serves as an inspiration to women engaged in the agricultural value chain. It is worth noting that Nozuko's agribusinesses effectively used the Department's funding and is now self-sustainable and independent. Our goal which we share with Agribusiness Development Agency is to transform emerging farmers into commercial entities."



