



## agriculture & rural development

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agriculture  
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**PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL**

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### **VISIT BY EASTERN CAPE AGRICULTURE DELEGATION TO KZN ENDS ON A HIGH NOTE – CO-OPERATIVE AGREEMENTS REACHED**

A visit to KZN MEC Cyril Xaba and his Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (KZN DARD) by Eastern Cape counterpart, MEC Mlibo Qoboshiyane, resulted in several co-operative agreements being reached.

KZN DARD was contacted by the Eastern Cape Rural Development and Agrarian Reform Department (ECRDAR) requesting a week-long benchmarking visit. The aim was to look at best practices and the possibility of future collaborative partnerships between the two provinces.

The interaction ended on Saturday after a tour of the Makhathini Flats agricultural project in Jozini. Both MEC's declared the visit a resounding success and said it was in the spirit of government's key plan, to revitalize agriculture and the agro-processing value chain. They also took a leaf out of President Jacob Zuma's State of the Nation Address in which he said "together we move South Africa forward!"

In this regard, agreements covered several areas including agricultural education, agro-processing, research, livestock, dairy and sugar cane farming. The Eastern Cape delegation also took time to visit the Dube Trade Port (DTP) to assess the possibility of developing a DTP model for the Eastern Cape. Similarly, the delegation was interested in the possible establishment of a KZN Growth Fund type entity in the Eastern Cape.

Extensive tours of KZN DARD facilities and projects, ended with discussions on areas of collaboration. The delegates visited Cedara College of Agriculture and the Department's Research Institute. They met agricultural commodity organizations, visited dairy and sugar cane farms and the Makhathini Flats Project.

On the agricultural education front, shared experiences going forward will include:

- Bilateral visits to strengthen interaction between colleges of agriculture in both provinces.
- The sharing of policies, procedures and joint workshops on curriculum development
- Students from KZN to be given the opportunity to be trained as animal health technicians at the Tsolo Agriculture and Rural Development Institute. Discussion also centered on the longer term aim of offering the animal health program at KZN DARD's Owen Sitole College of Agriculture.
- In turn, KZN will offer Eastern Cape farmers and students training in sugar cane production
- Both departments will share information and programs on models and funding for agricultural high schools. They will also work together on promoting farming as a career among young people.
- In terms of links with other institutions, there will be shared Memoranda of Understanding with other stakeholders and the Eastern Cape will request inclusion in the Regional East Indian Ocean Collaboration (REAP). KZN is currently part of REAP.
- When it comes to studies, it will not be all hard work and no play. The agreements reached included holding a sports week for all Agricultural Colleges at Fort Cox later this year as well as inter-provincial college sporting activities. There will also be support for each other's graduations.

On Agro-processing and agri-business development, both MEC's made it clear that this was to be an important area of collaboration.

- Their Departments are to explore the possibility of jointly implementing agri-parks to lobby for potential investors in the two provinces as well as make joint representation to national government for funding. In his State of the Nation Address, President Zuma said government would promote the establishment of agri-parks or co-operatives and clusters in each of the 27 poorest district municipalities to transform rural economies. The President said that an initial funding of R2 billion had been made available for the agri-park initiative.

- Similarly, there will be the exploration of joint steering committees to initiate game changer projects for rural development.
- KZN was invited to visit the Eastern Cape mega agri-parks in anticipation of the establishment of agri-villages in this province. The Agri-village model is one of four pillars in MEC Xaba's new strategy for agrarian reform in KZN. The other pillars are post settlement support and re-capitalization of land reform farms; river valley farming and a model for agricultural production on communal estates.

With regards to livestock, KZN will communicate its progress on the implementation of its Radio Frequency Identification Device (RFID) and reflective bar-coded ear tags pilot project to the Eastern Cape. There was discussion that the two provinces consider a joint visit to Botswana to learn more about that country's RFID tag and traceability model.

On the research front, there was agreement to establish communication channels for research output sharing as well as joint research in areas of commonality.

A highlight of the visit, was to the successful land reform KwaQwabe community sugar cane fields in KwaMaphumulo. This is a project that supports 600 families and is given backing by the South African Sugar Association (SASA)

Both MECs agreed that the project was a good news story that epitomized government aspirations.

A meeting with dairy farmers led to discussions on collaboration to grow the dairy industry in both provinces. The Eastern Cape which is looking to expand its sugar cane production held meetings with representatives of the KZN sugar sector.

After the visit, MEC Xaba said while it was flattering that the Eastern Cape chose to visit KZN to learn best practices, his department also learnt a great deal from MEC Qoboshiyane and his team. "It is only through collaboration and co-operation that we will be able to transform the agricultural sector to ensure food security, economic growth and job creation in the country," he added.

MEC Xaba said both provinces had vast agricultural potential and by working together to resolve cross-cutting challenges, this potential can be unleashed. He thanked MEC Qoboshiyane for taking the time to visit KZN and assured him of his department's ongoing cooperation and the formalization of agreements reached.





**KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development, Mr Cyril Xaba, together with the Eastern Cape MEC for Rural Development and Agrarian Reform, Mr Mlibo Qoboshiyane, at a Pump Station in Makhathini Flats**



**MEC Cyril Xaba and MEC Mlibo Qoboshiyane during a tour visit at the pack house**





**MEC Cyril Xaba together with MEC Mlibo Qoboshiyane and Inkosi Gumede at the gardens of Makhathini**



**MEC Cyril Xaba handing over his token of appreciation MEC Mr Mlibo Qoboshiyane**



**MEC Mlibo Qoboshiyane handing over his token of appreciation to MEC Cyril Xaba**

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