



agriculture & rural development

Department:
agriculture
& rural development
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

OUR SOIL IS OUR WEALTH

This was the theme that resonated with the people of Charlestown at the launch of the Food Security Month in Amaberry Farm, Newcastle, north of KwaZulu-Natal on 07 October 2015.

In attendance at this launch was the Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Mr. Senzeni Zokwana, KZN Premier Mr. Senzo Mchunu, Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries General Bheki Cele and KZN MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development Mr. Cyril Xaba who heeded the call to all South Africans to participate in food production to curb the scourge of food insecurity and to ensure participation in the agricultural economy.

The youth were encouraged to study agriculture as this is where their wealth lies and which will enable them to contribute to the economy, create job opportunities, fight poverty and malnutrition and most importantly, ensure food security. MEC Xaba had on a number of occasions and engagements strongly emphasized the rejuvenation of the agricultural sector and how close it is to his heart. "I will sound like a broken record, but this is an aging sector with an age average of 63 years, the youth needs to be more visible in agricultural participation from the primary up to the commercial level. The future of this country is in their hands and its only through such interventions that we can curb the triple threat of poverty, inequality and unemployment in the country" said MEC Xaba.

Agriculture Minister, Senzeni Zokwana says the older generation of farmers should pass down their indigenous knowledge of farming to the younger generation. "When you fuse our African way of farming with the more modern scientific ways, already half the battle is won" Minister Zokwana said.

The Amaberry Farm in Charlestown, where the food security launch was held, is a clear example of how hard work pays off as the farm is producing market standard berries on 15 hectares of land. One of the farm's irrigation resources, is water from the nearby river and the berries harvested are sold to export markets abroad. The Amaberry Farm currently employs 26 permanent employees and 56 fixed term employees with over 500 casual employees during the on-season period.

It has been advocated in many platforms, that the KZN Province and other Provinces in the country are experiencing severe drought. As part of the interventions to tackle the effects of drought, the Agricultural Research Council (ARC) donated a drought tolerant seed to the Department of Agriculture & Rural Development to help small-scale farmers affected by the current drought situation.



[From Left] KZN MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development Mr Cyril Xaba, National Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries General Bheki Cele, KZN Premier Mr Senzo Mchunu and Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Mr Senzeni Zokwana during The New Age Breakfast Business in Charlestown outside Newcastle



From Left - Agricultural Research Council Chief Executive Officer Dr Shadrack Moephuli, KZN Premier Mr Senzo Mchunu, National Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries General Bheki Cele and KZN MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development Mr Cyril Xaba during the handover of planting implements to Mrs Ngwenya of Charlestown

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MEC Cyril Xaba, KZN Premier Mr Senzo Mchunu, National Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries General Bheki Cele greeting Mr Sibiya of Iphemba Co-Operative



MEC Cyril Xaba, General Bheki Cele and KZN Premier Mr Senzo Mchunu



MEC Cyril Xaba test driving a new government tractor



National Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries General Bheki Cele together Agricultural Research Council Chief Executive Officer Dr Shadrack Moephuli handing over a drought resistant maize seed to KZN MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development, Mr Cyril Xaba