



agriculture & rural development

Department:
agriculture
& rural development
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

INAUGURAL NATIONAL SUGAR SECTOR CONFERENCE

KZN MEC for the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development Mr Cyril Xaba, officially opened a three-day Inaugural National Sugar Sector Conference hosted by the Food and Allied Workers Union (FAWU) at the Tropicana Hotel in Durban which commenced on Monday, 2 February 2015. This conference is set to discuss critical issues facing the sugar industry and it is expected to provide strategic recommendations on how to stimulate its economic growth.

The farmers in the province of KwaZulu-Natal recently complained about drought ravaging agricultural production including sugar cane. Matters for discussion will include strategies which can be employed to stop the epidemic of drought stricken areas in South Africa which affect agricultural production, resulting in farmers losing millions of rands.

Speaking at the conference, MEC Xaba lamented on the drought problem overwhelming the agricultural sector. Xaba said commencing in April this year, uMzimkhulu Milling might close for the coming season as the result of drought. "We acknowledge as government, that this problem will end all agricultural production if we don't intervene, which is why the Department has set aside a budget of R14 Million for drought relief, specifically for sugar cane farmers in the province. Sugar Cane in KwaZulu-Natal as a commodity, is a critical role-player that contributes approximately 2.25% of employment in the Province" said MEC Xaba.

MEC Xaba also mentioned that the Department is working with South Africa Sugar Association (SASA) to stimulate the small-scale farmers in the industry.

Apart from the drought engulfing some parts of the country, this conference is expected to discuss various agricultural issues including the increasing of import tariffs to protect the local sugar cane industry, biofuel and other matters that would make South Africa competitive globally.



MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development in KwaZulu-Natal, Mr Cyril Xaba, addressing members of the Food and Allied Workers Union (FAWU) at the Inaugural Sugar Sector Conference