



agriculture & rural development

Department:
agriculture
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PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

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FROM EMERGING TO COMMERCIAL FARMERS: KZN MEC FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT, MR CYRIL XABA PAVES THE WAY FOR THE FIRST BLACK CONTROLLED DAIRY FARM IN IXOPO

KZN MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development in KZN, Mr Cyril Xaba, has paved the way for the first black controlled dairy farming enterprise in Ixopo.

MEC Xaba met with Inkosi and members of the eMadungeni livestock associations over the Easter weekend to discuss the development of the Texas Valley Dairy farm. According to MEC Xaba, plans for the project were at an advanced stage and his meeting with the Inkosi and livestock owners was to ensure that everyone was on board.

Inkosi Phathisizwe Chiliza said there was excitement amongst the farmers because they saw the dairy farm as a ticket to economic emancipation.

MEC Xaba explained that farmers will have to combine their livestock which amounted to 1714 head of cattle and place them on the Texas Valley farm. There, they will be fed and nurtured for milk production. Initially dairy production will take centre stage on the farm, thereafter beef production, sugarcane plantations, vegetable planting and timber will follow.

According to MEC Xaba, the development of the farm was in keeping with his Department's new strategy for agrarian transformation. It was a strategy that aimed at turning subsistence farmers in the province into fully-fledged commercial farmers.

He said that the past 20 years had seen low key agricultural activities in black rural communities. It was time to up the game and put agriculture at the forefront of developing the rural economy. MEC Xaba saw the Texas Valley project as a catalyst to transforming the economy in the Ixopo area.

He said 2000 hectares of land in the area will be fenced in preparation for the work that will take place. His Department will also assist with farming equipment including milking machinery and the planting of fodder suitable for dairy cows.

According to MEC Xaba, a budget for the project is being prepared. Work is being done to develop a sound and proper business plan so that funding institutions like the Land Bank can come on board with financial assistance for farmers.

He added that his Department will continue to hold talks with local community members and the leadership in the area to fast-track efforts to develop Texas Valley Farm into one of the biggest milk producing enterprises in KwaZulu-Natal. "There is a market available for milk production in the province and the sky is the limit for farmers who are willing to seize this opportunity, MEC Xaba said.

Currently, Texas Valley Farm falls under the ambit of the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform. A formal request to utilise the land will be forwarded to National Minister of the Department, Mr Gugile Nkwinti.



KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development, Mr Cyril Xaba, addressing the Traditional Leaders of Harry Gwala District



MEC Cyril Xaba having a light moment with Inkosi Phathisizwe Chiliza