



## agriculture & rural development

Department:  
Agriculture and Rural Development  
**PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL**

### **MEC MTHEMBU ENCOURAGES YOUNG PEOPLE TO CLOSE RANKS ON AGRICULTURE**

As the country celebrates the month of June as Youth Month in commemoration of the Class of 1976 that bravely fought against an oppressive apartheid regime, the KZN MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development, Mr Themba Mthembu, visited youth agricultural projects in **New Hanover, outside of Pietermaritzburg as part of the Department's** drive to empower the youth in agriculture.

Firstly, the MEC visited Dukathole Youth Cooperative, which is led by five young people who are involved in crop production and growing mushrooms.

This youth cooperative is very passionate about agriculture and has requested the MEC to assist them with extension services to cultivate more land in order to make the land at their disposal fully productive. At current, Dukathole is leasing a 10-hectare farm that has great potential to produce extensively.

MEC Mthembu said he is happy that these young people are practicing agriculture and they are doing their best with what they have to make their project a success. He said it is particularly of great interest to him that these youth are forging ahead with their work whilst still seeking assistance from other stakeholders.

This crop producing cooperative has a succinct vision of propping up their production capacity by establishing a complete value chain in crop production and supplying their branded produce to various markets and ultimately, venture into export as they become more self-sufficient.

The MEC encouraged these young farmers to participate aggressively in the vegetable production space in order to address the triple challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality.

The MEC made a profound statement when he encouraged the youth to retain the energy and vibrancy they portrayed during the 1976 Soweto uprising in light of the aging agricultural constituency.

Lastly, MEC Mthembu visited the other young farmers in the area who run a thriving business enterprise of fresh vegetables from which they have secured an off-take agreement with the local Spar in New Hanover.



KZN MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development Mr Themba Mthembu greeting members of the Dukathole Youth Co-Operative



KZN MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development Mr Themba Mthembu encouraging Mr Vukani Mpanza, an Agricultural Graduate, from the Dukathole Youth Co-Operative



Dukathole Youth Co-Operative Member explaining to MEC Themba Mthembu about their goals



MEC Themba Mthembu assessing crops with Mr Hilton Allan, a young farmer from River Valley Farm



MEC Themba Mthembu with farm workers at River Valley Farm



MEC Themba Mthembu together with Mr Hilton Allan, a young farmer from River Valley Farm, during their tour visit to the farm