



## agriculture & rural development

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# Mpophomeni farmers market

## Fresh produce and entertainment galore

### SABELO NSELE

MPOPHOMENI township is set to hold the first ever black farmers market.

The event will be held at the Mpophomeni Tourism Gateway next Saturday, June 16 from 9 am to 3 pm.

Organisers of the event said they were expecting 20 to 25 stalls at the market.

Besides the fresh produce from local farmers, there will be a kiddies area with a jumping castle and storytelling.

Senzile Madlala of Iimbewu Foundation, which is organising the event, said consumers will be spoilt for choice during the event.

"It will be the best of Mpophomeni. There will be fresh produce, chicken farmers and piggery farmers who will be selling. We will be having exhibitions, fashion designers and local artists who will be entertaining people who come to the market.

"We have been busy all of this week visiting the farmers who will be selling and I am happy to say that all of them are ready for [next] Saturday.

"We are expecting people to come all out to support the event," she said.

Next week's market will coincide with Iimbewu Foundation's second anniversary.



Iimbewu Foundation founder, Senzile Madlala, chats with local farmer France Mtshali. **PHOTO: SUPPLIED**

sary.

The foundation was started by a group of friends in June 2016.

Madlala said the market would be held twice a month going forward and she said she hoped other townships would

take the cue from them and start their own markets in their townships.

The market will be held on the last Saturday of every month as well as on the weekend closest to the 15th every month.

"In townships we have the spending power and there are lots of businesses yet people do their shopping in towns. That is why we have decided to pull everyone together so that we are able to buy what we have here in Mpophomeni," she said.

Most of the farmers who will be selling at the market are receiving mentorship from the Iimbewu Foundation.

"We started the foundation in June 2016 to provide mentorship to small scale farmers and co-operatives and find markets for them.

"Our first project was supporting a co-operative from Bulwer which grows beans and is formed by women.

"Since 2015, we have five businesses that we have put under our wings and all of them are growing.

"Our main aim is to provide a network for these businesses so that they can work together and grow their businesses," she said.

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