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'Game over' for Estina dairy farm culprits: NPA



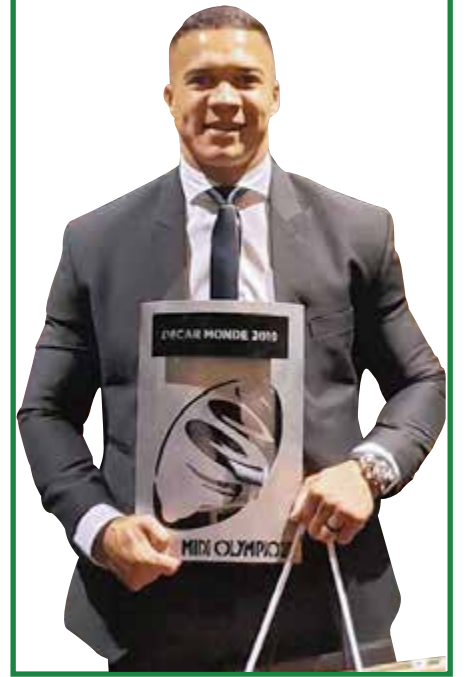
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PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Department of Agriculture & Rural Development 2019/2020 Multi-Planting Season

Premier Zikalala launches KZN's Multi-Planting Season programme

"WE are on the march towards an agriculture revolution that will ensure food security, grow the agriculture sector and create jobs" – a revolution that would see the agricultural sector increase its contribution to the provincial economy from R18 billion to R23bn. This was the call to action from KwaZulu-Natal Premier, Sihle Zikalala at the launch of the 2019/2020 KZN Multi-Planting Season programme.

Held in Ndumo, Umkhanyakude on September 13, the launch marked the start of a province-wide roll-out. Explaining that rural agriculture had a critical role to play in the eradication of poverty, unemployment and inequality, Zikalala said the provincial government would ensure that the Multi-Planting Season programme reached the length and breadth of KZN so that it positively impacted the lives of the "most downtrodden".

Zikalala was joined at the launch by the MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development in the province, Bongile Sithole-Moloi, together with other KZN provincial executive members.

Placing the RASET programme centre stage, he stressed its importance in driving the implementation of developmental programmes such as the Multi-Planting Season programme. RASET is a government-led initiative that, in this context, gives small-scale farming operations access to secure, fixed buying markets and customers in the form of various government departments.

Zikalala added that all the agricultural programmes under RASET must include opportunities for women and youth in order to create rural social and economic empowerment. "Participation of

youth and women in the sector will catalyse the development of the green economy, thus improving the lives of the impoverished in KZN," he said.

Decrying the "rampaging challenge of women and children abuse", Zikalala also addressed issues of inequality prevalent in the agricultural sector, which he said should be confronted head-on by government as well as all interested roleplayers.

He explained that food security was fundamental to the wellbeing of society, and to this end, the Department of Agriculture needed to chart the way forward in ensuring communities focus on growing food that is rich in nutrients and that provides all the necessary minerals and vitamins needed for optimum physical health. He also echoed the call made by His Majesty King Goodwill Zwelithini to prioritise water provision to ensure there is sufficient irrigation water for crop production as well as drinking water for livestock.

In closing, Premier Zikalala announced that MEC Sithole-Moloi would be taking a leadership role in ensuring the implementation of the programme across the board, with other MECs deployed to launch the programme in different districts.

Sithole-Moloi said planting has already commenced in Ndumo as well as in other areas of KZN, with emphasis placed on green crops like cabbage, beans, tomatoes and carrots. She added that 12 tractors would be made available to the communities of Ndumo to assist them with planting term. This provision would also be extended to the broader Umkhanyakude District, said Sithole-Moloi.



KZN MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development, Bongile Sithole-Moloi and Premier Sihle Zikalala get the planting started at the launch of the 2019/2020 Multi-Planting Season programme in Ndumo, Umkhanyakude.



What is the Multi-Planting Season programme?

AS part of its strategy to revitalise unproductive parcels of land, the KZN Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) developed the Multi-Planting Season programme.

The key elements of the programme include addressing food insecurity, land under-utilisation and low productivity by providing a variety of support to subsistence farmers and small rural farming operations. This support includes:

- * The supply of production inputs such as fertilizer, seed and chemicals.
- * The provision of mechanisation services such as ploughing, discing and planting as well as for the application of agro-chemicals and fertilizer.
- * Assistance with the marketing of produce through the government-led Radical Agrarian Socio-Economic Transformation programme (RASET) and other outlets.

In order to maximise its impact, the programme focuses on vegetable production and summer crops, in particular maize and beans.

This strategy provides subsistence and smallholder farmers with the staple protein and starch sources needed for their food security requirements.

Furthermore, by localising production, this strategy promotes equitable access for resource-poor households.

Socio-economic benefits:

- Potential to create 500 job opportunities during and after operations;
- Implementation is envisaged to reach about 8 041 beneficiaries across the province;
- The beneficiaries will be 60% female (equating to 4 849 women);
- About 873 youth and 44 disabled people will also benefit;
- The programme will also provide the opportunity for SMMEs to be used in the provision of mechanisation services;
- All in all, 16 162 hectares, covering all the districts of KZN, will be impacted.

THE term Multi-Planting Season came about because of the different planting seasons for the warm and cool parts of the province.

This approach enables the provincial government to promote those crops – and therefore those commodities – that are most sustainable for each planting season.

This, in turn, enhances the capacity of the farmers to grow and produce throughout all seasons of the year.



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SPRING HERALDS THE PLANTING SEASON

**Now is the time to push back the frontiers
of poverty and ensure food security in the
Province of KwaZulu-Natal.**

#PHEZU KOMKHONO

