



Department of Agriculture & Rural Development

2019/2020 Multi-Planting Season

Thousands of agricultural extension officers receive new professional uniforms

AS part of a drive to rejuvenate operations within the Department of Agriculture's Extension Advisory services division, KZN MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development, Bongive Sithole-Moloi recently launched a new professional uniform for the province's extension advisory officers. Held at Umhlathuze Sports Complex in Mpangeni on August 20, the launch brought together more than 1 000 extension advisory officers from across KZN – all resplendent in their new corporate gear.

The aim of introducing this specialised clothing is to inculcate a culture of service

delivery excellence and professionalism. Extension Advisory services are at the core of agricultural development in the province, and as such, are at the forefront of service delivery within the farming sector.

Speaking at the launch, Sithole-Moloi said the wearing of uniforms by extension officers will guard against dereliction of duty by officers who are sometimes found in areas outside the scope of their work during work hours.

She said it will also circumvent any acts of criminality by members of society who sometimes act as extension officers to

achieve sordid ends. One case of imposters was recently reported in Utrecht, when a group of people stormed into a land reform farm claiming to be employees of the Department and demanded the farmers provide them with crucial information about their co-operative.

"Extension officers are at the forefront of service delivery and are the face of the Department to clients and the general public. It is therefore important that the Department provides extension officers with uniforms to improve their visibility and image in the communities," said Sithole-Moloi.



KZN farmers get major R160-million boost for mechanisation support

THE KZN MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development, Bongive Sithole-Moloi celebrated World Food Day with the community of Mzimkhulu on Saturday, October 26.

Delivering the keynote address at the event, Sithole-Moloi said the Multi-Planting Season launch, which took place in September, was the culmination of the Department's plans to ensure widespread access to food for all the communities of KZN.

"An amount of R160 million has been budgeted to bolster farming and agricultural practises in the province amid the decreasing food production currently being faced.

"This will ensure there is a positive trajectory in food production, which will further catalyse the participation of our farmers in the agricultural economy," she said.

Sithole-Moloi told the large audience that recognising World Food Day is critical because it underscores the need to ensure access to nutritious food, especially in rural areas and poor urban settlements.

She emphasised the need for sufficient food production, saying the nation must be in a position to rely on itself for food production while also being able to sell the surplus.

"The responsibility of the department is to ensure that we eradicate poverty by all means necessary. Our programmes are geared towards that particular aim. We call upon all responsible citizens to partake in this very material responsibility," she said.

Sithole-Moloi said the Department's entities were being rejuvenated in order to align them with DARD's overall the vision, which included priorities such as sustainable and vibrant productivity.

To ensure this, the KZN Cabinet has proposed the amalgamation of all the entities under the Department's control.

The MEC also highlighted the harnessing of communal livestock production as a means to promote communal farmers and assist them to compete in the commercial farming sector.

Earlier in the day, the MEC visited community-based agricultural programmes which have received assistance with irrigation from the Department to enhance crop production.

Sithole-Moloi also distributed ploughing implements to 30 households as part of DARD's community-based agricultural support initiatives.



DARD's commodity-based approach to dictate favourable climatic regions for best crop yields in KwaZulu-Natal

IN a bid to substantially improve food security and boost local economies, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) has adopted a commodity-based approach to be used as a guide in determining agricultural projects to be supported going forward.

The commodity approach is recognised as an effective, natural science-based arrangement that dictates the potential yields of crops and spatially locates them in regional areas of agricultural potential in KwaZulu-Natal where they will thrive with less or no extra cost of inputs, due to favourable climatic conditions and the province's variety of bio-climates.

DARD's MEC, Bongive Sithole-Moloi said the commodities identified will be verified against the natural resources available (topography, soils and vegetation), current climatic conditions (rainfall, frost-sunshine hours) and economic parameters to find the best

match for each area.

"Commodities selection will be subject to positive correlation of natural resources, economic analysis, market analysis, production plan and support systems. This is in line with the National Development Plan, as well as Cabinet's resolution of September 2013, which gives a clear directive on the commodities to be selected in the Province of KwaZulu Natal," she said.

She added that the commodity approach also offers the opportunity to make effective use of commodity organisations, producer groups, and others to advise and counsel in the planning and evaluation, with an aim to improve production of commodities for import substitution and to increase exports.

"Independent commodity partnership arrangements can be designed to partner in extension and mentorship, education

and general project implementation.

Through these programmes, the Department believes it will be able to realise its vision and mission," she explained.

Sithole-Moloi said DARD's research and technology development service continues to play an important role in establishing new technologies in this ever-changing environment.

She added that extension services are working on being on top of the latest tested technologies to enable them to provide the correct advice for a specific resource environment and translating it into an understandable message for the farmers who need to incorporate the latest technologies in their farming practices.

The map alongside (left) illustrates DARD's commodity-based approach and highlights the most suitable crops identified for each region of the province.

