



KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE

AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

KZN AGRICULTURE INTRODUCES UNIQUE BRANDING MARKS TO STAMP OUT STOCK THEFT

<https://www.iol.co.za/dailynews/news/kzn-agriculture-introduces-unique-branding-marks-to-stamp-out-stock-theft-c666059c-258e-4a54-872a-2ec4c55548cd-:~:text=Durban%20%E2%80%94%20The%20KwaZulu%2DNatal%20Department,to%20squeeze%20out%20stock%20theft.>

<https://www.foodformzansi.co.za/kzn-introduces-unique-branding-to-combat-livestock-theft/>



KwaZulu-Natal Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) MEC Super Zuma. Picture: Supplied

Durban — The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) has introduced specialised livestock branding to squeeze out stock theft.

Recently, DARD restored hope to Loskop livestock farmers who had been victims of stock theft when it introduced unique branding marks for each district. These will make the process of reuniting lost stock with owners simple and easy.

The department said that livestock identification remains an effective means to curb stock theft, and DARD MEC Super Zuma has vowed that he will not rest until all perpetrators working in syndicates, including their networks, are behind bars.

On Thursday, DARD visited the Inkosi Langalibalele Local Municipality to create awareness and hand over branding kits.



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Hope was restored to Loskop livestock farmers who had been victims of stock theft when the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) introduced unique branding marks for each district.

Zuma encouraged livestock association members and livestock owners to apply for brand mark certificates and to not waste any time legally branding their livestock. While handing over branding kits to 13 provincial livestock associations, Zuma said livestock associations needed to invite SAPS stock theft units to monthly meetings.

“Over and above the district branding marks, we are looking at employing herdsmen through the EPWP (Expanded Public Works Programme) who will be deployed to assist communities to herd communal branded cattle to solve the problem of unattended livestock in communities.



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“Steps need to be taken by the Department of Justice to increase the fines or mandatory prison sentences for stock theft as a more serious deterrent for thieves. The department, in conjunction with the Road Traffic Inspectorate and the SAPS Stock Theft Unit will conduct more roadblocks during peak stock theft periods and we will be teaming up with existing structures such as the Provincial Task Team on Municipality pounds in awareness and training campaigns,” Zuma said.



Hope was restored to Loskop livestock farmers who had been victims of stock theft when the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) introduced unique branding marks for each district. Picture: Supplied

Sibusiso Ndlovu from the Bolohweni Dip Tank, a Loskop livestock association, has fallen victim to stock theft several times, losing thousands of rand in livestock. Looking back on the last two attacks where thieves entered his kraal and left with his investment, Ndlovu said his family now lived in fear but he was hopeful that the department’s interventions would end the criminality.

“In 2022 they took 12 cattle. Last year in August and November, I lost goats and seven cattle respectively. It was heart-breaking and discouraging seeing my cattle being taken away from me. I spent many years trying to save to be able to buy cattle, but in a moment I lost everything,” Ngcobo said.

“I am encouraged by the department’s efforts to curb stock theft and I am looking forward to growing my business to be able to provide for my family. As farmers, we want to see more of these thieves being dealt with.”



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General Khumalo, from the Upper Tugela police station, said levels of stock theft within the region were worrying and that some cases had led to murder.

Khumalo said some of the perpetrators were known to the farming community and it was paramount that individuals come forward to assist the police. He said the most affected areas included Bergville, Upper Tugela and Ntabamhlophe.

“It is disheartening and disappointing to witness the determination of these criminals. There have been times when theft has led to farmers being killed and it has to stop. I believe that senseless murders would not occur if we were working together. In all our successful cases, we were assisted by members of the community who provided positive leads. We need more people to come forward so we can defeat these criminals.

“We are grateful for the department’s efforts and we will work together to end stock theft,” Khumalo said.



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KZN Provincial House of Traditional and Khoisan Leaders chairperson Inkosi Sifiso Shinga said he was proud to be part of such a monumental event. He strongly condemned stock theft, emphasising that there was no blessing for thieving hands.

“They are robbing generations of their inheritance. The entire province is suffering and it is painful to see families losing their wealth. These criminals are brutal, so we fully support the government in their efforts to stop this criminality. I urge the community to work closely with authorities to ensure that thieves are brought to book,” Shinga said.