



KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE

AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

JOZINI FARMERS CELEBRATE NEW MARKET ACCESS FOR DRY BEANS

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MEC Thembeni kaMadlopha-Mthethwa (wearing a hat) and some of the Jozini local farmers near a truck loaded with dry beans.

Image: Supplied

Jozini's local farmers are optimistic after the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) successfully secured market access for their produce.

This commitment follows successful agreements between the department and several agribusinesses, where local farmers pledged to produce 1,000 tons of dry beans each month.

The culmination of these agreements took place at Nondabuya Community Hall on Tuesday. There, MEC Thembeni kaMadlopha-Mthethwa supervised the loading of the initial 10-ton shipment of dry beans onto a truck. This shipment was destined for a company located in KwaDukuza.

Additionally, three other agribusinesses have also secured agreements, benefiting approximately 300 local farmers.

The Radical Agrarian Socio-Economic Transformation (RASET) programme will oversee this initiative. RASET has been instrumental in addressing the challenges



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farmers face, such as inadequate funding and restricted access to reliable and stable markets, which have hindered their full engagement in the agricultural sector.

The growth and development of historically disadvantaged producers of key commodities, including grain, crops, and meat, have been stifled by limited market access.



MEC Thembeni kaMadlopha-Mthethwa oversees the loading of the first 10-ton shipment of dry beans, marking a significant milestone for Jozini's local farmers.

Image: Supplied

MEC Thembeni kaMadlopha-Mthethwa highlighted the crucial role of fostering connections between farmers and agricultural enterprises to stimulate local economic growth and overcome existing challenges.

Farmers can elevate their businesses to new heights through RASET, she said.

Local farmer Sabisile Ndimande stated that they were hopeful because MEC kaMadlopha-Mthethwa said they should work hard and the department will help them too, especially in bringing markets closer to them to sell their beans.

Ndimande began cultivating beans in 2003 and initially sold them to local buyers. However, many locals purchased on credit and failed to pay. Consequently, a committee was established to identify new market opportunities.

"In 2024, we got into the market and sold well. But this year has been difficult. Some buyers only want to pay R1,000 or R950 per bag (50kg). That's not enough to feed our families," Ndimande said.

"Now we will see a difference. Our bags were sold, and we can avoid hunger. I left some beans for my family and to sow."



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MEC Thembeni kaMadlopha-Mthethwa (wearing a hat) and local farmers celebrate the successful agreements to secure market access for their produce.

Image: Supplied

Ingose Dry Bean chairperson, Mandla Gumede, highlighted the significant challenges faced by the business, particularly the difficulty in affording worker employment when profits are not being generated.

“Selling is difficult. One expects R1,500 to R1,000 but is selling for less than R1,000,” Gumede said. “Sales have dropped. But hopefully, in the future we’ll get better prices.”

Gumede said they did not have co-ops. They were unknown, and that was why beans were imported.

He also said that they have decided to alternate when it comes to farming, so they do not harvest at the same time.

“We want to farm, but who will buy it (produce)?” Gumede asked.

He said some beans remain because some farmers are hesitating in the hope that the price will get better.



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A truck loaded with dry beans prepares to leave for KwaDukuza, symbolising new market opportunities for Jozini farmers.

Image: Supplied

Gumede said they are hopeful things will get better with the department finding them a market for their beans.

“We won’t lose hope. Hopefully, it will improve.”

Additionally, the farmers voiced their concerns regarding the use of traditional bean-sorting methods and being exploited by unethical agents who manipulate prices.

In response, the MEC acknowledged that the government will need to intervene in these challenges by providing solutions to ease the burden on struggling farmers.

KaMadlopha-Mthethwa also said farmers will need to establish formal trading initiatives, adding that the department will find ways to capacitate farmers to professionalise their businesses.

“We want these companies to not only buy your products but also enhance your livelihoods through training in financial management and financial literacy, and ensuring that your beans are of great quality and processed here for top grading. We want you to become successful farmers, as many of you are emerging and growing farmers. Our objective is for you to eventually supply the entire nation of South Africa and even export to other countries.”

She added that uMkhanyakude District could become the province’s breadbasket.