



KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE

AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

KWAZULU-NATAL PREMIER THAMSANQA NTULI LAUNCHES 2025 MULTI-PLANTING SEASON TO COMBAT HUNGER AND REVITALISE RURAL AREAS

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Pietermaritzburg, South Africa – KwaZulu-Natal Premier Thamsanqa Ntuli has launched the 2025 Provincial Multi-Planting Season, a major programme aimed at boosting food production, cutting down on hunger, and bringing new life to rural communities. The event took place on Friday, 10 October 2025, at eNhlanhleni Mission in the Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma Local Municipality, part of the Harry Gwala District. This initiative shows the province's strong push towards self-sufficiency, better food security, and stronger rural economies, especially as many families still struggle with food shortages.

The Multi-Planting Season encourages farmers to plant crops throughout the year, not just in one go, to make the most of the land and weather. This approach helps increase harvests, reduce waste, and ensure a steady supply of food. It fits into bigger national goals to fight poverty and grow the economy through farming, which is a key sector in KwaZulu-Natal. The province is known for its fertile lands, producing things like sugar cane, maize, vegetables, and livestock, but it faces tough challenges like changing weather patterns and limited resources for small farmers.

A Grand Launch in a Rural Heartland

The launch at eNhlanhleni Mission brought together government leaders, farmers, and community members in a lively setting. This spot in the Harry Gwala District was chosen because it represents the rural areas that need the most help. The district covers hilly terrain with rich soil, ideal for growing crops like beans, potatoes, and maize, but many locals rely on subsistence farming and face risks from heavy rains or dry spells.



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Premier Ntuli was joined by the MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development, Thembeni KaMadlopha Mthethwa, along with Harry Gwala District Speaker Sibongiseni Mdunge, Deputy Mayor of Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma Local Municipality Kholeka Hadebe, and other top officials. Their presence highlighted how the programme involves all levels of government, from province to local councils, to make sure it reaches every corner.

During the event, speeches and demonstrations showed how the season will work. Farmers got tips on best planting times, crop choices, and ways to protect against pests and weather changes. This hands-on start sets the tone for activities across all districts, where similar events will roll out to get communities involved.

Tackling Food Shortages Head-On

In his main speech, Premier Ntuli pointed out worrying facts from recent studies: about 15% of people in KwaZulu-Natal still go without enough food, with rural areas hit hardest. This means families might skip meals or rely on poor-quality food, leading to health issues like malnutrition, especially among children and the elderly.

These problems have grown worse due to natural disasters. For example, the devastating floods in April 2022 washed away crops, homes, and livestock, leaving thousands without food sources. Droughts in some parts dry up water supplies, making it hard to grow anything. On top of that, the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted supply chains, raised food prices, and left many jobless, making it tougher to afford basics.

The Multi-Planting Season is the government's direct answer to these issues. Led by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, it plans to increase local food output by helping farmers plant more often and smarter. This could mean rotating crops like vegetables in summer and grains in cooler months, ensuring year-round production. By doing this, the programme aims to cut reliance on imports, lower prices, and create a buffer against future shocks.

Ntuli stressed: "Agriculture must be seen as a weapon to defeat hunger and grow our economy. We must work together to ensure that every piece of arable land is used productively to feed our people and strengthen our communities." Arable land refers to soil good for farming, and in KwaZulu-Natal, there are vast areas that could produce more if given the right support.

Empowering Youth and Small Farmers

A big part of the programme targets young people, urging them to view farming as a real job with good prospects. Many youths in rural areas move to cities for work, leaving farms empty. Ntuli called on them to see agriculture as a path to change lives and the economy. This could involve modern farming methods like using apps for weather forecasts or drones for checking crops, making it appealing to tech-savvy generations.

For smallholder farmers – those with smaller plots who farm for family and local sales – the government promises help. This includes seeds, fertilisers, tools, and training on sustainable ways to farm without harming the environment. Infrastructure like better roads, water systems, and storage will also get attention, so produce reaches markets without spoiling.

These supports build a tougher, more inclusive farming sector. Small farmers often struggle with loans or market access, but with government backing, they can grow their operations, hire locals, and add to the province's wealth.

The Power of Partnerships

Ntuli made it clear that success depends on teamwork. The programme brings together government, farmers, businesses, and communities. For instance, private companies might provide tech or funding, while locals form co-operatives to share resources and knowledge.

"This collaborative approach is vital to ensuring that food production efforts translate into sustainable growth and improved quality of life in rural areas," he said. Co-operatives are groups



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where farmers pool efforts, like buying supplies in bulk for cheaper prices or selling together for better deals.

This teamwork extends to dealing with climate risks. By sharing early warning systems and best practices, communities can prepare for disasters, reducing losses and speeding up recovery.