



## TRACTOR ROLLOUT POWERS UP STRUGGLING KZN FARMERS

KwaZulu-Natal has invested over R78 million in 24 tractors and 100 vehicles to support small-scale farmers. Premier Thami Ntuli wants to “turn the province green” with crops and vegetables

<https://www.foodformzansi.co.za/tractor-rollout-powers-up-struggling-kzn-farmers/>

19 June 2025



*One of the events to look out for this week is tractor training by Agri Skills Transfer.*

*Photo: Supplied/Food For Mzansi*

The KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) department of agriculture and rural development has launched a new fleet of tractors and vehicles aimed at tackling poverty, improving food security, and supporting farmer development across the province.

The department has procured 24 tractors and 100 vehicles at a cost of over R78 million, marking a significant investment in its mechanisation programme. The initiative is part of the province’s broader strategy to uplift struggling farming communities and boost agricultural output.



Premier Thami Ntuli was speaking during the official handover event at Cedara, commending the department for its efforts. He said he has a vision of the province of KwaZulu-Natal being turned green with vegetables and crops.

### **Firing up food security in KZN**

“The department of agriculture and rural development must push for the interests of farmers by providing support and turning our provincial leadership’s vision into a reality. With this investment of 100 vehicles and a 24-tractor fleet, our objective is to address food insecurity and respond to the needs of our farming communities,” he said.

Ntuli also called on the department to procure even more tractors to meet the growing needs of the province’s agricultural sector.

The MEC for agriculture and rural development, Thembeni KaMadlopha-Mthethwa, echoed the premier’s sentiments and emphasised the importance of this intervention.

“The additional 24 tractors in the province will further augment agricultural activities and play a significant role in alleviating some of the challenges facing the sector. This is in response to the dire needs of the farming communities struggling to access adequate resources.

“The tractor fleet will enable the department to support rural communities who do not have sufficient means to grow their agricultural efforts from subsistence farming to a sustainable agricultural enterprise,” she said.

### **Targeting farmers in key districts**

Priority will be given to districts hardest hit by food insecurity – Zululand, uMzinyathi, King Cetshwayo, and uMkhanyakude – following a needs assessment. The



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department will offer full mechanisation services and input support to subsistence farmers for a period of up to four years.

According to the department, smallholder farmers will be supported with mechanisation services and fertilisers. An exit strategy will be implemented in the fifth year, focusing on minimum tillage support. This support will be conditional on farmers reinvesting profits back into their operations.

To ensure accountability and proper usage, the department has introduced an inventory system. Local extension officers, working with district and head office staff, will record and verify tractor use weekly. All tractors will be fitted with tracking devices to mitigate theft risks.

The department has also engaged traditional leaders and communities to ensure safe storage of the tractors near operating sites.

According to the department, the 100 newly acquired vehicles are part of efforts to strengthen the department's fleet, which has suffered due to theft, hijackings, and accidents. These incidents have hampered the department's ability to reach farming communities. All vehicles have been registered, licensed, and now bear the new GBB number plates.