"I'm the mother and the mentor. I put out fires and I make sure that the the gardener," she said.

Quality manager Nokulunga Mkhize

She admits she didn't know much about the textile industry at the outset,

at home in the laboratory in the plant.

She uses equipment to test fibre and

and companies requiring artificial hair, Zarrebini said.

The Witness Business, Tuesday, 18 August 2015

Govt allocates R500 mln for AgriParks

THE government has allocated a potential R500 million budget for the roll-out of AgriParks, said Rural Development and Land Reform deputy minister Mcebisi Skwatsha.

He said at a Farmer's Day function in Makhathini Gin late last week that 10 districts in the province had been identified for Agriparks.

The amount did not include contributions to the parks from other departments such as Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and Cogta, a statement said.

The project involves getting farmers and agri-business entrepreneurs in a region to participate not only in primary production, but also in the full value chain of the agriculture commodity being farmed. The value chain aspects can include warehousing, processing, retail, financial services, market access, training and development.

Partnerships with other government departments, such as the DTI and district municipalities were required to develop infrastructure such as roads, energy and water, for the projects, Skwatsha said.

• The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) has invested R11,5 million to restore the operations of the cotton gin in Makhathini.

There had once been more than 3 000 smallholder cotton farmers in the Makhathini region, but this number fell after the gin went into liquidation.

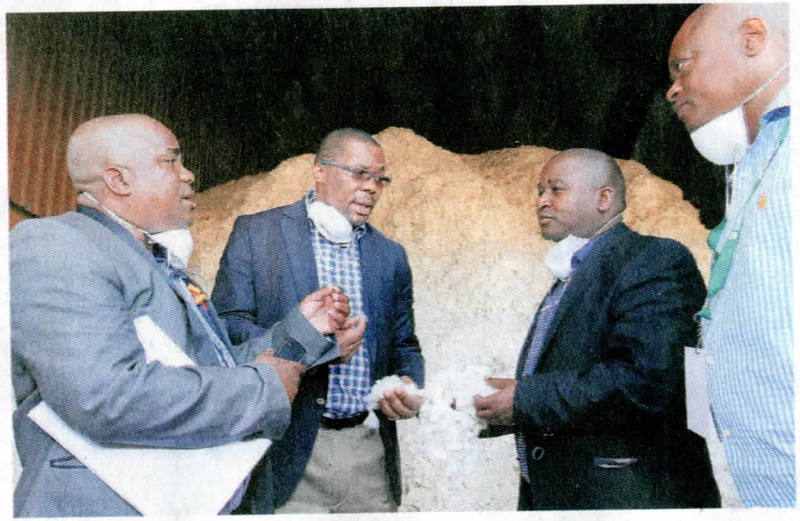
The DAFF is transferring the gin to the Ubongwa Farmers' Co-Operative, which comprises 32 farmers' associations, or 1 579 farmers.

"Their intention is to take responsibility for their own cotton from production until processed into garments for the retail industry," said Skwatsha.

A total of 511 tons of 2012/13 seed cotton had been ginned over two-and-a-half months, and 300 tons of seed cotton had been sent to Loskop cotton because the recommissioning of the gin had not been completed during the first picking season.

There were 513 farmer beneficiaries in the 2012/13 season and 577 farmers had benefited during the 2013/14 season. Some 600 tons of cotton seed was ginned for the 2014/15 season.

There was potential for many more farmers to begin farming cotton, said Skwatsha. — Business Editor.



FROM LEFT: Makhathini Cotton Gin project leader Phineas Gumede, KZN MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development Cyril Xaba, Rural Development and Land Reform deputy minister Mcebisi Skwatsha and Makhathini Cotton Gin manager Charles Kekota at the Gin.
PHOTO: SUPPLIED

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