



**DEATH BY DROUGHT:** The carcass of a dead cow lies in the Black Umfolozi River, dry from the effects of the latest severe drought, in Nongoma district north west from Durban, on November 9. PICTURE:AFP

# Farmers get relief from killer drought

Saving the remainder of their decimated herds is the battle they face

SIHLE MAVUSO

THE first rollout of the R114m drought relief fund has brought temporary relief for Mtubatuba farmers who are battling to save their last remaining cattle from the worst drought in the province since 1992.

The provincial department of agriculture and rural development yesterday assisted hundreds of farmers from Mtubatuba with drought relief feed and JoJo tanks – to be used to harvest water.

Ndoda Ntshangase, 61, who has lost 33 cows since the beginning of the drought said the relief was helpful even though it came a bit late.

“I am hoping to feed my remaining herd in the morning in order to have the strength to go out and look for scarce

**For farmers Wellington Mtshali and Daniel Mkhwanazi, the feed will hopefully help save their remaining cattle**

grass in the dry veld,” Ntshangase said.

Mtubatuba falls under the Mkhanyakude district, one of the districts left battered by the prevailing drought. It has more than 3000 subsistence and commercial farmers.

Among them is Muntu Ntombela, who said since the beginning of the drought he had lost 19 head of cattle but hoped

to save the remaining 11 to start over again when the situation eased.

For Wellington Mtshali, 62, and Daniel Mkhwanazi, 48, the feed will help save their remaining cattle with the hope that rain will come soon.

“It came a little too late, but I still hope to save the remaining cattle. With this feed I hope to be able to save my herd,” said Ntombela in Mtubatuba yesterday.

KZN MEC for agriculture and rural development Cyril Xaba urged affected farmers to utilise the relief assistance fund.

“Farmers should be in touch with their nearest departmental offices, we are serious about helping the drought-besieged farmers.”

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