



agriculture & rural development

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PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

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NEWS AT A GLANCE

CHICORY

New agreement to boost SA chicory production

South Africa's chicory production sector was recently given a boost with the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between various government departments, and food and beverage manufacturer, Nestlé SA. The MoU was aimed at growing South Africa's chicory production and processing, increasing jobs in the sector, and providing developing farmers with mentorship opportunities.

A statement issued by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (KZN DARD) said that while the Eastern Cape had a long-established chicory industry, production of the crop had been developing in KwaZulu-Natal since 2008.

"A few hurdles were experienced along the

way. One of these was in the agro-processing stage as the roasting of the commodity could only be done in the Eastern Cape, which proved costly and time-consuming," KZN DARD spokesperson, Lelethu Manentsa, said in the statement.

To overcome some of these challenges, members of the KZN chicory industry had bought their own roaster and were perfecting the process.

Daily newspaper *The Witness* reported that the chicory roaster would be installed in Weenen to support the growing chicory sector in the uThukela District Municipality. *The Witness* also reported that the MoU would be in place for five years and the aim was to increase South Africa's current annual 7 500t chicory harvest to



ABOVE: Signing the chicory agreement were (from left): Sakhumzi Somyo (Eastern Cape MEC for Economic Development and Environmental Affairs), Cyril Xaba (KZN MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development), and Dr Rob Davies (minister of Trade and Industry).
COURTESY OF KZN DARD

8 700t and create 870 additional jobs in the sector.

The government departments that signed the MoU with Nestlé SA were the Department of Trade and Industry, the Eastern Cape Department of Economic Development and Environmental Affairs, and the Eastern Cape Department of Rural Development and Agrarian Reform.

Nestlé SA spokesperson Ravi Pillay told *Farmer's Weekly* that the company currently procured 20% of its annual chicory requirements from within

South Africa, with the majority of this coming from the Eastern Cape. Pillay said the company had signed the MoU because it was "fully supportive of promoting local procurement".

"Nestlé SA is committed to the partnership with [government] and, in line with our way of doing business, namely creating shared value, we not only look at maximising shareholder value but consider the positive impact in the communities where we operate," said Pillay. – Lloyd Phillips