



agriculture & rural development

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DROUGHT CAN'T STOP US!

Women vow to succeed against all odds

By MICHAEL DLAMINI

THE ongoing drought hasn't dampened the spirit of these 32 women who remain positive that their crops will survive.

These gogos and mamas from Qinabout, a township in Gamalakhe outside Port Shepstone on the KZN south coast, formed a co-operative in 2001.

Back then so much rain fell that some of the women thought it would affect their crops.

But now, 15 years down the line, they can hardly believe the rain is so scarce.

Yesterday, the councillor for ward 26 Nonhlanhla Madlala-Duma, together with Ellen Mbele from the Hibiscus Coast Municipality's rural development in agriculture unit handed over 32 brand new hoes to the members of Zamunotho Community Garden.

The oldest member of the co-operative, 83-year-old gogo Busisiwe Lushabe said: "We are thankful for the garden tools. I plant cabbages and amadumbe. With the money I get from selling the crops to the public I manage to buy other things. It takes amadumbe seven months to be ready to be consumed."

Madlala-Duma said: "It's about time our black people go back to the basics and produce fresh food for themselves. If they



The women using their new hoes in their madumbe garden in Qinabout yesterday.

Photo by Michael Dlamini

are willing to do so, the government will help where it's possible. Fresh food is healthy and people should know that agriculture is not their enemy."

The women dug a furrow which helps them to water their crops.

But they said some community members were also fetching water from inside their fenced garden.

■ The Department of Water and Sanita-

tion reported to the Portfolio Committee on Water and Sanitation yesterday that it's rolling out comprehensive interventions in support of the current drought relief efforts across the country.

The department has deployed water tankers to provide water to the hardest hit areas.

These include rural areas in KZN, Free State and Limpopo which have been de-

clared disaster areas.

Deputy director general for planning and transformation Deborah Mochotlhi said there were also short, medium to long term measures in place to deal with the drought.

These included tanker solutions, eradication of illegal water use, drilling of boreholes in suitable areas and rainwater harvesting as short term interventions.