

# Farmers told to expect more legislation on land reform

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**EDWARD WEST**

TOUGH times lie ahead for farmers due to uncertainty on land issues, the weak economy and forecasts of continuing dry weather, said outgoing KwaZulu-Natal Agricultural Union (Kwanalu) president Michael Black.

Kwanalu, the largest organisation representing farmers in the province, held its annual congress in the Showgrounds in Pietermaritzburg yesterday.

The union's deputy president, Andy Buchan from Greytown, was elected as the new president.

Black said 12 months ago, at the last annual meeting, he had warned farmers that times would be tough, but "by now matters are far worse in all respects".

He said drought conditions had persisted until early spring, and forecasts of El Nino-type weather would mean dry conditions for even longer.

Black said although farmers were generally positive about land reform, there was an escalating breakdown in trust between farmers and the government, and "my sense is patience is wearing thin".

He said the government seemed incapable of realising that the lack of certainty on land policy was the single biggest constraint to transformation in the agricultural sector.

Land reform was supposed to be driven at local levels by district land committees, but it was "astonishing" to find not a single landowner among the invitees at some of these meetings, while government representatives often did not know their terms of reference, said Black.



## Kwanalu 2015 Young Farmer from Tongaat

**Anthony Goble, 2015's KZN Young Farmer of the Year, shows off the banana plantation on his farm in Tongaat. Goble (33) was awarded the provincial title at a ceremony attended by Kwanalu members, fellow farmers and agricultural industry leaders from all over KZN.**

**PHOTO: HEATHER MULLON**

"Transformation is not only about land; there are countless ways to make a difference," he said.

Kwanalu chief executive officer Sandy la Marque said in spite of numerous attempts and much lobbying, there did not appear to be any drought relief for farmers in the province from the government.

She said the impact of the drought had been serious. For example, 8 220 people had lost jobs among dry-land

cane farmers due to the drought. There were also substantial cane production losses. Political commentator, journalist and columnist Justice Malala said land reform had become a big focus of the ANC as the organisation had once again adopted the Freedom Charter, and he expected that land issues would continue to be a central thrust of the ANC for at least the next five to 15 years.

"We will see more regulation and leg-

islation on land issues," he said.

A statement from Rural Development and Land Reform Minister Gugile Nkwinti said yesterday that he and Agriculture and Rural Development MEC Cyril Xaba would meet with traditional leaders, district mayors and emerging and commercial farming organisations at Cedara on Saturday, to discuss district land committees and the government's agri-parks strategy.