



agriculture & rural development

Department:
agriculture
& rural development
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

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Speaking notes for MEC Cyril Xaba's visit to the Makhabeleni Community in Umvoti, Ward 6 on Thursday, 02 April 2015

MEC for Arts, Culture, Sports and Recreation Ms Sibhidla-Sapetha has been a true champion of the Makhabeleni Community. After the Imbizo last year, she kept reminding us of the issues raised by the community and wanted to know what was being done about them.

At the Imbizo, you spoke about the lack of fencing and that crops were being destroyed by stray livestock. There was a request for tractors to assist farmers with ploughing of the land and there was a request for cattle dips.

I am happy to report that 2.5 hectares of the Siyathuthuka Garden Project was fenced and one hectare of fencing was placed around Project Gcinide. In addition, 10km of fencing was used to close off a livestock grazing camp at Magophe.

MEC Sibhidla-Sapetha, there are some brilliant and enterprising youth in the community as they came up with a goat-farming project and approached my Department for assistance. We were more than willing to help the Gayede Youth Project with goats and infrastructure. More than 2 hectares were fenced for the project and the youth were assisted with 200 goats to get the project going. The estimated cost to develop the project to grow in the future, is R1,7 million and the Department is considering this proposal. Other youth in the area can learn from the Gayede Youth Project and come up with ideas for projects. They can speak to staff from my Department for advice on whether their ideas will work and if so, how they can be set up as projects.

I know that all areas in Ward six are not suitable for agriculture and that during winter, some of the rivers dry out causing many cattle to die and growing vegetables, is a struggle. This is why the KZN Department of Agriculture and Rural Development through extension services, is trying its level best to uplift the community through projects.

We have had a challenge with tractors as all were not functional but we still managed to plough 19 ha of land for the planting of beans by hiring tractors from a service provider. More than 37 ha of maize and 24 ha of beans were planted using the Departmental tractors.

Following your request for dip tanks, the construction of a dip tank here in Makhabeleni has just been completed. I understand that the handover is due to take place after a final inspection meeting next week.

Officials from my Department who work in this area, trained 25 people on how to produce vegetables using the latest farming methods so that a healthy crop can be harvested. Subsequent to training, each participant was given a seed pack as a start, for producing vegetables in their households. Seed scoops were also issued for people to cultivate home gardens. I would like to call on the officials of my Department to keep up the good work. I have visited other projects where people tell me that since they started growing their own vegetables, they have been able to save money to buy other household items.

I am aware that the area is dry and it is difficult for vegetable production, but I am sure we can develop livestock farming in this area. The Gayede Youth Project is an inspiration and we need more projects like this one. My Department also has plans to assist the livestock sector. Proposed projects for funding in the new financial year include the establishment of a grazing camp for all Edambe livestock farmers. Two diptanks are to be rehabilitated and two more new dip tanks will be constructed at a cost of over R1,7million.

MEC Sibhidla-Sapetha, as champion of this area, I can assure you that my Department is committed and willing to help the farmers and gardeners of the Makhabeleni Community here in Ward six of Umvoti.