



agriculture & rural development

Department:
agriculture
& rural development
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

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SPEAKING NOTES BY KZN DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT MEC, MR THEMBA MTHEMBU AT THE LAUNCH OF THE WOOL-GROWERS SHEEP SHEARING SHEDS & BONTRAND PIGGERY PROJECT IN UMZIMKHULU

WEDNESDAY, 20 JULY 2016

VENUE: GLENGARY HALL, WARD 10, UMZIMKHULU

Programme Director

Harry Gwala District Mayor, Councillor M.E. Ndobe

Umzimkhulu Mayor, Councillor M.B.Mpabanga

Councillors

Inkosi P.H.D Chiliza, Provincial Chairperson of the House of Traditional Leaders

Inkosi Sethuse and all Amakhosi of the Harry Gwala District

Members of the Wool Growers Association

The Bonrand Piggery Project Team

All farmers present

Community Leaders

Ladies and Gentlemen

The ANC-led government is on a massive transformation drive, to transform the economy and the living conditions of our people so that we all enjoy the fruits of our freedom and our democracy.

Today we are delivering on that mandate here in Umzimkhulu with the launch of four sheep-shearing sheds valued at more than R4,8 million and the Bontrand Piggery Project to the value of R1,345 million.

This follows on other projects that are being implemented within this municipality by the KZN Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (KZN

DARD). During 2015 to 2016 more than R33 million was invested in Soya and Dry bean cultivation.

Ladies and Gentlemen, our commitment to develop this area continues. During the current financial year which ends in mid-2107, more than R25 million will be invested in agriculture projects. We are paying particular attention to community and household gardens to uplift the poor and ensure food security.

As government, we have no choice but to work towards growing our economy to gain a lasting victory over poverty and hunger. This means that we have to create decent work opportunities and ensure sustainable livelihoods. Government also recognised that to do this, it has to pay attention to rural infrastructure development. Building the shearing sheds and developing the piggery serves as part of the Department's commitment to develop the farming infrastructure here in uMzimkhulu.

On Monday we celebrated Tata Madiba's birthday and he once reminded us of what we should be doing as good citizens of this country. Tata said and I quote: "As long as many of our people still live in utter poverty, as long as children still live under plastic covers, as long as many of our people are still without jobs, no South African should rest and wallow in the joy of freedom."

Ladies and Gentlemen, as government, we are not resting and this is why it gives me the greatest of pleasure to launch the building of four sheep shearing sheds under the uMzimkhulu Wool Growers Association. The sheds will be located in Wards one, seven, eight and ten.

The members of the uMzimkhulu Wool Growers Association must be commended, it is because of their hard work and success as sheep farmers that we are building these sheds. The Department has a long working relationship with the Association. In 2012, the Department provided 223 pure merino rams to the association. This lead to about 12 Wool Grower Associations being formed and the population of sheep increased to over seventeen thousand.

From 2013 to 2015 the wool growers sold more than 40 thousand kilograms of wool. However, with only four shearing sheds to share among the growing number of farmers, challenges arose. It was difficult for the farmers to send their wool on time and they began missing the high demand marketing season.

The four additional sheds will mean that there will be eight sheep shearing sheds in the uMzimkhulu Wool Farming district. The four sheds being built at a total cost of R4,8 million will be for the Thaba Moerena; Glengary, Mfulamhle and Kwa Senti Wool Growers Associations. This will be of benefit to the 81 participants in these four associations and more than 104 temporary and permanent jobs will be created.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we must give the wool farmers a round of applause for their hard work and success.

As we launch the shearing sheds today, I wish you the very best for the growth of your farming enterprises and may these facilities serve you well.

My gratitude goes to our partners the National Wool Growers Association for working with both the Department and the farmers to support and grow wool farming in KZN. Ladies and Gentlemen, I recently met with the commodity organisations and I reminded them that at the ANC conference in Manguang in 2012, a resolution was taken that government could not carry out the country's economic transformation on its own. It was resolved that this transformation would only be achieved by the united action of all South Africans working in a concerted manner to eradicate poverty, create full employment and reduce inequality. As a result of that conference resolution, Government committed itself to build strong partnerships with community organizations, social movements, with trade unions, the business sector, with youth and women and in the case of agriculture, with commodity organizations and organized agriculture.

KZN DARD forged a partnership with the National Wool Growers Association. One of the agreements from this partnership is that the Association will be training some of our staff to become specialists in all aspects of sheep farming so that they in turn, can assist new-entry and established sheep farmers. In addition, in October the Association will be training 62 livestock specialists and Animal Health Technicians from the Department on what is known as predation management. This means how to prevent animals from preying on each other, as occurs during time of drought when there is no water. These trained officials will then go out and advise farmers on proper livestock management.

The KZN Government has a strategy to improve livestock farming in the province. The focus of the strategy is to increase the working knowledge of communal farmers on animal husbandry and improving the health of livestock and reducing disease. The aim is for KZN to become self-sufficient in livestock production and to even be able to export its products.

This is why I am happy today to launch the Bontrand Piggery Project here in uMzimkhulu. The Department is supporting this project to the tune of over R1,3million. This is a family owned cooperative which aims to grow the piggery side of its operation to create jobs within the Bontrand community and generate income through the sale of pigs. The cooperative is already selling pigs within the local community and to the Matatiele and Margate abattoirs.

Sadly, the project suffered a setback with the death of Mr Upington Mbanjwa who was an experienced farmer. We are sorry to lose him and his skills. This is why a large part of the work of the Department involves skills development and training in farming management. As I said, this is all part of the provincial government's bigger plan to grow agriculture so that it becomes a catalyst for economic development in the rural areas. The aim is for the people of uMzimkhulu to thrive and lead sustainable lives in the same way as people living in urban areas.

All of us must enjoy the fruits of living in a free South Africa, this was the legacy left to us by Tata Madiba and the ANC led government is determined to ensure that legacy for all our people. We have political freedom, we must now work together for economic freedom and a better life for all our people.

I thank you