



agriculture & rural development

Department:
agriculture
& rural development
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

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KZN DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (KZN DARD) MEC, MR THEMBA MTHEMBU'S SPEAKING NOTES TO UMHLABUYALINGANA LIVESTOCK FARMERS ASSOCIATION/COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAMME

DATE: TUESDAY, 6TH DECEMBER 2016

VENUE: UMHLABUYALINGANA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

Program Director

Umkhanyakude District Mayor, Councillor T.S. Mkhombo

Mayors and Councillors present

Amakhosi

Head of the Department of Agriculture & Rural Development, Dr S.F. Mkhize

Local Area Manager, Mrs T. Mathenjwa and her team

Members of the Livestock Association

Community Leaders

Farmers

Officials Present

Ladies and Gentlemen

Livestock farmers suffered some of the worst effects of the drought and now you are faced with weakened animals and the big task of re-building your herds. The KZN Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (KZN DARD) has walked with you through this journey and we are still with you.

Today I am here to launch a vaccination programme that will help address the animal health issues in this area. The Department has made animal health a top priority as part of its service delivery to communities. However, for the programme to work we need your co-operation.

As Livestock farmers in the Umkhanyakude District you are faced with even more challenges. You have the countries of Mozambique and Swaziland as your borders. Mozambique has some diseases that South Africa has eradicated. At the same time it is also true that South Africa may in fact infect Mozambique with some animal diseases as well. These diseases remain a threat to the country and to our livestock and therefore should be prevented at all cost.

You also faced the challenge of the outbreak of Foot-and-Mouth Disease in 2011. This led to the ban of our animals and animal products by countries of the world. It was estimated at the time that the total revenue South Africa lost as a result of foot-and-mouth was about R4 million. In 2014, the ban was lifted because of the co-operation of the local community and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. The worst that could have happened at that time was for all cloven-hoofed animals to be culled. Fortunately this situation was avoided and the disease has been brought under control.

However, as a country we still have a duty to put credible measures in place to ensure that foot-and-mouth does not return. We also have make certain that other diseases are prevented and that they are detected early enough for immediate control actions.

Besides foot-and-mouth, other diseases of concern in the District include Brucellosis, rabies, TB and Corridor Disease also known as Buffalo Disease as well as Nagana. As a Department we have also been surveying for threats of Rinderpest in goats and *Brucella mellitensis*.

These diseases are transmissible to our domesticated animals sometimes with fatal consequences. It was for this reason that the Department has over the past two years been using a different dipping chemical here in uMkhanyakude which kills both ticks and flies. We are now at the stage where we can revert back to using the dipping chemical that is being used elsewhere in the Province.

Once more, I must applaud local livestock owners for their co-operation in these dipping programmes.

The Department is however, aware that there are a few individuals who despite the call not to move animals out of Umkhanyakude, have been smuggling their livestock to as far as Durban. This is extremely bad!

Brucellosis and animal TB, which are transmissible to humans with disastrous effects, have been seen spreading along the coastal areas. Our people drink raw milk (Ukukleza) and are likely to contract these diseases.

This is why our vaccination programme is important and my appeal to all of you is to cooperate with our Vets. Together we can work towards building healthy herds of livestock in the district.

Dip tanks also remain important facilities as they help in controlling tick-borne disease. Equally important are our clinics at which extension meetings are held. The department has spent millions of rands and will continue to do so precisely because of the role these facilities play in healthy livestock production.

Therefore, it is critical that all our people look after these facilities and protect them. The Redline fence that has been completed to help control the spread of foot-and-mouth also needs your protection. The vandalism of the Redline fence and guard houses is extremely worrying. Always remember that these are your facilities. They do not belong to government but to the community and they are meant to help protect livestock as well as human lives.

The Department is equally concerned about the hijackings of vehicles including government ones in this district. This situation makes it extremely difficult for Vets and Animal Health Technicians to do their jobs. Strategies are being worked out together with security agencies to put an end to this criminal scourge.

However, we also need the co-operation of local communities to deal with these social ills of crime and vandalism.

Ladies and Gentlemen, besides the introduction of the vaccination program. I have more good news with regards to livestock farming. The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development held an extensive strategic planning session last week on how we can grow agriculture in the Province. Some exciting proposals have emerged. Over the next few weeks these plans will be finalised with budgets and implementation plans worked out.

The key focus of the Department going forward is to ensure that our service is to place food security on the top of our agenda. This means that equal attention has to be paid to both crop and livestock production.

The Department has re-affirmed its commitment to the elimination of poverty in our rural areas. According to Statistics South Africa, more than 3,5 million people in KwaZulu-Natal live in poverty. This translates to more than 35 percent of our total population who are mainly concentrated in the rural areas.

In fact, Umkhanyakude has been identified as one of the areas with high levels of poverty. We also know that agriculture is at the heart of rural livelihoods and that to grow the local economy we have to grow agriculture. This is why KZN DARD has adopted the slogan, "Let's Make Agriculture our Culture."

The Strategic Planning session has come up with various plans to boost livestock farming. The promotion of animal health is one of our key targets.

Working with Amakhosi, we are going to revive dip tanks and fencing of all grazing land in villages. This intervention will encourage our people to continue with stock farming especially with cattle and goats. It will also allow the youth to go to school rather than have to spend their time looking after the animals.

We will be re-visiting the dip-tank assistant's programme, which is aimed at employing, training and equipping dip tank assistants. These assistants, known as Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWS) will provide support at local level in the management of the province's dip tanks. They will also be in a position to look out for any signs of the outbreak of any diseases.

Other suggestions to come out of the strategic planning session was the need to improve the genetics of livestock so that we have healthier animals and to ensure better care of our grazing land.

Ladies and Gentlemen, KZN DARD has already shown its commitment to uMhlabuyalingana. Your area now has a completed livestock centre that is for use by local farmers. The abattoir in Jozini has been built so that it can take in cattle from the whole of Umkhanyakude as well as the adjoining districts. Dip tanks, boreholes and stock dams have been established so that your livestock can have good health and produce maximally. The Department has also been focussed on establishing goat projects to improve livelihoods and as a way of ensuring that nutritious meat along with vegetables become affordable to all our people.

So let us work together to make agriculture our culture and we can begin today by committing to participate in the vaccination programme.

I thank you.



KZN MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development Mr Themba Mthembu together with Umkhanyakude District Municipality Speaker of the Council Clrr Solomon Msane and members of Umhlabuyalingana Livestock Association visiting the Umhlabuyalingana Auction Sale Yard



MEC Themba Mthembu together with Umkhanyakude District Municipality Speaker of the Council Clrr Solomon Msane and members of Umhlabuyalingana Livestock Association at the Umhlabuyalingana Auction Sale Yard



MEC Themba Mthembu together with Umkhanyakude District Municipality Speaker of the Council Clrr Solomon Msane and members of Umhlabuyalingana Livestock Association visiting the site where the Department will be building a diptank for the community of Manzengwenya



MEC Themba Mthembu at the site where the Department will be building a diptank for the community of Manzengwenya