



## agriculture & rural development

Department:  
Agriculture and Rural Development  
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

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### **SPEAKING NOTES BY THE KZN MEC FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT, MR THEMBA MTHEMBU**

### **DURING THE LAUNCH OF THE DEPARTMENTAL PRIMARY ANIMAL HEALTH CARE PROGRAMME AND THE COMPULSORY COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAMME**

**VENUE: iTshelimnyama Library, Mariannahill,**

**DATE: 29 May 2017**

We are gathered here today to launch the Departmental Primary Animal Health Care Programme and the Compulsory Community Service Programme for the new Veterinary graduates to kick-start the provincial focus on animal production.

During the delivery of the Departments Budget Vote Speech earlier this month, I announced that we would intensify our Primary Animal Health Care outreach services to assist vulnerable communities. Today's launch is in line with that commitment.

Our visits to the Shangase and Mazibuko households this morning are a clear indication of the dire need for animal health care education, advice and services in semi-urban and rural areas across the province. It is also to assist people like the Nyoka family who have not had the opportunity to vaccinate their animals due to the unavailability of vet services at their doorstep.

It is also to ensure that human and animal wellbeing is optimised through strategic livestock development in respect of food security, agrarian transformation and rural development as transcribed in the South African Animal Management Plan.

We view livestock development as a key contributor to poverty alleviation, job creation and the creation of sustainable rural communities.

It is important to note that our history of colonialism and apartheid created an imbalance in the administration of animal health services to different communities. There was a clear distinction between the needs and services provided to urban white communities as compared to the needs and services provided to the black population who resided in rural and peri-urban communities in the country. A distinction that is still evident in today's society as the provision of veterinary services, is poor or virtually non-existent in rural and peri-urban communities.

Therefore to transform and build an inclusive agricultural sector, we need to ensure that we create an enabling environment for previously disadvantaged farmers and rural communities to access primary animal healthcare services.

The functions of our Primary Animal Health Care programme can be summed up as follows:

Firstly, to provide veterinary services to previously disadvantaged communities for the health and wellbeing of household pets such as cats and dogs to prevent the spread of animal to human contamination which in some instances, has fatal consequences.

And secondly, to provide veterinary services to subsistence and emerging farmers so as to ensure that communities are food secure and are able to participate in the agricultural economy.

To help us achieve this task we are launching:

A fully equipped Mobile Theatre Truck which will be supported by five Mobile Animal Health Clinics that also function as ambulatory vehicles.

The mobile theatre truck is responsible for providing everyday veterinary services such as vaccinations and animal sterilisation while also being a referral facility for the mobile clinics.

We started the Primary Health Care Programme alongside the Compulsory Community Service for new graduates in January 2016 by recruiting newly qualified vets and deploying them across the province to assist in disease prevention, rendering ambulatory services and educating communities on animal

health issues particularly on responsible pet ownership, resource utilization and optimizing livestock production.

This programme is important as it addresses employment opportunities to newly qualified vets to render needed services to rural areas and gain valuable experience and knowledge whilst ploughing back those skills and learned expertise for the betterment and development of the communities they serve.

We have already rolled out this programme to nine district municipalities across the Province, namely; Umkhanyakude, King Cetshwayo, Uthukela, Ugu, Harry Gwala, Umgungundlovu, Amajuba, Zululand and the Durban Metro.

I hope your engagement with our vets and the practical viewing of our mobile clinics will provide a better understanding of the extensive work done by our state veterinary services in our communities.

In conclusion, today's launch seeks to ensure that there is sustainability in the farming practises of our communities thus instituting the notion that Agriculture needs to be more than a practice but a culture. Our people need to live, feel and own Agriculture. It is in this breath that we can ensure future generations of a KwaZulu-Natal that is food secure and a leader in the transformation of the agricultural sector for inclusive sustainable agricultural development.

I Thank You



Veterinarian Dr Cameron Kutwana taking the MEC of KZN Agriculture and Rural Development Mr. Themba Mthembu, through the immunization process of pets



MEC Themba Mthembu addressing the community of iTshelimnyama on the importance of animal health



MEC Themba Mthembu visiting Ms Nonhle Mazibuko 45, who is the survivor of a dog bite

For more information, please contact Khaye Nkwanyana on 083 952 9723