



KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE

AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

BUDGET

VOTE SPEECH - 2020/21

GROWING KWAZULU-NATAL TOGETHER



THE HONOURABLE

MRS. BONGIWE SITHOLE-MOLOI

MEC: Agriculture & Rural Development, KwaZulu-Natal

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KwaZulu-Natal Department of Agriculture
and Rural Development



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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Executive Building, Communication Services | 01 Cedara Road, Cedara | Pietermaritzburg | PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Tel: 033 343 8240 or Fax: 033 343 8255 | www.kzndard.gov.za



Honourable Speaker, Ms Nontembeko Boyce
Honorable deputy Speaker, Hon Mluleki Ndobe
Honourable Premier, Mr Sihle Zikalala
Honourable Members of the Executive Council
Honourable Members of the KZN Legislature
Isilo Samabandla
House of Traditional Leaders Chairperson Inkosi Chiliza
Religious and Traditional Leaders
Mayors and Councillors
Officials of KZN DARD and Entities
Sectoral Stakeholders and the Broader Business Community
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Honourable Chairperson

It gives me great pleasure to stand before this august house to give a holistic view of the Department's annual capital and expenditure account and also to outline the major plans by the Department. In doing so, I want to acknowledge the Premier for having accorded me this Executive responsibility to do so, for and on behalf of KwaZulu-Natal government.

The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development is a key department within the economic cluster in stimulating growth and job creation, and it remains a kernel in the baseline sustainable economic sectors as well as rural economy, with specific interventions and support to reduce and eliminate poverty through subsistence farming.

Honourable Speaker, let me remind this house, that we present this budget shortly after the 108th birthday celebration of one South Africa liberation struggle icon, and veteran of the struggle for human rights, the late uTata, Walter Sisulu. It is forever my hope that, Africa and the world, will never forget the freedom; they gave to all South Africans, Black and White as espoused in our Freedom Charter as well as our Bill of Rights.

May we also be reminded that we present this budget in June on the eve of yet another unforgettable tragedy that took place in SOWETO in June 1976. The then apartheid South Africa, as it was common barbaric practices, undertook yet another miscarriage of justice, and trampled over the rights of its African children, the right to live and the right to express freely.



Honourable Premier of KwaZulu-Natal
Mr Sihle Zikalala

Honourable Speaker, as a people, we must remain resolute in keeping our memories alive of these stark reminders of where we come from as a country and as a people. In order to keep our focus and compass solid on where we are going as a country and as a people, let me remind this house that the year 2020 is also the centenary year of two other gigantic figures of the South African struggle for liberation and human rights, the late uBaba, Raymond Mhlaba and the Lion of the Midlands uBaba, Harry Gwala. Given these brilliant reminders, it is indeed befitting to be committed to the reality that Africa is our Beginning, and that Africa is our Ending.

Honourable Speaker, let us remind ourselves further that in his State of the Nation Address in February 2020, President Cyril Ramaphosa, underlined the central role of agriculture and its significance to the 6th Administration when he made the remark that:

“Agriculture is one of the industries with the greatest potential for growth. This sector is expected to play a meaningful role to give effect to drive agriculture an inclusive rural development”

Honourable Speaker and Members of the House, consistent with the directives by the President and our KZN Premier, Honourable Sihle Zikalala, which he articulated in his State of the Province Address in March 2020, when he said:

“The Province of Kwa-Zulu Natal is poised to expand and diversify the agricultural economy.”

In response to these directives, the department is poised to explore the letter and spirit of the industrialization trajectory of the country in agro-processing as well as general commercial farming by intentionally increasing support to potential commercial farmers in the Province.

We are determined and stand ready to provide dedicated and efficient support to all the agricultural value chains as key drivers to KZN's short and long-term sustainable economic growth and transformation.

It is abundantly clear that we need to pay attention in growing small-scale farmers in terms of material support across various commodities. Key to our advance is to support youth and women and people with disability to be major players in the sector.

The advent of smart agriculture in the sector whereby new technologies driven by artificial intelligence, robotics, internet of things, nanotechnology and quantum computing are shaping the future and replacing old ways of farming.

In this regard, we call on our youth to take leadership in agriculture especially in agro-processing and other value chains. It is against this background, that the department undertook a Province wide program to disseminate information to youth and women through the summits held by the Department in recent past months.

The masses of our people's social conditions are not getting better because of rising unemployment, poverty and hunger, and therefore cannot wait any longer. The economic crisis presented by COVID-19 means more people will join the millions of hungry and unemployed, with our own government recently predicting that unemployment is set to reach 50%.

Food security remains a critical challenge. If not addressed prudently and urgently, it can easily become the seed of social upheavals and a major national security threat. The balance between the usage of available land in tribal lands maximally for household consumption and the re-engineering of mindsets for producing for markets can no longer be postponed. We must insist to our people that the entry to the agricultural economy does not only lie on the acquisition of already existing commercial farms, but the very land available in our villages and our backyards.

Honourable Speaker, we want to state clearly that the department's plans enshrined in our Annual Performance Plan are not a pie in the sky but measurable and attainable with timelines.

Government has finalized the 2019-2024 Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF), which outlines the programme of action for this term. MTSF is the implementation framework that moves government closer to the goals of the National Development Plan.

The current MTSF is built on seven (7) strategic priorities of government, which have been further augmented by eight (8) priorities outlined by the Honourable, Premier Zikalala, in his State of the Province Address. And so, this Budget Vote is a presentation by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development in terms of policy priorities and strategic interventions that will be implemented in line with the aforementioned government programme of action.

Chairperson, as I present this budget speech for 2020/21 I will also be reporting on the several commitments I made last year to this house. This account is important because this administration is looking into the five-year horizon within its delivery mechanism and available resources.

"Food security remains a critical challenge".





Honourable Members, I made a commitment to this house that filling the position of the Head of Department and that of the CFO was my priority, in order to bring certainty and stability in the system. It gives me a great pleasure to report to this House that, indeed, we have filled both positions.

We had concrete plans to ensure the filling of our vacancies of which 30 of these were already at the interview stage. However, the process was affected by the recent lockdown. Therefore, it is deeply disheartening to report that the continuation of the process is now hanging in the balance due recent budget cuts concentrated on the curbing of the Corona virus pandemic.

Honourable Members, we have strengthened partnerships with organizations representing people with disabilities in order to ensure that profiles of candidates with disabilities are obtained for consideration when filling posts.

The Department is in the process of reviewing its organizational structure to ensure that it is able to deliver on its mandate. Of particular importance, is the creation of an in-house Internal Audit and Risk Management Directorate. This Directorate will be responsible for the establishment and implementation of proactive measure to deal with fraud and corruption.

Honourable Members, it is my pleasure to report that the department has been able to spend 96.2% of its 2019/20 budget. This was an improvement from 88.9% actual expenditure achieved in the 2018/19 financial year. This is but one area in the department's Turnaround Plan that focuses on change management and efficiency in the Supply Chain Management unit, particularly, in the Contract Management, Supply Chain and Performance Management.



RESPONSE TO CORONA VIRUS PANDEMIC IN KWAZULU-NATAL THROUGH FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY PROGRAMME

Chairperson, as the COVID-19 pandemic unfolds around the world rapidly and in South Africa, people in KwaZulu-Natal are now awakening to the new reality and the magnitude of the impact that this pandemic has on people. Food and nutrition security is one of the real dimension as many households are affected by the lockdown, closure of businesses, and loss of income for many families.

We applaud government's efforts aimed at cushioning the most vulnerable among us, which includes the announcement of various social safety nets such as the increase in the budget of social grants and the unemployed allowance of R350. More still needs to be done, as these remain temporary and short measures. Generally, COVID-19 could have an impact in the overall agricultural sector demand-side in South Africa and abroad, with the possible ripple effect on food prices and agricultural markets.

The COVID-19 pandemic has created uncertainty and disruption of economic growth. In addition, food distribution channels could face some

disruptions from transport interruptions and quarantine measures, which would cause impact on staple commodities.

In dealing with the effect of the pandemic amongst those that are vulnerable in our society, I have directed the Head of the Department to reprioritise the budget so that more focus can be on food security. This reprioritisation will see our intervention in food security increasing from the current allocation of R10, 7 million to R40 million





This intervention will be realised by DARD through:

- Making an effort to engage the community to fully participate in their own development in order to ensure sustainability of the project even after its lifespan;
- Collaborating with the Department of Human Settlement and Department of Education to promote one-home-one garden vegetables and fruit trees and to promote school gardens as a long-term solution to food security; respectively. Appropriate memorandum of understanding (MoU) will be signed with each key stakeholder;
- Partnering with relevant stakeholders who are willing to provide support needed to DARD and KZN households in the race to defeat the virus and its impact on people's health and livelihoods;
- Use of technology when necessary to coordinate and keep in touch to get all preparatory work done.

Kwa-Zulu Natal continues to be amongst the provinces with the highest number of households who have inadequate access to food and has seen a slight increase of this phenomenon from 23, 4% in 2017 to 24, 5% in 2018 against the national average of 20,2%. Whilst this is dependent on a number of variables, the department will seek to strengthen food security programmes in collaboration with other sector departments and stakeholders to promote increased access to food especially by vulnerable groups in our community.

The Department is, however, emboldened by the consistency in the number of households involved in agriculture reported to be at 18,2% in 2018 against a national average of 14,8% and will utilize this strength to promote programmes that will ensure increased food production and enhanced access to food at a household level. Through the department's food security intervention programmes in the last financial year, approximately 20 758 households were supported with food production initiatives.

I have directed the Department to find ways of scaling up organic, permaculture and conservation farming programmes as part of an urban agriculture concept and promotion of food security within the urban and peri-urban areas of our province. Furthermore, I have also directed that similar projects be piloted in each local municipality within the province.





Honorable: Thoko Didiza

Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

COVID-19 RELIEF SCHEME

Following the pronouncement by the Minister of Agriculture Land Reform and Rural Development to support smallholder farmers through a COVID-19 Relief Scheme, the response from farmers far exceeded expectations, however, a significant number of applications were disqualified owing to non-compliance with stipulated criteria.

I am pleased to announce that the province was allocated R99,7 million to support 2 812 smallholder farmers across the province of KwaZulu-Natal. About 1 222 of these farmers are woman constituting 43, 5%. Commodities prioritized for support include poultry, livestock, fruits, winter field crops and vegetables.

Furthermore, government through the national department distributed over 40 000 Personal Protective equipment (PPE) in a form of masks for farm workers through Farmers Unions in the province.

It is however important to note that through the guidance of the National Minister for Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, it has been resolved that the disqualified applications should be subjected to further screening processes including assisting these farmers to provide necessary documentation which will put them in a

good stead to qualify them for support. Through this intervention, well-deserving farmers who missed the first opportunity will be considered for support utilizing 5% of Ilima-Letsema conditional grant funding.

Honourable Members, farm workers and dwellers have emerged as one social cluster that is hardest hit by famine during this COVID-19 lockdown period due to no income, which has resulted in dire shortage of nutrition in their diet.

This has prompted the government of KwaZulu-Natal to intervene by forming a private public partnership with African Farmers Association of South Africa (AFASA), which will result in 70 beasts slaughtered in an effort to ease famine by boosting their protein intake.



AGRICULTURE SERVICES

Agricultural development funding policy

Honourable Members, our Agricultural Development Funding Policy will require a review, which will usher in mechanisms for comprehensive support package to promote the commercialization of strategic agricultural enterprises. It will be funded and cushioned over the MTEF period. The policy review will be concluded and consulted with relevant stakeholders before the end of the current financial year.

Agricultural Master Plan

Honourable Members, I am happy to report that a draft Master Plan document has been developed and is undergoing further refinement following a series of consultations within the industry. The plan now incorporates the Rural Development Strategy.

The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development is in the process of drafting a National Agriculture Master Plan, which will align ourselves with the national government once their work has been concluded.

The national Department will be hosting a summit on Agriculture in 2020 as a final stakeholder consultation engagement on the Agriculture Master plan.





Honourable Members, the Premier of KwaZulu-Natal launched an integrated planting programme in Mkhanyakude District coined Phez'komkhono in 2019. The launch ushered in a fresh breath of new life in this multi-season planting programme.

Madam Speaker, I am happy to report that the Department has set aside R77 million to regenerate the multi-planting season (Phez'komkhono) programme in the current financial year.

Even though the province has experienced unfavorable weather conditions resulting in delayed rains and consequently the start of the planting season, the Department successfully assisted farmers to plant over 11 000 hectares in the financial year 2019/20.

The Department will accelerate the programme through the use and promotion of conservation tillage to enable development of more areas and protection of natural resources. The farmers will be encouraged to practice this farming method including other climate smart agricultural technologies in light of global warming and climate change.

The Department recognizes that not all communities are able to access the mechanization services rendered by the state. However, in the current financial year, as part of enterprise development, the department will pilot in two districts the use of locally based SMMs to provide mechanization services. This initiative will enable expedient provision of services and consequently benefit both the local businesses and farmers who were unable to receive the state mechanization services.

I noted with concern that the procurement of production inputs was not synchronized with the onset of the planting season leading to late deliveries of production inputs to farmers. Hence, the department reviewed its procurement strategy for the production inputs to minimize delays in the delivery of inputs and the commencement of the planting programme.



EXTENSION AND ADVISORY SERVICES

The Agricultural Extension and Advisory Services remains the core function of the department. It requires full oversight by the Department as a function charged with the responsibility of being at the front line of service provision. Honourable Members, as the Department, we are committed to revive extension services and to restore its dignity, which is why the Province

of KwaZulu-Natal hosted its provincial leg of the National Extension and Advisory Services Summit and Awards (NEASA) ceremony. These awards are aimed at promoting agricultural innovation and systems approach in enhancing effectiveness of Extension and Advisory services.

AGRONOMIC SEED AND HORTICULTURAL SEEDLING PRODUCTION TO SUPPORT RASET

The Department announced the development of a plan to produce its own seeds and seedling capability in order to reduce reliance and rising costs within the context of a declining budget allocation. I am happy to announce that the plan has now been finalized and endorsed by the Provincial Executive Council.

This is a bold step by the sixth administration, which will see, over time, the establishment of five mega-nurseries to produce seedlings and fruit trees. The research stations were identified for the establishment of these nurseries.

These are situated in the following areas i.e. Cedara, Dundee, Kokstad, Jozini and eMpangeni. These research stations are geographically spread across the province, under different bio-resource groups and can specialize in producing different seeds & seedlings.

This programme aims to address the skewed structure of the economy by ensuring that the historically disadvantaged individuals participate in the seed and seedling value chain.

This plan will ensure that farmers currently supplying the RASET market have sufficient seedlings and fruit trees to plant in order to fulfil orders.

The plan is premised on two pillars: Horticulture (vegetable seedlings, fruit trees and sweet potato vines) and Agronomic crops (maize, dry beans, potatoes and ground nuts seed). Strong partnerships with state-owned institutions like the Agriculture Research Council (ARC) and our colleges and universities are advocated by the Executive Council.

While agronomic seeds and seedlings are produced, skills and knowledge will be transferred to the young agriculturalists by utilizing the research stations as knowledge hubs to provide agricultural technical support.

Implementation will commence in 2020/2021 and the programme will see the employment of 290 agricultural graduates over the next 2 years.

ASSESSMENT OF LAND REFORM FARMS



In response to the directive of the Honourable Premier in his 2019 State of the Province Address for the Department to conduct an assessment of land reform farms in the province, I am happy to announce that the report has been concluded and its findings will be tabled to the Provincial Executive Council.

The assessment has confirmed that a significant number of the farms are facing serious operational challenges and riddled with social dynamics, which have rendered them dysfunctional. The report reveals that there are symptoms of regression in the agrarian transformation agenda owing to leasing back of these farms by beneficiaries to white farming corporations.

The report indicates that an investment of approximately R5.5 billion would be required to resuscitate these farms into full production.

Government will work with all stakeholders within the sector and financial institutions to develop suitable financing mechanism to put these farms back into production in the medium term.

The Department has heeded a call by His Excellency, President Cyril Ramaphosa, to release specific land for agricultural production accompanied by post-settlement support packages.

In this regard, the Department is in consultation with the National Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development to prepare business plans for farms falling within this category in KwaZulu-Natal province, which will be supported through the Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme (CASP) conditional grants.

AGRI- HUB ZONES

Honourable Speaker and Honourable members,

The Department will take a leaf out of Premier Zikalala's State of the Province Address on 4 March 2020 to ensure that we become a game changer in Agro-Processing and a key catalyst for radical economic transformation of the current domestic supply chain capabilities of the province.

This approach will ensure the expansion of the Agricultural Food and Logistics HUB intertwined with the AGRIPARK Model, Government Warehouses, Operational Vula through RASET and District Development Model (DDM).

Honourable Members, allow me to unpack and expand on an initiative that will be implemented in four districts of the province. This initiative follows a commodity competitive and comparative advantage clustering approach.

Giant strides towards the implementation of this concept have been undertaken, and the first phase of developing a feasibility study, business case, viable business plan for the four hubs, coupled with the implementation framework, have been concluded.

The implementation of the first phase of this project is expected to create 540 jobs during phase one of project implementation.



SUPPORT TO WOMEN, YOUTH AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Honourable Members,

In recognition of a protracted period of disenfranchisement of vulnerable groups (women, youth, and people with disabilities) within the agricultural sector, the department has resolved to measure progress made in the promotion and advancement of these groups in agricultural development programmes.

In this regard, the department will support projects owned by women, youth and people with disability such as the one that I participated in, which was coordinated in partnership with **Uthingo Organic Academy**. This academy was founded by Zama Ngubane, an agricultural graduate. She sought to utilize her acquired skills in organic farming methods. She left formal employment to pursue an advocacy career and contribute to the advancement and promotion of vulnerable people within our society.

Through this initiative, I was introduced to **ITHEMBA FOR THE DISABLED** project situated at Dumisani Makhaye Village, in uMhlathuze local municipality. The project supports 19 disabled people who have established a practical nursery that propagate organic seedlings that are sold to the community of Dumisani Makhaye Village

for their own household gardens. They have also established a relationship with a community garden involved in organic farming in a neighboring ward that purchases seedlings from their nursery.

They are also mentors to some of the agricultural graduates placed by this Department on farms or enterprises as part of its graduate development programme. Their team has made an impact on the lives of the community as well as these young agriculturalists. It is my hope that more such projects, which assure the dignity of youth, women and disabled people, are supported and developed into the future.

Fellow citizens, we can confirm to the Premier of KwaZulu-Natal and our youth parliament that we are heartened and inspired by examples of community initiatives and activism by women like Zama Ngubane.

During this youth month, we also hold a strong believe that the youth of this province continue to draw inspiration from the activism and courage of the 1976 generation. The youth of this country has said it wants a “hand-up”, not ‘hand-outs”, and this ANC-led government is committed to actively support our youth in agriculture.



FEMALE ENTREPRENEUR AWARDS (“FEA”) PROGRAMME

Honourable Speaker,

The department runs the Female Entrepreneur Awards programme to acknowledge, encourage and increase the participation of women and women with disabilities in the agricultural sector, thus empowering women to own and manage agricultural land for their enterprises and to be involved in the country's economic transformation.

The aim is to mainstream women, young women and women with disabilities in the sector through food security, job creation, economic growth and poverty alleviation.

The programme has a long-term ambition of leveraging women entrepreneurs from being subsistence and smallholder producers to commercial entrepreneurs who also venture into export markets.

It offers awards to female entrepreneurs who excel in the agricultural sector.

The Department has also taken the initiative to include all the winners from the 2016 up to 2019 competition years, in the mentorship support programme. The list of projects to be mentored will grow each year, as and when the additional winners are recognized.

Honourable Speaker, we are also proud to mention that KZN is the only Province that recognizes senior citizens in the MEC's Special Awards because we value the contribution of our elders and the wisdom they continue to impart to the younger generation on all matters of agriculture.





YOUTH EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVES

Honourable Members, the scourge of youth unemployment is a socio-economic challenge that requires a multi-pronged response from government and all other sectors. In this regard, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) will launch an ambitious initiative that will unlock 10 000 direct and indirect jobs for youth, out of school, unemployed graduates and those young people who have a passion for agriculture. Our youth empowerment initiatives aim to assist in achieving the production required to fill the RASET order.

Honourable Members, this government will implement six-empowerment programmes set-aside for vulnerable groups through DARD. We will roll out the Youth Strategy informed by Youth In Agriculture and Rural Development Indaba in December 2019.

This youth initiatives will be housed under **Inkunzi Isematholeni-Umthente/Uhlaba Usamile Programme**, which will include the establishment of a Directorate for Youth, Women and Disabled People in Agriculture and Rural Development. The **Inkunzi Isematholeni-Umthente/Uhlaba Usamila Programme** is expected to enhance emancipation of vulnerable groups and to specifically address issues and challenges facing these groups, particularly through investments in six pillars of Operation Vula and stimulating agro-industrialization.

The department plans to massively upscale its EPWP Programme to include the following five pillars, namely, EPWP Youth Brigades; Youth Owned Enterprises / Incubators; ICT Training and Technology Training (4IR) and Youth Farm Experiential Learning.



EPWP Community Works Projects (Youth Brigades)

The Department will employ youth to protect and enhance sustainable use and conservation of agricultural resources through programmes such as LandCare, bio-resource surveys and mapping, controlling of alien plants, thinning of bush encroaching species and sustainable management of cropping and grazing lands.

Rural youth will assist with food security, minor irrigation and engineering project works such as water-harvesting, dip-tanks, animal handling, fencing and input storage facilities. Finally, rural youth interested in Primary Animal Health Care will be employed to assist with dipping, record-keeping, animal identification and rabies control.

Youth Owned Enterprises/Incubators

The Province's current Programme of Farmer Production Support Units (FPSU) and agri-hubs will be used as springboards for the provision of land, tractors, implements, inputs, agricultural training and business skills to rural youth.

These facilities will be operationalized in order to supply rural youth with access to information and market opportunities, HACCP compliant agro-processing facilities, packaging and logistics,

public-private partnerships and also benefit from support from the National Jobs Fund, IDC and Small Enterprise Development Agency, NEF's Enterprise Development Fund.

ICT and Technology Training (4IR)

The Department will collaborate with donors, investors or hi-tech NGOs to give rural youth exposure to the world of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR). This opportunity will expose young people to the fields of remote sensing, precision mapping, and drone imagery to detect pests, disease, nutrient and water deficiency, smart soil sensors reporting in real time on the status of the soil, the weather conditions, and allow smart irrigation. Rural youth will also be exposed to contained and vertical farming, renewable energy, off-grid photovoltaic systems using the Dube Trade Port, Moses Kotane Institute and University of KwaZulu-Natal as potential strategic partners.

Youth Farming Experiential Training

The Department currently runs an excellent programme that places unemployed graduates with commercial and land reform beneficiaries as well as agricultural enterprises in order to gain vital workplace experience. It will continue to implement this youth farming experiential training programme.



Public Service Internship and Partnership with Youth Formations

Through the Public Service Internship, we are providing graduates internships within DARD in the fields of engineering and irrigation, ploughing, planting, spraying, harvesting, primary animal health care, animal identification/stock theft partnering with the Department of Correctional Services & Rehabilitation, natural resource surveys & mapping, and food preparation and preservation in support of the RASET Programme.

We remain committed to mainstream vulnerable groups in agriculture. We are establishing the Directorate for Youth, Women and People Living with Disabilities within the Department, and this is expected to be concluded by 2020/21 financial year. We are proud to state that 70% of the budget is aligned and biased to youth, women and people living with disabilities.

Since the launch of the **Youth in Agriculture and Rural Development Indaba** by our Premier in uMzinyathi, we have also visited various districts of our province. We are confident that this generation of youth will achieve economic freedom through government's support of agro-entrepreneurship and market support.

Honourable Members, during the regional outreach programme of **Youth in Agriculture and Rural Development Indaba**, young farmers raised concerns around their challenges, which included among others, access to market and network.

It is for this reason that the Department has entered into a partnership with a young IT entrepreneur from KZN to establish a block-chain platform to assist young farmers with access to markets and network with the major role players in the industry. The digital platform is a first of its kind. It will allow all young farmers to register in order to participate in the platform. The platform will further enhance our drive ensure that we have provincial database for young people.

The Department is set to launch a partnership initiative with "Yoba APP" aimed at connecting youth farmers during the month of June. Honourable members, we are working with private sector in developing a solution for young farmers that will address and solve all of the above challenges.

Since the 4th Industrial Revolution has taken over, it compels our government to transform the sector. The internet with its social media and chat groups platforms have ushered a new way of doing business. Young farmers must benefit and take advantage of this.

Through a well marketed, well managed online/app-based portal, farmers will command a greater market share and reach the most remote markets only accessible by big retail stores.





AGRICULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Honourable Speaker, agricultural infrastructure remains the cornerstone for the promotion of growth and development in the sector and ensures seamless production and improved productivity if well-planned and coordinated. The Department is establishing new infrastructure and rehabilitating existing ones such as dip tanks, dams, boreholes, irrigation, fences and storage facilities amongst others to support smallholder farmers.

Over the years, the Department has been involved in the development of agricultural infrastructure such as tunnel projects to assist vegetable producing farmers to produce good quality vegetables for markets.

The Department has also supported broiler projects to assist broiler community projects for both food security and income generation as well as layer projects to assist the community to produce eggs.

Livestock infrastructure such as sheep shearing sheds, poultry houses and piggeries have also been given prominent support to ensure livestock development. Many of the veld area in the province still require new fencing to ensure animal and

crop protection. The Department thus prioritizes fencing projects to mitigate uncontrolled animals since this poses a threat to agricultural production, especially during periods of drought.

Investment in infrastructure, therefore, continues to be a critical component of the Department's strategic agrarian transformative agenda.

Accordingly, the department will implement 114 agricultural infrastructure related projects in the province during this financial year, which will help provide a necessary base for the development of enterprises, mainly by smallholder farmers.

The agriculture infrastructure rollout programme, which will be inclusive of maintenance, will see an investment of over R28 million to be used for establishment and rehabilitation of agricultural infrastructure, which includes irrigation schemes, fencing, pack houses and abattoirs, to mention a few.





LANDCARE PROGRAMME

Through its LandCare programme, the Department continues to optimize productivity and the sustainability of agricultural natural resources by promoting community participation in sustainable land use and its management. Community based projects amounting to R42 million were implemented in the 2019/2021 financial year and over 1000 EPWP jobs opportunities were created.

In the current financial year, the Department will implement community-based projects under LandCare to rehabilitate agricultural land and create over 1100 EPWP job opportunities. Over and above community-based projects, the programme will also fund in-school initiatives, under the JuniorCare Programme. The programme will also be able to create awareness for the various environmental days like World Wetland Day, Water Week, World Desertification Day, and Arbor Day.

The LandCare programme also provides accredited training to its beneficiaries. Over 500 participants will receive training in chainsaw operation, health and safety, first aid and mixed farming. An amount of R53 million has been set aside to ensure the implementation of the Land-Care programme interventions for this financial year.



RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY

The Department has embarked on an exciting journey to convert its research stations into Centres of Excellence and Innovation in order to respond to research needs and technology development within the Province.

Honourable Members, agriculture is heavily affected by the adverse weather conditions. Currently, science has means by which to accurately predict and control weather patterns. To help alleviate the harsh effects of the drought in the province, the Department is promoting the use of drought tolerant seeds suitable for the different climates developed by our researchers. The Department is invested on conducting hemp product research to identify varieties and their uses in order to provide opportunities for small-scale farmers. The research findings will be used during the formulation of policy on the use of cannabis products for medicinal purposes.

Our research team is also currently engaged in research activities that include precise optimization that will solve many current problems in agriculture such as reverting back to some indigenous production elements and 4IR technologies that will have a significant impact on weather-related problems.



ANALYTICAL LABORATORY - Mazibuye Emasisweni

Fellow citizens, this financial year we will implement a programme called Mazibuye eMasisweni, which applies modern scientific tools to enhance indigenous knowledge and preserve our heritage. The Premier of KwaZulu-Natal unveiled a new departmental mission to reposition the analytical laboratory as a Centre of Excellence and Innovation where “indigenous traditional healing methods and African medicine that is offered as a possible solution to many opportunistic diseases, can be propagated. This, we will do in partnership with various stakeholders in our community.

The Department is in the drive to revive indigenous knowledge through the propagation of plants that grow in our natural environments and have been serving human kind as food and medicine in almost all cultures for generations.

It is known that indigenous foods and dietary diversity within cultures can be a source of nutrients and contribute to better health. Indigenous plants can play a major role in enhancing quality of life and improving food and nutrition security.

Sadly, the use of indigenous plants and foods has declined due to the scarcity of these plants and its foods in modern commercialized and industrialized markets and lack of investment in research and development.

The indigenous crops have been largely ignored by commercial farming, research and development, thus becoming less competitive than well-established major crops, and losing gradually their diversity and the associated traditional knowledge.

Food security policies globally have almost completely ignored the potential nutritive value of indigenous plants, especially those harvested in impoverished communities. Yet these underutilized species play a crucial role in food security, income generation, food culture and can contribute to nutrient requirements.

To turn around the situation, our Department through its Agricultural Crop Research Services is going to partner with University of KwaZulu Natal Medicinal Centre and other relevant institutions and Departments.

A nursery for medicinal herbs and indigenous crops will be developed in any of research stations.

The purpose of the nursery will be to conserve those herbs that are about to vanish, and to serve as a resource for those that are required by traditional healers. Traditional healers will be trained on sustainable harvesting of those plants that may still require to be harvested wild.

A list of medicinal herbs in demand will be developed in consultation with traditional healers. Herbs identified will be mapped for their potential and suitability production in their respective geographic areas based on climatic requirements.

Farmers from different areas will be trained in the propagation production of both indigenous plants and medicinal herbs. Seedlings for identified and mapped plants will be propagated in the research stations nurseries and given to farmers for production to supply traditional healers industry.

Analytical Services laboratories will assist with the chemical analysis of both indigenous crops, hemp and herbs that will also include heavy metals analysis for human safe use.

Both indigenous crops and medicinal herbs seedlings will be incorporated with current Department's programmes such as food and nutrition packages. Laboratory equipment and machineries such as HPLC and ICP will be procured for chemical analysis.



4th Industrial Revolution and Impact of ICT on Agriculture

Agriculture is a representative industry in which inputs and outputs are inconsistent. In terms of worldwide food production, enough food is produced for the entire population, yet 30–50% of produced food is discarded, while many die of starvation. About 80% of the water on the planet is used for agriculture, yet only 20% of viable crop is grown, and the remaining unused surplus is discarded. In the UK, the use of nitrogen fertilizer resulted in blue disease. Each of these problems can be solved via precision agriculture.

Honourable Members, the Department in collaboration with institutions such as the Moses Kotane Institute (MKI) and UKZN will hold a multi-stakeholder summit to establish a research based platform for participating institutions to come together in an effort to improve the efficiency of agricultural production, value-adding, marketing and consumption where possible using the latest technologies. A concept document has been developed and planning discussions have been held with MKI that will be leading preparations for the summit.

Through its research unit, the Department is conducting research to investigate climate smart livestock management principles as a measure to mitigate climate change effects for the farmers. This includes genetic conservation and characterization of indigenous livestock such as Nguni cattle and sheep and indigenous goats. Examples include the storage of seeds by communal farmers in indigenous ways that prevent spoilage and ensure use of proved seeds for an area. Conservation tillage is another method that appreciates and applies indigenous ways of production.

We are set to invest in the security and sustainability of its livestock and that of the farmers in KZN. We will enter into another partnership with KZN Youth entrepreneur in ICT to launch a unique invention in cattle tracking systems using tracking devices. The system has got numerous benefit especially for our rural community:

Agricultural Colleges-CEDARA and OSCA



The department, in line with the National Priority 2: Education, Skills, Health and Provincial Priority 5: Education and Skills Development continues to provide agricultural education and training through Cedara and OSCA Colleges of Agriculture to a wide clientele. This forms part of governments' concerted effort to expand access to the Post School Education and Training in agricultural production.

The colleges offer full-time Higher Education qualifications in the form of the Diploma in Agriculture and a Bachelor of Agriculture at Cedara in conjunction with the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The colleges have enrolled 300 students into the Diploma and B Agric degree, for the 2020 academic year.

The colleges have also embarked on providing qualifications at NQF levels 2-4 with learnerships in both Plant and Animal Production across these levels. Currently 86 students are enrolled in the various learnerships. The colleges are actively trying to register as providers and assessment centres for the Quality Council on Trades and Occupations qualifications.

The role of colleges extends beyond fulltime students. They also provide both accredited and non-accredited courses and agricultural training to farmers and participants of projects funded and supported by the department.

LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION PROGRAMME



As documented in various agricultural publications, the natural resource profile of the province lends itself most suitable to support livestock production. The Department will utilise a budget of R100million to support, in particular, smallholder farmers to establish 48 beef, piggery, and poultry enterprises in the current financial year.

In the medium term, the Department will continue to invest in these enterprises to create a critical mass for both domestic and export markets' purpose. During this period, the Department will have engagements with relevant national departments and embassies to identify possible market destinations including their production requirements for these enterprises.

Furthermore, in line with the Premier's State of the Province Address, the Department is developing a goat production value chain strategy to support primary production and promote the culture of business enterprise management amongst black rural livestock producers.

This will include auctions, creating awareness and promoting the value of goat meat amongst the rural poor as a commercial farming venture of choice.



VETERINARY SERVICES



The Veterinary Services Directorate seeks to promote animal health to safeguard food security, human health and animal welfare by controlling animal diseases of economic and zoonotic importance in the province and country at large. It also supports community developments and projects.

In order to build capacity in this unit, the Department intends to reduce the number of vacancies as well as the procurement of 3 mobile theaters over the MTEF. The mobile theaters will be fully-fledged theaters units that will contribute to elimination of diseases such rabies and other opportunistic animal diseases.

Livestock Infrastructure and Livestock Associations



The primary reason for formation of livestock associations was to start the process of building new dip tanks and rehabilitation of the old dip-tanks in the province, as well as to unite the livestock owners in an umbrella body. Part of livestock formation was to create a conducive environment in order for the Department to work closely with livestock farmers and to be able to control animal diseases in rural communities through dip tank structures and also to support them through our departmental programs.

Establishment and Rehabilitation of Dip tanks



Currently in the province, we have 2053 operational dip tanks with an estimated total of 2.1 million cattle in communal areas. We are in a process of building 12 new dip tanks and rehabilitating 42 dip tanks in different districts in order to render an efficient service to our farmers and to address the growing population challenges.

We will be procuring treated poles in different sizes for dip tank rehabilitation worth of R5,5 million with each district receiving poles worth R500 000. This project will assist farmers in repairing or replacing broken poles at their respective enterprises. We will collaborate with municipalities to implement this programme.

Primary Animal Health Care and CCS program

Honourable Members, we all know that agriculture is an important sector for many rural communities. Productivity of livestock could be improved by animal health inputs and interventions. A critical limiting factor in rural communities is the distorted distribution of veterinary services as well as an uneven access to animal health care.

To address these imbalances, the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development focuses on improving access to veterinary services across the country through two strategic national initiatives namely compulsory community service (CCS) programme and Primary Animal Health Care (PAHC).

The CCS programme aims to provide accessible and affordable veterinary services in the whole country especially the rural communities. The programme will involve the deployment of newly qualified veterinarians across the entire country and will focus on disease prevention, rendering ambulatory services and providing education,

especially, regarding responsible pet ownership, resource utilization and optimizing livestock production. This programme will offer the newly qualified veterinarian the opportunity to render their much-needed service to rural areas and gain valuable experience and knowledge.

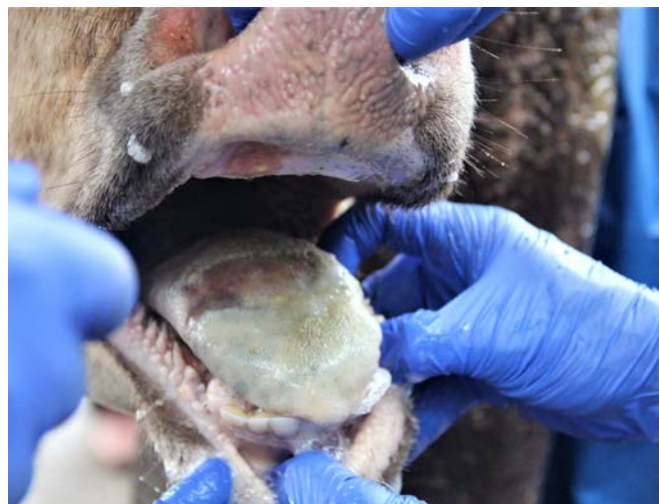
Animal Disease Control and Prevention:

Anthrax

In the two past financial years, there was an outbreak of Anthrax in Lesotho and as the Department; we implemented a strategy to contain the spread of anthrax so that we remain free of the disease through extensive vaccination program, extension and surveillance. We are continuing with the monitoring of the disease.

Rabies

Honourable Members, in our quest to fight the spread of rabies in KwaZulu-Natal, we are pleased to report that we have vaccinated 340 000 pets across the province. We appeal to communities to bring their pets to vaccination clinics in their areas as a means to curb the spread of rabies. Working with our communities we can eliminate the scourge of rabies.



Foot and Mouth Disease

We are collaborating with our national department regarding our status on the foot and mouth disease and other control measures.



African Armyworm/ Fall Armyworm

Fall Armyworm (FAW) moths were first detected in several areas in the KZN Province from 2017 until recently. DARD managed to deal with the threat of FAW by following guidelines listed by the National Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD). FAW is classified as a quarantine pest in terms of the Control Measures Relating to Fall Armyworm R. 449 of 26 May 2017 of the Agricultural Pests Act of 1983 (Act No. 36 of 1983).

It is therefore still compulsory that any individual or organisation that has detected FAW shall immediately report it to the nearest Agricultural office and/or executive officer of the Act. Only one incident reported in and around Paulpietersburg in the Zululand District.

The department has dispatched its team of specialist to investigate the outbreaks of African Armyworm in and around areas such Msinga, Mfolozi and KwaHlabisa led by our entomologists. The team reported that all the affected areas poses a less significant threat and in some areas where grazing land was seen affected the department supplied local farmers associations with feeds.

Livestock Marketing and Goats Masterplan

In the last financial year, we had 13 successful rural auction sales in different districts with different auctioneers which resulted in the selling of about

1350 cattle and a total turnover of R9 million. Goats Production and Marketing

We are in a process of developing a goat masterplan in order to commercialize goat meat in the province. We will negotiate with major retailers so that they can stock and crease a market.



Honourable members, as part of the Provincial Livestock Strategy, the Department had identified wool improvement as an important area of focus in agricultural related products, especially, given its export market opportunities. The average export value of the South African wool clip is R 2,3 billion of which 75% is exported in an unprocessed form as greasy wool and 25% as washed (scoured) wool and also as combed wool (tops). South African farmers, more especially communal farmers, are losing profit due to lack of infrastructure, equipment, poor feeding and genetic material.

The Department will have a focused intervention, especially, at Harry Gwala District to support Wool Growers Associations constituted by African farmers, who collectively own about 32000 sheep according to 2019 records. These farmers export their wool unprocessed as they are unable to obtain maximum wool yields as a result of poor infrastructure, poor rationing and genetic material.

The Department will, therefore, invest R39.5 million over a period of 3 years for construction of shearing sheds, renovation of existing sheds, purchasing of shearing equipment, equipping all shearing sheds with dip-tanks and establishment of cultivated pasture. The implementation of this programme will have a positive overall impact in the profitability and sustainability of wool farming by providing world-class production technology and skills to black African wool farmers in KwaZulu-Natal.

AMALGAMATION OF PUBLIC ENTITIES

The Executive Council resolved that the Departmental entities must be amalgamated. In this regard, it was resolved that Mjindi and Intingwe Tea be wound up and its functions and shares be transferred to the Agri-business Development Agency (ADA).

Honourable Members, while I acknowledge that the finalization of this task has been onerous and slow, I am happy to announce that we have recently made impressive strides in this regard. With effect from 31 March 2020, all three DARD entities are operating as a single entity under the Agri-business Development Agency. Other operational matters are constantly being dealt with by the work-streams on a continuous basis to ensure seamless operation and to advance the Department's commercial Value-Chain mandate.

Public Entities

Agribusiness Development Agency (ADA)

In our previous budget vote, we reported our intention to support some projects funded by our entity, Agribusiness Development Agency (ADA). These include egg production facility owned by a group of women, Amatshitshi Oqobo. We are pleased to report that the construction of the egg facility is progressing and is expected to be completed by June 2020.

The project is being implemented in phases starting with the 10 000 layers and will expand to 20 000 layers. This project, once completed and operational, will create 10 permanent and 20 seasonal employment opportunities, targeting and empowering women as agricultural entrepreneurs.

Honourable Chairperson, through ADA we have developed an interest to establish a youth owned meat-processing facility based at Eston, outside Pietermaritzburg, with an abattoir as part of the value chain. The facility is nearing completion and is expected to create 25 direct jobs and an additional 50 indirect jobs related to logistics and meat retailing.

Red Meat Value Chain Programme

Honourable Members, this red meat value-chain programme seeks to assist projects that encompass the full value chain from veld grazing, feed-lots to meat processing.

The projects that have been identified for the red meat value chain include Tsar Beef project in Harry Gwala, Free M Family farm in Zululand, Oro Beef management feedlot in uMgungundlovu and KwaziGugu Beef farm in Amajuba. The red meat value-chain programme will create more than 120 permanent jobs both in primary agriculture and in agro-processing.

Woman-Owned Egg Production Value Chain Programme.

The ADA identified 5 women owned projects that will be involved in egg production as the cluster. These projects will be linked with mega farm and egg processing warehouse that is privately owned for completing the value chain and securing reliable markets.

High technological Green House Project

Our Agribusiness Development Agency (ADA) will expand in the development of the high-tech hydroponic operation based at Dube Trade Port. This project is looking at value addition into their own pack house where it can source produce from other small-scale growers in the province to package and fulfil its demand for vegetables not grown in greenhouses.

Ntingwe Tea Estate Turnaround

Last year, we reported our plan to resuscitate Ntingwe Tea Estate, an entity that had fallen in hard times. Honourable Members, the turnaround of the entity is in full motion. As part of this plan, in September 2019, we resolved to transfer the management of Ntingwe Tea Estate to ADA under the oversight of ADA Board and Chief Executive Officer pending the finalisation of the amalgamation of entities.

To support the operations of the entity, the Department and ADA provided fertilizers and chemicals, refurbished the factory, helped to facilitate boiler certification to enable harvesting and resumption of tea processing activities. It also ensured the sustenance of 160 seasonal and permanent jobs at the tea estate. Honourable Members, the turnaround strategy seeks to bring back Ntingwe Tea Estate into production.

Mjindi Farming (Pty) Ltd

Last year, we reported our commitment to implement a progressive farmer support model at Mjindi Farming for the maintenance and repair of the infrastructure such as fences, canals, drainage canals, pump stations, in-field roads and to render advisory services in the irrigation scheme.

Honourable Members, we are pleased to report that Mjindi Farming was able to execute maintenance of fencing by employing 15 contract workers for the installation of 27,5 km fence line and repairing of existing fences along the canal. The entity also cleared 211 km of vegetation along the canals, creating jobs for women and youth in the process as well as the maintenance of 130 km of infield gravel road within Makhathini Irrigation Scheme. Furthermore, a new pump was installed and pump stand reconstructed at P4 pump-station to improve the functioning of this critical facility.

Marula Factory and Bhambanana Abattoir

The department will initiate the operationalisation of the Marula Factory and the Bhambanana Abattoir in the UMkhanyakude District. Both facilities have been incomplete for some time. The Department's multimillion investment here must be leveraged.

The Marula factory will take advantage of the fruit from 2 million Amarula trees in our province to produce world-class jams and Amarula oils that are in huge demand by local tourists and the international cosmetic industry. The operational plan has identified the potential to employ almost 1,000 seasonal workers.

We are also in the process of operationalising the Bhambanana Abattoir that allows livestock associations in UMkhanyakude to gain economic benefit from the 140,000 cattle in their District. In 2011, the country lost R11 billion in foreign exchange when it lost its foot and mouth Disease Free status due to the FMD outbreak in the northern part of the Province. The abattoir is therefore a critical pillar in the country's effort to maintain its FMD free status.

Tabling of the Budget Vote

Honourable Chairperson, I hereby submit the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development's budget vote as follows:

- Programme 1 – Administration – R658.844 million
- Programme 2 – Agriculture – R1 803,227 Billion
- Programme 3 – Rural Development – R86.086 million

Total: Vote 3 – Agriculture & Rural Dev. – R2 548.157 billion

Conclusion

In these turbulent times, Honourable Chairperson and Honourable Members, we are reminded of the wise counsel of Helen Keller, who reminds us that, "Although the world is full of suffering, it is full also of the overcoming of it." Our strength as a nation has seen us through the adversity that we have overcome.

We have strengthened our belief that nothing can lower our spirits to a point of no return. That our will to live and thrive has the power to defy any threat to our livelihood. The coronavirus has caused untold suffering in our country and beyond. However, it has not diminished our will and capacity to advance the goal of development for our nation.

As we submit this budget vote, Chairperson, we do so with the unyielding conviction that we are a nation of winners. Even in these troubled times, our mandate has not changed. We are expected to ensure there is sufficient nutritious food for a healthy population.

We will summon all our collective might to ensure that this objective is achieved. It is with this background in mind that we submit our request for this budget allocation to support the service delivery programme of the Department and this provincial government.

As the Department of Agriculture, we are also reminded that June evokes the poignant passage in the opening of the book, *Native Life In South Africa*, by Sol Plaatje, the first Secretary-General of the African National Congress.

It is a passage that captures succinctly, the meaning of land dispossession through the 1913 Land Act. Sol Plaatjie writes that, "Awaking on Friday morning, June 20, 1913, the South African native found himself, not actually a slave, but a pariah in the land of his birth."

Honourable Members, since 1994, the ANC-led government has been working tirelessly to restore the dignity of its entire people. Covid-19, which the Premier correctly pointed out in his budget vote, has only galvanized us more to root out the enduring legacy of race and gender based inequality, poverty, and unemployment.

As we imagine our province post Covid-19, we make a solemn pledge as a Department, we will double of efforts to ensure that our people have access to productive land; that no child goes to bed on an empty stomach, and that all South Africans have access to quality health care.

We will pay forward the sacrifices of our freedom stalwarts like Sol Plaatjie and Charlotte Maxeke by ensuring that our policies and programmes accelerate the realisation of the vision of a South Africa, which is truly united, just, equal, non-racial, non-sexist and prosperous.

As I conclude, allow me Chairperson, to tip my hat to my team, led by the Head of Department, his senior management team, my family and mostly important, my husband, for the support they provide to me in fulfilling my responsibilities as the Executive Authority. The same goes to the committees of this Legislature and all the Honourable Members that we have the privilege to work with.

The support of the Premier, Honourable Sihle Zikalala, and all my Executive Council colleagues reflects the true spirit of our movement that has deployed us to serve the people of KwaZulu-Natal. I also want to extend a word of gratitude to my husband, kids and the rest of the family for allowing me the opportunity to be of service to the people. The same grace and respect is shared with all our stakeholders.

Together, Let Us Create Our Common Future.

And Together, Let Us Grow KwaZulu-Natal.

#Phez'komkhono!!!

With that said, I hereby table the Budget Vote for the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development for the 2020/21 financial year.

I thank you!



KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE

AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

BUDGET

VOTE SPEECH - 2020/21

GROWING KWAZULU-NATAL TOGETHER

*To obtain copies of this document,
please contact:*

Department of Agriculture and Rural
Development
Executive Building,
Communication Services
01 Cedara Road, Cedara
Pietermaritzburg
3200
Tel: 033 343 8240
Fax: 033 343 8255
www.kzndard.gov.za



KwaZulu-Natal Department of Agriculture
and Rural Development



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