

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

VOTE 03 BUDGET SPEECH 2025/26



Hon. Thembeni KaMadlopha-Mthethwa (MPL)
*MEC: Department of Agriculture
& Rural Development, KwaZulu-Natal*

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Inspiring New Hope





- Honourable Speaker, Ms. N Boyce
- Honourable Deputy Speaker, Ms. Tembe
- Honourable Premier, Mr. AT Ntuli
- Honourable Members of the Executive Council
- Honourable Members of the KZN Legislature
- House of Traditional Leaders Chairperson, Inkosi Shinga

- Religious and Traditional Leaders
- Mayors and Councillors
- HOD and Officials from the Department
- Sector Stakeholders
- Our citizens of KZN
- Members of the Media
- Ladies and Gentlemen

INTRODUCTION

Honourable Chair, I am particularly grateful for the opportunity to table Vote 3 Budget Policy Vote for the KZN Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. Let me take this opportunity to firstly thank the Honourable Premier, Mr. AT Ntuli for his continued leadership as the Premier of this province. I remain indebted to Inkatha Freedom Party for deploying me to this legislature.

We are also proud to be led by His Majesty, **Isilo Samabandla, Indlulamithi YamaKhosi** for his support to the agricultural sector as a beacon of hope in eradicating hunger and poverty in rural areas. Chairperson, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude for the ongoing support provided by the Provincial House of Traditional and Khoisan Leaders under the chairmanship of Inkosi RS Shinga.

Recently, I undertook a visit to Nkandla at the invitation of Amakhosi in particular Inkosi yakwa Zondi, Inkosi Mchunu, Inkosi Sithole, and Inkosi Dlomo, who are at the forefront of championing community upliftment programmes through agricultural initiatives. Their willingness to collaborate with our department is commendable.

I would like to acknowledge these traditional leaders for embracing this noble idea of working the land, which has vast potential to address food insecurity. We are working with oNdabezitha to transform the agricultural landscape in all corners of our beautiful province. This is what we envision in every communal land, just like how these leaders in Nkandla and other amakhosi areas across the Province of KwaZulu-Natal show exemplary leadership in championing the developmental aspirations of their communities.



2024/25 AUDIT OUTCOMES

Honourable Chairperson, before I present the Budget to you and the House, please allow me to share with the house the audit outcomes of the department. As the MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development, I am proud to acknowledge and celebrate the Department's achievement of a clean audit outcome for the 2024/25 financial year. This remarkable milestone is a reflection of our collective commitment to good governance, fiscal discipline, and transparent management of public resources. It is a clear indication that our internal

control systems are effective, and that we are upholding the highest standards of accountability and integrity in the execution of our mandate. I extend my sincere appreciation to the Head of Department, senior management, and all officials whose hard work and dedication made this achievement possible. We will build on this success as we continue to serve our farming communities and rural citizens with excellence.



G20 Agriculture Working Group Meeting in KZN

From the 23rd-25th April 2025, the province of KwaZulu-Natal proudly hosted the G20 Agriculture Working Group and the Food Security Task Force Meetings in Durban. We were proud to have the Minister of Agriculture, the Deputy Minister and the Premier, Mayor and Deputy Mayor of eThekweni in attendance. KZN exhibitors made a lasting impression to our visitors and the site visit to the Dube Trade Port AgriZone showcased the possibilities of commercial agriculture success to the delegates.

We are proud of the contribution of KwaZulu-Natal in growing the agricultural sector and placing ourselves in prominent global spaces. To this end our message to the world of "making agriculture cool and fashionable" resonated with the National Department of Agriculture and the delegates from G20 Food Security Task Force group members who promised to replicate it in their respective countries.

This call is premised on young people's energy, enthusiasm and creativity. It's for them to rise above their challenges and be counted in the agricultural value chain as we intend not to leave anyone behind in our quest for development including our most vulnerable groups in the society.

The department is committed to the Government of National Unity (GNU) Statement of Intent and Principles. As the department transitions fully into the 7th Administration term of government 2025-2030, it will pay particular focus to the three national priorities as announced by the President, namely:

- Improved institutional capability, corporate governance and digital innovation
- Improved agricultural production and food security
- Increased farmer support & rural economic development
- Improved animal health and reduced disease outbreak
- Increased agricultural research productivity, technology development and climate-smart agriculture.

In KwaZulu-Natal, we will move with speed to reduce poverty and hunger in the cities and in rural areas, ensuring that we leave no one behind. To this end, we drive comprehensive and equitable agricultural growth, food security, and the advancement of rural communities through sustained scientific and digital technology practices. This will bring us closer **to our vision of inclusively transformed innovative, food secure and sustainable agricultural sector.**

PROGRAMME 1: ADMINISTRATION

HUMAN CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

We are committed to strengthening the institutional capacity by ensuring that there are competent, ethical, and professional employees to deliver quality services to citizens, the Department will be investing in several human development interventions. These initiatives include provision of bursaries for internal staff members and external candidates, trainings, internships, artisanal development and learnerships.

BURSARIES

The department has allocated a budget of **R 4,3 million** in the 2025/2026 financial year for bursaries. To address skills shortages in the public service, the Department developed the Artisan Development Programme.

The programme aims to increase the number of qualified artisans through apprenticeships and trade qualifications. The programme is designed for the employees of the department that have been utilised as Tradesman Aid in our Research Farms. As a pilot programme, four (4) Diesel Mechanics and 4 Welders are prioritised for 2025/2026 financial year.



Internship and Learnership Programme

To empower youth with work experience and professional development opportunities, the Department has allocated a budget of **R 8 million to support 97 Graduate Interns**. In addition to internships, the Department also offers learnerships, which are a combination of theoretical learning with practical workplace experience to prepare participants with industry-relevant skills and knowledge. In this financial year, an allocation of **R 6,9 million** has been made available to continue supporting **120 learners** in Plant and Animal production at NQF level 2 and 3.

These programmes are fully aligned to the IFP's 13point Plan we have been campaigning for in the lead-up to the 2024 National and Provincial Election because we strongly believe in education and that unemployed graduates should be assisted to find meaningful employment opportunities. In a move that underscored the IFP's strong education stance, when other liberation movements were urging students to burn their schools and textbooks in protest against apartheid and chanting "Liberation First, Education Later," the IFP founder and Emeritus President Inkosi Mangosuthu Buthelezi pushed for "Education for Liberation".

Prince Buthelezi was putting a strong emphasis on education as a vital aspect of personal and societal development. It's part of a call to redirect some of the billions spent on Sector Education and Training Authority (SETAs), to ensure that all graduates are given a 12-month internship at municipalities, provincial and national departments which can give graduates work experience and enhance their employability.



Digital Transformation and Automation of Business Processes

The Department has to evolve by adopting more digital technologies and use of artificial intelligence in order to improve business efficiency. To achieve this, the department will partner with State Information Technology Agency (SITA) and Microsoft to upgrade its infrastructure and automate its business. The ICT Strategy is currently under review and an audit of IT solutions will be conducted in order to cost efficiencies.

This includes efforts to maximise the Microsoft licences by ensuring that all the solutions that are part of the agreement are utilised fully, and refresher trainings are conducted for all staff. The department is also going to roll-out the e-leave and electronic requisition forms for procurement. Security services will also be subjected to an independent review and assessment to establish if the service cannot be rendered in a more cost-saving technologically efficient manner.





Programme 2: Agricultural Development Services

To achieve improved agricultural production and food security, the Department will render comprehensive agricultural support to farmers in KZN. In 2024/25 budget speech it was pronounced that the department will accelerate food production through mechanization, production inputs and extension services. On the 15th October 2024 at uMsinga, uMzinyathi District, the Honourable Premier and I launched 2024/2025 multi-planting season. The Department has successfully planted 7748 hectares (against the target of 7000 ha) and supported 13 586 subsistence farmers.

The Department has reconfigured multi-planting season programme to improve efficiency. The reconfigured programme will now include mechanisation provided by the department, mechanisation provided by service providers and farmers that will benefit from the distribution of production inputs.

The Department is proud to announce that 24 new tractors have been bought to augment the support provided to farmers through this programme. A **budget of R53 million (Ilima/Letsima)** has been set aside for food security interventions this financial year. A further, **R44 million is set aside for food security and special projects** across the province.



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Empowering Women, Youth and People with Disability

The department supports a substantial number of females and youth through its Food Security programme. The department seeks to develop youth and females into smallholder farmers who will contribute to create employment in the province.

A budget of **R16.5million** has been set aside to support projects owned or operated by vulnerable groups. A total of **59 women owned projects and a further 39 youth** owned projects will be supported in the current financial year on various agricultural interventions.

The Department will further strengthen its interventions for the disability sector including encouraging the formation of strategic partnership with the sector. In the current financial year **10 projects for people with disabilities** are targeted for support.

The intention of this partnership is to determine appropriate support that citizens with disabilities prefer, which are suited to their needs. Over the years, it has become obvious that the department cannot use one-size-fits all approach as each constituency has different needs. From this partnership, projects will be identified for support within the prevailing farmer support and development framework.



Farmer support and rural economic development

KwaZulu-Natal farmers face a numerous difficulties including ever increasing cost of production, ageing or poor infrastructure, outbreak of diseases and inclement weather. These challenges also include disaster incidents as the 2024 veld fires that destroyed farms, livestock and claimed human lives have shown. It is against this background that the provincial executive mandated the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development to strengthen their agricultural producer support to deliver a comprehensive agricultural development programme.

Following pronouncements made during 2024 budget speech, the department has completed 39 new agricultural infrastructure projects (dip tank, boreholes, irrigation systems, hydroponics tunnels piggery infrastructure) renovated 27 existing infrastructure (dam scooping, infield roads and dip tanks) and fenced 97 Km of grazing and arable lands in various parts of the Province. These initiatives will contribute positively to increased food production and transformation of the agriculture sector. They will further actively be contributing to economic growth, inclusion, equality and the creation of decent work.

Agriculture and Agro-processing Masterplan will remain the anchor policy framework to drive inclusive growth and Job creation in the sector. Various investment projects in the sector will be supported by both the Department and its entity Agribusiness Development Agency in the identified commodities. A total of **73 agricultural projects** in vegetables, grains, small stock, poultry, piggery and beef value chains will be supported with a combined government investment of approximately **R122.5 million**. It is envisaged that 725 job opportunities will be created and directly **impacting 2258 beneficiaries**.



SUGARCANE SUPPORT FOR SMALL SCALE GROWERS

Government remains concerned about ailing sugarcane industry in the province especially its impact to the vulnerable small-scale growers. An amount of **R30 million** has been set aside to assist these farmers to improve the yields and the quality of produce. It is envisaged that **2000 small-scale growers operating in 4000 hectares** in various parts of the province will be supported through the seed cane scheme offered in this programme.



PROMOTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF GOAT INDUSTRY

Goat production in KwaZulu-Natal holds significant prospects to enhancing economic opportunities especially for the rural farming communities. In the current financial year, we intend supporting 68 beneficiaries specifically women through the distribution of high-quality breeding stock to support further development of the goat meat industry.

Approximately **R5 million** has been set aside as seed funding for this initiative. Furthermore, Inkosi Owen Sithole Agricultural College will intensify its training programmes on processing of goat meat. Whilst goat production is significant for traditional rituals, the department seeks to explore the full potential beyond the rituals.



STIMULATING AGRICULTURAL ECONOMIC GROWTH THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS WITH PRIVATE SECTOR

Chairperson, ladies and gentlemen, allow me to highlight the recent strategic partnerships aimed at promoting inclusive agricultural growth, particularly for marginalised producers. A key collaboration with the National Woolgrowers Association supports wool sheep farmers in KwaZulu-Natal through training, value-added production, disease control, and structured planning.

Another major partnership with ABSA focuses on financial literacy, co-financing, and support for producers and farm workers. Agricultural advisors will work tirelessly to workshop farmers on the importance and benefits of these partnerships. These efforts are laying the foundation for resilient, empowered farming communities across the province. Further partnerships are in the pipeline.



PROJECT FUNDING AND OUTCOMES

In our previous Budget Speech, it was announced that a project funding call was advertised by the Department to enable a fair and transparent process. The department received 4 253 applications for small holder support.

However, due to financial limitations imposed by the current fiscal conditions 32 projects for the smallholder commercial category have been approved for funding in 2025/26 financial year through the Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme (CASP) conditional grant. In the subsistence producer category for projects under **R300 thousand**, the Department has been able to support a bigger cohort, with a total of 2 286 projects receiving support.

To support these projects, a total budget of **R18.2 million** has been set aside. Most projects for this category will be crop production with a total of 1 428 projects with a budget of **R7.6 million**. This is followed by 678 animal feed projects with a budget of **R4.7 million**. Fencing projects have been approved at a monetary value of **R3.9 million**.

The department will further provide 162 projects with garden tools with a budget of **R1.5 million** and support 9 minor infrastructure with a budget of R397 thousand. Even though funding is a limiting factor, we pride ourselves for bringing transparency in the system and encourage farmers to be patient as we realign the operational models aimed at supporting the development of the sector.



PROFESSIONALISATION OF EXTENSION SERVICES

Honourable chairperson, on the 20th August 2024 the Honourable Premier, Mr AT Ntuli oversaw the successful hosting of the KZN Agricultural Extension Indaba at Olive Convention Centre in Durban. At that Indaba, the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) Report on status of food security was delivered and scientific papers were presented.

In this financial year, the Department is allocating **R59 million to improve extension services** by ensuring improved public visibility & accountability, enhanced image and professionalism, recruitment of extension personnel, re-skilling and re-orientation of agricultural practitioners and provision of ICT resources.

The Department will host its annual Agricultural Extension Indaba to recognise excellence in the profession in the current financial year. Furthermore 45 Agricultural Advisors including Assistant Agricultural Practitioners will be employed to increase the capacity of services to our farmers.





FARMER TRAINING, INCUBATION AND MENTORSHIP

The Department renders capacity building interventions and farming skills development programmes to upskill farmers. This helps improve production and ensure success of their agricultural ventures.

The Mentorship programme has been identified as one of the critical strategies to develop and leverage these previously marginalised and vulnerable farmers. A total of **R6,1 million** will be used to execute the mandate of Mentorship Programme in the current financial year. The programme aims to assist 39 projects, which is 19 Red Meat, 7 White Meat, 2 Dairy, 1 Bee, 1 Medicinal Herbs, 2 Macadamia, 6 Vegetable, and 1 Fruit production farms.

Through the Cedara and Inkosi Owen Sitole Colleges of Agriculture, the Department has allocated **R3,5 million** for training. Approximately, **1772 youth farmers** will benefit from this training



LAND CARE PROGRAMME

Degradation of natural resources that support agricultural development remains a significant hurdle to socio economic opportunities that would ordinarily be offered. In line with Sustainable Development Goal to protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss the Department established an ambitious Landcare Programme.

LAND CARE PROGRAMME (continue)

In the current year a number of projects will be rolled out to **rehabilitate over 2900 hectares of agricultural land** and directly supporting **330 employment opportunities** through green jobs. Approximately **R26,8 million** has been earmarked to support 10 projects benefiting directly **646 beneficiaries** and a further 11 schools benefiting 800 learners through the Junior LandCare interventions.

MANAGING ANIMAL HEALTH AND REDUCED DISEASE OUTBREAK



Honourable Members, mandatory veterinary services to clients will be enhanced in the current financial year to ensure healthy animals, sustainable and profitable animal production enterprises, safe trade in animals and products of animal origin and the wellbeing of animals and the public.

In February and March 2025, seven new outbreaks were reported in KwaZulu-Natal, bringing the total number of outbreaks in the province to 164. National Cabinet has supported the extension of the KwaZulu-Natal's Disease Management Area (DMA) boundaries to curb further outbreaks of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD).

The DMA has been expanded to include the following municipalities: Big Five Hlabisa; Mtubatuba; Nongoma; Ulundi; Umhlabuyalingana; Jozini; Pongola; Abaqulusi; Mfolozi; uMhlathuze; Mthonjaneni; Nquthu; Nkandla; uMlalazi and Mandeni.

As it stands, no cloven-hoofed animals (cattle, sheep and goats), their products or genetic material may be moved from or within the DMA unless authorised by a state veterinary permit. Movement control is applied on affected locations. Infected locations outside the DMA are similarly quarantined until the disease is eradicated.

The Department working with Industry continue to conduct clinical surveillance to ensure early detection of disease, and to determine absence of disease in previously affected dip tanks. These are supported by intensive vaccination drive in areas diagnosed to be infected.

I must commend the departmental officials, industry and the security cluster in particular South African Police Services for continuously hosting interventions to mitigate any further spread. Reasonable progress has been made to confine the spread and ensure economic programmes return to normalcy.



Over the **Medium-Term Expenditure Framework** an amount of **R134,3 million** has been allocated to support livestock improvement particularly mitigating against Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD). These funds will be utilised for dipping chemicals and other veterinary remedies and employment of 77 dip tank assistants through EPWP programme in the FMD disease management area to assist the livestock associations to keep proper record and follow up on vaccinations, dipping sessions, etc.



The Department will also provide maintenance items such as treated poles and steel pipes to livestock associations to maintain the dip tank infrastructure.

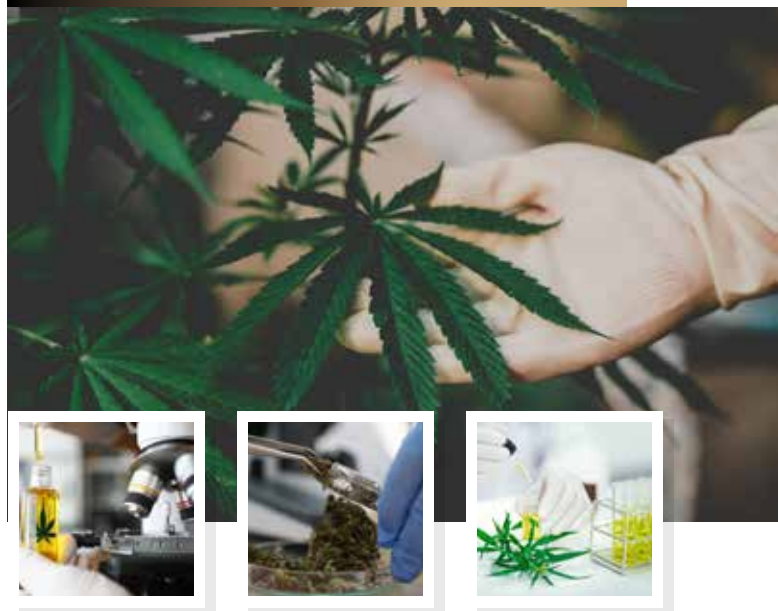
The Department will widen its public awareness campaigns on the disease across the province through extensive use of media platforms. The movement control of animals will remain in place together with disease surveillance across the province to detect any infections timely

AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH, TECHNOLOGY AND CLIMATE-SMART AGRICULTURE



Honourable Chairperson, we are encouraged by the maturity of the Department's **seed multiplication programme**. The Department spends millions of rands buying seeds and fertilisers to be utilised by farmers, especially for the food security and mechanisation programmes. To this end besides producing grains (maize and beans) and vegetable seedlings I have directed the Department to pilot expanding the programme to include potato seeds. The Department strengthens its partnership with Potato SA to give effect to this initiative that will assist smallholder producers who have commercial industry aspirations.

HEMP PERMITS



His Excellency, President Ramaphosa has reaffirmed government's intention to create an enabling regime for hemp and cannabis.

Ensuring that KZN is not left behind, DARD opened another opportunity to farmers by issuing an advert inviting farmers to apply for Hemp permits.

The department has identified hemp seed gap and undertaking hemp seed multiplication programme within Research Stations in collaboration with National Department of Agriculture.



SOIL FERTILITY LAB

Soil fertility is critical to productive food production. Through research conducted by the Department, it has been established that inadequate soil fertility, climate change and financial constraints have been identified as substantial barriers to effective production thus intensifying food insecurity, especially on subsistence and smallholder farms. To respond to this, DARD has developed technological app to monitor the soil fertility status of KwaZulu-Natal utilising FERTREC software.

The department will also be investing in upgrading the equipment in its soil fertility laboratory to improve efficiency of its analytical services and rebuild confidence to the farming fraternity in providing world class service. Approximately **R21 million has been set aside to upgrade laboratory equipment** for both Soil Analytical and Veterinary Laboratories



INDIGENOUS CHICKS PROGRAMME

Indigenous chicks programme is part of food security and nutrition programme. The hatchery programme for indigenous chicks is stationed at the Owen Sithole College of Agriculture. Currently, the hatchery capacity produces 4 000 chicks per month. Due to the demand of indigenous chickens by rural household, the department is expanding hatchery capacity to 8000 chicks per month.

Climate Resilience

As part of climate mitigation strategy, due to continuous inclement weather, DARD has introduced an interface and accessibility tool which will allow farmers to register their weather-related incidents.

Due to the severity of fires and magnitude of losses and damages caused by veld fires leaving the farmers devastated, DARD has engaged firefighting entities as part of fire management strategy.

These include Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE), Working on Fire (WoF) and KZN Fire Protection Association (KZNFFPA).

We call on all farmers and stakeholders to be vigilant during this time of the season as grazing lands are susceptible to wildfires during this period.



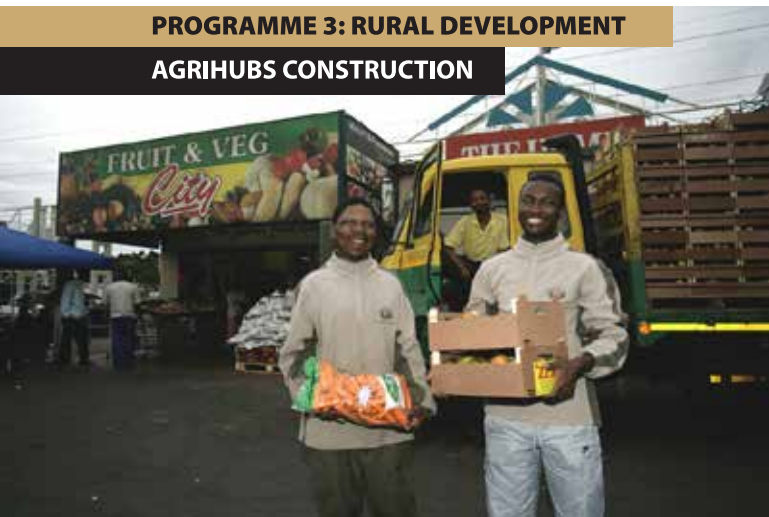
AGRICULTURAL TRAINING INSTITUTES

Integration of traditional Agriculture and Technology has been a challenge which delays service delivery, as a result DARD is in the process of developing Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with countries who are advanced on the space of Agrotechnology. In November 2024, the Department hosted a South African and Chinese BRICS Skills Development Working Group (SDWG) delegation at Cedara. The delegation was accompanied by GoDigitalSA Foundation, which has established a partnership with the department to jointly develop and collaborate on Agri-Internet of Things (IoT) and other forms of technological innovation for smart / precision agriculture.

The visit was preceded by the donation of the of the Sand Table System Greenhouse equipment of the Agri-IoT to be utilised by DARD scientists and students. Following this visit, Cedara has been pronounced as a BRICS Agri-IoT training base. DARD plans to introduce drones in three research station to assist in the collection of data for scientific base decision making. The department is in the process of increasing enrolment through introduction of part-time e-learning advanced diploma that will be done through partnership with tertiary institutions.

PROGRAMME 3: RURAL DEVELOPMENT

AGRIHUBS CONSTRUCTION



The Fresh Produce Hub is one of the major investment project in the province that we announced during the State of the Province Address on July 31, 2024 by the Honourable Premier. As a progress report, Madam Speaker, I would like to report that there is a procurement process for the site establishment, clearing, and fencing of 5,64 hectares within the land allotted under Richards Bay Industrial Development Zone (RBIDZ) Phase 1 as part of the Agrihubs programme. It is anticipated that this initiative will generate up to 110 job opportunities for locals to perform the aforementioned infrastructure works. The Department is still finalising the planning for the agri-hubs in uMgungundlovu (red meat – sheep and pig), Zululand (red meat – beef), uThukela (grain), Harry Gwala (dairy and grain) and eThekweni (white meat).



PHEZU'KOMKHONO AWARDS

As part of the KwaZulu-Natal's commitment to significant economic initiatives, in response to the pressing issue of economic performance, KZN DARD has developed a policy framework on the Women Entrepreneur Awards programme for 2025-2029, that will respond to the call of putting women at the forefront of the economic mainstream.

The objectives of the policy framework are to acknowledge, promote and increase active participation of women in the agricultural value chain for sustainable social and economic growth; to recognise the efforts and contribution of women, young women, senior citizens and women with disabilities in the agricultural sector through food security, job creation, economic growth and poverty alleviation; to encourage the participation of women, young women, senior citizens and women with disabilities in the agricultural value chain; and to award women for their efforts in the agricultural value chain with monetary prizes that can be invested back into their business activities for their sustainable social and economic growth.

This initiative will be epitomised by the Phezu'Komkhono Awards that will be held every year, in commemoration of the women's endeavors in the sector.



UNEMPLOYED AGRICULTURAL GRADUATES YOUTH PROGRAMME (UAGYP)

The programme successfully placed 45 graduates on farms and agricultural enterprises for a period of 24 months in the 2024/25 financial year. The Department is planning to appoint and will appoint and place **130 agricultural youth graduates** into farms and enterprises for a period of 24 months. This will give them the necessary exposure and hands-on experience while being mentored by the farmers or enterprise owners.

The 130 will be comprised of the graduates from various universities including the Department's two Cedara and Owen Sithole College of Agriculture graduates.

Furthermore, to encourage young people to start their own agricultural enterprises, the Department will provide financial support to four (4) successful agricultural graduates who have completed the 2 years farm placement. This is an initiative to demonstrate commitment to those who are exiting the Unemployed Agricultural Graduates Youth Programme.



Market Access Initiatives.

We continue to drive initiatives to unlock market opportunities both in the public as well as private sector and increase the number of historically disadvantaged farmers accessing markets. The priority is given to women, youth and farmers living with disabilities, especially in rural areas. The private sector markets include hotels, restaurants and food and beverages companies. In the 2025/26 financial year, we are targeting to increase revenue generated by farmers by 30%. These initiatives will create approximately 50 job opportunities through post-harvest activities, like sorting, grading and packaging. DARD will provide logistics support to ensure that the produce reaches the markets timeously.



AGRI-BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (ADA)

Agri-Business Development Agency (ADA) continues to roll out its strategy to be a vehicle that facilitates the growth of a strong, transformed, diversified, sustainable agri-business industry in KZN by focusing on projects that are catalytic in nature. The entity's mandate includes provision of support to the Makhathini irrigation scheme. However, land disputes and old infrastructure remain challenges that impact negatively on operations. The entity is further entrusted with a responsibility as an interim project manager for Ntingwe Tea Estate to ensure continuation of operations at the tea estate while the Annual Financial Statement (AFS) and valuation of the business is underway.

Although ADA's governance is slowly showing signs of improvement especially with the institution of the new Board, it however, remains a focal priority for the Department as its vehicle to champion transformation of the agricultural sector. I have tasked the Head of Department to assist the entity to improve its systems of internal control and general delivery of projects and programmes. The new board has further been mandated to prioritise the filling of all vacant executive positions in the entity within the next six months.



This will further enable the entity to aggressively carry out its mandate free of impediments. ADA will receive an allocation of R214 million in the 2025/26 budget vote.

The Department had initially announced the establishment of the KZN Farming Enterprise (KZNFE) as a special purpose vehicle (SPV) to oversee the implementation of Agri-Hubs and the Commercial Mechanization Programme. This was going to be an entity that draws investments, generate revenue and with prospects to be self-sustainable.

In the course of setting up the KZN FE Systems and business plan, including consideration of the new strategic direction from the new leadership in the Department and the fiscal position of the provincial government, it became evident that it is no longer feasible for the Department to set up another new entity.

The Department has now halted the establishment of the KwaZulu-Natal Farming Enterprise and in line with the original resolution of the rationalisation of entities, move all the planned activities of the KZNFE to Agribusiness Development Agency.

VOTE 3 BUDGET SUMMARY

The department hereby tables a budget of R2.757 billion in 2025/26 for vote three broken down as follows:

- Programme 1 - Administration: R751 834 000
- Programme 2 - Agriculture: R1 898 601 000
- Programme 3 - Rural Development: R 107 008 000

TOTAL: R2 757 443 000

CONCLUSION

As I conclude, allow me Chairperson, to express my sincere appreciation to the Head of Department, Mr ZN Dlamini, senior management and all staff of the Department. We are grateful for the support of our stakeholders, the Board and staff of our entity Agribusiness Development Agency.

Without the support of my family and my political home, the IFP, I would not be here. I also wish to express my gratitude to the Honourable Premier, Mr AT Ntuli and all colleagues in the provincial executive and this House. To the President of my party the IFP, the Honourable V Hlabisa, thank you for your support and for a smooth transition to the 50th year anniversary of the IFP that we continue to serve as humble servants. The IFP is this year celebrating 50 Years of Resilience, Service, and Integrity.

I THANK YOU! SIYATHOKOZA!





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HEAD OFFICE

Private Bag X9059, Pietermaritzburg, 3200 Tel: 033 355 9100

Fax: 033 355 9122

MEC's OFFICE (CEDARA)

Private Bag X9059 | Pietermaritzburg | 3200

Tel: 033 343 8240 | Fax: 033 343 8255

Tel: 033 355 9100 | Fax: 033 355 9151

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

Private Bag X9059 | Pietermaritzburg | 3200 | Tel: 033 355 9690

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