



## agriculture & rural development

Department:  
agriculture  
& rural development  
**PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL**

# BUDGET POLICY SPEECH 2014-15

TOGETHER WE HAVE MADE KZN A BETTER PROVINCE TO LIVE IN.





## **PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL**

Vote 3 Budget Policy Address  
by Mr. V. C. Xaba,  
MEC: Agriculture and Rural Development,  
to the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Legislature

***14 August 2014***



## **Chairperson**

Honourable Premier and colleagues of the Executive Council

Honourable Members, Amakhosi present, Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

It is indeed an honour and privilege for me to be delivering my first budget policy speech as the MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development in KwaZulu-Natal. I stand in front of you, humbled, excited and ready to take steps towards radical agrarian transformation.

### **Radical Agrarian Transformation**

The Agricultural Sector, as the primary economic activity, is one of the few sectors in the economy with high labour absorption ability in rural areas.

We are guided by Outcomes 4 (Decent Employment through inclusive growth) and 7 (Comprehensive rural development and food security) of the Medium Term Strategic Framework as well as the National Development Plan and the Provincial Growth and Development Plan.

The main metric of these mandates is to contribute to the creation of one million jobs in the agricultural sector by 2030.

This means profound change.

For this reason, alignment and coordination between the DARD, other departments (national and provincial), local government and local leadership, the private sector, organised agriculture and our farmers and farming communities is foremost in our minds. The need to develop policies that introduce new business opportunities in agriculture to make it attractive for investors is beyond debate.

Integrated planning with agricultural commodity associations, strategic partnerships and the crowding in of investments are all key to achieving our departmental outcomes.

We will promote agricultural development based on successful land reform and post-settlement support. We intend to enhance the development of smallholder producers in the Province and give focused attention to the expansion of irrigated agriculture and dry-land production.

We aim to create rural jobs through taking steps to grow and develop sustainable rural enterprises in areas with greater economic potential and we will continue to address the food insecurity of the Province.

The question is: "How?"



## Commodity Approach and Spatial Planning

Honourable Members, the National Development Plan, the Agricultural Policy Action Plan and the Provincial Growth and Development Plan direct us, in short, to use underused land in communal areas and land-reform projects for commercial production, support commercial agriculture sectors and regions that have the highest potential for growth and employment and support job creation in the upstream and downstream industries.

This is the integral part of our rural economic transformation approach. These plans point to certain agricultural commodities to be focused on due to them being important employment creators with growth and value adding potential.

The KwaZulu-Natal Executive Council identified key commodities such as Red Meat, Chicken Meat, Dairy and Dairy Products, Vegetables, Dry Beans and Soya beans as focus commodities that have the potential to become self-sufficient industries and eventually enter the export market.

The Department will be taking a commodity approach into the future and aims to drive these commodities by recognizing our local opportunities and developing strategies tailored to local conditions.

The Department will develop a District-based commodity plan for each of these District Municipalities, with the aim to eventually develop such a plan for every District Municipality in the Province.

The Department will use this spatial planning process as a platform and process amongst stakeholders to properly diagnose constraints and to identify required practical interventions to develop rural communities within the context of 'employment-driven and equitable economic growth'.

In adopting an agrarian step-wise approach, we will also aim to take enterprise development to the creation of agri-villages, finding more innovative market linkages and facilitating joint ventures between communities and local and international investors.

An opportunity exists to explore options in terms of farm resident settlement options and improved service provision which will bring about stability relating to various agricultural issues. In this regard we have commenced working on an agri-village model within commercial agriculture areas of our Province.

These areas will, in the long term, be identified in our spatial planning process. At present a lot of work has been done amongst role players to establish a pilot-agri village in the Utrecht area and Ubuhlebezwe Municipality.

It is anticipated that these new emerging settlements or villages in remote rural areas will contribute to rural economic development and also address the plight of labour tenants living on farms.



CHEESE Production



BEEF Production



Mentorship and capacity building of beneficiaries will lead to them being empowered to run the project themselves and be self-sustaining through generation of their own income.

The Department will end up exiting from a project after having mentored beneficiaries and having transferred management and business skills. Our approach might require the beneficiary to also be exposed to risk by contributing towards to establishment and running of their project.

The Department will start focussing on project implementation plans that clearly indicate the impact that it is making, and who will be benefiting and it will be effectively monitoring and evaluating such impact over time. We see into the future that agricultural enterprises can only develop if we ensure provision of support for collective structures, such as rural producer associations or cooperatives.

This includes economic infrastructure, further technology and skills development, more marketing, establishment of SMMEs in processing or light manufacturing and trade, and creating an incentive scheme(s) to support local agricultural production and value addition/agro-processing.

I also want to announce that we will, in partnership with KwaZulu-Natal Agricultural Union (Kwanalu), create an Emerging Farmer Development Unit which will focus on the growth, development and sustainability of emerging farmers towards the level of the commercial counterparts.

Commercial farmers will be assisting us to develop supporting mechanisms to promote small and developing farmers in an integrated manner. I have had some interactions with the commercial agricultural sector and look forward to strengthening our relations so that we can share best practice towards agricultural and rural development.

## Agriculture: Science and Business

High growth and labour creating agricultural industries will be encouraged as identified in the NDP. For a number of years now, the Department has facilitated agricultural primary production through its massification and mechanisation programmes.

However this approach has largely ignored the fact that agriculture is a business. The business skills development of participants is thus of utmost importance.

I have found in my short time as MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development that this is a great gap in our approach. The application of basic scientific and business principles to any project, large or small, will become an integral part of the development and enhancing of enterprises.

Yes, we must aim for food security, nutrition and health first, and yes, we must at the same time be environmentally responsible, but: The anchor to the activities of the Department will become the creation of accountable agricultural businesses that deliver and ensure economic viability and share value, across the entire food and agriculture chain, from farmers to consumers.

Our business approach will start with facilitating market access for produce and the possible agro-processing and value adding of such produce.

## Morana People's Bio Oil







## Makhathini Development

**KZN Executive Council visits Makhathini Flats**

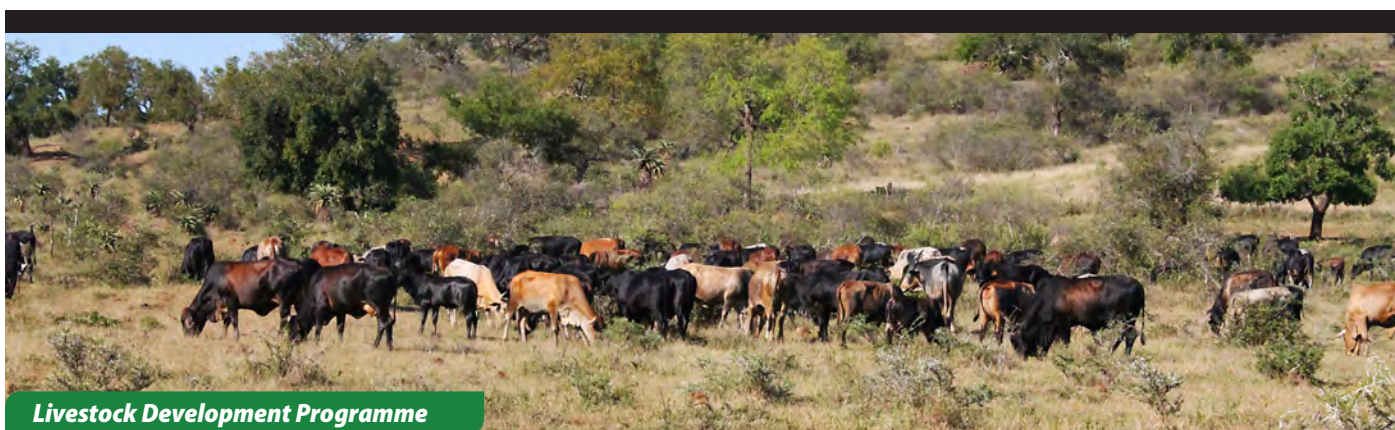
Honourable Members, while on the topic of business, it perhaps is an opportune moment to indicate to you that the Department will commence to fast track implementation of the Makhathini Integrated Development Plan as part of the National Phakisa (Big Fast Results) Initiative, as announced by the Honourable Premier, following the Cabinet visit to Makhathini in July.

Chairperson, the development of the Makhathini Flats has long been under discussion in this House. It has now

been elevated to one of the National Development Plan priorities and the whole country is focused on the potential of this area. I wish to take some time to tell you about the successes we have achieved.

For the past five years, the department has invested over R300 million at Makhathini flats towards agricultural programmes which include livestock development, crops, irrigation and dry land cropping.

I list this progress as follows:



### Livestock Development Programme

Livestock is one of the economic pillars of Jozini and Mhlabuyalingana Municipalities, the herds of cattle in these two municipalities are estimated over 150 000, however the scarcity of water impedes the effective development of the industry. The department invested over R15million in livestock watering related projects in the past five years, to date 70 stock watering dams have been scooped and 13 boreholes have been drilled.

Honourable Members, as you will recall, that with the outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) in the Makhathini area during 2011, South-Africa was banned from exporting all cloven-hoofed animals (cattle, goats and sheep), as well as products from these. It is estimated that, since then, this resulted in a loss of about R3 billion in exports per year.





### **Livestock and Sale Centre in Manguzi**

The DARD, and the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, work hard towards successfully controlling the outbreak. I am sure that all present here will join me in expressing gratitude for work well done.

The Department has recently launched a programme which will see the re-instatement of the Redline barrier of just over 120km of fencing. These and other measures, such as increasing disease surveillance, animal identification, etc., have been recognised by the International Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases - a specialist body of the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE). It is with pride that I report that OIE has declared the

rest of South-Africa (outside of the redline control areas) as FMD free, this, of course, will now allow farmers outside of the redline area to export red meat and red meat products again.

The construction of the abattoir to assist livestock farmers in the Redlined area has commenced, the contractor is on site, the official site hand over was done on the 25th of March 2014. In order to have good quality animals feeding the abattoir, the department has completed two livestock centers and one feedlot. The total investment in livestock intervention is about R70million.

### **Crops and Irrigation:**



Chairperson, the agricultural potential of Makhathini and the soil conditions are known, however the rainfall is insufficient to support all agricultural activities. In order to unlock this potential, development of irrigation schemes is required.

The department has invested over R100million in the past five years developing and rehabilitating irrigation schemes.

The Department, together with Mjindi has appointed consultants to design the expansion of this scheme from 4570ha to 15000ha.

The expansion of the scheme will be implemented in phases, the first phase will commence in the fourth quarter of the financial year, the whole development is anticipated to be completed in the 2019/2020 financial year.



## Dry Land Cropping

There are parts in the Makhathini area that are along the coastal line where the rainfall is sufficient for some agricultural activities, however the soils are sandy and not as good as other areas.

The Department has identified fruit trees, ground nuts, cassava and Marula as potential crops to be planted in these areas. To date, 150 ha is being developed for groundnuts, the marula processing plant is under construction at Manguzi and the marula storage shed has been completed at Ngwavuma.

The total area earmarked for irrigation development is 20 000ha. However, this land is farmed in small and

unprofitable parcels. The development of Makhathini can only truly become sustainable if lands are consolidated and farmed on a commercial basis.

This will require a collaborative effort with our sister Departments and relevant National Departments to solve land conflicts, establish community business enterprises in partnership with the private sector and to establish agro-processing facilities that will benefit farmers on the ground to access market hitherto untapped.

It is trusted that the Phakisa approach will expand the Makhathini Development from an "agricultural intervention" to a holistic Government intervention.

## Research and Technology Development



Honourable Members, I am particularly excited about the department's renewed focus on research and technology, as this is something that was neglected in recent years and, in my opinion, should form the backbone for all our activities.

As I mentioned earlier, agriculture is a science and I wish to see greater integration between researchers, extension officers and economists.

The Department, through an innovative, needs-driven agricultural research and technology development programme, with technical support, specialized advice and the services provided by the analytical and diagnostic laboratories will support agriculture moving forward in KwaZulu-Natal.

The Analytical Services which we provide comprise five routine laboratories which are housed in technical facilities and offer cost effective, valuable scientific data which impacts directly on agricultural production in the Province.

For the year 2014/15 these laboratories are planning to analyse approximately 34 000 samples received from clients of the Department.

Soil Fertility research focuses on improving the fertilizer and lime recommendations made by these Analytical Services, and on developing conservation agriculture technologies which promote the rehabilitation and maintenance of soil structure and health.

Critical is the continued innovative research into the Province's soil fertility to provide information with regard to acidification as well as the use of alternative inputs for Nitrogen fertilization such as cover cropping.

To address future challenges that will affect crop production in the Province, research scientists investigate aspects such as different rates of Nitrogen required under no-till; the effects of winter cover crops on maize production; the effects of lime on soil acidity and maize under no-tillage and as well as looking into the comparison of conventional tillage and conservation-tillage.



In addition, research is also conducted on the control of main maize diseases as well as weed control in maize using cover crops.

The production of essential oil crops are a great opportunity for the engagement of small farmers in agriculture. The essential oil industry is a lucrative industry valued at millions of rand with great potential to alleviate poverty in the rural areas by means of community projects.

Biochemistry Researchers are conducting research into essential oils to provide scientifically researched information on the different aspects that are responsible for quality, quantity and continuity of essential oils.

The production of agronomic and horticultural crops remains one of the most effective means of alleviating poverty and raising the levels of household food security.

Research Scientists in my Department continue to focus primarily on evaluating potato, maize, sweet potato, soya and dry bean cultivars to ensure that we recommend those that are not only adapted to specific production areas, but are also economically important to producers.

This is an on-going process as new cultivars are regularly introduced into the market - and accurate, long-term data is needed for reliability and optimum yields.

A significant number of trials are being conducted in rural areas. I need to mention the Co-operative work between our Department and Potato South Africa.

There are 12 potato production demonstrations throughout the Province with the objective of promoting potato production amongst emerging commercial rural farmers in rural areas.



Sweet Potato is a crop that could make a significant impact towards alleviating hunger and nutrient deficiency in the Province. For this reason, we are investigating the potential of a number of cultivars to determine which are best suited for production in KZN. Some 5000 cultivars will therefore be evaluated in terms of yield and quality.

Emphasis will be given to selecting high beta-carotene genotypes. It is planned to select roughly 30 lines from the top 100 for release. More recently, great interest has become evident in the field of viticulture - the cultivation of grapevines - especially as a 'niche market' commodity.

It may even be that climate change could be beneficial to the province in this field. However, detailed research studies need to be undertaken before this can be substantiated. It is also of significance to inform the House that 2014 marks the 60th anniversary of Bartlow Combine and 50th anniversary of the Kokstad and Makhathini Research Stations.







## ***Food Security***

Honourable Members, Food Security forms a big part of the KwaZulu-Natal Poverty Eradication Strategy. Our Food Security focus will continue to play a big role in agrarian transformation but the Department's food security approach will be anchored in instilling a love and excitement for agriculture amongst our children at school.

200 Million young people live in Sub-Saharan Africa. We have the youngest population in the world. If we can enhance their aspirations and interests in agricultural activities we will take big steps towards agricultural development and food security. They are our future agricultural scientists, farmers, agricultural economists.

The Department, together with the Department of Education, is developing a model to make this possible and will investigate the possibilities for these young learners to obtain some accreditation towards a future career in Agriculture.

Chairperson, Members, our Honourable Premier talks to us in his address about Job Creation for the Youth and addressing social challenges.

The Department takes youth and gender mainstreaming very seriously and will actively continue to formulate focused programmes to address the challenges of youth unemployment and to make our youth aware of the exciting careers in agriculture.

The Department will use its Food Security experience and knowledge to start taking subsistence farmers to a level where they start earning an income from their farming activities and step into the enterprise development phase of agrarian transformation.

In this regard, we have started developing household food producers to supply local, external and government markets by means of contributing to the School Nutrition Programme and the Department of Social Development's Nutrition Development Centres.

NEPAD has declared 2014 the year of Agriculture and Food Security, a year of 'Family Farming'. We especially believe that our focus on Food Security during 2014/15 will give emphasis to this NEPAD campaign.





## Livestock

Honourable Members, the Department is implementing the Livestock Intervention Strategy approved by the Executive Council in 2010. Livestock production forms a major portion of the gross agricultural product of KwaZulu-Natal.

Between 70 to 80% of the Province is only suited to grazing as a sustainable land use option. Consequently, research and technology development into the sustainable use of the livestock and the resource base is critical.

Various challenges in the implementation of the Livestock Intervention have highlighted the need for an increased focus on extension, adaptive and applied research in animal husbandry. This is grazing management, breeding management and production systems, nutrition/supplementary feeding, herd management and animal health management.

The indigenous breeds of the Province are important to the people of KZN and offer animals potentially better adapted to climate change; therefore the breeds indigenous to KZN must be actively conserved and characterised. This forms part of our spatial planning approach where adaptive and applied research is focused on the potential of the different bio-resource units and conditions in the Province.

To improve compliance with Animal Identification Act (Act No 6 of 2002), the Department last year sought to support communal farmers with the registration of brand marks with the Registrar of Animal Identification by providing branding tools as part of an integrated animal identification campaign.



The Department has obtained dip-tank branding certificates allocating a unique number to each of the 1 600 dip-tanks in KZN. These will, as an alternative, assist mainly communal farmers who are unable to afford registration.

During our engagement with the Stock Theft Forum and Rural Safety and Tourism Forum, it became apparent that the inability of communal farmers to mark their animals makes it difficult for the South African Police Services-Stock Theft Unit (SAPS-STU) to deal with prevailing stock theft cases.

This is why we will continue with our animal branding campaigns in areas mostly affected by stock theft. The main goal is to enhance traceability.

The Department assisted communal farmers during 2013 to establish a KZN Livestock Association which is an umbrella body representing the interests of communal livestock farmers.

Since its inception, the KZN Livestock Association has proven to be an important structure through which communal farmers can organise themselves and through which DARD can support them with livestock auction sales and other livestock related activities.

Furthermore, it is able to engage with relevant departments and forums such as the KZN Rural Safety and Tourism Forum, Stock Theft Forum and Red Meat Production Organization (RPO).

The Department sees the Livestock Association as an effective communication structure in co-ordinating livestock farmer development support.

In 2014/15 the Department will provide comprehensive training to livestock farmers in the Province on the following aspects:

- grazing management and nutrition,
- supplementary feeding at different production periods and seasons,
- primary animal health care,
- marketing and management to achieve best market prices,
- breeding and selection,
- value adding,
- business administration and governance,
- condition scoring,
- animal care for good production,
- animal identification and
- record keeping and marketing.





### ***Nguni Project***

One of our exciting initiatives, the Nguni Project has in the past faced numerous challenges. I have appointed a Technical Committee comprising of senior managers in the Department to attend to these challenges but most importantly to pave a simple, practical but working solution well into the future.

Among others, the Technical Committee has clear instructions to revive a partnership with the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC). The IDC is in successful partnership with all the other provinces for Nguni Cattle Development.

After personal engagement with the IDC, I am confident of the future success of the Nguni project in our Province. Furthermore, the Technical Committee is tasked with the establishment of a Trust to which a dedicated staff structure will be seconded with their sole focus being on the implementation of this project.

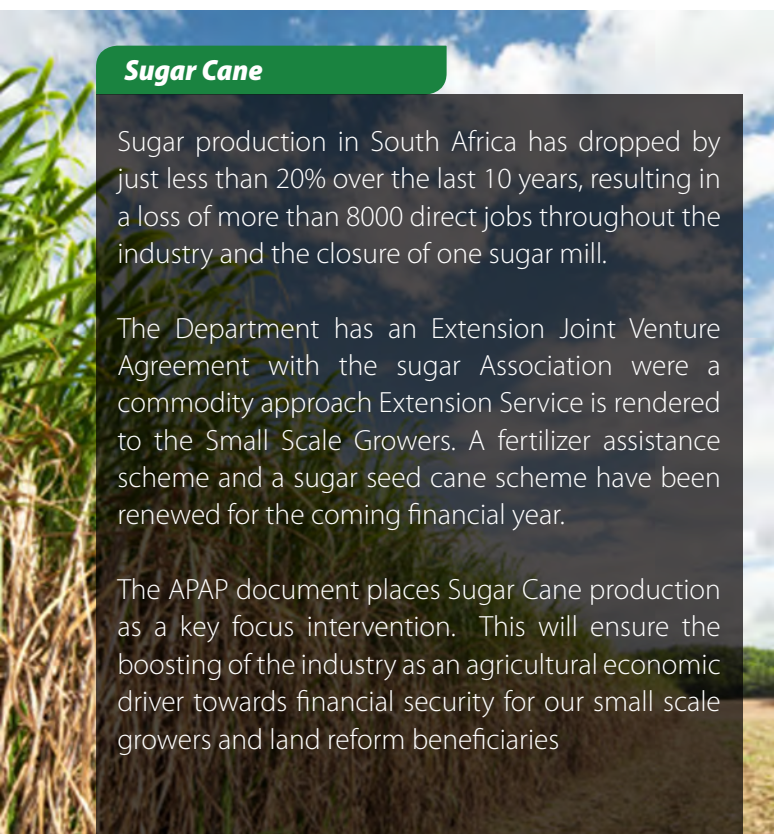
I also want to assure our clients and beneficiaries of this Department's commitment to correct and timeous communication subsequent to the approval of our plans by the Executive Council.



### ***Crop production:***

Honourable Members, we will soon embark on a process of communicating with our stakeholders and beneficiaries regarding the innovative changes we envisage for the Land Preparation and Mechanisation Programmes of the Department into the future.

Relevant policies and procedures will be reviewed and active consultation will take place. This being said, the ploughing of approximately 21 000 hectares and liming of 1900ha will continue as was originally planned for the 2014/15 financial year.



### ***Sugar Cane***

Sugar production in South Africa has dropped by just less than 20% over the last 10 years, resulting in a loss of more than 8000 direct jobs throughout the industry and the closure of one sugar mill.

The Department has an Extension Joint Venture Agreement with the sugar Association where a commodity approach Extension Service is rendered to the Small Scale Growers. A fertilizer assistance scheme and a sugar seed cane scheme have been renewed for the coming financial year.

The APAP document places Sugar Cane production as a key focus intervention. This will ensure the boosting of the industry as an agricultural economic driver towards financial security for our small scale growers and land reform beneficiaries



### ***Fencing***

Fencing will always be part of any development and the Department plans to put up a total of 668km of fencing. Irrigation support will continue as the Department envisages developing about 36 new irrigation schemes and rehabilitating 20 existing irrigation schemes.





**Rabies Eradication**

The success of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and World Health Organisation Rabies Eradication Programme must be celebrated today. We are pleased to announce that we celebrated a full year without a human death to rabies in July this year and two years with only one single death. In July we celebrated 45 days without an animal case (something that did not occur in over 30 years) but recently we unfortunately diagnosed 2 cases in Port Shepstone and we will strengthen our campaigns in this area as well as other priority areas.



**Mjindi Pty (Ltd)**

The communities in Umkhanyakude District continue to derive part of their livelihoods and economic activities from Makhathini Irrigation Scheme.

The improved rehabilitation of the infrastructure during the past year resulted in uninterrupted supply of irrigation water.

Farmers were also assisted with irrigation pipes. The new pipes have improved the effectiveness of irrigation operations and will increase crop yields.

Food production remains the major focus for Mjindi Farming. During the previous financial year, there has been an increase in the area and the yield of food crops while the area under sugar cane has remained stagnant.

There has been an increase in the number of farmers trained in the various farming methods. There is a noticeable positive correlation between the effectiveness in the advisory services, efficient water supply to farmers and the increase in the production of food.

Land disputes, theft and vandalism of irrigation infrastructure remain problems and major threats.

Mjindi also plans to provide mechanization services that will assist farmers to prepare their lands and plant timeously. These services will be paid for by the farmers.



**Vets Services vaccinating pets**



**Public Entities**



Ladies and Gentlemen, I want to start off this part of my address by indicating to you that the Department will be purifying and streamlining its links and activities with its Public Entities. We aim to enhance our mutual support to achieve our agricultural and rural development mandates.





## **Agribusiness Development Agency (ADA)**

Honourable Members, the ADA, despite its short history of existence, has successfully helped a number of emerging black farmers and agribusinesses graduate to being fully-fledged commercial farmers and value-adding businesses.

Examples of such successes include Bayonne Dairy Farm in Mooi River, Ma-Ande Investment (dairy) and Copperfield (dairy), both in Kokstad.

The ADA has also managed to prevent the repossession of a number of farms by financial institutions through the Distressed Farmers Programme, where farms that were unprofitable and could not meet their obligations were assisted and brought to full production, thus being able to honour their debt commitments.

We are looking forward to the 2014/15 financial year to build on the gains already achieved and working even closer with this public entity.

## **Conditional Grants**

### **Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme (CASP)**

The main objective of this programme is to capacitate the farmers to graduate to commercial level enabling them to acquire their own equipment and production assets.

This programme is implemented in all eleven district municipalities to encourage farmers to participate in grain production.

The Extension Recovery Programme (ERP) unit is also funded through the Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme as a conditional grant. The allocated budget for the 2014/15 financial year is R47 million.

The Programme is a direct drive by Government to improve extension and advisory support by up-skilling extension officers to improve assistance to farming communities in KwaZulu-Natal.

Thus, the recruitment process of contract extension officers targeted unemployed graduates with qualifications (Diplomas/Degrees) in Agriculture.

The Department continues to maintain its internship programme by employing 525 contract Agricultural Assistant Extension Officers whom have been placed across all district offices.

Their placement was informed by their field of specialization such as crop science, soil science, agronomy, agricultural economics, environmental sciences, animal production etc.



The internship programme enables Assistant Extension Officers to become marketable to Agricultural institutions. All Departmental interns qualify for bursaries to upgrade their qualifications from diplomas to degrees at registered tertiary institutions.

The upgrading process is in line with the National norms and standards. The Department also funded bursaries to officers for continuing studies in areas of specialization that are aligned to the Departmental objectives.

The CASP grant allocation of R 212 million for the 2014/15 financial year is shared amongst the four CASP pillars; of which 68% has been allocated towards implementing CASP projects and post-settlement support, 22% towards the Extension Recovery Plan (ERP); 5% for the Colleges and 5% for training and mentorship.

The Department is planning to assist both land reform and communal maize and bean farmers for the development of more than 10 200ha this financial year. Other commodities that will be assisted is sugarcane; citrus; small stock and large stock and vegetable production.





### **Ilima/Letsema Programme**

The total budget allocated for Ilima/Letsema programme for 2014/15 financial year is R69 million for the following deliverables or outputs:

- Maize and Dry Beans production valued at R7 million for 1500ha.
- Irrigation Development valued at R15 million for 4270ha.
- Liming and fertilizer programme R31,5million for 2000ha.
- And R15,4million for the Food Security programme.

### **Departmental LandCare Programme**



The LandCare programme is aimed at halting the degradation of agricultural natural resources through promoting community participation in sustainable use and management; and in so doing to optimise productivity, food security, job creation and better quality of life for all.

The programme includes provision of training, capacity building and succession, planning in relation to programme or land management and promoting awareness amongst community members in natural resources management. It must be mentioned that we exceeded our plans last year to create green jobs with 577 jobs (we planned creating 1500 jobs but instead facilitated the creation of 2077).

### **Planned projects:**

The following projects are planned for 2014/15 financial year:

- community based and soil conservation projects which include landcare awareness conferences
- JuniorCare which will continue to target the youth in identified communities,
- training and community mobilization, which will include LandCare branding and UIF contributions.

### **Rural Development:**

Honourable Members, as all of you are aware, the Premier, Mr E.S. Mchunu, announced in his State of the Province Address in February this year, the incorporation of Rural Development into the Department.

Furthermore, in his inauguration address on 26 May 2014, he announced that the Environmental Management function will be moving to the Department of Economic Development and Tourism, allowing the Department to focus on Agriculture and Rural Development.

This has inevitably required from us to commence the reconfiguration of the departmental structure in order to obtain sufficient human and financial resources to implement the Department's constitutional mandate as well as the national priorities pertaining to agriculture and rural development.

The Rural Development mandate has the potential to transform and revive the economy in our rural communities through renewed investment and job creation but this remains to be a transversal provincial priority.

In this regard the agrarian transformation system introduced by Honourable Minister G. Nkwinti in his budget policy speech on Rural Development and Land Reform on 23 July 2014 will be adapted for KwaZulu-Natal.

He specifically highlights the National Development Plan as roadmap for rural economic transformation and development. I quote: "The vision is rural areas that are spatially, socially and economically well integrated- across municipal, district and provincial and regional boundaries – where there is economic growth, food security, and jobs as a result of agrarian transformation and infrastructure development programmes..."end quote.

We will play a very big role in achieving this vision in KwaZulu-Natal.

The Rural Development mandate requires from us to co-ordinate with the Department of Land Reform and Rural Development to facilitate the implementation of comprehensive rural development initiatives and land reform support.

To this end, the MEC will kick-off this co-ordination by driving, chairing and taking the lead, hand-in-hand with the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform, in establishing the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP) Provincial Coordinating Forum, which will include District Mayors, Chairpersons of the Local Houses of Traditional Leaders, Senior Government Officials (National and Provincial Departments), DDG from the Department

of Rural Development and Land Reform, and representatives from other agencies.

This Forum has the overall responsibility for the implementation of the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme initiatives in the Province. It will receive, evaluate District reports and work done at a district level, and consolidate these reports into a Provincial report for tabling at MINMEC.

It is important to note that the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP) identifies 27 District Municipalities across the country as priority areas for the implementation of the CRDP in KwaZulu-Natal. Ten of the District Municipalities in KwaZulu-Natal are included in this list.

Furthermore, the Department will establish, in co-operation with our Rural Development and Land Reform colleagues, District Land/Agrarian Reform Co-ordination Committees.

These District Committees will include key stakeholders such as private sector financial institutions, other Government Departments, agencies and agricultural landowners.

These committees will be leading beneficiaries through resuscitation and settlement phases to achieve sustainable agrarian transformation on land reform farms.

We have strengthened our relationship with our Land Reform and Rural Development colleagues to take radical and robust action together, to participate in Land Allocation Committees and lead the district co-ordination towards effective implementation of the CRDP in KwaZulu-Natal.

### **Corporate Governance Matters**

Finally, members I must acknowledge that I have taken responsibility of a Department that faces a number of corporate challenges. With the support of internal and external teams appointed by the Honourable Premier, we have made progress in addressing these challenges. Critical posts are currently being filled at a rapid pace and the Treasury team placed in our Supply Chain Management Unit is setting up robust systems to ensure that agricultural inputs will never be acquired late in the planting season as was experienced before.

A new and ambitious programme has been started with regard to amalgamation of our agricultural colleges and we are currently in discussions with the Department of Trade and Industry, Trade and Investment KZN, and the Dutch Chamber of Commerce to rejuvenate our Training Centres into facilities that will substantially expand our capacity to train agricultural students in practical farming and artisanal skills.

The Department will have a principled corporate and human resource approach to making sure it meets its mandates, namely that of ensuring that we provide effective and efficient agricultural development services and that we coordinate, plan and stimulate rural development initiatives.

The Head Office will co-ordinate, monitor, evaluate and report while the local and district arm of the Department will be responsible for implementation.

The Rural Development mandate will be achieved by ensuring that amongst other aspects, rural development planning, co-ordination and infrastructure development is specifically looked at.

The Department will be innovative in the steps it takes toward ensuring ultimate holistic service delivery at coalface and a conducive environment for farmer development, where, as I mentioned earlier, the focus will be on establishing self-reliant farmers.

Before I conclude with the tabling of the budget for approval, I wish to thank members for their support, the acting HOD and other staff members for their commitment dedication in support me.

I have been involved in this House for some time, and wish to state, as a new member of the Executive Council, that the Department and I look forward with anticipation as we step into our new frontiers with you.

I now table the Vote 3 Budget for the 2014/2015 financial year for approval programme by programme:

- Programme 1:  
Administration: **R329 191 000**
- Programme 2:  
Agricultural Development: **R1 803 935 000**
- The total amount of Vote 3: **R2 133 126 000**

I thank you.