KZN MEC launches cotton planting season in Jozini

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KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development, Thembeni kaMadlopha-Mthethwa, has officially launched the 2026/27 cotton planting season at Sbonokuhle Sports Ground in KwaJobe, Jozini Local Municipality, calling on the Umkhanyakude District to position itself as the breadbasket of the country.
By Maile Matsimela, digital editor at African Farming

The launch is part of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development's Multi-Planting Season Programme, which supports resource-poor farmers with mechanisation in the form of tractors and production inputs including seeds, fertiliser and chemicals to combat food insecurity and poverty.

Cotton chosen for drought tolerance and guaranteed market

Addressing farmers, traditional leadership led by Inkosi Jobe, mayors and cooperatives from Cezwane and Ezinyokeni, the MEC said Jozini is ideal for cotton production owing to its Oakleaf and Hutton soils and favourable climate, with a target yield of 0.8 to 1 ton per hectare.

She said cotton was selected as a strategic industrial crop because it is drought-tolerant, requires less water than many alternatives and has a guaranteed market for fabric, oil and animal feed.



A red tractor tills the soil at one of the Jozini cotton planting demonstration sites ahead of the 2026/27 season launch.

Two demonstration sites showcase the crop

The launch features two demonstration sites. The first, at Cezwane under the Thuthukani cooperative, covers 4 hectares, while the second at Ezinyokeni spans 55 hectares.

Youth urged to see farming as business

KaMadlopha-Mthethwa called on young people to view agriculture as a business rather than a last resort, and thanked traditional leaders for releasing land for development under the One Plan, One Budget approach.

Three new diptanks for Jozini

Beyond the planting season launch, the MEC committed herself to constructing three diptanks in Jozini to complement the existing ones, as part of efforts to improve livestock health and support farmers across the area.