KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE
AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

OWEN SITHOLE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE GRADUATION CEREMONY

Graduates of Inkosi Owen Sithole College of Agriculture (OSCA) have been encouraged to use their academic experience into tangible success by setting up their own agribusiness ventures, supporting farming cooperatives within their communities, addressing food insecurity and coming up with innovative and research-driven solutions to tackle animal health diseases. The Graduation Ceremony of the uMfolozi-based institution of higher learning in agriculture, took place on Tuesday, 24 March 2026 at Imbizo Hall in eMpangeni.

Seventy-one students have graduated at OSCA offering Diplomas and Learnership Programmes. The MEC for the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Mrs Thembeni kaMadlopha-Mthethwa had conferred qualifications to the students before their proud parents, guardians and lecturers.

kaMadlopha-Mthethwa has acknowledged the sector's shortcomings but said these graduates are up to the task to tackle the challenges head on, "There are challenges ahead of you, given that according to the General Household Survey, many districts in KwaZulu-Natal are experiencing extreme poverty. Yet these areas have abundant arable land and even in backyards, there are spaces to cultivate crops and vegetables. With your fresh knowledge in this field, you can start agricultural businesses and encourage people to grow products that are in demand in key markets."

"Let's ensure that you use the skills acquired here to achieve success in your life. Let us not become another statistic of unemployed youth. The sector is diverse, it allows you to explore and identify niche markets. We rely on your contributions to develop vaccines that will provide permanent protection against diseases in animals."

"We will soon announce a potential partnership with Institutions of Higher Learning to the public, with the Diplomas you possess you can pursue Bachelor's degree of Agriculture which is equivalent to the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) 7 from Universities. We also have opportunities for youth in agriculture, such as the Unemployed Agricultural Graduates Youth Programme, a youth funding that is strictly ring-fenced for young people. We have already declared that this year, we will be focusing on empowering the youth by putting them at the forefront of our Department's plans to develop youth with skills and support that we offer every year. Go out there and shine."

The MEC said it is encouraging to see many students completing their studies increase year by year. In the class of 2024, 106 students graduated from OSCA and Cedara colleges and there are 170 students in the class of 2025. "Here at OSCA, 31 students are graduating with Diplomas and 41 are receiving Learnership Certificates. In previous years, the number of graduating students was lower, which is why over the past two years, I've made the decision to increase the number of students, which has risen from 106 to 170."

Nokwazi Mthethwa, a Crop Production student from the KwesakaMthethwa area in the uMfolozi Local Municipality, has been recognised as the Dux graduate of the Class of 2025. Following her outstanding academic achievements, she was offered employment at the Department of

Agriculture and Rural Development by the MEC. Her academic excellence was marked by several awards, including Best Student in Crop Production, Best Student in Agronomy and overall Dux Student.




MTHETHWA
NOMVAZI LONDIWE
DUX STUDENT
2025






2023










CELLE
GUGU SIMISO KHAYELIHLE














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