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Department:
Agriculture
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



FROM THE MINISTER'S DESK



Minister Willie Aucamp's first month in Agriculture

Stepping into the world of agriculture as minister has been nothing short of a profound journey over these past thirty days. One thing I have learned in my first month is that South African rural communities have an incredibly resilient heartbeat, and it beats deep in the soil. Having grown up in a farming family, I am proud and grateful for the opportunity to serve our beautiful country as Minister of Agriculture. Agriculture is in my heart, like so many South Africans who have a lifelong, close connection to the land.

Before looking ahead, I also want to thank former Minister John Steenhuisen for all the work he has done for this sector. He unlocked vital new opportunities and began the crucial, hard work of fixing broken systems within the Department of Agriculture. We owe him a debt of gratitude, and we need to continue that momentum.

From day one, the warmth and professionalism with which I was received by the department have been overwhelming. Thank you! Your dedication, institutional knowledge, and readiness to roll up your sleeves have made this transition smooth and deeply encouraging.

From the beginning, we had to go straight into the deep end. The highlight of this first month was the signing of the settlement agreement in the Foot and mouth disease (FMD) legal battle with Sakeliga, Southern African Agri Initiative (Saai) and Free State Agriculture (FSA). This achievement was not just about resolving a dispute. It was about walking into a new era of trust, respect and public-private collaboration.

I have also spent these past few weeks sitting down with the Executive Committee (EXCO) of the department and our public entities – from the Agriculture Research Council (ARC) and the National Agriculture Marketing Council (NAMC) to the Perishable Products Export Control Board (PPECB) and the South African Veterinary Council (SAVC). These engagements have reinforced just how much intellectual capital and passion we have driving our agricultural research, market access and regulatory oversight.

Looking ahead: Growing and securing rural South Africa

We all know agriculture is so much more than farming; it is the economic backbone of our countryside. Agriculture creates jobs, keeps local economies alive, and breathes new life into forgotten and struggling rural communities. Moreover, a healthy agricultural landscape is safer. Economic activity and employment are strong deterrents to crime, and that is why bringing stability and hope back to our rural communities is of utmost importance.

The sector has many challenges, but I want to ask every farmer, agricultural stakeholder, official and friends of agriculture not to lose hope. You work every single day to keep us fed and our economy moving. Keep working hard, believe in yourself, and know that you are not ignored. We build this future together, and I would like to make one thing very clear: I'm always here. Whether you are an official in the department, an agricultural stakeholder on the ground, a farmer who is working on the land, I want you to feel at home here. We are in this together, and our success is based on respect for each other, communication and mutual purpose. Let us move on to the next phase of development, collaboration and a prosperous agricultural sector for all South Africans.

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SIGNING OF SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT A WIN FOR ALL SOUTH AFRICANS



Dr Litha Magingxa from the Agricultural Research Council signing the settlement agreement.



Mr Piet Le Roux (CEO, Sakeliga), DG Mr Mooketsa Ramasodi, Minister Aucamp, Dr Theo De Jager and Mr Francois Wilken (Vrystaat Landbou).



DG of the Department of Agriculture, Mr Mooketsa Ramasodi, Minister of Agriculture, Mr Willie Aucamp and Dr Theo De Jager (President of Saa).

Rincert Moremi

The Minister of Agriculture, Willie Aucamp, lauded the signing of the settlement agreement in the Foot and mouth disease (FMD) legal battle between the Department of Agriculture (DoA), Sakeliga, South African Agri Initiative (Saa) and Free State Agriculture as a win for all South Africans. "Today's settlement is not only a win for the parties involved in the case but is a win for all South African farmers as this sector contributes significantly to the country's job creation efforts and GDP," said the minister.

The minister was speaking at a media briefing on 9 July 2026 after a meeting with Sakeliga, SAAI and Free State Agriculture, the applicants in the case against the department. The three applicants had taken the department to court to allow private individuals to import vaccines and personally vaccinate their cloven-hoofed livestock voluntarily. The first three respondents, namely the Minister of Agriculture, DoA Director-General and Director: Animal Health, decided to enter into settlement negotiations with the applicants. The matter was settled in the meeting whereafter the parties signed a formal settlement agreement.

The parties agreed that owners and managers of cloven-hoofed livestock may perform voluntary vaccination of their livestock against FMD in accordance with such requirements set out in the settlement agreement, provided that they are duly authorised to do so by the Director: Animal Health in terms of Section 3 of the Animal Diseases Act, 1984 (Act No. 35 of 1984),

which provisions sets out how persons may be authorised by the Director: Animal Health to perform certain acts, including administering vaccines to animals.

The settlement entailed allowing owners and managers of cloven-hoofed livestock to personally perform voluntary vaccination of their livestock against FMD in line with certain biosecurity measures, legal prescripts and specific conditions, including traceability and reporting. The department and Onderstepoort Biological Products (OBP) have also relinquished sole rights to the import and/or distribution of FMD vaccines, however, according to the Animal Diseases Act, the Director: Animal Health must still issue a permit for import of vaccines.

The minister added that the settlement is indicative of Government's willingness to work with the private sector as Government cannot combat FMD alone. He said, "We will continue to hold hands with all industry and private sector role players in the control of the FMD outbreak."

Francois Wilken, president of Free State Agriculture, said the settlement agreement is a great victory in the battle against FMD. He added that Free State Agriculture remains committed to protecting food security, the sustainability of the livestock sector and promoting practical, workable solutions for its members and the broader agricultural community. The applicants appreciated the conclusion of the matter and committed to work closely with the department in tackling the FMD crisis.



DEPUTY MINISTER CAPA MARKS MANDELA DAY WITH AGRICULTURAL OUTREACH

Samuel Kgatla



Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Ms Nokuzola Capa, handed over garden tools to the community of Mtontsasa in Eastern Cape.

The Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Ms Nokuzola Capa, dedicated her 67 minutes for Mandela Day by leading a series of community-focused agricultural interventions in Ingquza Hill Local Municipality, Eastern Cape on 17 July 2026. The outreach took place in the villages of Manquzi, Mtontsasa and Ndukudeni where the deputy minister led the vaccination of livestock against Foot and mouth disease (FMD), the vaccination of dogs and cats against rabies, and the handover of gardening tools to community members.

This initiative formed part of the department's Mandela Month outreach programme aimed at strengthening animal health, supporting emerging farmers and livestock owners, and enhancing agricultural productivity within the municipality. Since joining the department, the deputy minister has made the celebration of Mandela Month one of her key priorities, reflecting her commitment to the values and legacy of Nelson Mandela. The vaccination campaign sought to curb the spread of FMD, while the rabies awareness programme educated communities on prevention and responsible animal care. The donation of farming implements further demonstrated the department's commitment to supporting sustainable livelihoods and food security.



Deputy Minister Nokuzola Capa engaging with the livestock owners of Manquzi Village during the FMD vaccination in the area.





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Deputy Minister Nokuzola Capa witnessed the vaccination of dogs for rabies at Mtontsasa Village in Eastern Cape.

The deputy minister witnessed the vaccination of 559 cattle at the Manquzi dip tank and vaccination of 131 dogs and cats at Mtontsasa and nearby areas. Furthermore, she donated 50 sets of garden tools (spades, rakes, watering cans, garden forks and 20-metre hosepipes) and seedlings (1 000 spinach, 1 000 cabbage, 400 beetroot and 400 onion seedlings) at Mtontsasa and Ndukudeni villages. These Mandela Day activities reflected the spirit of service by bringing practical support directly to rural communities while contributing to improved food security, resilient agricultural systems and the sustainable development of communities in Eastern Cape.

Mr Peter Majiliza, a livestock owner from Manquzi, expressed his appreciation to the department for bringing veterinary services directly to the community. He thanked the department for visiting the Manquzi dip tank and for reminding livestock owners about the importance of regular dipping and disease prevention.

One of the beneficiaries, Ms Nomvuzo Ntsoyana, welcomed the donation of gardening tools and vegetable seedlings. She said the support would enable her and other community members to establish productive backyard gardens.

Deputy Minister Capa commended livestock owners for their participation in the vaccination campaign and their commitment to protecting animal health. "It is really encouraging to see so many cattle brought here for Foot and mouth disease vaccination. We are not only vaccinating cattle, but also dogs and cats against rabies. I am pleased to see that livestock owners are taking the issue of dipping seriously. A dip is a livestock clinic, and communities must take good care of these facilities. I also encourage the beneficiaries of the garden tools to look after the farming implements that have been provided to them so that they continue to benefit future generations," she said.



EXPERTS GATHER FOR AVIAN INFLUENZA PREPAREDNESS SIMULATION EXERCISE

Samuel Kgatla



Dr Mpho Maja giving remarks during the Avian Influenza Simulation Exercise in Pretoria.



Experts gathered at University of Pretoria for the Avian Influenza Simulation Exercise.

The Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) Simulation Exercise is expected to strengthen South Africa's One Health preparedness and response capacity for zoonotic disease outbreaks. This three-day event, organised by the Department of Agriculture (DoA) in collaboration with the Department of Health (DoH) and the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD), was held at Future Africa, University of Pretoria, from 22 to 24 June 2026. The exercise brought together experts from the government and the private sector to address issues relating to HPAI and strengthen coordinated response efforts.

The exercise aimed to strengthen South Africa's preparedness for zoonotic influenza outbreaks through a coordinated One Health approach. Using a simulated avian influenza virus (H5N1) spillover from poultry to humans, it evaluated cross-sectoral coordination, surveillance, communication, epidemiological investigations and laboratory readiness while identifying gaps and improving collaboration for effective outbreak prevention, detection and response.

A simulation exercise is a structured activity designed to recreate a realistic scenario for the purposes of training; evaluating capabilities; and testing plans and procedures. These exercises provide valuable opportunities to identify strengths, weaknesses and areas requiring improvement in emergency preparedness and response arrangements. They also help participants become more familiar with established procedures, develop their decision-making and role-specific skills in a controlled environment, and strengthen cooperation and communication among agencies, stakeholders and international partners.

According to the NICD, South Africa has experienced several outbreaks of H5N1 and H7 in commercial poultry and wild birds. The H7 strain refers to influenza A viruses with the H7 hemagglutinin protein. Surveillance includes passive surveillance, which depends on reporting suspected cases and increased bird deaths, and active surveillance, which is conducted in poultry compartments, vaccinated poultry farms, ostrich farms and during outbreak investigations to enable early detection and control. Avian influenza is a controlled animal disease in South Africa under the Animal Diseases Act (Act No. 35 of 1984), requiring mandatory reporting and surveillance.

Dr Mpho Maja from the DoA highlighted that the simulation exercise was timely, as veterinary services are currently managing multiple animal disease threats, increasing the risk of avian influenza being overlooked. She emphasised that with



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“There is considerable scope to improve the timely collaboration between health, environmental and veterinary services following the detection of zoonotic influenza. Strengthening the One Health reporting and response system at the local (especially in high-risk areas), provincial and national levels is essential,”

the planned HPAI vaccination programme, the exercise was essential for strengthening South Africa's preparedness by testing cross-sectoral coordination, communication, surveillance, epidemiology and laboratory readiness in response to a simulated H5N1 spillover from poultry to humans.

“There is considerable scope to improve the timely collaboration between health, environmental and veterinary services following the detection of zoonotic influenza. Strengthening the One Health reporting and response system at the local (especially in high-risk areas), provincial and national levels is essential,” she said.

As part of the resolutions, delegates agreed to fortify the One Health approach, enhance surveillance systems, improve emergency communication and coordination, increase laboratory preparedness, identify and address gaps in national preparedness, and strengthen outbreak response capacity to improve South Africa's readiness for HPAI and other emerging zoonotic disease threats.



Delegates at the Avian Influenza Simulation Exercise at University of Pretoria.



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE INSPIRES FUTURE AGRICULTURAL ECONOMISTS THROUGH UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO SYMPOSIUM

Matsepo Malatswane

The future of South Africa's agriculture was on full display as the Department of Agriculture (DoA) welcomed 60 third-year Bachelor of Science (BSc) Agricultural Economics students and six academic staff members from the University of Limpopo to the DoA–University of Limpopo Symposium on Agricultural Economics, held in Pretoria on 3 July 2026.

Hosted under the theme: "Transforming Agriculture through Economic Innovation, Sustainability, and Youth Participation", the symposium brought together government leaders, academics and industry experts to inspire the next generation of agricultural economists and provide students with first-hand exposure to the opportunities shaping the sector.

The Acting Chief Director: Sector Capacity Development, Ms Mmaserame Macucwa, officially opened the symposium and reaffirmed the department's commitment to nurturing future agricultural professionals through meaningful partnerships with institutions of higher learning. "Agricultural economics remains one of South Africa's critical and scarce skills. As future agricultural economists, you have an important role to play in addressing food security, creating employment, advancing rural development, responding to climate change, strengthening trade, and driving inclusive economic growth. I encourage you to engage actively with today's experts, build meaningful professional networks, and embrace every opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills needed to lead our sector into the future," said Ms Macucwa.

Welcoming representatives from the government, academia and key sector organisations, including the Agricultural Research Council (ARC), the National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC), the Bureau for Food and Agricultural Policy (BFAP) and the Agricultural Economics Association of South Africa (AEASA), Ms Macucwa encouraged students to seize every opportunity to learn, grow and contribute to the future of agriculture.

Setting the scene for the day's discussions, Dr Mmaphuti Nkoana from the University of Limpopo highlighted the importance of connecting classroom learning with practical industry experience. He explained that exposing students to the work of the department allows them to better understand the role of agricultural economists while showcasing the wide range of career opportunities available within the public sector.

Throughout the day, students heard from experts across the government and industry who shared their knowledge on

agricultural markets, policy development, research, trade and professional growth.

Marketing Officer, Ms Ndinanyi Mudzungu, introduced students to the DoA's Directorate: Marketing within the agricultural economics environment, demonstrating how market intelligence, value chain development and market access initiatives contribute to the competitiveness of South Africa's agriculture. She also highlighted diverse career opportunities within the field, including agricultural economist, agricultural marketing officer, commodity analyst, trade and market analyst, policy analyst and research analyst.

The importance of continuous professional development was emphasised by Mr Maremo Mphahlele, economist at the NAMC. He encouraged students to register with professional bodies such as AEASA, explaining that membership provides valuable networking opportunities, professional recognition and access to industry knowledge. "Professionalism is about continuous learning, ethical leadership and contributing meaningfully to the development of the agricultural sector. Joining professional bodies allows young economists to grow their networks, enhance their skills and remain relevant in a rapidly changing industry," he said.

One of the highlights of the symposium was the lively interaction between students and presenters. During engaging question-and-answer sessions, students explored current industry challenges, emerging opportunities and the skills required to succeed as future agricultural economists.

The symposium concluded with a renewed sense of purpose and optimism, leaving students motivated to apply their academic knowledge while preparing for meaningful careers that will shape the future of the country's agriculture.

By investing in young professionals and strengthening partnerships between the government, academia and industry, the DoA continues to develop the crucial skills needed to advance food security, promote rural development, strengthen agricultural competitiveness, and drive inclusive economic growth. Through initiatives such as this symposium, the department is helping to prepare a new generation of agricultural economists who will contribute to building a more resilient and sustainable agricultural sector.



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Ms Macucwa delivering the keynote address, encouraging students to become future leaders in agricultural economics.



Ms Ndinannyi Mudzunga speaking on diverse career opportunities within the field.



Students, academics and industry stakeholders gather at the DoA–University of Limpopo Symposium on Agricultural Economics in Pretoria.





MORE THAN HONEY—HONEYBEES POLLINATE UP TO ONE THIRD OF GLOBAL FOOD PRODUCTION

Rincert Moremi

If you think bees only produce honey, think again. Not only do they produce honey, but they also play an important role in pollination. It is estimated that one third of global food production depends on the crucial role honeybees play in pollination. This information was shared at the South Africa Bee Industry Organisation (SABIO) BEECON 2026 held at Sun City, North West, from 30 June to 1 July 2026.

The BEECON 2026 was hosted by SABIO in partnership with the North West Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. Sabio says the BEECON is a platform that brings together beekeepers, government leaders, researchers, agricultural industries and development partners to reflect on the state and future of the beekeeping sector in South Africa.

This year, the BEECON focused on the two pillars of the beekeeping sector, namely, the honey economy and the pollination economy. The former Minister of Agriculture, John Steenhuisen, acknowledged the importance of bees as pollinators when he said, “The contribution that pollinators make to South African agriculture extends far beyond the hive. They support the production systems that underpin many of our most successful export industries. Consumers buying South African citrus, apples, pears, macadamias, avocados or berries rarely think about pollination, yet it is one of the reasons those products meet the quality standards that allow our producers to compete in some of the most demanding markets in the world.”

Speakers presented other wonderful products that prove that beekeeping is more than producing honey. Products and practices derived from beekeeping are harvesting pollen, propolis and apitherapy (the medical practice that uses honeybee products to prevent or treat health conditions) and bee vectoring—an agricultural technique that uses honeybees to deliver beneficial biological products such as fungicides directly to crops. Exhibitors displayed digital applications (apps) developed to track beehives and to trace the value chain from the beehive to the shelf. Other exhibitors displayed their innovative processed products, such as wine, propolis and tinctures made from honey.

Lucas Radise, deputy chairperson of the North West Beekeeping Association (NWPBA), mentioned a few ongoing challenges that face beekeepers, such as authenticity and origin of honey. He said to mitigate these challenges, he developed an app that identifies a plant and its value for honeybees, such as nectar, pollen and propolis value.

He further commended BEECON 2026 for addressing most of the issues affecting the beekeeping industry. He said he appreciated the fact that the North West Member of Executive Council for Agriculture and Rural Development, Mr Madoda Sambatha, addressed challenges facing the beekeeping industry when he encouraged officials to start viewing bees as agricultural animals, so that when funding is allocated, the same criteria that applied for a livestock farmer are also applicable for beekeepers.

When the DoA Director-General (DG), Mooketsa Ramasodi, presented the National Beekeeping Plan, he said the beekeeping sector is a priority for the department because of its direct contribution to several strategic objectives, such as Outcome 2: Increased production in the agricultural sector; Outcome 3: Improved food and nutrition security; Outcome 5: Increased market access; and Outcome 6: Enhanced biosecurity and effective disaster risk reduction.

He said, “These priorities underscore the crucial importance of beekeeping, not only as an agricultural enterprise, but as a cornerstone of sustainable food production, environmental stewardship and economic growth.” He also informed the conference attendees that upon completion, the National Beekeeping Strategy will be subjected to extensive consultation with stakeholders across the sector and that the department intends to finalise the strategy during the 2026/27 financial year. “The Department of Agriculture stands ready to provide leadership, support and partnership in building a resilient and thriving beekeeping sector for generations to come,” assured the DG.

SABIO’s chairperson, Tumi Mobu, presented on strategic resolutions taken at the BEECON 2026 and the National Beekeeping Strategy on bee health and biosecurity, the pollination economy, honey quality and market integrity. The BEECON resolved that SABIO will work with the DoA, the Agricultural Research Council (ARC) and provinces to finalise the National Beekeeping Strategy and align it with provincial implementation plans. She added that the DoA, ARC and provinces should also monitor the implementation annually. She also called on the department to have a dedicated official who will assist with all beekeeping queries and requirements and the beekeeping industry to strengthen coordination across the sector.



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Former Minister of Agriculture, John Steenhuisen, delivering the keynote address at the BEECON 2026.



Madoda Sambatha, MEC for North West Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, engaging with exhibitors at the BEECON 2026.



DoA Director-General Mooketsa Ramasodi, Dr Maanda Rambauli, SABIO chairperson, Tumi Mobu, Gilbert Mediroe and Salamina Maelane at the BEECON in Sun City.



IREAGH VILLAGE COMMUNITY DESPERATELY REQUIRES THE LOCAL DAM TO BE REPAIRED

Mercia Smith

The rural and historically drought-prone villages often lack the infrastructure to manage sudden, devastating floods. When severe weather strikes, areas designed to manage heat and dry spells face a cascade of sudden crises. This is what happened to Ireagh Village situated within the Bushbuckridge Local Municipality in Mpumalanga. It is one of the areas affected by the summer floods earlier this year. Infrastructure such as roads, bridges and houses were destroyed.

During the recent National Agrometeorological Workshop held on 19 and 20 May in Hazyview, Mpumalanga, attendees visited the Ireagh Livestock Production Project situated on 263 ha, with a population of approximately 4 230 residents and around 790 households. Flooding damaged the project's earth dam, resulting in insufficient water levels for the livestock in the area. According to the South African Weather Service, the sudden downpour was nearly half of the area's usual annual rainfall in less than a week, saturating soils and causing extreme runoff.

According to Mr Mzwakhe Nkambule, Deputy Director: Disaster Risk Reduction in Mpumalanga, the dam wall collapsed due to flooding and silt that had accumulated over time. As livestock, in particular cattle, are of major importance for income generation, security, social status and cultural value, the earth dam will be reconstructed. The building of the dam will bring a wide range of positive impacts, especially given the region's semi-arid climate and rural infrastructure. The improved water security will result in reliable access to water for livestock, reducing dependence on seasonal rainfall and unpredictable boreholes.

The farmers supply their livestock to hawkers as well as the local people around the Bushbuckridge Local Municipality. There is no formal market for their livestock due to the FMD red line which inhibits Bushbuckridge farmers from selling their livestock outside the municipality's borders. Veterinary Public Health regularly organises a registered auctioneer with a moving abattoir to buy cattle from the local livestock farmers.

Earth dams have generally performed well as an integral part of water storage for livestock farmers in the district. The purpose of rehabilitating the infrastructure is to increase agricultural productivity, create employment opportunities and have sustainable infrastructure that is resilient to climate change, Mr Nkambule explained.

Earth dams utilise on-site natural materials, making them significantly cheaper than rigid concrete reservoirs. Building and maintaining these community structures utilises local labour, keeping capital and skills development within the rural economy.

Erosion in the spillway and dam wall compromised controlled discharge capacity, increasing flood risk to downstream areas. Stormwater runoff from upstream residential areas has directly contributed to the formation of a gully on the dam wall.



Mrs Margaret Mnisi, Suzanne Silauhe and Annya Mkontso at the collapsed dam wall in Ireagh Village in the Bushbuck Ridge area.

"Excavations will have to be done; the dam wall has to be widened and raised, and lastly, topsoil should be applied on the dam wall for vegetation growth with the aim of reducing runoff," Mr Nkambule said.

The scope of the work covers both professional services, such as supervision and monitoring, as well as construction. Several new jobs will be created during the construction of the dam. Earth dams provide crucial, low-cost water security for rural South African communities by capturing seasonal runoff in a water-scarce country. Because they are constructed using locally available soils and basic machinery, they are highly practical for areas isolated from national water grids.

The department provides fodder and animal feed to the farmers in winter. Awareness campaigns are conducted before the beginning of every season to build farmers capacity to deal with imminent incidents. The department also provides infrastructure development such as fencing and graveling of roads.



Mr Mzwakhe Nkambule, Deputy Director: Disaster Risk Reduction in Mpumalanga explaining the damage to the dam.



FARMERS ASSISTED WITH MARKET READINESS AT FRESH PRODUCE MARKETING WORKSHOP IN MPUMALANGA



Mr Tlou Kabe explaining the Marketing Information System (MIS), showing farmers how to access real-time market prices and make informed marketing decisions.

Matsepo Malatswane

The Department of Agriculture (DoA) successfully hosted a two-day Fresh Produce Marketing Workshop in Thulamahashe (Bushbuckridge) and Mkhuhlu, Mpumalanga. The workshop equipped farmers with practical knowledge and market-orientated skills to strengthen their participation in the fresh produce value chain.

The training comes at an opportune time as Mpumalanga prepares to maximise opportunities presented by its newly established fresh produce market, creating greater prospects for local producers to access formal markets and build sustainable agricultural enterprises.

Bringing together farmers from across the province, the workshop focused on topics essential for successful market participation, including market access and requirements, grading standards, agro-processing opportunities, food safety, quarantine

pests, the Agricultural Product Standards Act, 1990 (Act No. 119 of 1990) the safe use of agro-chemicals, gross margin analysis for vegetables, and the Smallholder Horticulture Empowerment and Promotion (SHEP) approach.

Participants welcomed the initiative, noting that it was the first workshop of its kind in the province. These sessions provided valuable insights into market expectations and highlighted the importance of producing quality products that meet formal market standards. Facilitators emphasised that access to markets begins with knowledge and that empowering farmers with practical skills is key to building profitable and sustainable farming businesses.

A key highlight of the programme was a demonstration of the Marketing Information System (MIS), presented by Mr Tlou Kabe, from the DoA's Directorate: Marketing. Farmers were introduced to the online platform, which provides up-to-date market prices



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and information to support informed production and marketing decisions. This system enables producers to compare prices and monitor the latest selling prices of fruit and vegetables, helping them to make better business decisions.

“Having access to reliable market information enables farmers to plan better, understand market trends and improve profitability. We encourage every producer to make use of the MIS as part of their business planning,” said Mr Kabe.

The Agricultural Produce Agents Council (APAC) also shared valuable information on its role in regulating fresh produce agents and supporting farmers. Representing APAC, Ms Phindile Netwane encouraged producers to adopt sound business practices that improve their credibility and increase their chances of accessing formal markets. “Success in farming starts with doing the simple things right. Keep your receipts, maintain accurate records, and work with reputable fresh produce market agents. These practices build trust, strengthen traceability, and make it easier to access formal markets,” said Ms Netwane.

Ms Rose Mantshidi, who presented on the Agricultural Product Standards Amendment Act, 2023 (Act No. 12 of 2023), conducted a practical grading demonstration using butternut as an example. The hands-on session allowed farmers to assess whether produce meets national quality standards and market specifications.

“Meeting grading requirements is essential for accessing formal markets. Producing quality products that comply with standards gives farmers a competitive advantage, increases consumer confidence, and enhances marketability,” said Ms Mantshidi.

The workshop also highlighted the importance of managing quarantine pests, promoting food safety, and complying with legislative requirements. Farmers were encouraged to adopt good agricultural practices that improve both the quality and competitiveness of their produce.

Closing the workshop, facilitators urged participants to apply the knowledge and skills gained by improving production planning, maintaining quality standards, using market information to guide business decisions, and exploring value-adding opportunities through agro-processing.

The Fresh Produce Marketing Workshop forms part of the DoA's ongoing commitment to developing competitive, market-ready farmers who can participate meaningfully in South Africa's

agricultural economy. By equipping producers with practical skills, market intelligence and knowledge of industry standards, the department continues to support inclusive agricultural growth, improved household incomes and enhanced food security.



Farmers engaging in discussions on agro-processing opportunities, market access and sustainable farming practices during the two-day workshop.



Phindi Netwane from the Agricultural Produce Agents Council (APAC) explaining the importance of working with registered produce agents and maintaining proper business records.

