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Department:
Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



FARMERS AND COMMUNITIES TO BENEFIT FROM MAKHATHINI CANAL



The canal in Jozini is now ready to help farmers.



Farmers and community members came in numbers for their engagement with ministers Didiza and Mchunu.

Samuel Kgatla

With a holding capacity of approximately 141 754 m³, the Makhathini Canal can extract raw water from the Jozini Dam to six different pump stations. The canal will benefit farmers and communities in the uMkhanyakude District Municipality for decades to come. This is according to the Minister of Water and Sanitation, Mr Senzo Mchunu, who was speaking during a two-day community event organised by the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) and the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) in Jozini and Kwa-Gumbi.

The intention was for the leadership of both departments to visit the Makhathini Canal, engage communities, and inform people about government's programmes in the uMkhanyakude

and Zululand districts.

The pressurised water from the canal is distributed from the pump stations through an extensive network of underground pipelines to four different types of irrigation systems that are being used, which are sprinklers, centre pivots, and flood and drip systems. The canal is meant to benefit both agriculture and domestic users in the municipality.

The community of Kwa-Gumbi near Pongola in the Zululand District consists of small-scale farmers who are beneficiaries of DARRLD's Land Restitution Programme. The farmers, represented by the Emvokweni Community Trust, had water use licence challenges and they requested the ministers of the two departments to intervene.

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During this two-day event, farmer organisations, farmers and community members were given the opportunity to talk to government leaders on issues affecting them. Farmers requested more tractors to help them during the planting season. The issues of access to water and water rights are the main problems affecting these farmers and other people. During engagement with the communities, Sydney Gumbi from Kwa-Gumbi urged government to return the land to its owners.

Minister Thoko Didiza pledged to work with the people of both districts and promised to help them to get better services. "Our government listens and comes up with assistance. The people of Kwa-Gumbi Village are sitting on fertile soil and they must use it for agricultural purposes. We will do business to help develop the community of Kwa-Gumbi, especially on agriculture. We are willing to work with the people of Kwa-Gumbi. Use the land wisely for agricultural purposes," said the minister.

Minister Senzo Mchunu said that the water from Jozini Dam must reach farmers and people in villages. Furthermore, he mentioned that it was important for people to manage water from the dam. Both ministers pledged their commitment to assist the farmers to restore farming operations on their farms. They assured the farming community of availability of water to ensure sustainable irrigation on their farms.



One of the concerned community members during their engagement with leaders from DALRRD and DWS



From left: Minister Senzo Mchunu, Minister Thoko Didiza and Mayor of Zululand, Thulasizwe Buthelezi, during a community engagement



Deputy Minister Zoleka Capa responding to questions from Jozini residents during an Imbizo in the area

SA'S HASS AVOCADO FARMERS TO EXPORT TO JAPAN FOR THE FIRST TIME



When the Hass avocado is ripe, the skin becomes a dark purplish-black colour and yields to gentle pressure.



Hass avocado yields still on the tree

Mphahlela Rammutla

The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) continues to make strides in opening new markets for local farmers. The department has recently secured market access for Hass avocados in Japan.

The DALRRD announced that the ban on the export of Hass avocados from South Africa to Japan has been lifted with effect from 30 November 2023. However, technically speaking, there was never an actual ban on the export of Hass avocados to Japan since, in terms of the Japanese rule, all products are considered banned until market access for such a commodity is opened. That is according to Mpho Sekgala, Deputy Director: Biosecurity Promotion Awareness.

“A new market for Hass avocado opened in Japan, this is after the opening of another avocado market in China last year. South Africa continues to make significant strides in opening new markets,” boasted Sekgala.

The DALRRD and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan (MAFF) have approved a workplan which aims to ensure proper implementation of the export protocols of Hass avocados from South Africa to Japan. This workplan clarifies related operations and procedures to be followed to export avocados to Japan.

The DALRRD will work with its agency, Perishable Products Export Control Board (PPECB), to oversee activities such as the approval and registration of all places of production and packing houses, and the designation of all facilities in accordance with the approved work plan.

Furthermore, the DALRRD will inform the representative of MAFF in the case of detecting serious problems related to the activities in registered places of production and packing houses, designated disinfestation facilities and early detection of pests such as *Ceratitidis capitata* and *Bactrocera dorsalis*.

The approved protocol requires that growers of registered orchards to implement good agricultural practices that include orchard sanitation and an effective integrated pest management system. Adhering to the set of requirements as set out in the approved protocol will assist in ensuring that the export programme run swiftly without interruptions.

“On a general note, the opportunities brought about by these export markets are quite helpful in growing the economy, creating jobs, and enhancing rural development. The participation of avocado farmers and agricultural marketing agencies in the relevant associations and forums will assist them to understand all compliance measures and how to participate in the export programmes,” Sekgala remarked.

MALYSIAN DELEGATION VISITS AVOCADO FARMS AND FACILITIES FOR EXPORT OF AVOCADO CLONAL SEEDLINGS FROM SOUTH AFRICA



Verification visit on farms and facilities intended for the export of avocado seedlings from South Africa to Malaysia

Pfumelani Tsedu

A delegation of technical experts from the National Plant Protection Organisation (NPPO) of Malaysia visited South Africa (SA) recently to conduct an on-site inspection of orchards/farms and facilities intended to support the export of avocado clonal seedlings from SA to Malaysia.

The Malaysian delegation was welcomed by the technical team from the National Plant Production Organisation of South Africa (NPPOSA) within the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) in Tzaneen, Limpopo. They first met to discuss the outstanding phytosanitary issues associated with this inspection visit with Mr Kgabo Matlala from the DALRRD giving a brief presentation on the structure of the NPPOSA, including its core functions.

The Malaysian delegation presented a background report on the import procedure of the South African agricultural products exported to Malaysia. The delegation also highlighted the commodities that are high- and medium-risk for export to Malaysia. It was indicated that SA is not considered a high-risk country in terms of pests and diseases.

After the meeting, both NPPOSA and the delegation visited two farms in the Greater Tzaneen Municipality, in Limpopo, namely Allesbeste Farm and Nursery, and the Red Sun HortiTech. The two farms and their associated nurseries specialise in micro-cloning of avocado seedlings. These nurseries are recognised for providing superior-quality avocado seedlings and are currently accredited by the Avocado Nurserymen's Association (ANA) five-star grading for their sanitary and phytosanitary standards. They

supply disease-free plant material and top-quality clonal avocado seedlings to local and international markets.

During the nursery visit at Allesbeste farm, the procedure for micro-cloning of avocado clonal seedlings was elaborated along with the demonstration of the process for developing avocado clonal seedlings. It was explained that the avocado seeds used for clonal seedlings are collected from the orchard and planted. Once germinated, they are grafted to a rootstock followed by the final grafting with a cultivar selected. The seeds used are mostly for Reed and Edranol because these cultivars have large seeds, which is preferred by the industry for clonal seedlings. It takes about two weeks for the seeds to germinate, followed by four to six weeks before grafting to a rootstock. Each plant contains the original number from the plant for traceability and the grafting process starts at the stage of 6 mm thickness.

At Allesbeste farm, the main rootstocks used for grafting are Dusa, Duke 7 and the mother plant is reed cultivar. It was reported that the Dusa rootstock is tolerant to *Phytophthora cinnamomi*. The Edranol, Maluma, Hass and Fuerte are some of the cultivars used in this farm for clonal seedlings grafted on Dusa rootstock.

It was further explained that once the plant reaches 1 cm in length on the growing shoot, it is taken to the etiolation (dark) room. Sodium hypochlorite (bleach) with a concentration of 1% is used to sterilise during removal of the side shoot on the plant and sterilisation is done after removal of each shoot. In terms of fungal prevention, it was explained that the copper oxychloride is applied twice a month for fungal prevention in the nursery.

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Both parties visited the grafting facility where the final grafting with cultivar for clonal seedlings was taking place.

In terms of the packaging for export, the micro containers are closed with plastic and elastic bands one to two days before packing. It was further explained that each box carries 100 clonal seedlings for export while budwood sticks observed during inspection were 1 700 in a box with 10 sticks in each bundle.

The packaged propagation material (budwood) sticks observed during this inspection at Allesbete Nursery were destined to Tanzania. It was further reported that the Red Sun Hortitech Nursery produces half a million seedlings annually, with export market comprising about 14 countries, including Zambia, Ghana, Namibia, Mozambique and Tanzania.



DALRRD team and Malaysian delegation during an inspection of an avocado farm at the Allesbeeste Nursery in Tzaneen, Limpopo



DALRRD team and Malaysian delegation during an inspection of avocado seedlings at the Allesbeeste Nursery in Tzaneen, Limpopo

AGRO-PROCESSING—THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE

“Agro-processing is the future of agriculture, it gives one space to be innovative; do not just focus on primary agriculture, but focus on sustainable, innovative products by increasing the shelf life and adding value,”

The past overall winner of the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) Female Entrepreneur Awards (FEA) in North West is not one to rest on her laurels, and she is making waves in agro-processing. Maboang Matlou, who was the overall winner of the provincial FEA in 2018, had invested a portion of the prize money in a dehydrator machine for drying moringa, a teabag machine and a cold press machine. She now has 7 500 moringa trees on a five-hectare farm in Bosplaas, Hammanskraal, which she processes into tea, energy drinks and even gin.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), moringa is a genus of shrubs and trees with multi-purpose uses. Its leaves, roots and immature pods can be consumed as a vegetable. Moringa is a herbaceous, medicinal plant, and all parts of the moringa tree—the bark, pods, leaves, nuts, seeds, tubers, roots and flowers are edible. The leaves are used fresh or dried and ground into powder. Moringa is also believed to contain 540 compounds that can treat or prevent 300 health issues, according to traditional African and Indian (Ayurvedic) medicine.

“Agro-processing is the future of agriculture, it gives one space to be innovative; do not just focus on primary agriculture, but focus on sustainable, innovative products by increasing the shelf life and adding value,” raved Maboang. She processes moringa into moringa leaf powder, teas and health and energy drinks; capsules and herbal salts; breakfast cereals, cereal bars



Getting moringa leaves ready to be processed into different products such as herbal tea

and spreads for bread; moringa pre-mix muffins, moringa honey and yoghurt. She exports moringa tea, capsules and health salts to Botswana and the US. She exports these, along with moringa gin, to Mauritius as well.

According to DALRRD Directorate: Agro-processing Support, agro-processing activities facilitate easier handling of bulk products and increase shelf life of perishable products in response to market demands. Another benefit of agro-processing is that it enhances the competitiveness of agribusinesses, industries, and the sector as a whole.

The department has established 25 agro-processing facilities, supported eight agro-processing infrastructure units, and supported 2 631 agri-businesses with agro-processing initiatives, including technical and financial support, equipment and market access.

The Agriculture and Agro-processing Masterplan (AAMP), which was tabled by Minister Thoko Didiza in Parliament on 12 May 2022, is one of the initiatives to enable the agricultural sector to achieve inclusive and sustainable growth.

Maboang was one of the women who attended the Symposium and Exhibition for Women in Agriculture and Agro-processing, Africa Free Trade Agreement: Market Access hosted by the Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, Thoko Didiza, back in 2022. The aim of the symposium was to increase participation of women in agriculture, agro-processing and agribusinesses for the sustainable social and economic wellbeing of households.

Maboang also participated in the Free Food Show through the SheTrades Initiative sponsored by the Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA) in Dubai in September last year.



Clearing and weeding the farm where moringa is planted

27 NARYSEC LEARNERS COMPLETE THEIR GENERAL SECURITY PRACTICE LEARNERSHIP

Ndivhuwo Thenga



DDG for Rural Development, Ms Nomthandazo Moyo delivering keynote address during the NARYSEC General Security Practice learnership programme Pass Out ceremony at Bidvest Protea Coin Gijima Training Academy in Wallmannsthal, outside Tshwane.



Graduates with their certificates in hand during the pass out ceremony. All 27 graduates will be placed at various Bidvest Protea Coin security company sites for eight-months on-the-job training.

“Security is not about guarding buildings and searching customers when they exit a store. There is more to the profession than we think, and people take it for granted because they lack understanding.” This is according to Ms Dineo Mthembu (28), a National Rural Youth Service Corps (NARYSEC) participant from Welkom in the Free State. She was part of a group of 27 youths who completed their general security practice learnership and participated in the pass out and certification ceremony at Bidvest Protea Coin’s Gijima Training Academy in Wallmannsthal outside Tshwane on Friday, 26 January 2024.

During his speech at the ceremony, the Director: Human Resources Management at Bidvest Magnum Security, Mr Chris Laubscher, told the participants that they have made the company and the management of the training academy proud by how they performed during their stay at the academy.

“Thanks to everyone at Gijima Training Academy for looking after these learners during their four-months stay. Your security training is the best and even the SANDF officials were impressed by how you salute,” Laubscher said. He made a commitment that Protea Coin will find a space for all 27 trainees for their eight-months on-the-job training. “I have communicated with regional

coordinators, and they have assured me that they will be able to place every one of you in their regional operations,” he concluded.

The Deputy Director-General: Rural Development, Ms Nomthandazo Moyo, began her keynote address by sharing with trainees about the department’s partnership with the Gijima Training Academy and the objectives the two organisations seek to achieve. It started in June 2022, and the objective was to get employment in the private security industry for unemployed youth. “The pass out is a demonstration of the fruit of the memorandum of understanding (MoU) we signed with the Gijima Training Academy. As a department, I can confirm that the MoU has been signed and we do not have an intention of revoking it. According to Ms Moyo, the Private Security Industry Regulation Authority (PSIRA) certification is an important qualification given the challenge of unemployment facing the country.

“The next phase of your training is practical assignments. This will make your families proud. Do not just look in front of you. They sky is the limit. You can go into business and create jobs for other young people like yourselves. The skills that you have is not yours alone. They are for the communities you come from. Use your skills to empower young community members who are directionless. Help the community to fight against alcohol and substance abuse. Many people started with you, but they dropped out. Congratulations,” said Ms Moyo.

On the sidelines of the pass out, Ms Moyo indicated that when this group of trainees started just after their intake, they did not have an idea of what the NARYSEC skills development programme was all about, but they now see the opportunities they will get through this training.

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Ms Dineo Mthembu from Welkom, Free State passed matric back in 2015 and went to a local FET college, where she studied Human Resources Management and did not find employment after completion. She expressed gratitude to the department for throwing her a lifeline. According to fellow learner, Mr Gift Semosa from QwaQwa, the learnership was a good journey although it was frustrating at times, and that it is personally uplifting now that he has completed and has a certificate.



General security learnership graduate during a pass out ceremony at Bidvest Protea Coin Gijima Training Academy.



Mr Hlompho Moruka, DALRRD Free State director for NARYSEC, and Mr Chris Laubscher, director for human resources at Protea Magnum Security with general security practice learnership graduate.



Security training instructor, Mr Cosmos Dlamini, and a colleague posing with a plaque to mark the end of the learnership programme before it was mounted on the wall at Gijima Training Academy.

SA CONSUMERS PAID MORE FOR FOOD LAST DECEMBER



The Urban Food Basket price monthly report published by NAMC shows that South Africans paid more for basic food items in December 2023

Ndivhuwo Thenga

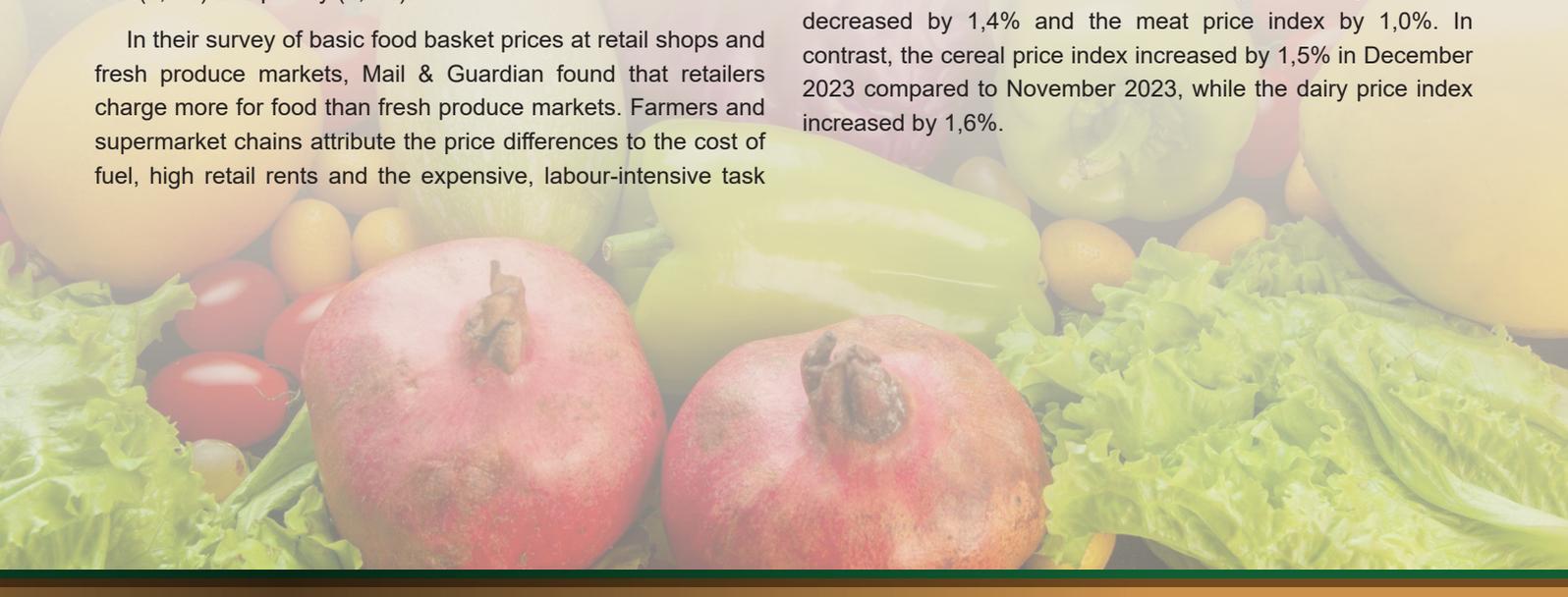
South Africa's consumers paid more for basic food items such as potatoes, rice and eggs in December 2023. That is according to the Urban Food Basket Price Monthly Report published by the National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC) on 25 January 2024. The cost of the NAMC's 28-item urban food basket increased by 9,6% in December 2023 compared to December 2022, reaching R1 239,59 compared to R1 131,01, with a monthly increase of 0,6%. Between December 2022 and December 2023, some among these 28 items experienced price increases that exceeded the inflation target set by the South African Reserve Bank (SARB) of 6%.

Potatoes experienced a substantial price increase of 55%, followed by bananas (29,9%), oranges (28,5%), Ceylon/black tea (28%), eggs (24,9%), white sugar (22,6%), instant coffee (21,5%), rice (20,6%), apples (19,8%), peanut butter (16,2%), baked beans (14,6%), dried beans (9,2%), cheddar cheese (8,4%), full cream milk (8,2%), cabbage (7,4%), tomato (6,9%), fish (6,5%) and polony (6,1%).

In their survey of basic food basket prices at retail shops and fresh produce markets, Mail & Guardian found that retailers charge more for food than fresh produce markets. Farmers and supermarket chains attribute the price differences to the cost of fuel, high retail rents and the expensive, labour-intensive task

of packing and labelling vegetables into prepacks, however, it seems supermarkets also price food according to what customers are prepared to pay. The survey continues to reflect big price differences in the cost of five basic vegetables—potatoes, onions, tomatoes, carrots, and cabbage. For example, onions dropped by almost 50%, to as low as R30 for a 10 kg packet in some cases, yet this is not reflected in the price at supermarket level.

According to Statistics South Africa (StatsSA), the 8,5% inflation rate for food and non-alcoholic beverages (NAB) was lower than November's 9,0%. Inflation softened for five food and NAB sub-categories: bread and cereals; oils and fats; sugar, sweets and desserts; vegetables; and hot beverages. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) reported a decrease of 1,5% in the global nominal food price index for December 2023 down by 1,8% points from November 2023. This can be attributed to decreases in different food categories included in calculating the food price index. For example, the sugar price index recorded a substantial decrease of 16,6%, the vegetable oil price index decreased by 1,4% and the meat price index by 1,0%. In contrast, the cereal price index increased by 1,5% in December 2023 compared to November 2023, while the dairy price index increased by 1,6%.



MPHILO MILLING GEARS FOR MORE SUCCESS



The automated milling machine worth R6 million that has increased production since it was procured by DALRRD.



Surrounded by his employees, Mr George Morallane (white shirt) showcases bags of maize meal produced and packaged at Mphilo Milling in Tshwane.

Rankepile Khomo

One of the South Africa's successful maize meal and animal feed producers, Mr Malose George Morallane of Mphilo Milling, has had to face numerous challenges, among which are lack of funding and intense competition in the grain industry. He, however, credits his relationship with government for bringing success to this company and the surrounding communities.

Armed with national diplomas in Public Management, and Project Management through the Tshwane University of Technology, the Director of Mphilo Milling, Morallane said that he had always believed that he would achieve business and financial success. His ambition and determination, along with endless desire to learn, have enabled him to run a profitable white maize processing company, which is situated in Klipdrift, near the City of Tshwane. In addressing some of the challenges facing Mphilo Milling, various studies were conducted. The project was referred to Economic Development, Trade and Marketing through a letter by the City of Tshwane when the project was struggling owing to the Covid 19 pandemic. A project officer was allocated and conducted an assessment and recommendations were supported by both GDARD and DALRRD to assist the project.

GDARD then appointed a private service provider to produce a feasibility study which was commissioned to a full-blown business plan. This resulted in financial support to the company amounting to over R9,5 million in 2022 for the purchase of automated milling machinery, packaging material, equipment, and raw material.

Mphilo Milling is a company operating on a 23-hectare farm located in an area dominated by tourism and other agricultural activities. The company's products are processed and packaged into different sizes as per market requirements or client specifications. The business is currently processing white maize into maize meal, samp, and animal feed. It markets its products both in the formal and informal markets.

Managing the business has been a tough journey for Morallane; he had to deal with the anxiety of not wanting to fail but the promise he had made to his parents and himself kept him going. "My father was a true visionary. He was the one who started this business a long time ago. So, taking over the business, for me, meant I had to up my game in making it grow and I am happy the company is doing exceptionally well in the agro-processing space," Morallane recalls with a smile.

Founded in 2006, Mphilo Milling currently has a total of 47 workers in its employ, 12 of whom work at the farm, 10 are delivery drivers, 15 are at the warehouse, six are administration staff and four additional transport companies with four drivers each.

The maize meal and samp produced is sold to school feeding schemes and a contract has now been secured with the Gauteng Department of Education to supply over 50 000 scholars.

The company also distributes a wide range of foods that include sugar beans, canned fish, rice, cooking oil, instant porridge, soya meat, fruit, and vegetables to the Department of Correctional Services, local spaza shops, as well as the Department of Health.

George Morallane has grand plans for the future. He said that he had his sight set on becoming the biggest maize producer in the country. "Although currently the company is struggling to meet the demand for white maize, continuous engagements with many small-scale maize farmers are at an advanced stage to increase the current 300-ton to 600-ton supply on a monthly basis," he added.

In line with its Comprehensive Rural Development Programme, the Gauteng Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, together with the City of Tshwane, have contributed immensely to the success of the company.

CULLINAN ENTREPRENEURS GET INFO ON HOW TO MAKE THEIR BUSINESSES VIABLE



Mr Zibusiso Cele, Deputy Director: Strategic Land Acquisition at the Gauteng PSSC making a presentation about the process of land acquisition



Ms Simphiwe Ndlovu from Gauteng Department of Economic Development informing small-business owners about available opportunities at her department.

Themba Hleko

Government efforts to grow the small, medium and micro enterprise (SMME) sector saw various partner departments and stakeholders descend on the Refilwe township in Cullinan, in Tshwane for an information session with local businesses about various support and services available. The Directorate: Strategic Land Acquisition within the Gauteng Provincial Shared Service Centre (PSSC G) of the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) took part in the Township Enterprise and Supplier Development Session that was organised for the local SMMEs.

The event as organised by the Gauteng Department of Economic Development (GDED) in conjunction with the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality took place at Tshepong Multipurpose Centre. The purpose of the information session was to inform local SMMEs, particularly those in manufacturing about opportunities, services and programmes that are available at GDED as well as from many stakeholders. The aim was to establish the level of readiness of the SMMEs to conduct business with the state and stimulate the growth of local businesses.

Stakeholders, including DALRRD, Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA), Family Tree Holdings, Gauteng Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment (GDARDE), Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA), South African Revenue Service (SARS), Tshwane Economic Development Agency (TEDA) and Gauteng Enterprise Propeller (GEP) made presentations to the local entrepreneurs. The presentations touched on ways to improve their enterprises by accessing funding, complying with the by-laws, registering on the National Treasury's Central Supplier Database (CSD), and comply with industry standards.

Although most attendees were curious about the available opportunities that were presented, some raised concerns about the availability of land to set up or expand their businesses.

To allay their concerns, Mr Zibusiso Cele, Deputy Director: Strategic Land Acquisition responsible for the Tshwane Region, made a presentation about how land is acquired, in which he educated the audience about DALRRD's processes of land redistribution, especially to those who aspire to embark on agricultural business.

Ms Sphiwe Ndlovu from GDED said that through the Enterprise and Supplier Development, her department was trying to build capacity to create an enabling environment for local businesses. With the implementation of the eight anchor pillars of Enterprise and Supplier Development, their mission is to unlock opportunities for township enterprises to tap into global markets.

"Government is always procuring from external suppliers, and as a result, service providers need to always comply with all the regulations. If they do not comply, they lose business," she indicated.

GDED monitors the implementation of B-BBEE in the province as well as enforces aspects relating to compliance with industry standards. Through the Township Economy Partnership Fund, the GDED, GEP and Industrial Development Corporation (IDC), assist small business startups with funding to the maximum of R100 000. The fund aims to support vulnerable township small businesses that are unable to access funding from private funding institutions, government, and other business support programmes. Priority is given to SMMEs in manufacturing, taxi economy, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), backyard real estate upgrading and retail.

LIVESTOCK FARMERS RECEIVE CATTLE HANDLING FACILITIES



Mr Mayibongwe Kunene, Project Manager at DALRRD, with one of the beneficiaries at one of the cattle handling facilities that were erected by DALLRD at the farms.



Mr Ali Mkgato, an Animal Health Technician from GDARDE, demonstrating how to use a cattle handling facility.



From left: Mr Kunene handing over a certificate of completion to one of the beneficiaries, Mr Rorisang Ndala, in the presence of the Service Provider and Mr Makgato.

Themba Hleko

The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) recently handed over 15 state-of-the-art cattle handling facilities to Rust De Winter livestock farmers in Tshwane, Gauteng.

Cattle handling facilities play a vital role in livestock farming because they ensure proper livestock management, especially in conducting husbandry procedures such as weighing, sorting, weaning, veterinary care, as well as transporting the animals to feedlots and markets.

Infrastructure development is crucial in uplifting smallholder farmers, according to the Directorate: Rural Infrastructure Development at the Gauteng Provincial Shared Service Centre, which added that the massive project in Rust De Winter is linked to several infrastructure projects that have been completed to improve and catalyse production support for smallholder farmers.

The construction of the cattle handling facilities on Rust De Winter state farms is part of phase two of the Infrastructure Development Plan that also includes the ongoing projects of erecting an 80 km fence and equipping of 23 boreholes in the area.

These projects have created 53 temporary jobs for the locals with 13 jobs resulting from cattle handling facilities, 17 from borehole installations and 23 from the erection of the fence. The erection of the fence not only prevents stray animals to access national and provincial roads, but it has also prevented stock theft, cross pollination of pests, spread of diseases, and crossbreeding of cattle from different farms.

One of the beneficiaries, Mr Rorisang Ndala (24), could not contain his happiness after receiving one of the cattle handling facilities. Rorisang had taken over the Kloppersdam Farm two years ago after his father, Mr Frank Ndala, who was the lessee of the farm, passed away. "The department has helped us a lot. We were struggling with cattle handling facilities. It was hard for me and other farmers to vaccinate and tag the ears of the cattle before. Now, with these facilities, we overcame the challenges, and this will help us grow our livestock," mentioned Rorisang.

Rust De Winter State farms are situated on the borders of Gauteng, Mpumalanga, and Limpopo and 32 000 ha of these farms are leased to Gauteng beneficiaries. The farmers started leasing the farms in 1990 and they farm with livestock such as cattle, sheep, goats and pigs and crops such as wheat, potatoes and beans. Over the years, their farming operations were affected negatively owing to lack of infrastructure such as adequate fencing, cattle handling facilities and the equipping of boreholes, to mention a few.

Through its Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP), which makes provision for infrastructure development and improvement, DALRRD provided support to the tune of R25 million to improve infrastructure at these Rust De Winter farms. With the help of other stakeholders like the Gauteng Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment (GDARDE), the DALRRD has solicited a prudent partnership that will enable farmers to access veterinary services, extension services and maintenance of all allocated infrastructure.

HLABEDI CONTINUES TO THRIVE WITH BONSMARA BREED

Samuel Kgatla



The Bonsmara breed is known for its resistance to local diseases and high-quality beef

Selina Hlabedi has earned the title, “Queen of Bonsmara”, because of her love and passion for this breed of cattle and the enormous success she has achieved to date. Selina is the owner of Ba Kwa-Hlabedi Farming in Vanderbijlpark Park along the N1 in Gauteng, where she specialises in producing good quality Bonsmara and engages in other farming operations such as maize, soya beans and vegetable production.

Selina works closely with her “knowledgeable” son, Thabang, who is the manager of the farm. She farms on a 489 ha property which was allocated to her by the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) in 2014.

In terms of the operations, she has divided the land into portions to accommodate the various activities: 260 ha is arable

land and is in the process of being developed, maize and soya are being cultivated on 200 ha, while a 10 ha portion is used for vegetable production. The remaining hectares are used for grazing purposes.

Selina has overcome many setbacks and says that she is not one to shy away from difficult situations, including starting over. In 2019, she suffered every livestock farmer’s worst nightmare and was forced to sell all her animals. This happened after Hlabedi’s cattle were infected with brucellosis bacteria and she lost all of them; that is how she started to breed with Bonsmara because the Bonsmara breed is known for its resistance to local diseases and high-quality beef. It is also considered a top-tier breed because it has a good breeding index.

A social activist at heart, Selina admits that farming can be challenging, and appreciates the assistance she has been receiving from other farmers and DALRRD. She has helped many people overcome difficulties and often puts the needs of others, particularly women and children, above her own.

In addition to the Bonsmara, she has added 15 Brahman and 15 Simbra cows, as well as two bulls which she bought when she received the farm from the department, even though her main focus at the moment is on the Bonsmara cattle. She says that stock theft is however, becoming an increasing problem because she has lost some of her livestock owing to criminal activities. She employs five permanent staff and one intern.

Selina and her son praised the Agricultural Research Council (ARC)’s Kaonafatso Ya Dikgomo (KYD) Programme, saying it has made a huge difference to their farming operations. They also benefitted from the Sernick Group’s two-year livestock programme. She has won a series of awards, such as the 2018 Female Entrepreneur Award (FEA) (first prize); 2019 FEA: Top Entrepreneur in the Sector: Commercial (second runner-up); the 2022 KYD Farmer of the Year Award and lastly, the 2023 FEA: Top Entrepreneur in the Sector: Commercial (second runner-up).

Hlabedi’s farming prowess has taken her all over the world where she has done extensive training, and she is “taking the bull by the horns” as it is to expand and grow her farming operations even further. The good thing about the Bonsmara breed is that they are easy to sell and can adapt to the changing climate, reduced rainfall, and warmer temperatures.



Ms Selina Hlabedi and Thabang Hlabedi with their cattle

ON THE ROAD TO JUSTICE - COMMISSION ON RESTITUTION OF LAND RIGHTS MOBILE OFFICES BRIDGE THE GAP IN LAND RESTITUTION



The Chief Land Claims Commissioner, Ms Nomfundo Ntloko (right) and the Eastern Cape Chief Director Land Restitution Support, Mr Zama Memela, receiving the one-stop multipurpose mobile office in East London.

Nontembiso Kgatele

The Commission on Restitution of Land Rights recently launched its first mobile office pilot project, which aims to reach land claimants in far-flung remote areas of the country. The initiative is part of a public information drive to broaden access to information for rural communities that had lodged land claims with the commission and are awaiting settlements, or to receive progress reports on their claims.

This pilot project was launched in Eastern Cape where hundreds of land claimants were serviced at these mobile offices that serve as a bridge between the commission and the communities. Building on the success of the Eastern Cape pilot, the commission is actively working on expanding the mobile office initiative to all provinces. Plans are underway to bring the mobile offices to more remote communities, with a focus on areas with the greatest number of outstanding old order claims—these are land claims that were lodged during the 1998 lodgement period where various challenges had been identified that have led to delays in settlements.

The commitment to accessibility is not only about physical presence; it extends to effective communication and engagement as well.

Chief Land Claims Commissioner, Ms Nomfundo Ntloko, who leads the commission, plays a pivotal role in steering the commission towards its goals, aligning with the vision set forth by the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform, and Rural Development.



Members of the Community receiving assistance inside the multipurpose mobile office

Under her guidance, the mobile office initiative was introduced as a strategy to bring the commission's services directly to the people, especially those in remote and marginalised areas. "We want to remind our communities that the land restitution process is a service provided freely by Government, and that no individuals should be coerced to pay for this service," emphasised Ms Ntloko.

Should you encounter a fraudulent practice, please report the individuals to your nearest police station or call our Toll-Free number at 0800 007 095.