

# The Farmers' Chronicles

BLOG

24 November 2025



## Hope for Banana Growers: Deputy Minister Nokuzola Capa Takes Action to Help Ugu District in its Battle Against Banana Bunchy Top Virus (BBTV)

Banana farmers in the Ugu District of KwaZulu-Natal have endured silently as an enemy threatens their banana crops. The enemy causes bananas to grow abnormally, twisting their leaves and halting all growth, and ultimately causing total loss of banana crops if not stopped by treatment. This enemy, the Banana bunchy top virus (BBTV), is one of the most aggressive banana viruses in the world. However, when the Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Ms Nokuzola Capa, arrived at Roselands Farm on 11 November 2025 to distribute agrochemicals to help farmers control BBTV, the atmosphere dramatically improved. Relief and unity were evident, but above all else action.

The Deputy Minister's arrival at Roselands Farm was the result of her engagement with growers on 26 September 2025 at which they raised serious concerns regarding the presence of BBTV in the Ugu District area and the urgency of immediate intervention. Many in the Ugu District believe her visit symbolises that the prolonged battle against BBTV is finally being addressed seriously and with haste.

Since 2015, BBTV has plagued banana farms in the Ugu District of KwaZulu-Natal. While it affects commercial, smallholder and subsistence farmers alike, its effects have been devastating. If not treated immediately, BBTV can severely reduce crop yields and put at risk the livelihoods of the hundreds of farming families who rely on banana farming for income and food security. As a result of the national Department of Agriculture's previous efforts to assist farmers affected by the virus, agrochemicals were provided to farmers, agricultural advisors were trained to provide assistance to farmers, and awareness campaigns were implemented throughout the region.

These efforts have assisted in slowing down the progress of the virus; however, farmers have requested further urgent and coordinated actions to be implemented. At the event, the Deputy Minister presented 3 000 litres of agrochemicals to small-scale and subsistence growers in Ray Nkonyeni, Umdoni and Umzumbe areas, in addition to the 3 000 litres previously distributed to commercial growers in October.



agriculture

Department:  
Agriculture  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



A NATION  
THAT WORKS FOR ALL



## Hope for Banana Growers: Deputy Minister Nokuzola Capa Takes Action to Help Ugu District in its Battle Against Banana Bunchy Top Virus (BBTV)

Together, these efforts represent a large portion of a multi-step approach to providing support to all types of growers in the Ugu District. Representatives from local leadership, agricultural advisors and the farming community attended the distribution of agrochemicals. Inkosi Xolo of the KwaXolo Traditional Authority expressed sincere appreciation for the ongoing support provided by the department and thanked the department for quickly addressing the plight of banana-producing communities to protect the livelihoods of the people who reside within them.

Mr Sphephelo Ngubane, Manager of Roselands Farm, similarly expressed his appreciation to the department and to Deputy Minister Capa for taking the initiative to respond to farmers' requests in a timely manner. Additionally, he expressed that prior to the department's awareness campaigns and training sessions, many farmers had limited knowledge regarding BBTV; however, the training and knowledge gained from the department, combined with the additional support of the agrochemicals, will greatly aid in protecting the banana plantations and increase the confidence of the growers.

When speaking at the event, Deputy Minister Capa stressed that to combat BBTV, we must work together. Furthermore, she emphasised the importance of developing strong relationships between government, farming communities, academia, and industry. With these partnerships, growers will receive not only products to assist them, but also knowledge, training, and timely interventions to aid in the prevention of the spread of the virus. Furthermore, Deputy Minister Capa reminded growers that although agrochemicals are a key component in solving the problem of BBTV, regular training, continuous monitoring, early

detection, and awareness in the community are equally important to combat BBTV successfully. The Deputy Minister reiterated the department's commitment to continue to work closely with the Kwa-Zulu Natal Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, local authorities, and farming communities of the Ugu District to develop a comprehensive plan of action to fight against BBTV. Additionally, she emphasised that the road to achieving success will require consistent training, vigilant monitoring, and community-wide awareness to ensure that all growers understand how BBTV is transmitted and how to prevent its transmission.

As the fight against BBTV continues, the message is clear: protecting the banana industry in the Ugu District is a shared responsibility among growers, community members and partners in the value chain who are urged to remain informed, report suspected cases early and take an active role in protecting the banana fields in the Ugu District for the benefit of future generations.





## Hope for Banana Growers: Deputy Minister Nokuzola Capa Takes Action to Help Ugu District in its Battle Against Banana Bunchy Top Virus (BBTV)

-Prince Mtsweni-

