



**dardlea**

Department:  
Agriculture, Rural Development,  
Land and Environmental Affairs  
**MPUMALANGA PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT**



## **FAO Programme Helps To Boost Food Production**

Fighting hunger cannot be accomplished by a single stakeholder but it needs a collective effort where farmers, various departments and key stakeholders play a crucial role in addressing the current challenges in food production.

The Department of Agriculture Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs (Dardlea) in its efforts to intensify capacity for farmers, and increase food production, it works very handy with various key stakeholders like UN agencies (FAO), NGO, Research Institutions, private sector and Academia etc.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations programme (FAO) is a specialized agency leading international efforts to defeat hunger. It helps developing countries and rural areas to improve agriculture, forestry and fisheries practices. It was founded on 16 October 1945, hence the declaration of 16 October as World Food Day.

Ms Thandeka Sithole, a Provincial Project Coordinator for FAO, stated that the objective of the organization is to improve nutrition, increase agricultural productivity, raise the standard of living in rural population and contribute to global economic growth. She further added that FAO's mandate is to support its member countries or host government in its effort to ensure that people have regular access to enough high quality food to lead active healthy lives.

She explained that the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) signed a cooperation agreement with FAO in the field of capacity building, aid management and strengthening support provided to emerging farmers in 2007, hence the intervention in identified projects in province.

"In Ehlanzeni District, FAO is involved in building the capacity of smallholder farmers and has six pilot projects that were identified by the department, they include land reform and food security projects. The pilot project range from individual to group of farmers partaking in the production of various commodities such as poultry (broilers, layers, village chickens), livestock (dairy and beef), horticulture, field crops and vegetable production", Ms Sithole said.

FAO through capacity building for professionals in the field of agriculture and food security project, under the capacity building for smallholder farmer component aims to test and demonstrate models of fully orchestrated approach to interventions by key players in support of smallholder farmers development. Under this project it offers theoretical and practical training and mentorship based on the commodities on the farm and skill gaps identified.



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The capacity building pilot projects are; Matibidi Home Based Care and Coromandel Farmers Trust in Thaba Chewu Municipality, and Calicom Pty (Ltd), Nyalunga Farm, Silver Creek and Lijahasisu Kulabakhutsele in Umjindi Municipality.

Mr Makhofi Biya, Chairperson of Lijahasisu Kulabakhutsele project is one of the dedicated farmers who benefited from the FAO programme. The project is situated on a 5.5 ha land. He said he has seen a huge difference since the department and FAO intervened on the project. Although there are still challenges on the project, FAO has assisted them with fencing, drip irrigation system, trainings and diversifying their enterprises to include indigenous chickens.

FAO is also involved in the following programmes; capacity building for SA Professionals in the field of Agriculture and food security, FAO/WFP Lesotho programme, CAADP, Tele-food projects and Conservation Agriculture Forum.