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agriculture, rural development,  
land & environmental affairs

MPUMALANGA PROVINCE  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

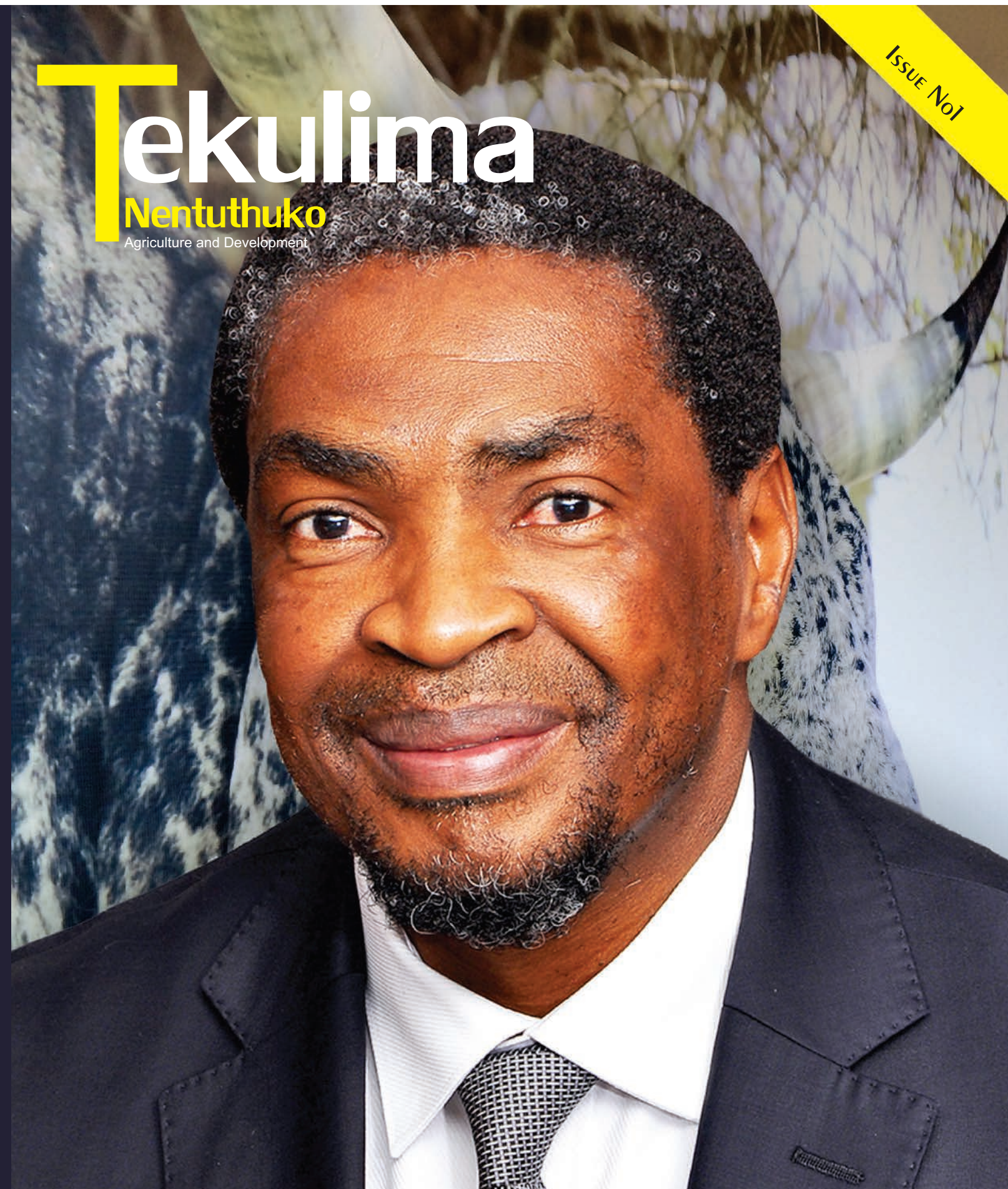


Issue No1

# Tekulima

## Nentuthuko

Agriculture and Development





*Kubhunya Lutfuli, Kusephuka Tidzindzi,  
Siyalima eMpumalanga!*





Grazing

Eragrostis curvula characterized by an early spring growth, long growing season and a high grazing capacity is not only an ideal grazing crop but totally underestimated as grazing pasture

Eragrostis curvula provides grazing 20-30 days earlier than natural pasturage. It's an ideal alternative to farmers who lacks sufficient winter feed to last until grazing on natural pasture is available. Unpredictable climate conditions, the growing mining industry, crimping natural pasturage are challenging, therefore the following alternative as a grazing crop.

A grazing capacity of 4 to 5 large stock units (LSU)/ha for 8 months is possible. Our recommendation however is to stock the pasture at 2 to 3 LSU/ha and that hay be harvested also during the season. A flexible rotational grazing system to follow when grass is 10-15cm high, aiming at a 60-70% utilization on the available forage area. Divided the pasture area into separate units and stocked at 2-3 LSU/ha to follow a rotational grazing system allowing the pasture to re-grow after utilization. If the utilization is 100%, livestock is subjected to stress as a result of competition, therefore 60-70% utilization is recommended.

Another benefit of Eragrostis curvula is to use it in autumn after taking one or two hay cuts. Following this practise the pressure on natural veld is relieved and additional rest for the veld may increase the stocking rate during summer or the veld could be utilized during winter shortages of fodder, serving as a “fodder bank”.

Seed

The popularity of the crop creates a demand for Eragrostis curvula seed. A seed production of 200-250 kg/ha is expected with the same fertilization as for hay production. It is important to register as a seed distributor, grower within the rules from the Register.

Conclusion

Eragrostis curvula is only one of the reliable, sustainable jewels of pastures with a known high management, high input but with a known trusted production value. Not only value for money on the hay, grazing or seed production side but also for the utilization of marginal soils. A high level of nutrition through the different systems is key to successful stock farming in South Africa.

More Land Is Needed

Mr Malinda Vilakazi now the chairperson of Phakamani CPA always wanted to farm. So when the owner of the farm that he was working on decided to sell his farm in 1995, Mr Malinda Vilakazi approached the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform for assistance to buy the farm. The response was that Mr Malinda Vilakazi had to find farm workers or community members with the same vision, so that they could buy the farm as a group with Land Restitution for Agricultural Development (LRAD) funding.

As a result Phakamani CPA was formed which, consisted of nine members in 1996 and in 2000, they bought 173 ha of land, 36 kilometres away from Ermelo in Mpumalanga. The CPA group, at the time, was jubilant about their farming prospects, but reality soon sunk in so that only three of the beneficiaries are still fully committed to the project today, according to Vilakazi.

The main reason why beneficiaries are losing interest is the small size of the farm rendering it unviable for such a large group, according to Vilakazi. At the moment the group has 40 head of cattle that are grazing on the farm, 10 hectares of pasture and 2.1 ha of apples trees under nets. The orchards have been established with the help of Hortgro funding and Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environmental Affairs assisted by erecting a 5 hectares fence on the project, 2.1 ha nets to cover the trees, they installed an irrigation system and boreholes. Mr Malinda Vilakazi has been looking for land close to the farm, to expand production and he would love to expand apple production to at least 5 hectares. “Apple production has the capacity of significantly boosting our farm's income, but we don't have enough money to expand production on our own. Especially not under net,” he says.

Another challenge is that people are not used to producing apples, as it isn't something that has been traditionally grown in the region. The group has a mentor, Job Mthombeni, who is also farming with apples in the region. Even though he is a great help, the group has found apple production to be much more intensive than livestock production and there is also smaller margins for error. In addition to this the farm doesn't have access to sufficient water to irrigate the orchards.

Production, as a result, is low because and the apples don't meet the strict standards required by the formal market. The apples are therefore sold to hawkers, local schools and neighbouring villages at less than half of what the group would have realised if they sold the apples to the formal market.

Lessons learnt

Two years ago, the group had suffered a setback when one of the beneficiaries sprayed the trees with chemicals that were mixed incorrectly. The person who did this was stopped before he could spray the whole orchard, but the trees that were sprayed still haven't recovered. About two rows have been affected. Mr Malinda Vilakazi says that most of the beneficiaries are illiterate, so it is very important that they know and understand exactly the way in which something has to be done as they cannot read instructions.

His advice to new entrants is that they should foster a close relationship with the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environmental Affairs to receive services provided by the Department and to gain access to valuable information to help them move forward. “Farmers should also realise that it takes a lot of commitment and patience to be successful,” he says.



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# Editorial

It gives me pleasure to reconnect with our stakeholders yet again through the Tekulima nentuthuko newsletter. The editorial team has not been able to publish our well-researched content on both our internal and external newsletters due to the resignation of our Graphic Designer for the past six months.

We have bounced back again! The look and feel of our designed publications will keep our readers wanting to know more about the activities of the Department. We have seen the Department working tersely in changing the lives of the people for the better.

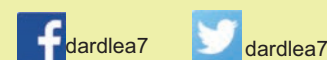
More exciting news have been covered on this first issue for the current financial year. Get to know what the Department has planned in the 2015/16 financial year as tabled by the MEC in his Policy and Budget Speech in May.

The Department plays a key role in dealing with the existing high levels of poverty, inequality and unemployment within the province. In realising this livestock farmers of Thembisile Hani municipality were compensated with livestock that they lost due the harshest weather in 2012. Read more about it.

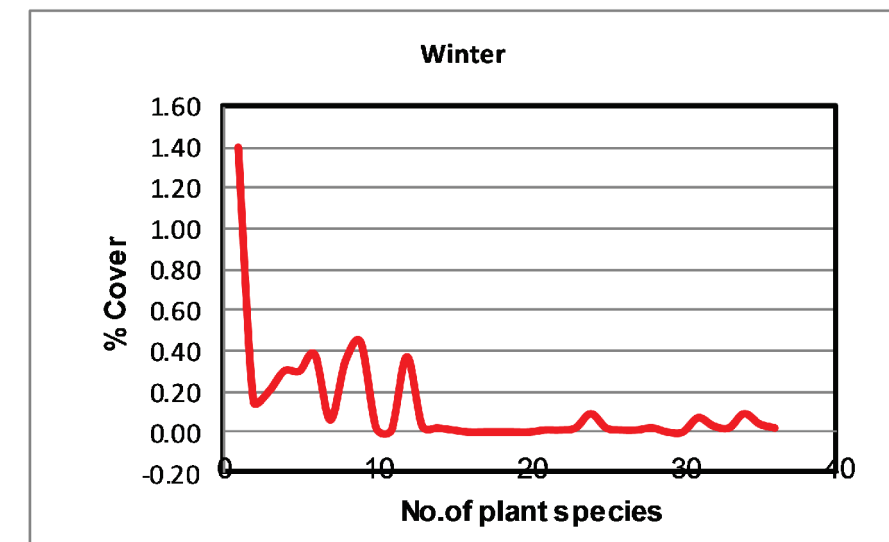
Famers Information Days were implemented across the province there's more to read about.

We would also like to receive your views and comments on our publications so as to improve it.

Our facebook page dardlea7 is also one platform to connect with both our internal and external stakeholders, please feel free to make meaningful contributions to the work that we are doing.



*Lanele Shabangu*



## Establishment And Production Cost: 2014-2015

All the calculations were done on the assumption that cultivation was done on a medium sandy loam soil with a 60-70 kw tractor, 2 wheel drive with suitable implements for this particular tractor. A fuel price at R14.20c/l form part of the cost per hectare and the hay cut twice during the season (J.P .le Roux, 2014).

### 1. Establishment Cost

#### Cultivation

a) Lime spreading – Rovic 3 ton lime spreader	R 101.58
b) Chisel plough / disc (twice)	R 565.69
c) Fertilizer spreading – 3 point spreader	R 89.50
d) Seedbed preparation – 13 tine Vibroflex	R 200.70
e) Trash buster (2 times)	R 161.54
f) Sowing	R 80.00

#### Fertilization

a) Lime @ 3 t/ha (R320 / t)	R 960.00
b) 2:3:4 (30) @ 250 kg/ha (R 5600 / t)	R1 400.00
c) LAN(28) @ 200 kg/ha (R 4600 / t)	R 920.00

#### Seed

a) E. curvula @ R100 / kg (8 kg/ha)	R 800.00
b) E. Tef @ R 25 / kg (4 kg/ha)	R 100.00

**Total Cost /ha R 5379-01**

### 1. Production Cost Per Annum

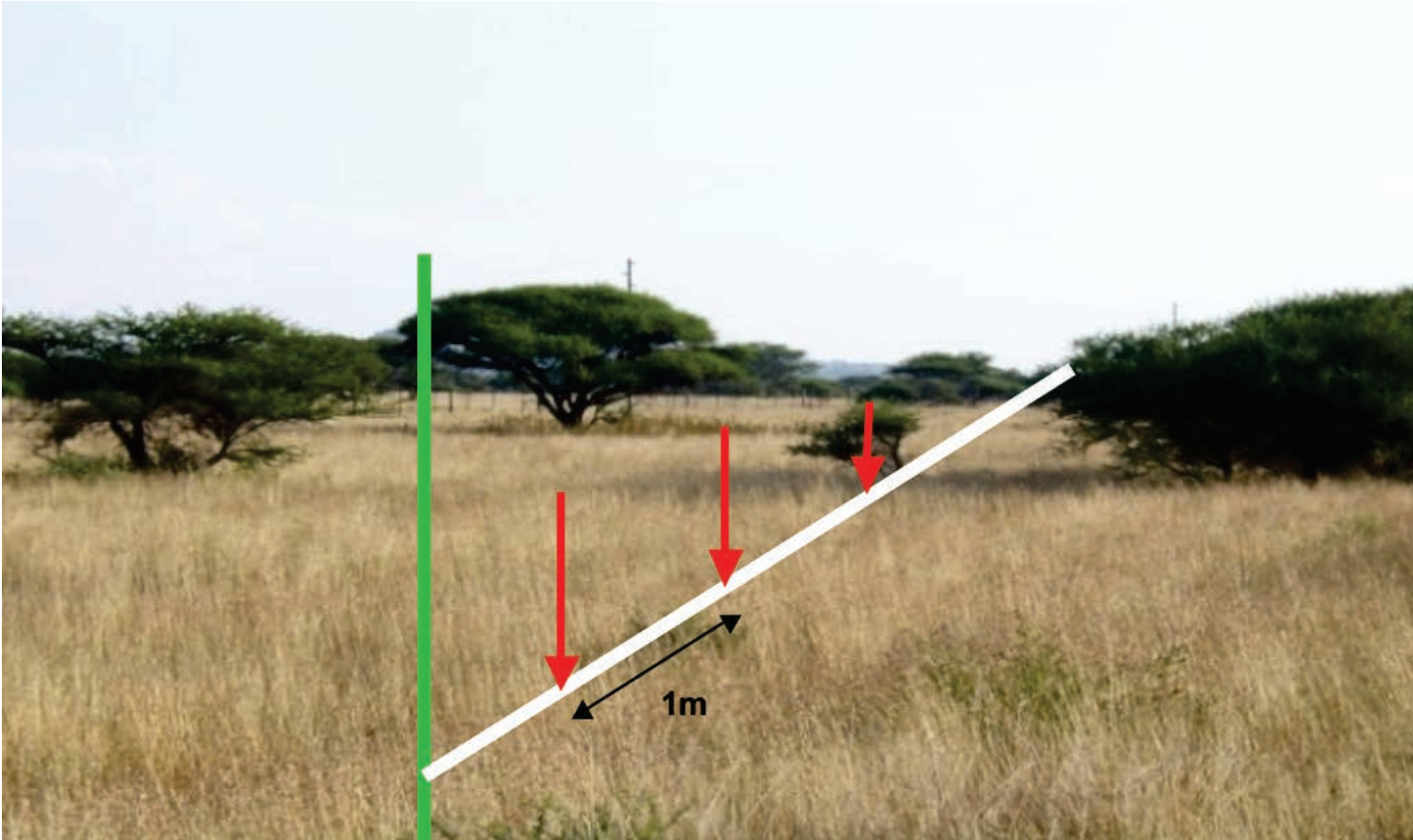
a) Fertilizer 18:1:5 (31) @ 450 kg/ha (R4870-00 /t	R2 191.50
b) Fertilizer spreading (twice)	R 179.00
c) Mowing (twice)	R 692.04
d) Raking (twice)	R 296.14
e) Baling (twice)	R 643.30
f) String	R 76.00

**Total Cost /ha R 4077-98**

Assuming on production of 6 ton/ha for the season the cost per ton hay produced is R679-66 /ton or R0-68c /kg!!







Line sampling method

Table : Species composition

No.	Species & Life Form Perennial (P)	Counts		% Cover		
Ecological status						
		Winter (W)	Summer (S)	Winter (W)	Summer (S)	
1.	<i>Hyparrhenia hirta</i> (P)	140	311	1.40	3.11	<i>Increaser I</i>
2.	<i>Monocymbium ceresiiforme</i> (P)	15	7	0.15	0.07	<i>Decreaser</i>
3.	<i>Cymbopogon plurinodis</i> (P)	20	81	0.20	0.81	<i>Increaser I-II</i>
4.	<i>Eragrostis curvula</i> (P)	30	51	0.30	0.51	<i>Increaser II</i>
5.	<i>Themeda triandra</i> (P)	44	20	0.44	0.20	<i>Decreaser</i>
6.	<i>Eragrostis racemosa</i> (P)	30	46	0.30	0.46	<i>Increaser II</i>
7.	<i>Tristachya leucothrix</i> (P)	38	35	0.38	0.35	<i>Increaser I</i>
8.	<i>Pogonarthria squarrosa</i> (P)	9	0	0.09	0.00	<i>Increaser II</i>
9.	<i>Eragrostis plana</i> (P)	37	49	0.37	0.49	<i>Increaser II</i>
10.	<i>Hyperthelia dissoluta</i> (P)	9	11	0.09	0.11	<i>Increaser 1</i>

# Message

from the HOD

We are in existence as Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs to ensure that food security food safety are realised. It gives me pleasure that the services we render impact on the state of development in the province.

The Department is working tirelessly by empowering the society we serve to grow their own food for subsistence or income generation that will provide nourishment and potential income.

As a Department, we continue to ensure that our programmes are in line with the development of smallholder producers, with the aim to make them to become commercially viable. This will further stimulate and rejuvenate the rural economy and promote job creation.

The newsletter present to our stakeholder some of the work the Department is implementing. More service delivery work will be covered as we continue with our work this financial year.

I would like to invite all our stakeholders to join hands with us as we change the lives of the people we serve for the better. Working together we can move South Africa Forward

*Sindisise Dulu*







MEC MA Gamede

POLICY AND  
BUDGET SPEECH

**20 farms** have been secured. The Department will be developing the youth to focus on dry land crop production, livestock production, poultry development. This will also include, vegetables and sub-tropical fruit production linked to Value Chain, including School Nutrition Programme and Hospitals.

**R4 million** is set aside by the Department for land rehabilitation. This will be a joint venture with BHP Billiton, where the latter has also budgeted **R3 million**.

**R102 million** will account for massifying and improving the implementation of Masibuyele Emasimini Programme.

**30 761 hectares** of land will be ploughed and planted across the province, which will see:

**9 595** hectares ploughed and planted for Gert Sibande

**9 332** hectares ploughed and planted for Nkangala

**6 072** hectares ploughed and planted for Ehlanzeni South **AND**

**5 762** hectares ploughed and planted for Ehlanzeni North

These hectares are going to be split into two:

**12 761** is going to be for subsistence farmers and **18 000** hectares for smallscale farmers who have been identified in all the Districts to be put in a three year programme to push them into commercial farming.

**R33 million** will cater for the supply, delivery and off-loading of fertilizers and manure covering Ehlanzeni South and North, Gert Sibande and Nkangala Districts.

**R22 million** will be utilised for the development of 62 cooperatives, water development and food gardens.

The food security programme will focus on reviving cooperatives that are linked to the school nutrition programme and hospitals. Areas of focus will be on vegetables production not limited to tomatoes, carrots and cabbages etc.

**R16 million** will account for Masibuyele Esibayeni Programme to increase animal production.

**R20 million** will be set aside for supply and delivery of tractors in the Districts for the enhancement of our fleet that we have as a Department.

**R27 million** will account for the appointment of service providers to repair and maintain mechanisation as well as procurement of fuel, diesel and lubricants for all the sites where our tractors will be dispatched on a daily basis.



Rangeland evaluation to improvemanagement practices on livestock production in Mkhondo

By Oupa Keromecwe  
Sub-Directorate:Veld Pasture Management and Nutrition

#### Abundance of plant species on communal rangelands in Mkhondo Municipality

##### Background

In rural areas of South Africa, soil erosion and vegetation destruction have reached serious proportions due to population pressures, socioeconomic condition and traditional grazing patterns that conflict with limited land resources. A challenge in the next decade is to examine alternatives to improve production as a sustainable option for land use. One approach that has been used to restore degraded rangelands in the other countries is to seed with alien grasses.

Taking in consideration climatic factors, Mpumalanga Province can be classified in three agro-ecological zones, namely Lowveld, Middleveld and Highveld with variable annual rainfall ranging from 450 mm of Lowveld to 1200mm in the Highveld. The grassveld of the Mpumalanga Province Highveld can be classified as mainly Sourveld. Sourveld occurs mainly at high altitudes with lower temperatures than in lowveld regions. Sourveld provides high grazing quality in spring and summer but during autumn the quality of the grazing slowly decreases and winter grazing contains little nutrients due to the translocation of nutrients to the roots.

Natural veld constitutes the main feed resource for livestock in South Africa. An estimated 15% of the land surface of South Africa is potentially suitable for arable farming, and while the remaining 85%, only one-quarter receives more than 625mm of annual rainfall and almost 40% receives an annual rainfall below 375 mm. In addition to above statement is the fact that much of the area receiving sufficient rain for arable farming is topographically unsuited for cultivation.

For these reasons much of the country's land surface is likely to remain under pastoral production based primarily on veld. This, combined with the unique role of veld in the ecosystem, particularly regarding water provision and soil conservation, make it one of South Africa's most valuable natural resources as a result, should be conserved and used properly for sustained livestock production.

Overgrazing can be defined as the repeated utilization of the grass plant until the reserve nutrients in the roots are exhausted and remain one of the principal causes of rapid land degradation especially vegetation and soil. The degradation of veld essentially takes the form of a decrease of preferred species and an increase in unpreferable species. The primary effect of land degradation is generally to reduce the productivity of land and this process fundamentally affects the welfare of those who depend on the land as a basic resource. Livestock suffer and as a result one of the main sources of cash income is weakened.

##### INTRODUCTON

Rangeland monitoring and evaluation (RME) is critical in detecting vegetation change. Rangeland monitoring and evaluation are very critical for Mpumalanga communal rangelands because of increased human and livestock population- increased frequency and severity of drought - increased frequency of burning - increased conversion of rangeland to arable and the objective of abundance of plant species are vital : To assess abundance of plant species in communal rangelands of Mkhondo Local municipality

##### SAMPLING PROCEDURE

Line-point and intercept method used to assess plant species composition and cover (- 4 x 300m transects per site)- Assessment done each every (1) meter along the transect. Assessed were done in Summer (S) and Winter (W) season.





# Research Corner

## Performance of Drakensberger calves at different weaning age in Mpumalanga Highveld Areas.

<sup>1</sup>SH Molefi and P Munzhelele<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Nooitgedacht Research Station, Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs, Private Bag x 9019, Ermelo, 2350, South Africa, Corresponding Author: [shmolefi@mpg.gov.za](mailto:shmolefi@mpg.gov.za)

A research study was conducted on communal farms under Masibuyele Esibayeni Project (MESP) in Mpumalanga Highveld areas. Tweefontein, Zama okunzima, Kalkbank farms and Nooitgedacht as controls were used to evaluate the growth of Drakensberger heifers at different weaning ages to test the hypothesis that early weaning affects neither growth nor 12-month weights. On each farm ten heifer calves were randomly selected and weighed in November and every month thereafter until twelve months age to determine their growth performance. The calves were individually identified by ear notches and numbered ear tags and all groups were grazed on veld supplemented with licks in winter and summer.

Tweefontein and Zama okunzima calves were weaned at normal weaning age 6 - 7 months, while Nooitgedacht and Kalkbank were weaned at 2 - 3 months. The study indicated that there is a significant difference in heifer daily gain between the four sites in favour of Tweefontein. The average weaning weight was 208 kg at Tweefontein, which is heavier than the average weaning weight of Drakensberger Cattle Breeder Society of South Africa in sourveld areas.

Nooitgedacht, Kalkbank, Zama okunzima have the mean average weaning weight of 106 kg, 104 kg and 152 kg respectively. The average gain weights were 174 kg, 139 kg, 145 kg and 131 kg in Tweefontein, Nooitgedacht, Kalkbank and Zama okunzima respectively. Poor management practiced in some farms resulted on calves having *pseudomyxoma peritonei* (PMP) with a slow growth rate and poor body confirmation at 12 months of age. Good management practise makes calves to perform better despite weaning age. Therefore, following management programme is the key factor when farming with Drakensberger breed cattle in Highveld areas of Mpumalanga.



**R11 million** will account for the construction and refurbishment of eight (8) Poultry Houses with a carrying capacity of **40 000** chickens at Gert Sibande, Nkangala and Ehlanzeni North and South respectively.

**R500 thousand** will be allocated for the planning of a Red Meat Abattoir at Ehlanzeni North. This initiative will benefit local livestock farmers upon completion.

**R14 million** will account for the construction and renovation of One Stop Centres in Bushbuckridge South, Mkhondo, and Nkomazi Municipalities. The Department will now be easily accessible by society we serve, as all the services will be contained under one roof.

**R1 million** is put aside for the supply and installation of irrigation system for small scale sugarcane farmers in Malelane under Nkomazi Municipality.

**R9 million** is set aside for the construction of livestock handling facilities and water development for projects mainly in Ehlanzeni, Gert Sibande and Nkangala Districts.

**R10.7 million** is put aside for the recruitment of 40 agricultural graduates to be linked to Land Reform farms and for mentorship initiatives on various commodities aimed at Land Reform projects.

**R5 million** is allocated for the completion of infrastructure in Marapyane College, under Dr. JS Moroka Municipality; development of a Farmer Training Centre at our Nooitgedacht Agricultural Centre in Msukaligwa Municipality, and equipping of Funda Mlimi Training Centre in Thembisile Hani Municipality.

**R8.3 million** will be invested on Research and Development.

**R51 million** is put aside for the Mpumalanga International Fresh Produce Market, bulk infrastructure including roads and civil works and the construction of sewer system.

**R5.1 million** will account for coordination of rural development initiatives and strategies.

**R160 million** is put aside for Land Acquisition across the province targeting **244 380 hectares** of land.

**R111.3 million** will be invested on **Recap and Development**

**R96 million** is allocated for Rural Infrastructure Development targeting to benefit the **eight (8)** identified Comprehensive Rural Development Programme Municipalities.

**R54.9 million** will account for the Rural Economic Infrastructure Development (REID)

**R96 million** will be invested on the Animal Veld Management Programme (AVMP).

**R5.9 million** will account for the Land Care programme across the province.

**R4.1 million** is set aside for EPWP with the focus to create job opportunities.

**R11.9 million** will account for the payment of **181** Tractor drivers and **92** security guards employed under Masibuyele Emasimini Programme.

**R85 683 million** is put aside for environmental affairs for the implementation of environmental programmes in all the Districts.

This budget was approved by the Provincial Legislature during the tabling of Policy and Budget Speech in May by MEC Andreas Gamede. The budget will see the Department carrying out its mandate in this financial year.



Post Budget Interview: Ligwalagwala FM.



# MEC Launches Air Quality Monitoring Station In Delmas

Bheki Nyathikazi

The MEC for Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs has officially launched the Victor Khanye Air Quality Monitoring Station (AQMS) in Delmas. The AQMS will enable the Department and its stakeholders to successfully develop an air quality management plan for the Highveld area, aimed at co-ordinating air quality management while providing for the implementation of the plan by all relevant role-players. The Highveld area was declared the Highveld Priority Area in November 2007. It covers major towns like Emalahleni, Delmas, Middelburg, Secunda, Standerton, Edenvale, Boksburg, Benoni and Balfour.

The launch took place during a provincial World Environment Day (WED) celebration. WED is celebrated worldwide annually since 1973, with an aim to raise the global awareness about the importance of a healthy and green environment in human lives. The WED for 2015 is celebrated under the Theme: "One World, One Environment". Addressing community members at Delpark Primary School, MEC Gamede reminded the local people about the importance of looking after the environment, as it has been found that humans have the most adverse impact on the environment.

The WED was established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1972 to mark the opening of the Stockholm Conference on the United Nations Environment Programme.



Both the young and old braved the cold to come witness the launch of the air quality monitoring station.



MEC Gamede as he officially opens the Air Quality Monitoring Station.



MEC with Mayor of Victor Khanye and Officials.

# The last kick of the LCA

Andile Shabangu

The 23<sup>rd</sup> Lowveld College of Agriculture's 2015 Graduation Ceremony was a special one in many ways; it was the very last while the College was under under the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs.

The college has since been incorporated into the University of Mpumalanga effective 01 January 2015. However, the National Diploma in Agriculture will still be offered together with a B-Agric degree, and later a BSc Agric degree by the University of Mpumalanga. After this year's graduation, the current students (pipeline students) will complete their diploma under the newly formed university.

Over the past 23 years, the Lowveld College of Agriculture awarded diplomas and National Certificates to graduates, many of whom are currently making a mark in the Agriculture industry in Mpumalanga Province, and all over South Africa. The college focused mainly on the livestock and crops that are produced within different agro-ecological regions of the province.

This year Diplomas were awarded to 155 graduates, whose programmes focused on Farm Management, Soil Science, Water management, Agricultural Engineering, Vegetable Production, Livestock Production, Fruit production and Agronomy.



155 Graduates ready to recieve their Diplomas.



Left to Right -MEC Gamede, UMP Vice Chancellor Prof. Mayekiso, LCA Principal Mr F. Leutle and LCA Marapyane Campus Principal Mr Viljoen.



Dardlea MEC MA Gamede and HOD Ms SP Xulu in a group picture with the graduates.





Minister Edna Molewa and MEC MA Gamede during a media briefing at the Summit.

## Mpumalanga Hosts the National Waste Summit

Bheki Nyathikazi

White River - The National Waste Management Summit was hosted by Mpumalanga at the Ingwenyama Conference Centre in White River, under the theme "War on Waste, Driving the recycling economy in South Africa". Delegates at the Summit included government, industry, civil society, communities, organised labour, academia, NGOs, NPOs, state owned entities, research institutions and the general public. The Summit acknowledged that Waste Management is an integral part of our lives and therefore needs to be prioritised, and that improper waste management in South Africa poses a serious threat to society. Both the Minister Edna Molewa and MEC Andreas Gamede called for a radical approach in order to "turn the tide" and declare a "War on Waste".

After three days of deliberations, among others the Summit took the following resolutions as part of actions that are required to advance the "War on Waste" -

- Resolve challenges with respect to project management issues between Local Municipalities and District Municipalities
- Consider provision of accredited training
- Conduct awareness raising on waste management.
- Review current allocations for waste management services and ring-fence allocated budgets
- Promote public private partnerships

- Provide clear policy direction regarding waste-to-energy
- Provide consistent support to municipalities
- Involvement of youth in waste programmes



Journalists at the media briefing with Minister Molewa and MEC Gamede.



MEC Gamede addressing delegates at the Waste Summit.

## Agriculture is Exciting and Dynamic



A demonstration on how food is produced to the young girls

Zenzile Nhlanguwini, Celani Ndude & Mbalenhle Mhlongo-Zulu

Umjindi and Emalahleni Municipalities- In an effort to inspire young girls to consider agriculture as a career, the Department invited young girls from local schools in Barberton to participate in a Take a Girl Child to Work annual campaign. Thirty young girls from Emjindi High School and KaMhola Secondary School in Barberton were among the thousands that participated during the annual campaign held countrywide.

Meanwhile on 28 May 2015, the department granted and opportunity to the Nkangala District female learners from Mpuqhukweni Secondary School, Coronation Secondary Schoolman Mafa Secondary School and a farm school situated in Kriel, Lehlaka Secondary School an opportunity to get the first hand information and experience in the Agricultural field. This event took place in Eensumheid farm in Balmoral at eMalahleni Municipality whereby all the learners had to feel the atmosphere of the actual agriculture world.

This initiative is aimed to entice young girls to consider different career opportunities available in various sectors and to encourage them to venture in careers that were previously male dominated industries, like agriculture.

Ms Sindy Shongwe, the Organiser of the Ehlanzeni event said that this initiative was hosted to encourage and expose a girl child to career opportunities available in the public, business and agricultural sectors.

Speaking to learners, Ms Shongwe told them that agriculture was shaping the economy of the country therefore, it needs young people that would live and think agriculture. "Farming is a business but it needs young people with skills.

Young girls you must prepare for your future and choose your careers in agriculture. You must change the perception that agriculture was only for males," said Ms Shongwe.

Mr. James Mokgotho, Agricultural Manager who was standing in for the Nkangala District Director, encouraged the young women to have purpose of existence, a vision, to dream and to chase their dreams." You have a potential to realise your dreams. Unleash your potential so that you may change the situation in your life, community and make the world a better place.

They received guidance in various careers like Agricultural Engineering, Agricultural Economics, Extension Services, Veterinary Services and Animal Health Service from the professionals in those fields within the Department. The young women were advised to take up studies in which after completing, they can be employable.

An Agricultural Engineer Ms Ipeleng Maroo was one of the presenters who encouraged the young girls to work hard in order to succeed. "The interest of agriculture to many young people went down. Most people view agriculture as a dirty field, poor field, working in agriculture one thinks of someone in overalls, exposed to scorching sun, and people do not want to be there. Agriculture is exciting and dynamic. This is the time where we as young ladies must get involved in agriculture. There is a bright future in agriculture," said Ms Maroo.

The learners applauded the Department citing that it was mind refreshing to get information on careers in agriculture, as many students lack career guidance and end up going for any field of study without information on that particular course. The Dardlea is offering bursaries to young people with interest to study further in agriculture and veterinary as they are one of the scarce skills.

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Some of the animals that were given to the THLM farmers.

Zanele Shabangu

Jubilation is what could be seen on faces of Thembisile Hani Local Municipality (THLM) livestock farmers which were affected by livestock mortality in September 2012 as they witnessed the handover of their livestock from the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs (DARDLEA).

The handover ceremony which was led by MEC for DARDLEA Mr Andreas Gamede accompanied by MEC for Social Development Mrs Nomsa Mtshweni, took place on Saturday 18 April 2015 in Kwaggafontein Community Hall where the beneficiaries converged in numbers.

Addressing the beneficiaries by MEC Gamede, he said the farmers must appreciate government's effort of providing services to the people and for being there to serve them. "We are here today as Mpumalanga Provincial Government to handover the livestock as a way of compensation to the farmers who were affected by the cattle mortality, we are saying, "you should also consider expanding your farming to business level", he said. " You will all be receiving pregnant heifers which are less than 36 months old, we have done this with the aim to reproduce", alluded the MEC. Another advise to farmers from the MEC was to avoid overgrazing of their livestock.

The municipality experienced the harshest weather pattern in September 2012 that heavily affected the crazing areas leading to livestock suffering from malnutrition and as a result many cattle died. About 399 farmers were confirmed to have been affected following the verification processes which were conducted by the Department in the entire area.

An investigation that was conducted by the Veterinary Services concluded that the livestock died due to Hypothermia and Pneumonia.

The beneficiaries who appeared on the verification list were on the day of the handover given letters indicating the number of cattle to be compensated with.



MEC Gamede and his Social Development counterpart MEC Nomsa Mtshweni flanked by livestock farmers.



## Who is Gogo Beauty Skhosana

Gugu Nkosi

Ms Mtandana Beauty Skosana of Uthembekile project at Gert Sibande was born and bred in Barberton in the Mpumalanga province. She grew up on a farm where her grandmother used to work. Planting of crops, vegetables and breeding cattle, goats and chicken was mostly her daily activities. As she grew up she developed an interest in farming and started growing vegetables at the age of 15 and looking after goats, chicken and cows.

After high school she became a teacher at a farm school and later on was employed by the Department of Correctional Services in 1965 where she worked as a Vegetable Production Specialist until 1999. In 2003 she attended a Broiler and Layers Production course offered by Buhle Academy. She acquired more skills on vegetable, crops and animal production from Xtrata Sebenzana for three years and the Department of Agriculture.

She pursued her love of farming and mobilized a group of women to get involved in crop production in Emalahleni where they were given a one hectare plot to plant maize. During this time, she was also engaged in vegetable production in her backyard garden. She expanded her farming practice to include chicken layers, cattle and small pigs on a small scale and supplied eggs to state departments, small businesses and the community at large.

In 2014, she entered on the Female Entrepreneur competition where she won the Category of a Best Commercial in the Province and again won as an Overall winner of the province. Beauty Skhosana won the total sum of R375 000.

She used the prize money to purchase additional implements for the operations of the farm. She bought a tractor, a planter that can cover eight rows; a multi- purpose harvester as well as a machine to use to make her own feed for the cows.



Her future plans are to request assistance from the Department to revamp the existing piggery structure, to revamp the two boreholes in the farm, to build the store room for implements and to be trained on tractor mechanization or Food formulation. Her priority is to revamp the two boreholes to make the project viable. Currently the project is operation is in a good state except that all the infrastructure projects or future plans are difficult to be supported because the farm belongs to the government.

This year Beauty Skhosana has managed to plant 300ha of soya, 50ha of maize, 50ha of sunflower and 50ha of sugar beans. Currently she owns 238 cattle that include the bull and neifers given by the department. Her love of farming has made her by twenty sheep in order to create more job opportunities for the needy.

## Government Interacting With Community

Nonhlanhla Dooka

During the 2nd National Imbizo focus week residents of Bushbuckridge had an honour to be visited by Deputy Minister of Rural Development and Land Reform Mrs Candith Mashego-Dlamini to interact with them on issues of rural development under the theme "Together we move South Africa forward". This rallying theme promotes partnerships and transformation of South Africa into a better place for all. The Deputy Minister's visit was on the 13th April 2015 in Thulamashe village.

The aim of this visit was to interact and observe challenges that famers encounter on a daily basis and to see how best the Department can assist. She visited two projects and one of them was the River Valley Catalytic irrigation project situated at New Forrest.

Part of the visit was a tour in the area where the Deputy Minister engaged with projects' beneficiaries that had benefitted from the government. The tour was followed by a public participation meeting with the community of Thulamahashe where agricultural issues were raised.

In her engagement with the community she said, " The Provincial Government has the Masibuyele Emasimini programme which is aimed at encouraging people to use every arable piece of land productively to produce food that will be for household consumption and also benefit the country".

She further outlined that Agriculture and Rural Development Departments have Extension Officers in every municipality to support farmers, the Deputy Minister said.

Farmers were happy to have an interaction with the Deputy Minister to share their successes and challenges they face. They further requested that government should be in touch with them not only when there are challenges.

Bushbuckridge is one of the seriously struggling local municipalities in the province with water shortages as it was raised as a challenge by the local residents and farmers.



Deputy minister Mrs Candith Mashego-Dlamini together with Bushbuckridge Mayor addressing delegates.



# DARDLEA

## Aquaculture First Fish Harvest

Andile Shabangu

The Research and Technology, Game Development and Aquaculture Research Unit within the Department rolled up sleeves to assist Shiyalongubo Fish and Vegetable project to harvest fish that they farm with for selling in Barberton community.

According to Technical Advisors, Ms Yvonne Manganeng and Mr Len Coertze, between 10 to 400 grams of Oreochromis Mossambicus was harvested. Further than that, the majority of the warm water fish weighing 175 grams and out of the four dams that are on site, two dams have been harvested and they were able to sell 23kg of fish to the community. The twelve ponds is the total number of targeted dams for Shiyalongubo Fish and Vegetable Project.

This was not for the first time the project harvested fish, in November 2014 10kg of Oreochromis Mossambicus was harvested and the 23kg proved that the project was growing according to Mr Len Coertze. and their wish is to see the project getting more funds through Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme (CASP) in order to be sustainable.

The Project Manager, Ms Thandi Mbatha said the Project currently employs 18 people, which are paid through the Expanded Public Works Programme.

The workers have been working for free or remunerated through the harvest obtained from the vegetable project up until the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs intervened. All these efforts are attributed to Ms Mbatha through her diligence, commitment and passion that eventually led to the glorious day of harvesting.

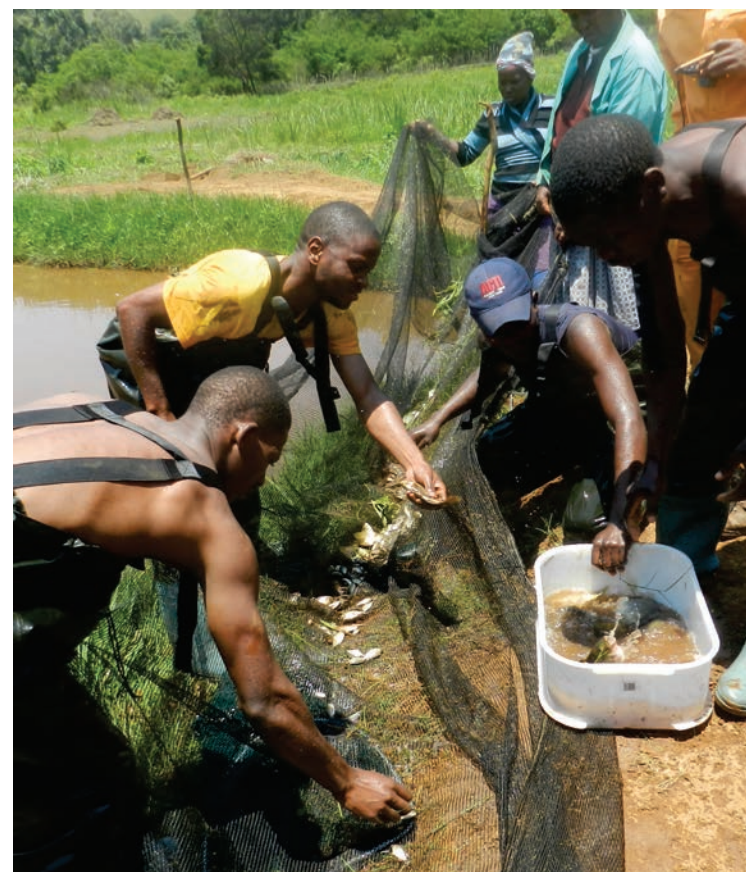
The hosting of the Aquaculture Stakeholder Consultative Workshop which was held in May 2013 in Nelspruit by the Department of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries; served to formalise the inland fishing industry in Mpumalanga province and a motivating drive.

According to research statistics, some 10 years ago food security was regarded as maize or other agricultural crops in Sub-Saharan countries; whereas fish in Sub-Saharan countries are largely consumed while in Europe they are a large population that consumes fish.

For those interested in starting their fish projects the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs can be contacted on the following numbers (013) 766 7559 Ms Yvonne Manganeng or Len Coetzer.



A display of a catch during harvesting.



A wonderful display of the catch of the day.

# ADC

## to Encourage Youth Involvement In Agriculture

Bheki Nyathikazi

Mpumalanga farmers have joined hands to revive the Agricultural Development Committee (ADC) that will see into the interests of farmers, but also assist the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs and act as a bridge between the two. Interestingly, the members of the committee have committed to assist the Department in its quest to encourage the youth to participate in agriculture.

During the tabling of the 2015/16 Policy and Budget vote on 21 May 2015, MEC MA Gamede announced the establishment of the Mpumalanga Fortune-40 Young Farmers Incubator programme that will have 20 youth-owned cooperatives recruited into an incubator programme operated in four farms throughout the province. The MEC said 20 farms have already been secured, and the department will be developing the youth focusing on dry land crop production, livestock production and poultry development. "The Department is proud to be contributing in investing on youth development as a way of creating opportunities that will allow them to participate in economic growth of the province", said MEC Gamede during his Budget speech.

We are trying to respond to MEC Gamede's efforts to get the youth interested in the field of agriculture in large numbers. This will be good for food security and the future, because we know that imparting the knowledge and wisdom on agriculture to the young people today, will help us towards a sustainable future. We heard MEC Gamede very well during his budget speech, and farmers are here to help him win on his quest to get the youth into agriculture", said ADC's Mr Jamden Nkosi.

"The ADC has always been there, but somehow it was a toothless dog. We have now come together with one thing in mind - to bring it back to life. Our aim is to look at the interests of both the livestock and crop producing farmers. Being organised will assist farmers to have a way and easy access to get their grievances, including their contributions to government's programmes aimed at benefitting emerging farmers", added Nkosi. He applauded the DARDLEA for its contribution in developing emerging farmers especially in the Nsikazi area, and assisting with basic necessities for farmers like training. He says farmers in rural areas are frequented by extension officers and advisors, including animal health practitioners. He however called on the MEC to consider an abattoir for the Nsikazi area, as travelling to Barberton is costly and thereby leading to them working at a loss.



Front from left, Lillian Katzinger, Maria Madisa, M Mavuso, Jamden Nkosi, with MT Lukhele and S Ntiwane at the back



## Departments calls on the Youth to Protect The Environment



*Letsakuthula Primary School learners showcasing their understanding of the issues affecting Agriculture, Land Care and Wetlands through drama and dance*

### Celani Ndude

**M**bombela Municipality - The Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs (DARDLEA) has called on schools and learners to protect the environment and take care of the natural resources for future generations.

Letsakuthula Primary School in Matsulu is one of the schools that the Department had listed to participate in the Junior Land Care Programme in the province, during the official launch of the Junior Land Care Awareness Campaign at the school.

DARDLEA's Land Care programme Coordinator in Mbombela Municipality Ms Murhandziwani Shivambu said the aim of the event was to educate and encourage schools to take care of the environment. According to Shivambu, these listed schools are expected to start their own food garden projects, and share agricultural skills to promote sustainable land use and food security.

"Land Care is a community-based programme, supported by government with the goal to optimise productivity and sustainability of natural resources resulting in greater productivity, food security, job creation and a better quality of life for all", said Ms Shivambu.

She added that Junior Land Care empowers disadvantaged youth by providing them with facilitation and leadership skills to promote sustainable land use at home and in schools.

Shivambu says launching the Awareness Programme at the school will encourage the learners for their active involvement in preserving the natural resources. She promised to assist the school in taking their involvement in Land Care to another level, adding that Agriculture would be on the top of the list in the school's priorities.

As a beneficiary, Letsakuthulu Primary School has to adopt neighbouring schools and assist them to participate in agricultural activities effectively.

At the launch, the young people were taken through presentations outlining what needs to be done in order to preserve natural resources like water, soil, veld and Wetlands. All speakers advised learners to be proactive and freely participate in agricultural activities in order to widen their knowledge about the environment. They also cited the benefits of having a Land Care programme in the school, food gardens to avoid soil erosion and the vegetables from the garden will also supplement the school feeding schemes.

## DARDLEA

### tackles animals wellbeing

### Zanele Shabangu

**W**ellbeing of animals is one of Mpumalanga Department of Agriculture, Rural Development Land and Environmental Affairs (DARDLEA) priorities through the Veterinary Services Directorate to increase access to veterinary service to even remote rural areas.

Animal diseases that impact on trade and public health are controlled and this has been extended by the state of the art veterinary mobile hospitals that are servicing all areas across the province. The DARDLEA today boosts that veterinary services is extended to remote areas, limited services to the previously isolated rural areas in the province is now history, the communities are currently provided with key services like the building of diptanks and veterinary clinics, says MEC Andreas Gamede.

Again, we are proud that this current financial year planning of a Red Meat Abattoir at Ehlanzeni North will be commissioned. This initiative will benefit local livestock farmers upon completion, alluded MEC Gamede.

The Directorate, Veterinary Services is responsible for controlling and reporting on animal diseases in the province to prevent other stock from becoming infected and to prevent human consumption of contaminated meat. It further deals with animal health, veterinary public laboratory and diagnostic services, clinical services and export certification. It plays a key role of performing the regulatory functions to ensure animal health and the safety of agricultural products.



Annually the Department is hosting the Provincial Abattoir Rating Scheme awards. This is a competition that every abattoir owner strives to win and is particularly important in view of the contribution of the meat industry to Mpumalanga Province and the National Economy as a whole, says MEC Gamede.

The World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) which sets and prescribes norms and standards on matters of animal health and international trade, announced in February this year that as a Province we have regained the Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) free zone status.

"This was indeed good news for the Department however, a lot still needs to be done in ensuring that critical control measures are in place to prevent potential outbreak of FMD virus", says MEC.

State Veterinarians and other stakeholders are hard at work to put control measures such as movement control, veterinary checkpoints, surveillance among animals and vaccinations. The massive vaccination and awareness campaigns in the province against fatal diseases of animals and humans and the rabies are continuing in the province.

Farmers, other role players and stakeholders in the animal industry and the public at large are urged to present their livestock and pets for vaccination at all times, concluded the MEC.

**"This was indeed good news for the Department however, a lot still needs to be done in ensuring that critical control measures are in place to prevent potential outbreak of FMD virus"**