

# Transboundary Animal Diseases Information Sharing Session in North West

*By Rony Moremi*

**The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) has taken several interventions to curb the spread of Foot-and-mouth Disease (FMD) in the country. Some of the interventions taken were the 21 days ban of movement of cattle on 18 August 2022 and continuous farmers training on FMD.**

According to the latest Foot-and-mouth Disease Outbreak and Surveillance Update Report, South Africa has 146 open FMD outbreaks in the previously FMD free zones. The outbreaks affected Limpopo, Mpumalanga, North West, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, and Free State.

To limit the negative effects of the disease, the minister repealed control measures relating to Foot-and-mouth Disease as prescribed in the Government Notice No. 2075 of 10 May 2022 and Government Notice No. 2391 of 18 August 2022, to allow movements under certain conditions in the rest of the country except the new Disease Management Areas in Limpopo, KwaZulu-Natal, and Free State.

Minister Didiza appreciated the collaborative work between the state veterinary services, private vets, and Animal Health Technicians and the cooperation from traditional leaders, communities, and the police during the 21-day ban. "I call for improvement in the primary animal health care and the strengthening of biosecurity measures by all farmers, feedlots, and auctioneers," said the minister.

In Gauteng and North West, there were no suspect

cases reported around quarantined farms, and in Mpumalanga, no new cases were reported. However, the disease management area will be retained in KwaZulu-Natal, KwaNongoma, Ulundi, KwaHlabisa, eHluhluwe and eMtubatuba.

To create awareness about FMD and other transboundary diseases of economic concern, the DALRRD and the North West Department of Agriculture and Rural Development conducted an information sharing session for local emerging farmers in Ngaka Modiri Molema District in North West. Two villages where the information sharing sessions were held are Disaneng and Six Hundred.

"Tsholofetso ga e hlabise dihlong", loosely translated as, "keeping a promise is better than being ashamed", said Kgosi Masibi from Disaneng Village in the North West. Kgosi Masibi appreciated the efforts of training farmers in his village about transboundary diseases. He raised a concern about livestock theft and that it might be one of the ways in which FMD and other transboundary diseases spread. He further cautioned farmers from his village against illegal movement and transportation of livestock during the 21 days of no movement of livestock.

Awareness sessions like these, conducted by the department and the Provincial Department of Agriculture, are beneficial to farmers like Lerato Serame. Lerato, a farmer in Disaneng said that she attended the training to learn more about FMD and other animal diseases. She also appreciated the awareness

*to p 2*



# Transboundary Animal Diseases Information Sharing Session in North West

from p1

training, “I wish there could be more awareness sessions like these that teaches us about symptoms of animal diseases.”

According to Jonah Tongwane, a Control Animal Health Technician from the North West Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Directorate: Veterinary Services, FMD and other transboundary animal diseases have an economic impact as international trade comes to a halt amid outbreaks.

Cristopher Digwamaje from the Directorate: Food Import and Export Standards warned farmers against falling victim to fraudsters who claim to have FMD vaccines. He alerted farmers that FMD is a controlled notifiable animal disease. These are animal diseases that require government control due to the potential risk they pose on individual animal owners, farmers and consumers of animal products or compromise the agricultural sector as a whole.

Controlled and notifiable animal diseases are considered very detrimental as they may display at least three of the following aspects:

- Zoonosis: The disease is transmissible to and able to cause disease in humans, e.g., rabies, Brucellosis and Rift Valley fever.
- Rapid spread: The disease is highly transmissible and has the potential for rapid spread, independent of the actual movement of diseased animals and irrespective of farm boundaries, e.g., Rift Valley fever, Avian Influenza.
- Collective control: The disease is more effectively managed by collective control strategies than by the efforts of an individual animal owner, e.g., tuberculosis,

Brucellosis, Corridor disease.

- Threat to industry: The disease poses a potential serious threat to the performance of the agricultural industry if the current epidemiological and geographic distribution status in South Africa changes, e.g., Corridor disease, Foot-and-mouth Disease, African Swine Fever, African Horse Sickness.
- Trade sensitive: The disease can be regarded as a highly trade-sensitive issue and poses a potential serious threat to South Africa’s international trading status e.g. Foot-and-mouth Disease. It is also important to note that any animal disease which is not indigenous or native to the Republic is included automatically in the list of controlled animal diseases.

According to the Animal Diseases Act, 1984 (Act No. 35 of 1984), farmers should implement biosecurity measures on their farms. This is to prevent the introduction of disease into their farms and to prevent spreading of disease from their farms to other farms.

These biosecurity measures include requesting health certification or declarations indicating a vaccination schedule and health status as determined by a veterinarian when buying animals; requesting tuberculosis and brucellosis certification for the whole herd of origin is vital for cattle. Controlling movement of people and animals (including wildlife and pests) into and out of farms, enforcing a recording system such as keeping an access register and sanitisation point for visitors (boots and hands) before entering and exiting the farm, separating or quarantining newly bought animals from your other animals, so you can observe or test the new animals first to check if there are any signs of disease.

Director	Moses Rannditsheni	083 337 5869	Moses.Rannditsheni@dalrrd.gov.za
Subeditor	Lerato Mofokeng	012 319 7927	LeratoMOF@dalrrd.gov.za
Reporters	Samuel Kgatla	066 084 6653	SamuelK@dalrrd.gov.za
	Matsepo Maletswane	012 319 7852	MatsepoM@dalrrd.gov.za
	Innocent Mhlanga	063 693 0353	InnocentM@dalrrd.gov.za
	Rony Moremi	066 084 6192	RincertM@dalrrd.gov.za
	Mercia Smith	060 973 3816	MerciaS@dalrrd.gov.za
	Ndivhuwo Thenga	073 815 0345	NdivhuwoTH@dalrrd.gov.za

DALRRDnews is the newsletter of the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development Private Bag X250, PRETORIA 0001. It is published by the Chief Directorate: Communication Services, Private Bag X144, PRETORIA 0001.

Opinions expressed in DALRRDnews are not necessarily those of the editorial team. No part of this newsletter may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording or any information storage or retrieval system without prior permission from the editor.



# DALRRD Minister meets premiers to curb the FMD spread

By Samuel Kgatla

**T**he Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD), Thoko Didiza, met with KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) Premier, Nomusa Dube and Free State Premier, Sisi Ntombele, in Durban and Bloemfontein recently. The purpose of these meetings was for the minister and premiers to find ways on how to curb and mitigate the spread of Foot-and-mouth Disease (FMD). FMD is a serious disease that spreads easily. It is caused by a virus. The virus is found in all body fluids such as saliva, urine, faeces, milk and in the air that is breathed out by all diseased animals.

The country is currently experiencing 125 outbreaks of FMD involving farms, feedlots and communal areas in KZN, Free State, Limpopo, Gauteng and Mpumalanga. This led to government taking a decision to suspend movement of cattle in the entire country due to the continuous spread of FMD. The suspension is reviewable every week.

There are currently 22 outbreaks in the Free State, with the latest cases reported on 22 August 2022. The affected farms are located in two main areas, Viljoenskroon and Marquard. Vaccination of 55 628 cattle were concluded at five locations in the Free State. There are currently 75 outbreaks in KZN, with the latest case reported on 29 July 2022. Limpopo has recorded eight outbreaks, Gauteng five, Mpumalanga one and North West 14. The department is facing challenges of movement control of livestock, unpredictable availability of vaccine and lack of human resources.


Both premiers echoed the same sentiment to support DALRRD to curb the spread of FMD. They



*From the left are: MEC for KwaZulu-Natal, Bongzi Moloi, KZN Premier Nomusa Dube-Ncube, Minister Didiza and MEC Duma during the KZN FMD meeting.*

agreed that the matter must be prioritised because it is a threat to their provincial economies. They continued that there is need to move fast and inform people about the FMD. Lastly, they promised to use all the communication channels to help stop the spread before it gets worse.

The minister urged farmers, communities and industries to help curb illegal movements of animals. “The illegal movements of animals make things worse. Some farmers are deliberately moving these animals and putting other livestock at risk. This makes things difficult. We need to work well together,” she said.

The department has warned perpetrators that are illegally moving cattle will be prosecuted for contravention of the Animal Diseases Act, 1984 (Act No 35 of 1984) 





# Hlomela farmers plead for DALRRD assistance

By Samuel Kgatla


**F**armers from Hlomela Village outside Giyani were pleading with the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) to assist them with a feedlot and dips. They said this during the Foot-and-mouth Disease (FMD) awareness campaign held in the village in the Mopani District in September. The purpose of the awareness campaign was for the department to engage with all the farmers in the area on FMD issues affecting them.

Limpopo had more than eight cases of FMD until the end of August and the department put plans in place to mitigate the situation. The awareness campaign was one of the solutions to curb the FMD problem in the province. Earlier this year, DALRRD Minister Thoko Didiza met with the Limpopo Premier Stan Mathabatha and a few MECs to come up with plans to control the FMD. This was followed by many engagements between DALRRD and the Limpopo government.

A livestock farmer in the area, Jeremiah Malatji said the department should help them with a feedlot and resuscitation of dips. "Things could be better

if we have a feedlot. We used to have dips during the apartheid government and we still need them. Government should come on board and assist us. We rely on our livestock and had to wait for the 21 days on the suspension of movement of livestock by the department. I am not the only one who is talking about the feedlot and dip," he said.

The minister promised that the department has put money aside for the feedlot and dip in the area. She added that she has realised that most people in Hlomela Village rely on livestock. "We are here because of you as farmers and it does not matter how many livestock you have. We rely on livestock and planting of crops. Farmers should comply with the veterinarians' orders and take care of their animals. The Kruger National Park must make sure that their animals remain in the park and they do not trouble livestock farmers. Livestock farmers must unite and know their animals. We must resuscitate our dips and remind farmers about their importance," she said.

In conclusion, the minister said the department will accelerate on the issue of animal identification. 



**DALRRD Minister Thoko Didiza having a conversation with livestock farmers in Limpopo.**



**Limpopo livestock farmers during the FMD engagement with DALRRD at Hlomela Village.**



**Veterinarian Dr Mabasa responding to questions in Hlomela Village.**

# Follow proper vaccination schedule to prevent rabies

By Rony Moremi

**A**s part of World Rabies Day Commemoration, the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) in partnership with the Animal Health Forum hosted the Rabies Awareness Webinar on 27 September 2022. The department also embarked on a mass vaccination of dogs in provinces such as North West in Brits offering free dog rabies vaccinations together with other Provincial Departments of Agriculture.

The main message repeated by all the speakers during the webinar was that although rabies has 100% fatality rate, but it is also 100% preventable through vaccination.

With a 100% fatality rate in humans and animals, rabies remains a global threat killing approximately 59 000 people every year according to the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE). In South Africa, during 2020, 294 animal deaths were recorded and in 2021, 997 animal deaths due to rabies. This is an increase of 300%. In 2022, up to April, 400 animal deaths were confirmed. Up to 29 July 2022, 10 human deaths from rabies were confirmed. Rabies is however, 100% preventable and rabies vaccines for dogs can efficiently eliminate the disease at its animal source.

According to the OIE, rabies is a viral disease that affects the central nervous system of mammals (dogs, cats, foxes etc.), including humans. The rabies virus is particularly present in the saliva and brain of infected animals, most commonly dogs, and is transmitted by a bite. It is a zoonotic disease which means it can be passed from animals to humans. Symptoms are salivation, strange vocalisations, incoordination, paralysis, and aggression especially when approached.

Following the proper vaccination schedule for your pets can keep you and your pets safe from rabies. According to the Animal Diseases Act, 1984 (Act No. 35 of 1984), it is compulsory to vaccinate dogs and cats against rabies. Failure to vaccinate domestic

pets is illegal and is a public health risk.

The first rabies vaccine should be administered when the dog or cat is at least 12 weeks (three months) old. Older dogs and cats that have never been vaccinated can receive their first rabies vaccination at any age. After the first vaccination, a booster vaccine is required between one to 12 months after the first vaccine. After the initial two vaccines, a booster vaccine is required every three years but in high-risk areas, a booster vaccine should be administered annually. High risk areas include Kwa-Zulu Natal, the Eastern Cape and the eastern parts of Limpopo and Mpumalanga.

Dogs and cats younger than 12 weeks (three months) old may be vaccinated but must be re-vaccinated at 12 weeks old. A booster is still required one to twelve (12) months later.

To get a free rabies vaccine, pet owners can contact their local State Veterinarian or Animal Health Technician. It is never too late to vaccinate your dogs and cats.

For further information, contact your nearest animal health technician or private/State Veterinarian. Link for provincial contacts: <https://www.dalrrd.gov.za/Branches/Agricultural-Production-Health-Food-Safety/Animal-Health/contacts/provincialveterinary>

## **Directorate: Animal Health**

### **Animal Health**

**Tel.: +27 12 319 7456**

**Fax: +27 12 319 7218**

**E-mail: PA.DAH@dalrrd.gov.za**

**Website: www.dalrrd.gov.za**

## **Directorate: Food Import and Export Standards**

### **Animal Health Promotion Division**

**Tel.: +27 12 319/6117/6444**

**E-mail: info.sps@dalrrd.gov.za**

**Website: www.dalrrd.gov.za**





# North West pig farmer bags top national award

**J**ust four years after entering the piggery industry, the emerging North West farmer, Setadi Mabe, scooped up his first prestigious national award during the 2020/21 National Carcass competition recently hosted by the South African Meat Industry Company (Sam-ic) in partnership with ENVARTO in Pretoria.

Setadi Mabe of the Mabe Homestead in Lichtenburg, 18 km from Mafikeng Town, was crowned the National Carcass Champion in the emerging farmer category. Setadi farms on 196 ha of land, where 110 ha arable land was initially earmarked for cattle farming.

He had already achieved recognition after he was crowned the provincial champion in the North West. Mabe shared his feelings about winning the national championship and said, “I was happy with my victory at provincial level but winning at the national level was truly overwhelming.” He jokes that there was a lot of food at the awards ceremony that looked appetising, but he left without eating anything because of his level of excitement.

Though he has no formal agriculture training, Mabe is a mechanic by profession, notably a Caterpillar specialist. While he was growing up and herding family cattle in the rural community of Mobiskraal, he knew little that livestock farming would be a viable business. He employs four workers on the farm: a production manager, three assistants and a casual worker. “Once a week we hire people to help us with cleaning and other odd jobs. When the business has grown, I would like to bring more qualified people on to the managerial role,” Mabe says.

According to Mabe, he started the piggery venture in 2018 with only 15 pigs that he had purchased at an auction, with the intention to grow and sell them at a later stage. “When I started the piggery, I started at the wrong time and learned the hard way. I started by buying pigs from an auction to raise and sell them. However, two weeks into the business the industry was hit by listeriosis, I could not sell because the

**to p 7**



***Mabe's award for National Carcass Champion for the category, emerging farmer in the piggery industry.***



***Mr Mabe, the 2020—2021 National Carcass Champion for emerging farmer feeding his piglets he is rearing to compete again.***



**Setadi Mabe of Mabe Homestead showcasing his 2021 National Carcass champion award alongside his production manager, Bonolo Dimpe at Lichtenburg.**



**Mabe's piglets at Mabe Homestead, a piggery in Lichtenburg, a few kilometres from Mahikeng in North West.**

**from p 6**

industry was closed due to the outbreak of the disease," he adds. He says he held on to the pigs hoping he would be able to sell when the market opened, however, the animals started to develop defects and no longer met the market standards.

The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, through the intervention of agricultural extension and research services, have introduced Mabe Homestead to the South African Pork Producers Organisation (SAPPO), which is the body that regulates the piggery industry.

SAPPO supported Mr Mabe and other producers through a mentorship programme and introduced them to PIC SA, a leading genetic biotechnology company to develop breeding stock that helps pig growers to maximise profitability.

Mabe Homestead is now a preferred supplier of pork in North West. It supplies around 15 pigs a week to local butcheries and farms and supplies meat to the local Shisanyamas and community members in Lichtenburg and Mafikeng. He also supplies the

Syferfontein Abattoir on a monthly basis.

Samic has been hosting the National Carcass Competition since 1984, and it continues to go from strength to strength. The competition is aimed at improving quality in the red meat industry for commercial as well as emerging farmers, especially regarding improved genetics. The competition runs in a year-long cycle; usually from 1 July to 30 June.

Mabe explains that carcass judging criteria include carcass conformation, carcass fat measurements, carcass fat grading and carcass weight. These criteria are collectively scored to give a total out of 100. Extensive judging sub-categories fall under each of the listed criteria. Sub-categories are adjusted for the breed.

"In the competition, they are looking at fat content. Consumers are no longer interested in fat, they want muscle. They look at the distribution of fats across the carcass to check if you don't have a build-up of fat in a certain area or areas. On our carcass, the fat distribution was equal," an excited Mabe concludes.



# Minister Didiza handed over title deed in Port Shepstone

By Samuel Kgatla

**T**he Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, Thoko Didiza, handed over land valued at millions of rands to the communities of Nzimakwe, Mbotho, Ndwalane and Juluku families and their communities, at Bethani Sports Ground in Port Shepstone in August. The main intention of the handover ceremony at Ray Nkonyeni Municipality in the Ugu District Municipality was to restore rights to land lost by these communities under the Natives Land Act of 1913.

Approximately 6 177 beneficiaries from these communities are expected to benefit from the restoration of land.

to p9



*DALRRD Minister Thoko Didiza handing over of the title deeds in Port Shepstone.*



*In front are KZN MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development, Ms Sithole Moloï, Minister Thoko Didiza and KZN MEC for Human Settlements and Public Works, Dr Ntuthuko Mahlaba, with land claim beneficiaries.*



*DALRRD Minister Thoko Didiza with one of the beneficiaries.*



# Minister urged beneficiaries to use the land wisely


from p8

Nearly 50% of the total number of beneficiaries is from female headed households. These communities comprise of direct descendants of people who were dispossessed of their rights to claim land after 1913 because of a deliberate and enforced system of racial segregation and discrimination. This handover event took place during Women's Month.

The Nzimakwe community was awarded land in three phases to the value of R235, 397,428.00 for the 1629.4329 ha. The Mbotho community was awarded land to the value of R10, 998,172.00 in settlement of their land claim of 409, 3827 ha. Ndwalane was given the 494 ha worth R29,877,569.00 and lastly, the Juluka families' land was awarded R5,800 000.00 for the 167,3831 ha. The minister and the entourage visited the Nzimakwe Macademia Project and they also participated in harvesting macademia and saw how it was processed. They also viewed the shopping complex that was restored to the Nzimakwe community.

On behalf of the communities, Inkosi Ndwalane

warned government officials about accountability and told them to put the interests of the people first. "We are ready to work with government to help our people. I am not just chief, but a community developer who have helped many young people to further their studies. Some of them are working every where and this gives some motivation. Greediness is what makes some leaders fail and this has to stop," he said.

During the handover ceremony, Minister Didiza encouraged the beneficiaries of land to use their restored land wisely. She motivated them to use land so that it can increase in value. "Work on your land so that it can benefit all of you. Now, you have ownership of the land. Communities must respect and work with their chiefs. Some beneficiaries of the land in the country have a tendency to sideline chiefs when it comes to the received claimed lands. Chiefs play crucial roles in communities and land claimants must work with them," she said. 



**Minister Didiza visited a macadamia project before handing over the title deeds.**



# Thembelihle farmers excited about support from the department



**T**hembelihle small-scale farmers were excited to see the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) handing over implements, a vehicle and office space in August 2022 in Middepos, Saldanha Bay. The hand over ceremony was led by DALRRD Minister Thoko Didiza, Deputy Ministers Zoleka Capa and Mcebisi Skwatsha and the Director-General, Mooketsa Ramasodi. This came after Deputy Minister Skwatsha visited the cooperative on a few occasions and farmers pleaded with him for more support from the department.

This cooperative is currently farming with many goats, pigs, cattle, poultry and vegetables. The farmers have received infrastructure and implements support of R9,8 million from the department. The cooperative leases 112 ha of land from the Saldanha

*to p 5*



***Deputy Minister Zoleka Capa and Minister Thoko Didiza took a walk at the project in Saldanha Bay.***





***DALRRD leaders cutting a ribbon during the official handing over of office space to Thembelihle Cooperative in Saldanha Bay.***



***From the left are: Deputy Minister Mcebisi Skwatsha, Minister Thoko Didiza and Deputy Minister Zoleka Capa at the Thembelihle project.***

**from p 4**

Bay Local Municipality, and farmers have received a further support for fencing, a kraal and handling facility, water tanks, diesel generators and storage in the form of containers. The department also handed over a modern bakkie to the co-operative. The bakkie is suitable for their operations and it has come in handy for farmers.

Chairperson of the cooperative, Gerrit de Bruyn said he was happy to see the department delivering on their promises. “I want to thank the department and its officials for walking with us on this journey. The big challenge is grazing land, we don’t have enough grazing land. We lease 112 ha from the municipality and it is close to the community. The land we farm on is not fenced by the municipality, so the biggest chal-

lenge is to control the animals within the boundary of the 112ha, the big thing is we grow very fast and quick. We need more formal training,” he said.

The DALRRD minister mentioned that they were happy to celebrate the achievements of Thembelihle farmers so far. “Today is a big day for the people of Thembelihle and we are happy as Government to be here on this important day with the farmers. This celebration is an indication of the meaning of our freedom in the country. There used to be places we could not enter but now we go everywhere, and that is why we are her today. Our role as government is to support and develop our farmers, so that they can continue contributing to the food security and economy of the country,” she said. 🇿🇦



# Muselwa Project improves the livelihoods of communities

By Samuel Kgatla

**T**he Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, Thoko Didiza visited the promising Muselwa Trading Project at Ha-Masia in Limpopo in August 2022. The purpose of this visit was for the Minister to see how the project was doing and also to pay a courtesy visit to Chief Masia.

Muselwa is one of the projects in the country contributing to improve the livelihoods of the communities. The project is a skills development programme specialising in farming (plant production and animal management practices). It started last year with 150 learners (aged 18 to 35) who finished their programmes. All of them were recruited by the Masia Traditional Council and Masia Development Agency. Currently, the project has another 150 learners and they are all youths. These learners had started this year in May and are expected to complete their programme in May 2023.

The project is one of the entities under the Department of Higher Education and Training, which is sponsored by the National Skills Fund (NSF). It operates on 10 ha land of which 5 ha is under irrigation. At the moment, they are planting chillies, cabbage, potatoes, spinach and sweet potatoes. Learners undergo training by attending classes and practical in order for them to obtain competency certification at the end of the programme.


The minister said she was happy to see the project doing well and learners enjoying the farming part of the programme. "It is always refreshing to see the young ones involved in farming. The set-up of this project gives me hope that young people are always involved in farming. We are ready to work with the Chief and the projects in this area. Your project is looking green with your healthy vegetables. I am impressed by the attitudes and eagerness by young people who are willing to work in the fields," she said.



**DALRRD Minister visited Muselwa Trading and Projects at Ha-Masai in Limpopo.**



**Learners of Muselwa Trading and Projects posing with Minister Didiza during her visit to the project.**

Chief Masia thanked the minister for visiting him, the council and the project. Moreover, the Chief said he is looking forward to work with the department to uplift the people of his community through farming projects. 



# Minister addresses farmers at Farmers' Indaba

By Samuel Kgatla



*DALRRD Minister Thoko Didiza giving a keynote address at the Mzansi Young Farmers' Indaba at Sandton.*



*Co-founder of Food for Mzansi, an agricultural publication, Mr Ivor Price giving the purpose of the Farmers' Indaba.*

**T**he Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, Thoko Didiza addressed young farmers during the inaugural Mzansi Young Farmers Indaba at Hotel Sky in Sandton on 15 September. The fruitful event was organised by Food For Mzansi and attended by hundreds of South Africa's finest young farmers and agripreneurs. Food For Mzansi is an agricultural publication believing in the power of agriculture to promote nation building and social cohesion by telling stories that are often overlooked by broader society. The event connected the talent with investors, funders and other stakeholders seeking partnerships with the new faces of the agriculture sector.

The Mzansi Young Farmers Indaba follows the announcement by World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA), the global organisation for the world's press, that Food For Mzansi has won its twelfth international media award in less than three years since the publication's launch.

Food For Mzansi co-founder and strategy director, Kobus Louwrens, said the indaba was the ideal opportunity for young farmers and agripreneurs who were looking to extend their supply chains, find possible partners and funders, and plug into new markets and value chains.

Minister Didiza said the future prosperity rides on inclusivity. "I am privileged to open the inaugural Food For Mzansi Young Farmers Indaba. The sector needs to become more inclusive, not only in terms of gender and youth, but also inclusive of race and class. Policy and regulatory issues are key to an enabling environment and I urge young farmers to insert themselves into the conversation and to actively engage with politicians and decision makers. Role players need to actively create the mechanisms to help the new generation of farmers succeed," she said.

The minister said she is happy because the farmers' indaba is going to be an annual thing. She praised the Food For Mzansi magazine for doing good work. The indaba left many inspired to build successful agribusinesses. 🇿🇦



# SASOL officially hand over land to DALRRD

**E**nergy company Sasol officially handed over 285 ha of agricultural land to the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) at Sasol Recreation Club, Secunda in August 2022. The land at Esperanza Farm is for the support of the development of emerging farmers. DALRRD Minister, Thoko Didiza together with Mpumalanga Premier Refilwe Mtsweni-Tsipane attended the official handing over of the land. The handing over ceremony coincided with Sasol's graduation ceremony and handing over of farming implements and two bakkies.

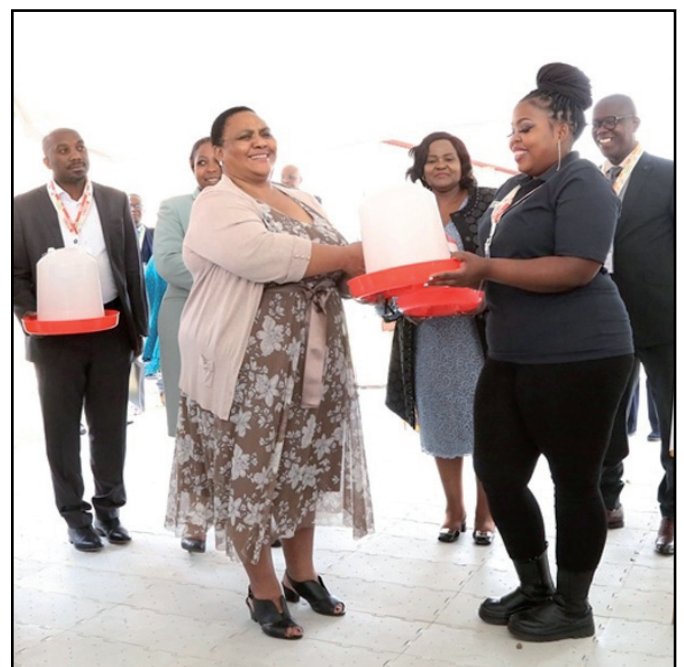
Sasol acquired Esperanza Farm in 1980 and used

it mainly for the establishment of the Sasol Secunda factory site. The land was then used by the Esperanza Trust to promote vegetable and chicken farming by community members before being leased to the Govan Mbeki Municipality after the trust dissolved. Part of it is currently used for agricultural and manufacturing activities. Sasol through their Bridge to Work programme produced 85 emerging farmers who received training at the Buhle Farmers' Academy. A further 88 farmers are due to complete their training this year. These emerging farmers will be assisted with business starter kits, mentorship

*to p 15*



*From left, Premier Mtsweni-Tsipane, Minister Didiza, MEC Shiba and Sasol Vice Chair Mokoena during the handing over of land.*



*DALRRD Minister Thoko Didiza handing over farming implements in Secunda.*





**DALRRD Minister Thoko Didiza looking at equipment to be handed over to the new graduates.**



**A recently-graduated intern showing the minister and the premier how a castration device works.**



**from p 14**

and market access to make their businesses grow and thrive.

Executive Vice President: Human Resources and Stakeholder Relations at Sasol, Charlotte Mokoena, said the decision to confer Esperanza to DALRRD, under the auspices of a 99-year lease, is informed by Sasol’s vision of a just transition by growing shared value through the development of key economic growth sectors, such as agriculture.

DALRRD Minister Didiza praised Sasol for being a responsible corporate citizen that is in touch with its community. “Sasol is a corporate citizen that seeks to address challenges in their communities. This just shows that if we work together, then we can ad-

dress many challenges facing the country.

Agriculture has been one of the sectors that can help to grow our economy. I would like to congratulate Sasol for this Bridge to Work programme. “What is important is the approach of this programme, you could have given these young people the piece of land and disappear, but you also trained them and gave them starter packs which are necessary skills they need,” she said.

DALRRD together with the provincial Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs have plans in place to develop the land for agricultural purposes and to create more jobs.



# Farmers trained on surveillance and prevention measures for banana bunchy top virus

By Rony Moremi

**F**or a farmer like Martha, whose source of livelihood is selling banana seedlings, losing her seedlings because of the banana bunchy top virus (BBTV) would mean losing her source of income. Martha, a single mother of four from the Ugu District in KwaZulu-Natal, had raised her children with the money from selling seedlings.

Martha, together with other local farmers from the Ugu District, Port Shepstone, KwaZulu-Natal, were part of a BBTV coordinating workshop that was hosted by the Directorate: Plant Health. The coordinating workshop is part of the efforts by the department to interact with farmers to ensure that they understand the disease and are trained properly. The farmers were trained on how to detect early plants with disease symptoms, and to control aphids that are vectors for BBTV. Most importantly, farmers were encouraged not to take banana plant propagation material from an

area that is infected to an area that is free of the BBTV.

BBTV was first identified in Egypt in 1900 and the symptoms of the virus were first recorded in the 1880s in Fiji. It was considered to be caused by a fungus. Banana bunchy top Virus has been occurring in the Hibberdene area in the South Coast region in the Ugu District since 2015. BBTV is difficult to control since it is spread by the banana aphid locally, but can also be spread over longer distances by wind. Propagation with banana suckers can further spread the disease.

To help fight these aphids, that are vectors for BBTV, farmers in Magaleni, Nyandeni and Ugu were given chemicals to control them.

They were also taught about the safe use of agro-chemicals and the importance of ensuring that the chemicals they use are registered under the Fertilisers, Farm Feeds, Agricultural Remedies and Stock Remedies Act, 1947 (Act No. 36 of 1947).

**Farmers were given chemicals to control aphids that are vectors for BBTV.**

