

Minister Didiza engages with women in agriculture, agro-processing and agribusiness



Minister Didiza with agripreneurs who were showcasing their products and officials.

The minister delivered on her promise made during the webinar with women in agriculture last year and held a briefing session with women in agribusiness on Friday, 25 February 2022.

The audience was abuzz with enthusiastic female

farmers ranging from bee keepers, hydroponic farmers to beauty products producers, all sitting with samples of their products at their respective tables, who could hardly wait for the session break to get their hands on the displayed products and interact with the fascinating female farmers.

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The captivating presentations made by the female farmers best defined the coined term “agripreneur”, used to capture the women’s resilience and business savviness of turning unfavourable circumstances such as inequality, poverty and even the Covid-19 lockdown period into opportunities for making positive changes. Take for example the story of Mems Ramaila. She founded her company, Bee African, which not only produces honey but immune boosting shots as well that became popular during the peak of the pandemic due to their high antioxidant levels that soothe lung irritation and clears congestion.

Nomgqibelo Mkhize of the Senzoshintsho Community Development Project spoke of their hydroponic farming approach, which eliminates land shortage and soil erosion challenges because they require neither to grow their lettuce, spinach, tomatoes, cucumbers and other varieties of herbs, proving that farming doesn’t have to be synonymous with archaic practices. Their only request is assistance with boreholes for irrigation. That is where the department and the purpose of the session comes into play, because not only did the agripreneurs get a chance to unveil their products to the minister, but relevant stakeholders from within the department and outside were also present to share invaluable information such as channels to follow to get financing for business.

Dr Thindisa from the Directorate: Agro-Processing Support detailed essential help offered by the department such as assistance with branding and funding through the Agri-BEE fund, Comprehensive Agriculture Support Programme (CASP) and blended financing through the IDC (Industrial Develop-

Department aims to expose farmers beyond local markets

ment Corporation). Explaining further, he mentioned that the department also helps farmers with product certification, which is done through the SABS, and also assists in promotion and marketing a brand through designing websites in partnership with the Council for Scientific Industrial Research.

After insightful and detailed information sharing from the stakeholders such as the Innovation Hub, the dti and the ARC, among others, it was hard to resist the urge to venture into agribusiness because of all the tools of the trade that were shared.

In her speech to the agripreneurs, Minister Didiza advised: “The power of farmer field schools is very important, a lot of knowledge in agriculture is gained through practice by going out and talking to other farmers.” She further added that the department aims to expose farmers beyond local markets. In agreement with the minister, the newly appointed DDG of Rural Development, Ms Noluthando Moyo, urged women to not just aim to have their products on the shelves, but to aim for more.

The objective of the session was to determine ways in which the government, particularly the DALRRD, could provide support that would bolster the businesses of female farmers, which is exactly what was done by the Chief Director of CASP, Ms Elder Mtshiza. In response to the Senzoshintsho Community Development Project’s plea to get a borehole, she punctually enlisted the help of the Gauteng Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, who confirmed and committed to supply the borehole to this Soweto-based project. ■■■



Minister Didiza takes Back-to-School campaign to Limpopo

By Samuel Kgatla



Minister Didiza addressing learners of Mandela Barloworld Agricultural School in Bolobedu.

The Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, Thoko Didiza, and the MEC for Education in Limpopo, Polly Boshielo, visited three identified agriculture schools on 24 January. The main purpose of these visits was to conduct the Back-to-School Campaign and assess their state of readiness for the re-opening of schools and also to see the agricultural side of it.

The Back-to-School Campaign is a government initiative which is aimed at encouraging all stakeholders to participate in promoting teaching and learning at schools. The minister also donated gardening equipment to the schools.

Both the minister and the MEC visited Hans Merensky Agricultural School in Tzaneen, the Mandela Barlow Agricultural School in Mohlakamosoma and Mamolemane High School in Moletji. These visits consisted of engagement with the district, school management, teachers, parents, school governing bodies, civil society and learners. Moreover, they provided government an opportunity to further support the schools. The minister also interacted with some

learners from the agriculture schools who are doing practical learning.

All three schools achieved a pass rate of more than 80% for the 2021 matric results. The leadership went to the schools to encourage the learners to achieve more than the class of 2021. These schools continue to do well even though the province did not do well nationally with the matric results. Hans Merensky and Mandela Barlow are both good schools for agriculture studies and they offer practical learning. Learners practice agriculture theory and practical learning. Hans Merensky has good relations with ZZZ, universities and other relevant stakeholders in the agriculture sector. Mandela Barloworld was established through the Mandela Institute during former president Nelson Mandela's presidency. It has cattle, broiler chickens, vegetable plantations and fruit such as mangos, lemons, avocados and macadamia nuts. Mamolemane High School has a school garden and they promised the minister that they want to be more involved in agriculture.

MEC Boshielo said she had invited the minister to come and see the setup of the agriculture schools in Limpopo and see how they can further help these schools. "I am happy the minister has honoured the invitation, and this just shows we are a working and caring government. We are going to assist these schools," she said.

Minister Didiza told the learners that they have an opportunity to become top achievers. Moreover, she said that food is important and the country cannot survive without it. "Agriculture is crucial because it is one of the biggest contributors to our economy. To attend the agriculture school does not mean you will only become a farmer. Learners can become agricultural scientists, economists, statisticians, engineers and whatever they want to be," she said.

The principals of all the visited schools echoed the same sentiment of appreciating the government's visits to their schools. They pledged to work with the department and other stakeholders in the agricultural sector.





Learners of Hans Merensky Agricultural School in Tzaneen were visited by DALRRD Minister.



Minister Thoko Didiza handed over seedlings and garden equipment to the Mamolemane High School in Moletji.



Minister Didiza and MEC Boshielo paid a courtesy visit to the Modjadji Royal Authority.



Deputy Ministers and Portfolio Committee visit Gwatyu Community

By Samuel Kgatla

The Deputy Ministers of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, Zoleka Capa and Mcebisi Skwatsha, joined the Portfolio Committee on Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development on an oversight visit to the Gwatyu areas in the Eastern Cape.

The purpose of this oversight visit, which took place from 1 to 4 February, was to listen to the farmworkers, ordinary people and address the issue of land claims. This follows a committee resolution in December 2021 to visit the area after it received complaints from the community, traditional leaders and former farmworkers regarding the rightful ownership of land.

Both deputy ministers and the Portfolio Committee members met with King Dalimvula Matanzima (AbaThembu Royal House) where the committee received a historical account of the displacement of communities from Gwatyu. Some of the challenges faced by the people of Gwatyu include roads that are not user-friendly, fencing, water shortages, the unregistered Gwatyu CPA and unmarked livestock.

Deputy Minister Mcebisi Skwatsha mentioned that the work of the department was hindered by violence and threats against officials by some of the members of the community when it attempted to do research through visiting households in the area to gather information.



Portfolio Committee on DALRRD members and DG Ramasodi attended the oversight visit in Eastern Cape.



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DG Mooketsa Ramasodi second from left getting ready to engage with the Dwatyu community in Eastern Cape.



From left, Deputy Minister Mcebisi Skwatsha, MEC Nonkqubela Pieters and Deputy Minister Zoleka Capa during the oversight visit in Eastern Cape.

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“We are a working and caring government, but sometimes our people are the ones making things difficult for us. We will not give up on helping the communities of Gwatyu,” he said.

Furthermore, Deputy Minister Capa informed the committee that, when the department visited Gwatyu in order to determine who the rightful land rights holders are, she found that there were people who had their own agenda to own the land with intentions of using it for their own benefit.

The chairperson of the Portfolio Committee, Zwelivile Mandla Mandela said they were there to directly listen, observe and interact with the people. “We are here to work with officials to help the people

of Gwatyu. We were told about the history of Gwatyu and its demarcation. We are engaging with you to hear your concerns. Something must happen for the people of Gwatyu,” said Mandela.

All the parties agreed that the people of Gwatyu want serious intervention from the government. They confirmed that there must be long-term and short-term solutions for the people of Gwatyu and the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development should bring other departments to develop the area. The department together with the Commission on Restitution of Land Rights presented an Action Plan to improve service delivery for the people of Gwatyu. 



DALRRD hosts EDTM Farmer Production Support unit workshop

By Samuel Kgatla

The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) hosted an enlightening Farmer Production Support Units (FPSUs) workshop on 12 January 2022 at Birchwood Hotel, Boksburg. The purpose of this workshop was to introduce the Branch: Economic Development, Trade and Marketing (EDTM), its FPSUs and its community-wide production schemes to the panel of selected implementation agents across the chosen categories of commodities: fruit, grains, vegetables, livestock and poultry and also to draft the Service Level Agreements (SLAs).

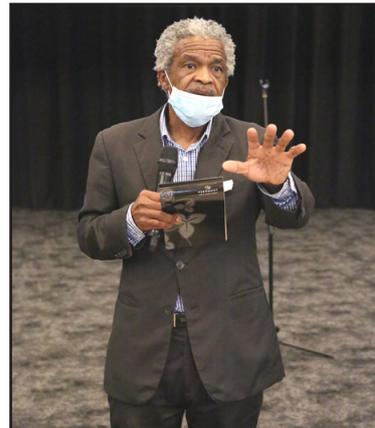
Furthermore, the intentions of the envisaged collaboration was to mobilise and involve at least 1 000 households in each of the 200 poorest municipalities (wards) in the commodity production value chains of their choice; to draft Agriculture and Agro-Processing Master Plan (AAMP) commodity corridors; to establish the commodity production schemes and community food buy-back and marketing schemes through FPSUs and to establish people's food secure restaurants and food retail stores.

Provinces and representatives from different commodities shared their experiences and challenges and also on how they can improve going forward. Farmers and managers dealing with goats, sugar cane, cotton and macadamia nuts were given an opportunity to highlight their products and transformation in the sector. The South African Farmers De-

velopment Association (SAFDA) mentioned the successes and challenges faced by sugar cane farmers in the country. The association is changing the sugar cane industry.

The Deputy Director-General of EDTM, Dr Moshe Swartz said that the workshop was all about building what they have as the department and what they can do to help people. "We are drafting the SLAs to monitor the progress made by the provinces. We need to help our people as the department. We are going to be evaluating how our farming communities are getting help. Officials need to work together in order to achieve more for the people of South Africa.

We want to learn what is working and not working on the ground. This is a dry run of what is going to happen on the ground. We are going to the ground," he said.



DDG Dr Moshe Swartz welcoming guests.

Some of the guests from all the provinces attending the EDTM Farmer Production Support Unit Workshop.



Minister launches trading hub for black farmers in Stellenbosch

By Samuel Kgatla

The Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, Ms Thoko Didiza, officially launched the Wine Arc, a home for black-owned wine brands at the Agricultural Research Council Tasting Facility (ARC Infruitec-Nietvoorbij) in Stellenbosch. The minister was accompanied by the Western Cape's Member of the Executive Council for Agriculture, Mr Ivan Meyer, and other industry stakeholders.

The location of the Wine Arc consequently gives black-owned wine brands and black entrepreneurs a greater business advantage and anchors them in an established agri-tourism environment. Stellenbosch is famous for producing good premium wines in South Africa. The other intention for the launch was to further strengthen the collaboration between government and the wine industry. This hub was created by the South African Wine Industry Transformation Unit (SAWITU) and the ARC as proprietors of Nietvoorbij where the hub is located.

While she spoke at the launch of the new trading hub for black owners of wine brands, Minister Didiza vowed to support these 13 black-owned wine brands currently trading from the hub with market access. She described the new facility as a breakthrough moment for South Africa's wine industry.

"This launch is seen as a signal of inclusive growth in the wine industry. Education, transformation and transferring of skills are crucial things in the wine industry. It is important to look back at the history in the wine industry. We are where we are because of them. We can make the wine industry more inclusive. We need to look at innovative ways to make the wine industry attractive,"

she said.

She further continued that they need to support the black brand owners in the wine industry in order for them to succeed. "Thanks very much to ARC for helping our wine industry and transformation in the sector. Our ultimate goal is to transform the sector. The journey of the wine industry in South Africa is an interesting one. I would like to thank the wine industry for their resilience during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown. ARC is a national asset and we should continue making it a success. The Wine Arc is a celebration of the industry," concluded the minister.

MEC Meyer said that his department would also make sure that the brand owners enjoy market access across the globe. "We have 98% of all the wine sellers in South Africa, so we have a moral obligation to support this industry. Wine is not only part of the economy, but also of the culture of South Africa and, as we say, there is no culture without agriculture and wine is part of that culture," he said. 



DALRRD Minister Thoko Didiza greets MEC for Agriculture in Western Cape, Mr Ivan Meyer during the launch of Wine Arc in Stellenbosch.



Son of farm labourer impresses Minister Didiza

By Samuel Kgatla

The Klein Goederust wine tasting room and restaurant was officially opened in Franschhoek on 3 December after some renovations. This was a milestone achievement and moment for Paul Siguqa. Siguqa is the owner and CEO of Klein Goederust Farm. The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) visited Siguqa on his 16 ha farm to see how he was doing.

The 116-year-old Klein Goederust Farm was acquired solely from the savings of many years by Siguqa, the son of a farm labourer. The department assisted the hard-working Paul with a tractor and installed an irrigation system. He had acquired the farm, which was in a bad state, in 2019 and, over the last three years, focused on land and soil analysis, correction and planting of new vines with the help of the government. He also renovated historic buildings on the farm to make it more attractive to the tourists and wine markets.

Siguqa grew up in the Franschhoek region with the dream of owning a farm one day. He came from hum-



Paul Siguqa showing a wine produced from his Klein Goederust Farm in Franschhoek.



Celebrating, Paul with some of the workers on the farm.

ble beginnings in the Eastern Cape and was raised by a single mother with his sister, and later moved to Backsberg Farm near Franschhoek, where his mother laboured for more than 30 years. He named the farm's premium sparkling wine after his mother, Nomaroma Siguqa. Siguqa has employed 17 permanent workers and also employed more temporary workers. He said he is looking forward to working with the government. "Partnership is important in this industry and I will have to work with other stakeholders, including the government. I have big plans for this project and I am ready," he said.

DALRRD Minister Thoko Didiza has welcomed the opening of a 100% black-owned winery by the children of a farm labourer. "The opening of the wine tasting room and restaurant at Klein Goederust Farm [today] is testimony to Government's efforts of ensuring equitable access and participation of black people in the wine value chain and the wine industry," said Minister Didiza. 



Cederberg Municipality hosted this year's International Day for Rural Women

By *Matsepo Malatswane*

On 15 October each year, the United Nations celebrates International Day for Rural Women (IDRW). This was a deliberate decision by the United Nations to remind us of the role that rural women play in strengthening rural communities, who mainly rely on agriculture for their survival. The majority of these women are also workers in rural industries, such as agriculture.

Last year's International Day for Rural Women was held at Citrusdal in the Cederberg Municipality, Western Cape, with Minister Thoko Didiza and Deputy Minister Mcebisi Skwatsha, honouring the community with their presence. The day highlighted how rural women play a critical role in the rural economies of country. In most parts of the country, women participate in crop production, livestock care and provide food and water for their families. The targeted beneficiaries are female farmworkers across districts in the Western Cape. Additionally, many female farmworkers from the Cape Winelands and West Coast districts will also be considered against the backdrop of the findings of the Agri Worker Household Census conducted by the Western Cape Department of Agriculture in 2020, which ascertained that a higher number of farmworkers were experiencing hunger in the aforesaid districts.

Minister Didiza said in her opening remarks: "Empowerment of farmworkers is beyond tenure security, but social and economic development remains key. The issue of capacity building of farmworkers remains important, particularly for the children of farmworkers. We want to break the poverty cycle. We want to ensure that children of farmworkers come into the sector by choice and not because of circumstances. Programme director, today also marks a report back following the meeting you had with the deputy minister, where you requested farm implements/tools to work the land. We are bringing some implements. We know this is a start. In going forward, we want to work with you and your organisations. These NGOs in the sector have travelled the journey with you. Ours is to

ensure that we address your needs by working together with you."

October offers opportunities to strengthen the national and international solidarity in the struggle against poverty, hunger and malnutrition and drawing attention to the achievements of food and nutrition security as well. The South African government in collaboration with sector role players, including farmworkers' organisations, play a major role in eradicating poverty and hunger in attempts to meet the requirements of the SDGs.

Therefore, it is crucial for the main objectives and purposes of the IDRW and the four dimensions of food security to prioritise the vulnerable members of society, such as female farmworkers, to accomplish zero hunger in the country

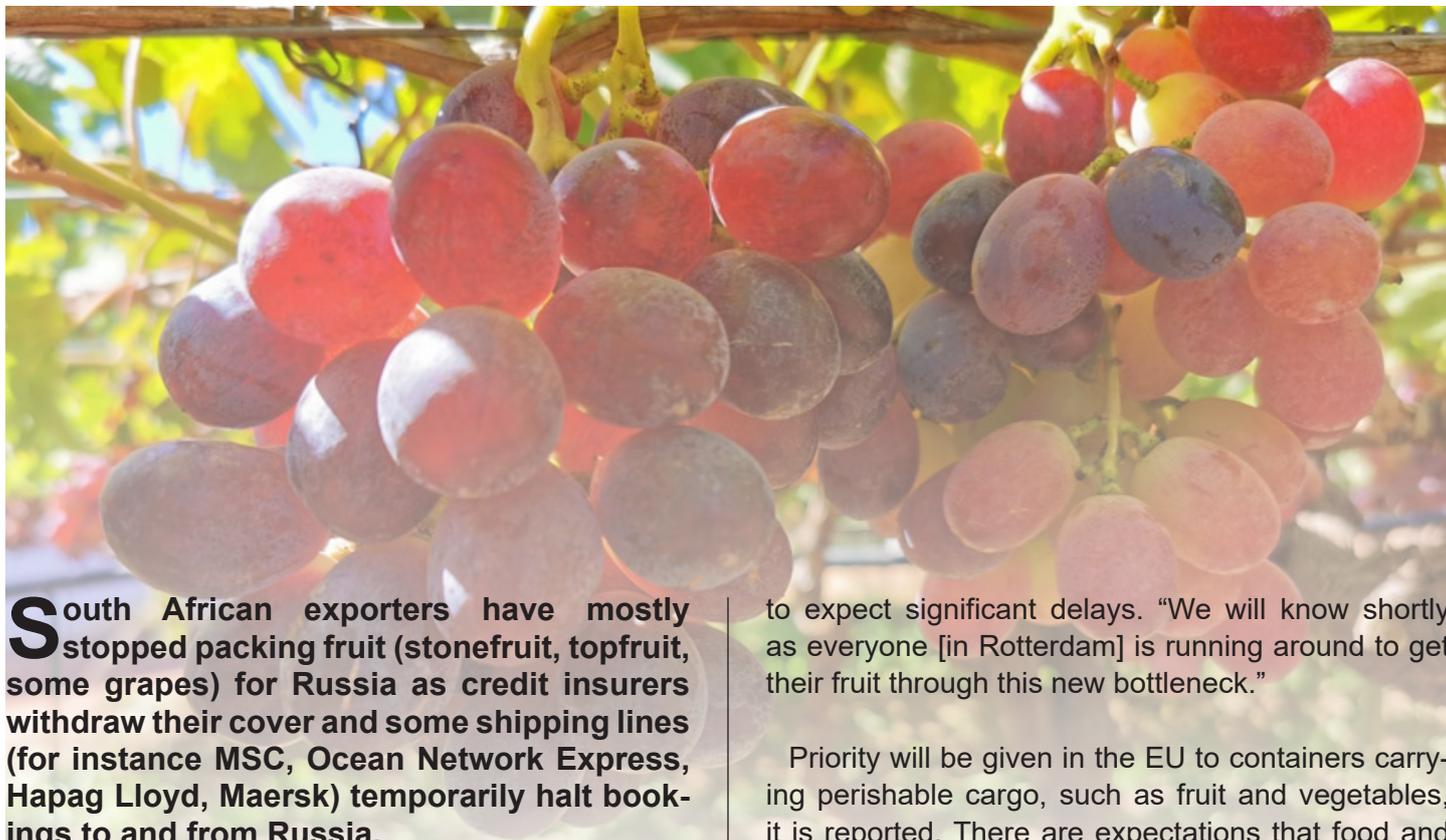
Minister Didiza continued to say the issue of tenure security remains crucial for farmworkers. "We will address land for housing for farmworkers in a deliberate sense. We need to allocate land to farmworkers for agricultural development so that they can also participate effectively and meaningfully in the agricultural sector."



Minister Didiza and Deputy Minister Skwatsha handing over garden equipment at Citrusdal.



South African fruit has big exposure to Russian risk



South African exporters have mostly stopped packing fruit (stonefruit, topfruit, some grapes) for Russia as credit insurers withdraw their cover and some shipping lines (for instance MSC, Ocean Network Express, Hapag Lloyd, Maersk) temporarily halt bookings to and from Russia.

There are shipments of South African fruit still underway to Russia with further limited volumes expected to still be shipped to Russia, depending on the availability of vessels, credit and marine insurance and whether food is exempt from sanctions.

Bottleneck of fruit in Rotterdam

During the past weekend all containers with destination Russia were blocked in EU ports, FreshPlaza is told, but on Monday evening the decision was reversed. Essential products such as fruit will now be allowed to go through after inspection for sanctioned cargo (such as aircraft parts) prior to release for Russia.

South Africa isn't really in the EU market yet with citrus yet, but, industry officials say, it is reasonable

to expect significant delays. "We will know shortly as everyone [in Rotterdam] is running around to get their fruit through this new bottleneck."

Priority will be given in the EU to containers carrying perishable cargo, such as fruit and vegetables, it is reported. There are expectations that food and essential services could be excluded from sanctions and that shipping lines will be able to continue carrying those categories of cargo.

Meanwhile, pear and stonefruit exporters tell FreshPlaza Russia is a challenge. Exporters with fruit on the water aren't in all cases assured of getting their money.

"We've stopped packing for our Russian programmes but the fruit on the water is a concern. Some of the products has been diverted to the European Union. From here forward we'll be spreading products to all possible markets. Getting all of our payments has been challenging." 



Beware of the spread of the resistant Palmer amaranth

One of the most aggressive weeds that has ever invaded South Africa, the Palmer amaranth (*Amaranthus palmeri*), has been confirmed on a maize farm in the Potchefstroom District Northwest. This weed, which is also known as the Palmer pigweed, is related to other indigenous *Amaranthus* species. The threat posed by this weed compared to its indigenous relatives is that it is resistant to at least six herbicide modes of action and cannot be controlled, for example, with glyphosate (amongst others).

The weed was discovered in the Douglas District of the Northern Cape in 2018 and initially identified by weed scientist Prof Charlie Reinhardt with the aid of DNA analysis.

The most recent discovery of the Palmer amaranth in Potchefstroom is of serious concern because it means the summer rainfall grain farming areas are likely to be invaded by this weed that will jeopardise crop production.

CropLife SA urges all crop farmers and crop advisers to expend all efforts to eradicate the Palmer amaranth and all other *Amaranthus* species that occur on farms. The reason for such drastic measures is that the Palmer amaranth hybridises with other *Amaranthus* species and transfers its herbicide resistance to such hybrids. The Palmer amaranth also progressively develops resistance to herbicide modes of action that have been used successfully thus far, and therefore leaves farmers with little options to combat the invasion. Maize farmers are at severe risk of losing their crop fields to this weed if they do not take immediate action to eradicate the weed and to prevent it from seeding. Refer to the emergency eradication plan and implement all the elements of the plan. Failure to eradicate the Palmer amaranth at farm level will result in devastating weed impacts on crop production.

CropLife SA also engaged the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development by requesting the Minister in writing (September 2018) to declare the Palmer amaranth as an invasive species

under the Conservation of Agriculture Resources Act, 1983 (Act No. 43 of 1983), involving officials in the Palmer amaranth action committee, and following up with written communications. A draft regulation to this effect was published on 24 December 2020 but the department has not formally promulgated the regulation to put control measures into effect yet.



Palmer amaranth in maize.



Emerging red meat farmers trade awareness workshop

By Ndivhuwo Thenga

In an effort to promote market access for emerging red meat farmers, the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development's Chief Directorate: International Trade and Marketing and the Chief Directorate: Animal Production and Health hosted a virtual trade awareness workshop.

The purpose of this workshop was to share information on the processes of, and market requirements for, emerging red meat farmers who want to enter the export market. Ms Nxalati Mashele, Deputy Director for EMIA Claims and Performance Measurements at the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (dtic), presented on the Export Marketing and Investment Assistance (EMIA) scheme. This scheme aims to develop export markets for South African products and services and to recruit new foreign direct investment into the country.

Transformation initiatives in South Africa's agricultural sector are funded through statutory levies that farmers contribute to 11 agricultural trusts. According to the National Agricultural Marketing Council's Brian Makhele, trusts are prescribed to spend 20% of their income on transformation initiatives. These include enterprise development, ownership and skills development. Currently, these trusts are spending 30% of their funds on transformation interventions.

A North West emerging red meat farmer, Mr Eric Leteane, lamented the fact that transformation interventions such as development support and funding are not reaching farmers on the ground. Ms Vivian Pila from the Chief Directorate: Development Finance advised him to contact the National Emerging Red Meat Producers Organisation (NERPO), which is a Micro Agricultural Financial Institution of South Africa (MAFISA) intermediary for assistance.

Mr Dewald Olivier from the Red Meat Industry Forum presented on the sector's performance, challenges and opportunities. The South African red

meat industry is the second largest contributor to the country's agricultural GDP. Between 2008 and 2018, gross production value of beef increased by an annual average of 11,6% and the value of slaughtered sheep and goats increased by 9,4%. As a net exporter of beef, the country has proven its ability to compete on global markets. In terms of herd count, the commercial cattle herd amounts to 7,57 million while the informal cattle herd is at 5,3 million.

The industry is also facing major challenges. These include droughts, which reduce the capacity of natural grazing; inability to deal with issues related to animal health and animal diseases; poor implementation of sanitary and phytosanitary systems; limited funding for research for vaccine development and animal

productivity; poor enforcement of meat grading and hygiene regulations and the lack of an internationally certified traceability system.

Dr Marietta Bronkhorst from the department's veterinary services explained how the process to access the meat export market works. The process is quick and easy if there is a trade agreement in place between South Africa and the country the company intends to export to, but slow and cumbersome in the absence of a trade agreement. If there is an agreement, the DALRRD receives a request and provide information on relevant diseases in South Africa. If the disease status is favourable, the trading partner will send through draft import requirements and if requirements are complied to, an agreement is reached and the result will be successful trade. In a situation where there is no trade agreement, contact with the potential trade partner is made and they evaluate South Africa's veterinary services through a comprehensive questionnaire. After evaluation, an inspection visit takes place and a risk assessment is conducted. If the risk is too high, an agreement is not reached and export is not allowed.

As a net exporter of beef, the country has proven its ability to compete on global markets.



ARC mobile soil testing laboratory visits Taung Agricultural College

The Agricultural Research Council (ARC) mobile soil testing laboratory visited Taung Agricultural College to participate in a Soil Survey and Fertility Management Workshop hosted by the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD). The college is located between Hartswater and Vryburg within the Greater Taung Local Municipality in the Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati District in North West.

This three-day workshop covered various topics including soil survey, soil classification, geographical information systems (GIS), mobile soil testing and soil fertility management. The ARC mobile soil testing laboratory team of Dr Goodman Jezile and Mr Sithembiso Fakude gave a presentation on the principles and procedures of mobile soil testing to two groups of workshop participants. The first group comprised officials from the Provincial Departments of Agriculture and Rural Development in North West, Limpopo and Gauteng, while the second group comprised learners from Taung Agricultural College. The presentation was followed by a demonstration of how the soil samples are received, registered, processed and analysed before a soil test report is printed.

The ARC mobile soil testing laboratory was well received by both groups, who participated actively during the presentation and demonstration. Some of the participants were unaware of its existence while others had seen it mentioned in the media or heard about it from inquisitive farmers in their respective jurisdiction, who wanted to find out how the mobile lab can be invited to come and test their soils. Many participants requested the team's contact details for further engagement.

The visit to Taung Agricultural College was a great opportunity for the mobile soil testing laboratory team to create further awareness about the mobile lab and the services offered by the ARC to various stakeholders in the agricultural sector.



Participants at the Soil Survey and Fertility Management Workshop attend the mobile soil testing laboratory demonstration.



The ARC mobile soil testing laboratory at Taung Agricultural College.



Transformation slow in SA's poultry industry

By Ndivhuwo Thenga

The Secretary-General of the African Farmers' Association of South Africa (AFASA), Mr Nakana Masoka, has criticised the country's poultry industry for its slow pace of transformation. He was speaking during the virtual poultry market information day organised by the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development's Directorate: Marketing and the National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC) on Monday, 21 February.

The sectoral Poultry Master Plan recognises poultry as an important, affordable source of protein for South Africa's population. It is a secure market for livestock feed made from maize and soya beans. This has a significant ripple effect on emerging farmers who produce maize and soya beans. Government's Industrial Policy Action Plan and New Growth Path identifies agro-processing as a sector for large-scale job creation. "Poultry production represents 21,8% of all agricultural production and more than 100 000 people are employed throughout the value chain," said Masoka.

Chicken is the most-consumed meat in the country, with a per capita consumption of 42 kg/year in 2018. Poultry meat represents more than 60% of the total meat consumption in South Africa. In 2018, the local consumption of broiler meat amounted to 1,88 million metric tons, and is forecasted to increase to 1,9 million metric tons in 2021, which represents a 2% increase in the demand for chicken meat. The Bureau for Food and Agricultural Policy (BFAP) es-

timate production to increase to 2 million tons, while consumption is expected to increase by 2,6 million tons by 2023. This demonstrates a shortfall unless there is an increase in domestic production. The increase in consumption is supplemented through high levels of imports. In 2013, the value of imports was R3,9 billion, which represented a 10% increase from 2012. 2018 was worst in terms of imports at a record high of 566 000 tons at a cost of R6,1 billion.

SA's poultry industry is characterised by high production costs, which impacts negatively on productivity. Production costs are dominated by high feed costs and that reduces the industry's competitiveness. Feed costs account for 70% of the production costs and soya beans are imported at a high cost as a result of the weak Rand/US\$ exchange rate.

The South African commercial agricultural sector is dominated by between 30 000 and 40 000 largely white farmers who contribute around 98% to the national food basket on 90% of total agricultural land. The smallholder sector, with 3 million mostly black farmers, is farming on 10% of the agricultural land and contribute insignificantly less to the national food basket. Between 70 and 80 individuals and families, dominate the local poultry industry, producing 12 million birds per production cycle. These large-scale farmers have invested between R35 million and R40 million in the farms. To change the status quo, AFASA propose that government build into the Agri BEE Sector Codes into all import and export license applications, agricultural permits and negotiations and tariff reviews.

