

R46m for North West smallholder farmers

The North West Department of Rural, Environment and Agricultural Development has set aside R46m to support smallholder farmers as planting season gets underway.



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The North West Department of Rural, Environment and Agricultural Development MEC, Mannketsi Tlhape, recently announced that 812 smallholder farmers would be supported with crop production inputs to cultivate 14,000ha to be planted during the 2018/19 planting season.

Speaking at the launch of the provincial planting season, Tlhape urged residents in the province to engage in food production activities of all forms.

“The main objective of the planting season launch was to create awareness on the importance of food security through agricultural production and to encourage all stakeholders to join hands in eradicating hunger and reducing poverty,” said the department.

In the last cropping season of 2017/18, a target of 13,000ha was exceeded by 1,628ha to attain overall 14,628ha planted. This was achieved despite late rains and early frost encountered in the province.

North West farmers were able to produce an excess of 19,016 tonnes, 11,409.84 tonnes of which was sunflower, 6,655.74

tonnes of maize, 190 tonnes of groundnuts and 760.64 tonnes of dry beans.

Tlhape said this was a great feat and the provincial department will continue to support all dedicated farmers to continue producing more food.

The North West province is currently the number one producer of sunflower in the country.

Over the years, the department has been supporting farmers in a variety of ways to produce more food through the provision of crop production inputs, access to storage facilities and technical advice, among other measures.

Participation of women and youth in farming

Tlhape reiterated that 50% of the budget in this financial year has been channelled to benefit women, youth and people living with disabilities in the agricultural sector.

“We need to do more to ensure that we give support to these groups in order for them to participate in mainstream agriculture as formidable players to advance the future of the sector by tilting the statistics as they remain,” she said.

Farmers applauded the department for the informative presentations they received from various organisations such as Grain South Africa, Omnia, Noord Wes Koporasie, Laeveld Agrochemicals, Agriculture Research Council and the Grain Farmer Development Association on the day of the launch.

Presenters shared much needed planting tips including the safe use and handling of agro chemicals and information on the importance of crop and cultivar choice.

Farmer Solomzi Booyesen from Welverdiend welcomed the department’s support, particularly for smallholder farmers in the region.

“Government’s support is welcomed. We really appreciate it and ours is just to make sure that we produce,” said Booyesen.

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