

FSA brings drought relief to struggling emerging farmers

Since December 2015, Free State Agriculture has helped a total of 5,735 Free State farmers through different means of drought assistance. More than 540 emerging and subsistence farmers have also received assistance in the form of feed. On 20 September 2016, the Geluksdam Farmer's Association outside Bloemfontein shared a load of feed they received from irrigation farmers in the Luckhoff area with emerging farmers from Lorierpark just outside the city. AfriVet also donated R12,000 worth of mineral and vitamin supplements to the farmers.



Lorier Park

Zach Choane, one of the emerging farmers, says survival and the buying of feed has been a huge challenge the past 11 months and they are grateful for any assistance. According to Choane they've not received any assistance from government since the start of the drought. The group have about 240 head of cattle.

Farmers from Geluksdam say some of them have had rain during July and they wanted to share their bales with those who need it more. "We farm close to Lorierpark and we can see the farmer's and animal's suffering, thus we decided to help them. We know this does not solve all their problems, but hopefully it can bring some relief for a while," says Laurens Schlebusch, farmer and regional representative for FSA.

Some of the other areas where emerging farmers have been assisted includes Steynsrus, Oppermansgronde, Trompsburg, Edenburg, Koffiefontein, Fauresmith and Jagersfontein.

Millions spent on drought relief

FSA has facilitated the distribution of 15,646 bales, 20 tons of oats, 17,301 bags of drought pellets/feed/lick blocks as well as 3,400 litres of mineral and vitamin syrup from AfriVet over 71,934km. An amount of about R2,017 million has been spent on buying 9,710 bags of drought pellets and baling costs, while transport costs have amounted to R1,205 million. The total spent up until now is just over R3,222 million.

These funds come from FSA's own disaster fund as well as funds allocated to FSA by Agri SA's Drought Relief Fund.

Henk Vermeulen, chief executive officer of FSA, says: "We would like to express our deepest thanks to all individuals, organisations and companies who have assisted farmers during this challenging time."

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>