

GOVERNMENT HELPS SET UP EMERGING FARMERS

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HELPING HAND: Agriculture MEC Msebenzi Zwane with some of the new farmers. Picture: Neo Mvubu

The department of agriculture has donated R2.5m worth of cattle to emerging farmers so that they can create jobs in the province.

Speaking at a handover ceremony in Zastron in the Xhariep district, MEC Msebenzi Zwane said 900 cows and sheep had been allocated towards the project. The amount would also cover facilities and equipment for the farmers.

According to Zwane R152m had been budgeted to roll out the project in the province. Zwane said the aim of the project was to encourage black farmers to develop their businesses so that they could become fully fledged commercial farmers. He said the initiative had already created 680 jobs since 2010.

Buckland Trust, a beneficiary of the project, was given 38 Nguni cows and two rams by the agriculture department. With five employees, the trust had managed to stay afloat despite some challenges. "We need tractors and machinery that will help pluck out the alien plants on the farms. All of this requires money. If you don't pay machinery, then you need money to pay your staff so either way, you still have to pay," he said.

Vathiswa Mosea from Francina Farm said their farm received 15 ewes and one ram from the department. "We submitted our needs to the department of agriculture and they responded positively," she said. Mosea said water and fencing remained her biggest challenge on the farm. "Even our windmill is old and often breaks," she said. She already has 277 goats, 50 cattle and five horses. Mosea said she struggled to sell her livestock. She said there was no established market.

[Source: www.thenewage.co.za]