

## THE WEALTH OF A SOTHO MAN IS CATTLE – ZWANE

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MEC Msebenzi Zwane handing over certificates to farmers

**ZASTRON** – Free State farmers have been allocated R152 million to assist them with mechanisation, machinery and restocking.

Agriculture and Rural Development MEC in Free State, Msebenzi Zwane handed over 381 livestock worth R2.5 million including mechanisation on Tuesday, September 18 to 15 farmers in Xhariep District.

Beneficiaries received 87 head of cattle, 278 sheep and 16 goats and were awarded certificates as proof of training that they acquired from the department in previous months.

The handing over of livestock to the farmers is part of the Mohoma-Mobung campaign which was launched in 2010 and is aimed at imparting skills to farmers to enhance their agricultural and business skills.

“Farmers have been trained. They must grow and mentor aspiring ones and give them a chance to also benefit from the department. They shouldn’t depend on the government forever. They should grow and sustain their working capital,” Zwane said.

He noted that blacks tended to have a dependency syndrome. “If the beneficiaries do not keep these cattle for breeding, they will only be making big enemies with the department,” he added saying “beneficiaries have an obligation of supporting and engaging me as your representative in creating a better future for our society”.

“Let us work together and create wealth. We have a right as black people to own banks,” MEC said.

The livestock sector contributes up to 49 per cent of agricultural output. South Africa generally produces about 85 per cent of its meat requirements, while the remaining 15 per cent is imported from the neighbouring countries, Australia, New Zealand and Europe.

There are 279 farms in the Xhariep district and 680 sustainable and permanent jobs have been created in the farming sector since 2010 in Zastron

In general, primary agriculture contributes about 3 per cent to South Africa's gross domestic product (GDP) and about 7 per cent to formal employment in the country.

"We are trying to stop the youth from closing roads and destroying property as a form of dealing with their unemployment frustrations. The Mohoma-Mobung campaign collapsed the categories of youth and women in agriculture and formed a main umbrella that accommodates everyone," Zwane said.

He said the department will be paying unannounced visits to the beneficiaries to monitor whether the livestock has been well looked after and still kept for breeding. The monitoring stage completes the value chain that started with training the farmers.

James Daliwe of Ncaseka Trust which started in 2001 said the addition of ten heifers and a bull to his 20 cattle is a big growth. "We need to breed the cattle, so that it doubles itself and then sustain our working capital by selling old stock and buying new one to in future, but right now we have to hold on tight to our stock".

Gavin Buckland of Buckland Trust which has been sustained for eight years said: "we were blessed with 38 Damara sheep, two rams and 36 ewes. Our farm had only 15 sheep included two rams but now we have four rams and 49 ewes. We are happy to see ourselves growing further and independent and we can only grow further from here."

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