

**2010 2011 Budget Vote Speech of the Free State Department of Agriculture Budget Vote 2010
by MEC M Qabathe**

24 March 2010

Towards Vibrant, Equitable, Sustainable Rural Communities and Food Security For All

Speaker of the Provincial Legislature,
Honourable Premier of the Free State Provincial government, Mr Magashule,
Members of the Executive Council,
Members of the Free State Provincial Legislature,
Mayors present here today,
Councillors present,
Members of the House of Traditional Leaders,
Commercial and Emerging farmers,
Women in Agriculture and Rural Development (WARD) and Youth in Agriculture for Rural
Development (YARD) members present,
Heads of departments
Ladies and Gentlemen
Speaker,

The timing is right, the mood has been set, the time to work together and do more.

We stand proud at this point in history in which we look back with dignity as we celebrate the release of Madiba 20 years ago.

As we celebrate the release of this African icon and world statesman, let us recommit ourselves to building a strong Agricultural Sector that will unite both the emerging and commercial farmers, bringing them together in ensuring that Free State remains the Bread Basket of the country.

We have re-prioritised our activities and budget in line with the government's outcome based performance approach. We will heed the call of the President of the Republic, the call of working faster, harder and smarter.

We will expect our staff members to comply with this national vision as we undertake to work harder in our contribution to build a strong developmental state.

A state that responds to the needs and aspirations of the farmers, and which performs better and faster in ensuring that black farmers will not remain emerging forever.

This year, 2010, shall indeed be the year of action.

We wish to thank the Speaker and the Premier for allowing us to bring the Budget Votes to our communities as part of deepening our relations with our stakeholders.

That is why we are here in Bultfontein at Boertjie-fees building working relations with Bultfontein Distriklandbou to further strengthen the commitment of working together to do more. Hence the two departments are today donating two specialised combis to the Bultfontein Distriklandbou. This will assist the farmers in effective response to disasters, combating stock theft and crime in general.

Achievements and Challenges

Speaker, today we have come to witness at how we have progressed on this journey of hope and how we build towards the future. We have come to re-energise and recommit ourselves in yet another phase of our National Democratic Revolution.

- In the previous tabling of the Budget Vote we indicated that there was an agreement between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of South Africa to construct the fish Hatchery for R 45 million. Today we are happy to announce that work has started and progressing well. Currently 100 temporary job opportunities are being created in different phases and eventually six permanent technical jobs will be created. This project has brought hope to the people of Xhariep, an area marked by high poverty levels.

We have strong working relations with our commercial farmers and the following achievements are testimony to that:

- A total amount of R188 million was brought into this province from export of animals and animal products to SADC and European Union countries.

We can mention:

- Mr Almur Smit from Parys who exports layers to Lesotho;
- Mr Edwin Claassen of Maitland Meat Distributors in Sasolburg who exports red meat to Lesotho, Namibia, Swaziland and Botswana.
- Supreme Poultry from Botshabelo that exports poultry meat to Lesotho and Namibia, and
- Mrs Marina Terblanche' who exports hides and skins to the European countries.

These farmers are amongst those assisted by our Veterinary Services through certification of their animals and animal products. In working together we are doing more and will do much more this year. Simzwile u President Wethu.

We are honoured by the presence of our previous winners in the following categories:

- Ms Ntshiuoa Kobo from Tweespruit the first prize winner of Export Markets and also an overall winner of National Female Farmer of the Year Awards 2009,
- Tswelang Pele Bomme from Jagersfontein first prize winners under household category for the year 2009,
- Mr Zim from Kestel the winner of both best Emerging Dairy Farmer of the Year, and Dry Beans Awards for 2009;
- Mr Moloï from Fouriesburg the winner of best Emerging Grain Producer of the Year 2009,
- Mr Jaap van der Westhuizen from Parys best commercial grain producer of the year

Motsamaisi wa Dipuisano, re kgathatshehile haholo ke ho utlwa masedinyaneng ka maqulwana a nyollang ditheko tsa dijo, hona ho nyenyefatsa ditheko tsa dihlahiswa tsa dihwai tsa rona.

Re tshwela ka mathe diketso tsena tsa bobodu le bo menemene bo etswang ke dikhampani tsena tse thefulang tlhahiso ya dijo. Re tshehetsa dipatlisiso tse etswang ke lekgotla le shebaneng le ditlhodisano tsa ditheko (Competition Commission) mabapi le dikhampani tsena tse latelang: Premier foods, Tiger Brand, Foodcorp le Pioneer foods.

These continuous corrupt and fraudulent practices by these companies are undermining the efforts of the government in fighting poverty and ensuring food security for all.

Dikhampani tsena di laola diporensente tse fetang mashome a robong (90%) tsa mmaraka wa phoofo ya koro. Re tla tswela pele ho ba kgahlanong le diketso tsena tsa bobodu tse seng molaong tse amang hampe tlhahiso ya dijo.

Motsamaisi wa dipuisano, re le lefapha re tshehetsa Operation hlasela ka ho otloloha e leng leano leo profinsi e le nkileng ho potlakisa phano ya ditshebeletso.

Re tla hlasela bofuma, re tla bo lwantsa mme ke dumela hore qetellong, mmoho re tla bo hlola. Selomong sena setjha sa ditjhelete re tla kenya tshebetsong hara tse ding diprojeke tsena tse latelang dibakeng tse fapaneng:

- Thaba Nchu - Agripark, R2 million
- Ficksburg - Setsoto cow hotel, R2.5 million
- Zastron - infrastructure development for livestock, R1.1 million
- Matjhabeng irrigation projects, R1 million
- Heilbron - grow together poultry, R1.2 million.

Speaker, die 2010/11 begroting maak voorsiening vir 'n groot belegging vir die toekoms. Die department sal ook ander volhoubare initiatiewe van stapel stuur om bystand te verleen aan landbou-ondernemers en boere om hul produktiwiteit te verhoog. Ons het 'n versoek gerig aan die nasionale Departement van Landbou, Bosbou en Visserye om bystand te verleen aan boere wat probleme ondervind om hul lenings rakende landbou-insette en infrastruktuur te finansier.

Ons sal ook hulp verleen aan die ontwikkeling van meer mededingende markte. Ons sal boere wat wil kommersialiseer bystaan deur middel van Navorsing en Ontwikkeling. Ons sal handelsgeoriënteerde koöperasies vestig en sodoende die aantal boere wat vir markte produseer verhoog.

Farm Workers and Farm Dwellers

Speaker, tshireletso ya ditokelo tsa bodulo ho baahi le basebeletsi ba mapolasing esale e le ntlha ya bohlokwa Molaotheong wa rona, empa ha eso fihlele sepheo sa yona sa ho ntlafatsa dikamang pakeng tsa beng ba mapolasi, baahi le basebeletsi ba mapolasing

Bo bong ba mathata a tobaneng le basebeletsi le baahi ba mapolasing ke ho iphumanela boemedi ba semolao nakong eo ditokelo tsa bona tsa mantlha di thunthetswang.

Sesosa sa bothata bona ke bofuma ba boja-dikate boo ba phelang kahara bona. Bofuma bona, bo boela bo ba hlokisa bokgoni ba ho itefella ditjeho tsa ho fumana boemedi ba semolao.

Tharollo ya bothata bona ba baahi le basebeletsi ba mapolasing ke phumantsho ya matlole, tsebo ya ditokelo tsa bona le batho ba ka ba phallelang hang ha ba teana le mathata ana.

Ketsahalo e tswang ho etsahala moo ntate Mbulelo Phillips April wa polasing enngwe mane Parys, moo a ileng a hatiswa ka terekere ke rapolasi wa hae, e sisimolla maikutlo. Se utlwiswang bohloko ka ho fetisisa ke hore rapolasi ya amehang ha a ka a ithlopha le ho etela ntate April leha a se a le diphateng tse tjhesang. Ketsahalo ena ha se mokgelo empa e le mohlala wa tse ngata tse etsahalang di sa tlelewe.

Kaha re le mmuso o etellwang pele ke mokgatlo o kgathallang wa ANC, re ile ra tloa matjato ho netefatsa hore rapolasi eo o llelwa ke ditshepe; ha Lefapha la Mesebetsi le ntse le seka seka tsela eo a ka thuswang ka yona dintlheng tse amanang le ditokelo tsa hae jwaloka mosebeletsi wa polasing.

Speaker, there is a need to have an integrated, co-ordinated, inter-departmental, inter-sectoral cooperative approach, with all the role players committed to changing the current situation. It is for this reason that this Department will during the course of the year in question, call upon final year law students to review and assist the Department to formulate a Provincial Specific Responsive Strategy in dealing with farm dwellers and farm worker related cases such as that of Mbulelo. But to also look at the gaps and weaknesses we might have, in ensuring that the Extension of Security of Tenure Act (ESTA) is utilised maximally to the protection of all.

The security of farmers is a concern to the Department we therefore strongly condemn the killings of farmers and will work closely with the Department of Police, Roads and Transport in ensuring safety of farmers, farm workers and dwellers. We strongly condemn all forms of human rights violations at farms

We will hold Farmers and Farm Workers Summit with the intention to ensure nation building. We need our farmers and farm workers to live in peace and harmony with one another.

Investing in Education

Honourable Speaker, education is one of the five key priorities as set by our President Jacob Zuma, a forever caring cadre.

As we partner with Department of Education in our endeavours to reintroduce and promote agriculture at schools; we will encourage young people to take agriculture as a field of study at tertiary level especially in the veterinary and agricultural engineering sciences.

Speaker, we have already started with a programme of action regarding youth mobilisation in agriculture. Last year we hosted 5 secondary schools at Glen and took them on a road show to farms and water purification networks to encourage them to take agriculture as a business or a career.

Soos ons agbare Premier gesê het, "ons gaan ook vier landbouskole vestig, want ons dink dit is belangrik om reeds op skoolvlak jongmense te betrek by landbou. Dit sal verseker dat studente 'n beter begrip het vir die studierigting op tersiêre vlak. Die landbouskole wat ons sal vestig, is Nampo, Seotlong, Bo-Vaal en Weiveld."

Ons sal ook werk om Unicom skool te hervestig as 'n landbouskool, soos die LUR van Onderwys in sy Begrotingsrede gese het.

We will also establish an additional 25 food gardens at rural schools.

Youth

Speaker, as a department we will continue to encourage young people to participate in Youth in Agriculture for Rural Development (YARD) structure by funding agricultural initiatives.

We shall assist to link the youth interested in agriculture with the National Youth Development Agency and the Youth Affairs Management Directorate in the Premier's Office. We are proud to mention that one young farmer from Motheo in Mangaung, Zanoxolo Jacobs from a farm called Anon through our assistance has a market for Shoprite Checkers, Fruit n Veg Fresh Food Produce and is at an advanced stage to obtain Woolworths Market. When the demand became more than what he can supply, he unselfishly went to other farmers to top up on the supply and helped others to benefit as well.

Women

Speaker, *Igama la Makhosi kazi Malibongwe*

Women emancipation into the mainstream of agricultural economy cannot be over-emphasised.

We will continue to integrate gender equity measures into our programme of action. We have mobilised women power in agriculture through the establishment of Women in Agriculture and Rural Development (WARD) structure. This shows our commitment in ensuring the empowerment of women in this historically male dominated sector.

Female farmers have already made strides in this sector. This programme is yielding the required results and the shining example is Mrs Lentoro from Bainsvlei who is producing field crops such as maize and sunflower and is supplying Fruits & Veg Market and Senwes. She indicated her profit margins to be over one million Rand.

Bomme hare tswelleng pele ho beha letsoho mohomeng re fepeng setjhaba sa Foreisitata ka dijo tsa theko e fihlillehang.

Programme 1: Administration

In our endeavours to strengthen our capacity as Department for working faster, harder and smarter, we have appointed 50 Agricultural Scientists from Free State and the majority of whom are women.

We also appointed 32 young graduates through intern-ship programme in various fields in agriculture. The Department has also taken a strategic decision on motivating staff through internal promotion; most of the vacant posts have been filled by internal staff.

In responding to the Premier's call to create permanent and decent jobs the Department will not renew the outsourced security service contract upon its expiry. We will employ sixty (60) security officers.

The Department has approved bursaries to employees to improve their skills and upgrade their qualifications. We have supported 37 employees in this regard and the number will be increasing this financial year.

The total amount of R109 million has been allocated to this programme.

Programme 2: Sustainable Resource Management

Speaker, the department will implement eighteen (18) Land-Care projects and one (1) Junior Land-Care project to the value of R4.3 million. The temporary jobs to be created through these projects will be about 100. Under Junior LandCare the department will focus mainly on agricultural schools.

We will continue to contribute to the Expanded Public Works Programme by using beneficiaries or local people to eradicate invader plants, establishment of pastures, construct fire belts, waterways and contours on eroded lands. The total budget for this programme is R21 million

Programme 3: Farmer Support and Development

Speaker, the Freedom Charter says “The State Shall help entrepreneurial farmers with implements, seeds, tractors and dams to save the land and assist the tillers.”

This quote is continuing to become the reality as the department continues to provide farmers with mechanisation, production inputs and provision of farming infrastructure.

This programme is aimed at enhancing food security, farmer support and settlement

That is why we are assisting Mr Kobo of Thitapoho farm with a dam construction worth R3.8 million and we will further assist him to install irrigation system to the tune of R1.7 million.

To date 31 farmers have benefited from our mechanisation programme. I must also mention that a total of 127 farmers have benefited from agricultural inputs such as seeds and fertilizers. For example the former farm workers at Zandfontein in Mqhaka, Viljoenskroon, have benefitted from the scheme.

The Department will continue to provide farmers with the support in the new financial year through Letsema/Ilima programme and we will implement more than 47 projects to the total grant of R26 million.

We have reduced the number of projects we are supporting in order to make a high impact in supporting our farmers.

Speaker, during the State of the Province Address, the Honourable Premier said, and I quote:

“Notwithstanding the successes of some of our provincial farmers, we are well aware that farmers still face challenges including access to finance to establish viable farming enterprises, high prices to acquire land and requisite machinery and implements, access to markets as well as poor farm and road infrastructure. Our farmers must be able to increase their profits, broaden the local export base and create additional employment opportunities”.

In heeding the Premier’s call; we have prioritised the provision of all the requisite farming infrastructure and mechanisation for projects under our care. I am glad to announce that this year, under the Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme (CASP), the department will be implementing 63 projects to the total budget of R 75 million which in turn will support two thousand, one hundred and ninety one (2191) farmers and create about two hundred and eighty four (284) employment opportunities.

While there have been some challenges in spending the CASP funds in total this financial year due to the complexity and nature of farming business, we want to indicate to this Honourable House, the people of the Free State and emerging farmers in particular, that we will do our business faster, harder and smarter in this year of action.

Motsamaisi wa dipuisano, thuo ya diphoofole e bapala karolo ya bohlokwa moruong wa profinsi ya Foreisitata. Ke kahoo ho leng bohlokwa hore e hodiswe le ho tshhetswa hobane e thusa ho hlasela bofuma le tlhokeho ya mesebetsi. Ka hona ho molemo hore borapolosi ba kojwana di mahetleng ba fumantshwe thuso hore e be borakgwebo ba ikemetseng thuong ya diphoofole.

Ke motlotlo ho phatlalatsa ka hara ntlo ena hore lefapha la Temo le thusitse bo rapolasi ba babedi hore ebe bo rakgwebo ba hlahelletseng ka mahetla hoka hlahisa dikgomo tsa boleng bo hodimo. Re fane ka thuso ya R2,5 million ho rapolasi wa dikgomo tsa Nguni le R1 million ho rapolasi wa dikgomo tsa lebesa tsa Shorthorn, seterekeng sa Thabo Mofutsanyana.

This year going forward we put a joint implementation plan with organised agriculture in particular, Free State Agriculture and the National African Farmers Union (NAFU) flowing from the discussion paper that was presented to the Honourable Premier.

The Department is continuing to fund the initiatives we have entered into with the following strategic partners: Oos Vrystaat Kooperasie (OVK), Vrystaat Kooperasie Beperk (VKB), Grain SA, National Emergent Red meat Producers Organisation (NERPO) and Milk Producers Organisation (MPO) The Department has allocated R2 million in support of these partnerships.

Speaker, a series of engagements have already been held with various key departments in ensuring support to the farmers. As indicated earlier we have partnered with Department of Social Development in reviving 250 Vegetable Tunnels in Thaba Nchu.

Together with the Department of Health we will establish vegetable gardens at clinics and Hospitals to support their nutrition programmes. We will continue to support the medicinal project of Sasolburg which is in the spirit of working together. This project was the initiative of the Agricultural Research Council (ARC) and the Department of Health.

In partnership with the Department of Public Works and Rural Development, despite the fact that the rural development is a new mandate we have both made strides in Diyatalawa and Kgolokoeng to ensure rural development.

We appreciate the fact that the Department of Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation will ensure that farming communities enjoy the fruits of the revolutionary gains by creating public viewing areas for farmers, farm workers and dwellers to be part of the mass to enjoy the Soccer World Cup 2010 games.

We further appreciate a food garden project started by the MEC Kothule in his Constituency area in Bethlehem. In working together we ensure access to food in every household.

Re boela re tlotla Lefapha la Kopanelo ya Puso, tsa Botjhaba le Bodulo ka ho elellwa bohlokwa ba ho ahela basebeletsi, badudi le borapolasi matlo mapolasing.

Through game farming we will continue to promote agri-tourism in our province working together with the Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs.

The Department of Agriculture is working closely with the Department of Police, Roads and Transport, to combat stock theft along our borders with neighbouring countries.

Ek wil graag die LUR vir Polisie, Paaie en Vervoer bedank deurdadig dat hy gehoor gegee het aan ons versoek dat die plaaspaaië herstel moet word wat beskadig is tydens die afgelope reënseisoen.

Tesame met die Bultfontein Distriklandbou, ons het reeds die spoorlyn met die LUR van Polisie, Paaie en Vervoer bespreek om die spoorlyn in die Bultfontein-omgewing weer in werking te stel. Dit sal help om die lading van swaar voertuie op ons paaie te verminder.

This Programme is allocated R160 million.

Speaker, indeed this shows that Working Together We Can Do More.

Programme 4: Veterinary Services

This programme is aimed at enhancing the Public Health through the prevention of animal diseases and therefore contributing positively to the economy of the province.

Speaker, one of our key responsibilities as a department is to promote food safety through the implementation of the Meat Safety Act (Act 40 of 2000). Furthermore is to provide a reliable and reputable diagnostic service through performing post mortems and other laboratory tests to determine the causes of animal diseases.

Interventions by the department in dealing with the issues raised by the Red Meat Producers' Organisation (RMPO) with the Premier has provided a platform for clarification of issues, thus paving a way for much more meaningful deliberations to continue.

Honourable Speaker, heavy rains that occurred during January and February months in the Northern, Eastern and Central parts of the Free State province have been a relief to some of our farmers on their grazing land but have also caused serious damages to some farmers on their infrastructure, field crops, livestock, etc. We have since reported the matter to the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries for a relief fund.

The Free State province experienced outbreak of the Rift Valley fever (RVF) (Feberu ya Melatswana, Slenkdalkoors) caused by mosquitoes due to these heavy rains. It was initially reported on three (3) farms in Bultfontein. This disease has since been confirmed on surrounding farms and towns within and beyond the borders of Lejweleputswa District and other neighbouring provinces.

In responding to this outbreak, the department has deployed response team comprising of Veterinarians, Animal Health Technicians in conjunction with the Department of Health. It has further procured 400 000 doses of the vaccine worth over R1.2 million to immunise the susceptible animals in the province. We have already started with the vaccination programme.

This programme has been allocated a total of R42 million.

Programme 5: Technology Research and Development Services

Agriculture continues to be one of the key industries in the Free State province. In order for this to be maintained and/or improved Agricultural Technologies generated through Research and disseminated to farmers for implementation will have to play a major role to keep abreast of global trends and challenges. Agriculture further operates in a global market and will only survive if Agricultural Technologies, generated through Research, are applied.

Twenty projects investigating methods to optimize agricultural production from a household food security to a commercial level are currently running. We are currently running two trials namely Soyabean cultivar and Indigenous crops (Amaranthus and Cowpeas) in collaboration with the Agricultural Research Council (ARC) in the Qwaqwa area.

The budget for this programme is R54 million.

Programme 6: Agricultural Economics

We have heard the Premier's concern on agro-processing and value adding and we have a pleasure to mention and display the value added products from the following projects:

- Artchar from Mantsopa Mothers Trust,
- Milk from the Lebebe Dairy

- Baby tomatoes from Batlounge
- Honey from Tswelang Youth Bee
- Bath salts from Tlalo le Hlwekileng
- Botshabelo - Tripe canning

In the last budget speech, we mentioned Wilhemina as one of our agro-processing projects and invested R1.5 million for processing equipment.

Today we are announcing that we are taking the project forward. This Cherry and Peach Processing farm will be supported with R2 million for dairy parlour, yoghurt making machines and a cooler truck for transportation of the dairy product to the market.

In partnership with Potato SA, we will add value to potatoes we are producing in the Maluti-A-Phofung particularly in Kgolokoeng.

This therefore demonstrates our commitment to work closely with our Traditional Leaders and our pledge to rural development as a Country's key Priority.

The allocated budget for this programme is R5 million.

Programme 7: Structured Agricultural Training

For the year ahead; the department will invest R6 million in farmer support and development, through various interventions ranging from mentorship and training. Out of this amount R2.5 million will be used to implement mentorship programme in addition to the already existing mentors supported by the Department.

The allocated budget for this programme is R14 million.

Assistance to MK Veterans

Honourable members, *re bona ho le bohlokwa, re le lefapha, hore diprogramong tsa rona re se lebale bahale ba rona ba MK ba lwanetseng tokoloho: - Comrades Lebentlele le Motsoahae re ba thusitse ka terekere, disebediswa tsa polasi, dipeo, manyolo, tanka ya metsi, disele, dikgoho le dihoko tsa tsona. Selemong sena re hatela pele ka ho hloma di green house le marang-rang a metsi (irrigation system).*

In the 2010/11 financial year, we will assist the late comrade Carpede's family with acquisition of the farm De La Rey and the necessary production inputs to run the farm successfully.

Conclusion

Speaker, in many of our meetings Mr Herman Meiring consistently says:

"Failing to plan, is planning to fail"

Therefore in conclusion, let me state that we are ready to continue to support our farmers with information and technology, marketing and business development, training and capacity building.

Jonathan Swift once said: "That whoever could make two ears of corn, or two blades of grass, to grow upon a spot where only one grew before, would deserve better of mankind, and do more essential service to his country."

The challenge to farmers and all of us is to build a tradition of resilience and perseverance. We have to do this in the face of challenges that make this task look insurmountable.

The cause is, however, so worthwhile that risks and whatever challenges confronting the realisation of our goal sink into insignificance.

I wish to thank my family for the support they continue to give me, my daughter Nombulelo who is in Grade 9 but surprisingly offers a lot of advice to me, a word of thanks and appreciation also goes to the Portfolio Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, the support that I enjoy from the Honourable Premier and the Executive Council and from members of the Provincial Legislature.

A special word of thanks to the farmers of the Free State, the Head of Department and the staff.

Deur saam te werk, kan ons meer bereik. Haak Vrystaat.

I thank you.