

PROJECTS FOR FOOD SECURITY



The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development said it has committed a significant part of its budget to the Mohuma Mobung project. The project seeks to revive agriculture through public-private partnerships. It was introduced as the provincial growth and development strategy for the agricultural and rural development sector.

MEC Msebenzi Zwane presented his department's budget vote in QwaQwa on Friday. Agriculture was allocated R579m for this financial year by the provincial treasury and rural development received R40.6m.

"The province is home to almost 3 million South Africans and produces about 2.5 million tons of maize a year – more than enough for its population," said Zwane.

"However, more and more people still live below the poverty line due to their incapacity to afford the available food, but also the challenges of access to safe and nutritious food. Due to this crisis the majority of rural communities in the province experience food insecurity.

"Mohoma Mobung recognises this challenge and its urgency and therefore has developed a way forward," said Zwane.

He said agro-processing had been identified as a key driver of job creation in the agriculture sector. Zwane said it would bring more enterprises and investors into agriculture to stimulate competition and demand for agricultural products. Infrastructure programmes would be implemented to enable smaller farmers to be able to come into the national agricultural market.

These include speeding up the building of new dams, irrigation systems and allocation of water rights, said Zwane.

In his state of the province address last month, Premier Ace Magashule said agro-processing had been extended in Wilhemina through the provision of processing equipment for fruit, a dairy parlour and for extending production. Magashule said that a dairy project would be established in Vrede and was expected to create 150 job opportunities.

"Our province's farming sector contributed R188m to the provincial economy through the export of animals and animal products to the SADC region and the European Union countries. We call on all farmers, black and white, to work together to maximise agricultural output that will increase food security for us all."

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