

The Weekly

MOHOMA-MOBUNG STRATEGY TO SAVE FS AGRICULTURE

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Growing agricultural sector ... The MEC for agriculture, Mosebenzi Zwane

The Free State agriculture department's farming development and advancement strategy, called Mohoma-Mobung, has made notable progress with several projects aimed at boosting the sector in the province already implemented.

The strategy is a multi-year mega public and private partnership business concept that deals with income generation through farming in the rural areas of the province; the creation of on-and-off farming agri-businesses; value chain enterprises and Black Economic Empowerment (BEE).

The department adopted Mohoma-Mobung as a provincial growth and development strategy for the agriculture and rural development sector on March 22, this year.

Several projects have been implemented under the strategy, with the most recent being the distribution of 72 tractors to farmers across the province earlier this month.

The department also donated 514 peach trees and 1 000 ornament trees to the residents of the Feloane Trust village, just outside Thaba-Nchu.

The MEC for agriculture, Mosebenzi Zwane, said the Mohoma-Mobung strategy is supported by both the United Nations (UN) and the African Union's (AU) development principles. During the department's budget speech, Zwane pointed out that people would be naked, hungry and dead without the agricultural sector; hence it must be placed in the centre of development.

Free State processes 11 percent of its primary agricultural production, but loses the economic opportunities in terms of value adding in the process, because most of the production is processed outside the province and imported as final demand goods.

Zwane revealed that the department had allocated R131.8-million earlier this year, for projects that will give effect to the Mohoma-Mobung strategy during the 2012/2013 financial year. He said he wanted to break the cycle of unemployment, poverty and food insecurity with the investment.

Research done by the department on the province's crop production showed that there was 56 percent of sorghum production; 48 percent sunflower production; 39.3 percent on maize production; 34.6 percent on groundnuts production; 27 percent on soya-beans production and 25.8 percent on wheat production in the province.

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The study additionally showed that the Free State is ranked second, behind the Eastern Cape, in terms of livestock resources possession. The province has 30 percent of total sheep in South Africa while the Eastern Cape has 31 percent.

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