

MEC wants IDZs to step up agro-processing

The Eastern Cape industrial zone could learn from the prominent role agriculture plays at the Dube Trade Port in KwaZulu-Natal, Agriculture MEC Mlibo Qoboshiyane said on Wednesday, 11 March...



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Visiting the trade port outside Durban yesterday, Qoboshiyane said this industrial development zone (IDZ) had promoted several aspects of agriculture with its Dube AgriZone.

The Dube AgriZone is Africa's first integrated perishables supply chain forming a part of the IDZ, which includes the King Shaka International Airport, Dube TradeZone and Dube Cargo Terminal.

Qoboshiyane said the Eastern Cape IDZs had not yet fully maximised agriculture to the extent that the Dube Trade Port has.

"The green house has all-year round production for domestic and international markets.

"The quality of the stock is exceptional and it is marvellous how they have created the whole value chain from the nursery to harvesting, processing and eventually transporting goods," he said.

While the Coega IDZ is expected to start with the construction of an R86-million agro-processing facility this month, the East London IDZ is home to a fish farm and dairy.

Qoboshiyane said both IDZs could benefit more from maximising agriculture and agro-processing.

The purpose of his visit to KwaZulu-Natal was to identify solutions and good practice to inspire the Eastern Cape's agro-processing programmes.

Qoboshiyane said he would also be meeting Sugar Cane South Africa to discuss the revival of the sugar plantations in northern Pondoland.

"We have a similar climate in the rural parts of the province to KwaZulu-Natal and we would like to explore the possibility of reviving the sugar industry which was started in the Eastern Cape but did not work out due to community issues."

Source: Herald