

# Promote agri career paths for youth

By [Gabi Khumalo](#)

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Careers in agriculture must be promoted to young South Africans, who perceive the sector as being exclusive to older people and not lucrative, says Limpopo MEC for Agriculture Dikeledi Magadzi.

“An impression is created among the youth of today that agriculture is non-profitable and only suitable for the elderly,” said Magadzi.

Magadzi was speaking during the handing over of more than 100 indigenous South African, Nguni cattle to previously disadvantaged farming communities on Thursday, 21 February.

The event was held at the University of Limpopo's Experimental Farm.

## Nguni Cattle Development Project

The Nguni Cattle Development Project is a partnership initiative between the department, the Industrial Development Cooperation (IDC) and the University of Limpopo.

It was initiated in mid 2005 with the aim of reintroducing the Nguni breed of cattle into the province in large numbers, focusing specifically on emerging farmers.

The project is aimed at empowering emerging farmers with livestock farming skills and developing their entrepreneurship abilities.

During the event, six emerging farmers from the Capricorn and Sekhukhune Districts each had 19 heifers and one bull loaned to them.

The farmers signed a contract committing them to pay for the cattle in the form of returning one offspring for each animal loaned to ensure the programme is sustained.

## Changing attitudes

Magadzi said she was convinced that the products of the project will send a message to the youth that there is a future and jobs in farming with Nguni cattle.

She further stressed the need to recruit and change the attitudes of young people about mathematics, science and technology.

Failure to attain the requisite levels of literacy in these critical subject areas may prevent many of our youth from assuming full responsibility and participation in the development of our nation's economy, said Magadzi.

Commenting on a partnership initiative between the department, the IDC and the University of Limpopo, Magadzi said the arrangement was beginning to bear fruit.

## **Continuing transformation**

She added that there was a need to encourage more such collaborations to strengthen relationships and friendships for the benefit of the farmers and agrarian reform in the province.

“We have a task on our hands to grow this country by making a contribution towards reducing hunger, poverty and fighting joblessness.

“Our quest as government is to continue on the path to transform our country and the farming sector into a non-racial, non-sexist society with equal opportunities for all,” she said.

## **Local livestock**

She said that Nguni cattle historically were developed and kept by black farmers as indigenous livestock.

Over time foreign breeds were introduced as improved and better breeds, and Nguni breeds were viewed as animals of inferior quality.

“Later scientists discovered what our forefathers knew all along, that Nguni cattle are a hardy breed.

“These animals are highly adaptable to harsh environment of our country and have shown resistance to ticks and diseases,” Magadzi explained.

She further commended the Nguni Cattle Breeders Society and Northern Nguni Club for their assistance in ensuring the supply of top quality breeding materials and providing guidance, advise, training and mentorship to the recipients.

“I hope this project will unlock more opportunities even for other projects or commodities to enhance the ‘business unusual approach’ directed by our State President Thabo Mbeki,” said Magadzi.

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