

R498m to support small farmers

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MBOMBELA: A total of R489 million has been set aside to support small farmers in Mpumalanga this financial year.

Presenting her department's R980.4 million budget in the provincial legislature in Mbombela on Tuesday, 15 May 2012, Agriculture, Rural Development and Land Administration MEC Candith Mashego-Dlamini promised to continue providing a lifeline to farmers through the Masibuyele Emasimini (back to farming) and Esibayeni (back to the kraal) programmes.

The Emasimini programme focuses on crop cultivation, while the Esibayeni programme focuses on the breeding of livestock.

"The department will continue with the massification of Masibuyele Emasimini and Esibayeni programmes... Farmer support and development services (will get) an amount of R489 054 million," said Mashego-Dlamini.

She said the Emasimini programme had supplied an extra 65 tractors, bringing to 357 the number of tractors given to smallholder and land and agrarian reform farmers.

"Through this intervention, a total of 43 200 hectares were ploughed and planted in the 2011/2012 financial year, benefitting 32 615 households," she said.

The MEC said that in partnership with the Industrial Development Corporation and the University of Limpopo, the province would also continue rolling out the Nguni Bull Project, which seeks to breed indigenous Nguni cattle for meat production.

"The programme will now also emphasise the roll out of other livestock such as sheep, goats, and pigs," she said.

She said more high performance bulls and heifers would also be provided for the roll out of the Bull and Heifer Project to all 18 local municipalities in as part of the Livestock Improvement Programme.