



**LIMPOPO**  
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**DEPARTMENT OF  
AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

**2023/24 Financial Year Budget Vote Speech**

**Vote 4: Agriculture and Rural Development**

**Delivered by the Member of the Executive Council, Hon. Thabo Andrew  
Mokone to the Limpopo Legislature**



**Date Delivered: 04 April 2023**

**Honourable Speaker, Mme Rosemary Molapo**

**Honourable Deputy Speaker, Mr Tshitereke Matibe**

**Honourable Premier, Stanley Chupu Mathabatha**

**Honourable colleagues in the Executive Council**

**Chief Whip of the Majority Party, Hon Mokgonyana**

**Honourable Members of the Provincial Legislature**

**Leadership of the Ruling Party, African National Congress**

**Leaders of the Opposition Parties**

**Limpopo House of Traditional Leaders, Led by Hosi Ngove**

**Members of the Agricultural Advisory Committee**

**Officials of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, national Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural development and other sector departments**

**Representatives of the Farming Community at large and Civil Society Organisations present**

**Representatives of the Agri-business and other Partners in the agriculture sector**

**Members of the Media**

**Distinguished Guests**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

**My sincere greetings to you**

## **Madame Speaker**

It is with honour that we today table to this august House a Budget of Vote 4, Limpopo Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, for the financial year 2023/2024.

We are tabling this Budget amidst difficult economic times. In recent years, farmers have been facing a continuous uphill battle because of exponentially rising cost of production, mainly fuel, fertilisers, compounded by current electricity blackouts. As also noted in the State of the Nation Address (SONA) 2023, his Excellency President Ramaphosa highlighted a fact that the agricultural sector *“is now facing several pressures, from input costs for fertilizers, fuel to market access constraints and severe weather patterns that are impacting badly on production”*.

Despite these the challenges, we take leadership from our Honourable Premier Stanley Chupu Mathabatha during the State of the Province Address (SOPA) 2023, when he said that *“Therefore, our collective responsibility, moving forward, is to implement the policy directives pronounced by the President.”*

Therefore, the budget and plans of the department for 2023/24 must aim to assist the producers to mitigate the impact of this unfavourable conditions on agricultural production.

It is worth mentioning though that despite these challenges, our agricultural sector continues to play a crucial role in ensuring the national food security. The Global Food Security Index, 2022, places South Africa as the most food secure country on the African continent. South Africa is ranked number 01 on the Continent, and globally at number 59, out of 133 countries that have their agricultural sectors worthy of inclusion in the GFS Index.

On the Continent South Africa is followed by Tunisia at number 62. We believe that this is made possible through the hard work of our farmers and farm workers, the agricultural industry at various levels and of course the supportive role of Government through various enabling policies and programmes.

We should also take note that 6,5 million people in South Africa still go to bed hungry, and the need to intensify our intervention programmes towards ensuring household food security as espoused in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal number 2, by 2030.

We welcome the pronouncement by the Premier that there will be a “...*development of a province-specific and comprehensive energy plan to ensure that we build a new electricity generation capacity in our province.*” Furthermore, the Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, Mme Thoko Didiza, has established an Energy Task Team, and this will help our Department to include the development of energy production projects in our plans as directed by the Premier in the 2023 State of the Province Address.

I had already met with the representatives of organised farmers in this regard and directed our Department to establish an Energy Task Team to work on the agricultural sector’s inputs into the broader plan to mitigate the impact of the load shedding on food production across the value chain.

### **Madame Speaker**

We have adopted a slogan of “***evangelizing agriculture and food production to be a culture by all, no longer just a leisure for some***”. We are calling upon everybody to take advantage of the resources at their disposal to contribute to improved food security, employment creation and reduction of poverty.

As part of this evangelism, together with our Limpopo Department of Education, we are working on mechanisms to support the agricultural schools in our Province. The aim is to enable these schools to continue to serve as foundation level for agricultural career development, and to promote the importance and value of increased participation of young people in the food chain system.

Flowing from my interactions with various stakeholders and role players, we believe that with our recent re-establishment of MEC Advisory Committee on agriculture and rural development and also formed a Technical Team on Energy at the sector level. We are on track to jointly and collectively find solutions as a sector towards addressing the above-mentioned challenges on the identified strategic programmes.

Our reflection on the red meat cluster development has indicated that we need to change our approach. We are in discussion with Impact Catalyst to have a holistic approach that will see us addressing all the aspects of production, value adding and markets. We are working on developing a comprehensive masterplan, which will guide and direct the necessary investment through public and private partnerships.

## **Madame Speaker**

At the beginning of the 6<sup>th</sup> Administration, our Department committed to a mission “*to promote food security and economic growth through sustainable agricultural development*”.

The 2023/2024 budget allocation will thus enable us to continue the journey of our mission, amplified by agriculture evangelism movement, to put into effect policy priorities as outlined in the 2020/21 - 2024/25 Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) and Limpopo Development Plan.

This journey is undertaken under the challenges of limited resources and slim workforce, which we have mitigated by among others organisational redesign which led to the implementation of a new organisational structure as we committed in the 2022/2023 Budget Speech. However, despite our efforts to decrease the workforce, our Compensation of Employees bill is stubbornly increased from one billion to 1.1 billion.

In 2022/2023, we spent approximately 4-million rand on the implementation of COVID-19 Health and Safety Protocols and more than 7-million rand on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to ensure a safe working environment of our personnel.

We have also allocated 7-million rand to enhance the capacity of our personnel through in-service training, and we will continue with the quest for alternative ways and resources to increase the capacity of our workforce to ensure maximum delivery of our mandate.

## **Honourable Members,**

The Red Meat Industry observed that the last United Nations Climate Change Conference held in November 2022, commonly referred to COP27, was the first one wherein “*...the participants had for the first time given agriculture and food production prominence in terms of how these sectors can be leveraged to better tackle environmental [issues]*”.

The Department is also keeping a close eye on how the effects of climate change and are shaping critical narratives about the future of all agricultural industries. We commit to initiating and participating in various research that promote the role of sustainable production strategies in the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

Our **Sustainable Resource Use and Management Programme** 137 million for 2023/24 financial year. This program remains the cornerstone of agricultural practices since it is about caring for the very soil agriculture is derived from and the provision of infrastructure to support farming activities. In 2022/2023, as we promised, we rehabilitated 1 300 hectares of land and cultivated five hundred and two hectares under conservation agriculture practice.

These milestones were achieved amidst challenges in the delivery of agriculture infrastructure. We have since developed a turnaround strategy to complete all outstanding infrastructure in the second quarter of this financial year and ensure that all infrastructure projects planned for this current financial year are completed timeously.

Despite these challenges, through this program, the Department managed to create more than 2 750 EPWP job opportunities, 6% above the target.

We will explore the expansion of support to process the identified invader tree species to other areas, so as to assist farmers to generate income from the harvested invader species. A feasibility analysis will be conducted in the first quarter of this financial year to determine the possibility of replicating these kinds of projects across the province. Recently I visited a similar Landcare pilot project at Mamaila Kolobetona village in Mopani District, wherein a group of 350 cattle farmers received support from the Department to manage invasive plants, namely, Sickle Bush and Lantana.

**Honourable Premier,**

It is with great humility to introduce to this august house Mr Theo du Plooy, an engineer and farmer from Limpopo, who designed a unique mass handler facility for goats and sheep. The system neatly lifts 20 mature goats and/or goats without hurting or injuring them off the ground to easily be inspected for parasites in their eyes and ears and dosed.

## Madame Speaker

Mr E. Nekhavhambe, in his article *What do we need to transform the agricultural sector?* in the *Transformation Digest*, found the following responses:

- *The agricultural sector needs a caring and responsible government; in the same way, the government needs the private sector.*
- *Transformation strategies should investigate youth participation in the agricultural sector for the sustainability and profitability of the sector.*
- *There is also a need to address and deliberate on the issue of the AgriBEE Charter Sector Code to realise its objectives.*
- *Government funding should be inclusive of all the industry commodities.*

Thus, we continue our transformation agenda by providing support to the transformation and development of the agriculture sector through our **Agricultural Producer Support and Development Programme**, and actively contribute to economic growth, inclusion, equality, and the creation of decent work.

During the past year, the Department increased participation of producers in the integrated value chain through support of 7 300 producers across various agriculture commodity groups, 1 570 above the target. Furthermore, we fulfilled our 2022/2023 commitment to capacitate farmers by training 1 350 producers and reaching out to 1 500 through demonstrations and farmers days, an overwhelming achievement against our plans.

Our intentions to support smallholder producers and subsistence farmers were negatively impacted mainly by the volatile price escalation in inputs, especially fertilisers, due to the Russian-Ukraine conflict and other global and national market factors. However, we remain committed to our mission as we present the 2023/2024 plans and derive strength from our agricultural spirit of evangelism.

Among the key deliverables of this Programme is revitalisation of small-scale irrigation schemes. As we pronounced in 2022/23 budget speech, notable progress has been made in four irrigation schemes mainly through the revitalisation of infrastructure development.

The development of Mogalatšane irrigation scheme infrastructure is at 80% completion. It is worth noting that the scheme is currently producing cotton under dryland rainfed production system.

The revitalisation of Hereford irrigation scheme of Tafelkop Farmers Association includes:

- bulk water supply and in-field irrigation system development,
- establishment of shade nets covering 1 hectare per plot,
- refurbishment of packing facility,
- construction of ablution facilities, and
- storage facility to ensure compliance with South African GAP market requirements.

Production at other schemes, namely, Zamerkomste, Readira Baswa, Dichweung and Swara O Tiiše is also progressing fairly well. Seasonally, an average quantity of cotton produced is 400 tons, with more than 300 jobs created. Support will continue in 2023/24, to amongst others, enable the planting of 464 hectares as part of the expansion of Sekhukhune cotton cluster development.

This support is aimed at increasing at:

- The number of producers from 124 to 400.
- Doubling production from 400 hectares to 1000.
- Increasing the knowledge and skills base of cotton producers, and
- To improve market access.

This development is in partnership with Cotton South Africa.

For 2023/24, the **Agricultural Producer Support and Development Programme** has received 795 million, which constitutes 45% of the total departmental budget. The allocation includes Comprehensive Agriculture Support Programme (CASP) and Ilima/Letšema Conditional Grants, with nearly 242 million for CASP and 77 million for Letšema, respectively.

In the year under review, 209 animals were provided to farmers through the departmental livestock loan scheme and departmental livestock re-sale scheme.



Fish breeding stock of 10 000 fish fingerlings, sourced from the departmental fish production operation at Turfloop Hatchery, were supplied to farmers.

In 2023/24, 250 livestock and 10 000 fish fingerlings will be provided to farmers to improve their production.

Our pursuit for the industrialisation of the Red Meat Cluster seeks to optimise and increase production of red meat across the value chain, and ultimately improve the access to formal markets and livelihoods of the livestock farmers. We are expanding this programme to include other parts of the Province, from the pilot in Waterberg district.

This has been prompted by our continuous drive to address the challenges faced by farmers affected by the Foot and Mouth Disease, to strengthen our interventions in the Redline areas towards addressing the historical challenges on market access for livestock farmers in the FMD Zone of Mopani and Vhembe Districts.

Lot of work has commenced on the ground, particularly on the area of capacity building of the farmers. So far, more than 1 400 farmers across the province have gone through a training programme on various aspects of livestock production, marketing and disease management.

We have also roped in Impact Catalyst, to work with us to conduct a full situational analysis and develop a masterplan for the province-wide red meat development.

We are forging ahead with a drive to increase participation of producers in the integrated value chain through support to 5 300 producers across different agricultural commodity groups.

In 2023/24, the support will benefit 8 700 farmers and 9 140 hectares of land would be put into production. This support will contribute to the creation of more than 11 000 job opportunities and approximately 4 000 subsistence producers who produce mainly for household food survival will be supported, as part of ensuring household food security, especially for the vulnerable households.

The role of Extension Officers in food production and in turn poverty alleviation, especially for our rural households, is very critical and cannot be overemphasized. We appreciate the contribution of the national Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development with the current drive to assist Provinces to increase the boots on the ground.

Our Department is faced with aging workforce, especially Extension Officers, thus we welcome the extension of temporary contracts of 820 Assistant Agricultural Practitioners by national Department of Agriculture.

**Honourable Members,**

The Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) continues to threaten the livelihoods of livestock farmers, not only in the Limpopo Province, but also the broader livestock industry in South Africa.

However, we can confidently report that the outbreak has been fully contained, thanks to interventions by the department and efforts by farmers, traditional leaders, animal auctioneers, SANDF, SAPS and media houses.

We further express our appreciation to departmental officials, the support of the Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, our Hon Premier and my colleagues, MECs for Treasury and Transport and Community Liaison, District Municipalities of Vhembe and Mopani.

We will be hosting the Limpopo Livestock Summit in the first quarter of the financial year - to bridge the gap between government, organized agriculture, and private sector, towards a shared vision for sustainable growth and development of the provincial livestock industry.

To continue with the implementation the above stated interventions and other key priorities which are critical to ensure disease free environment and meat safety for public consumption, the **Veterinary Services Programme** has been allocated 193 million rand, an increase of 77 million rand to enable the FMD interventions.

In as much as the main focus has been on the FMD due its wider negative impact on the livestock industry, we should not forget about the preventative measures for other diseases such as Rabies. Rabies is a zoonotic disease, meaning that it is an infectious disease that is transmitted between species from animals to humans. If 70% of dogs and cats are vaccinated the cycle can be broken. Mass Rabies vaccinations will continue especially in Vhembe and Mopani Districts where Rabies is endemic.

### **Madame Speaker**

As pronounced in the 2022/23 budget speech, the Department had planned to implement 12 research projects and 21 technology transfer interventions for improving agricultural production. The Department over-achieved with 14 research projects implemented and 41 technology transfer interventions conducted in the financial year under review.

**Research and Technology Development Services Programme** has been allocated 75 million and an amount of 2 million has been allocated to cater for the infrastructure rehabilitation of Mara and Towoomba Research Stations.

During 2023/24, twelve research projects will be implemented to improve agricultural production. This research is to explore alternative and new production practices and methods that can assist the producers to respond to the challenges brought about effects of climate change and changes in production systems.

The coordination and facilitation of the support regarding the implementation of the Cannabis Master plan will continue in this financial. We will intensify awareness and provide support to prospective producers with license applications. So far, public awareness workshops on hemp or cannabis development have been conducted across the province.

The Agriculture Geo-Spatial Information Services Team in the Department has developed a Digital Reporting System enabling monitoring and reporting on progress made with the implementation of departmental plans.

This modern technological system also allows for early warning on performance with resultant identification of strategies to overcome challenges. For example, the Producer Farmer Register will be added to the Digital Reporting System to guide planning and assist in the application process for Farmer Support.

### **Honourable Members**

The **Agricultural Economic Services Program** has been allocated 74-million rand to provide timely and relevant agricultural economic services to ensure equitable participation in the economy.

We have allocated 30-million rand for the continuation of RAAVC implementation, as one of the provincial policy priorities. The RAAVC Plan aims to contribute to the expansion and increase of agricultural production across the value chain, and in turn the sector's inclusive growth, job creation and food security as espoused in the National Development Plan, Limpopo Development Plan, and Limpopo Socio-economic Recovery Plan.

Implementation of RAAVC anchor projects will continue in 2023/24, which include

- Majeje citrus, with the allocation of R12 million, as second phase of the establishment of citrus orchards towards the target of 450ha;
- Tafelkop farmers in the Hereford irrigation scheme with the allocation of R10 million for the continuation of irrigation infrastructure and infrastructure for GAP market requirements certification, and
- Tshilwavhusiku with the allocation of R6 million for irrigation infrastructure and on-site packing shed.
- The Master Plan for Zebediela will be developed to outline specific deliverables and required investment to revitalize this Citrus Estate and increase the current jobs by more than 100%.

We have planned to convene a RAAVC Summit in the first quarter of 2023/24. The objective of the Summit is to have a structured engagement on the matters of agricultural value chain development, reflecting on the current and future development programmes in government and private sector, with the aim of strengthening existing and forging new partnerships, as well as sharing lessons on the best practices.

**Madam Speaker**

In 2022/2, we managed to audit 25 farms and 4 of them have been certified by South African GAP and one by Global GAP. In 2023/2024, thirty-three farms will be pre-audited and 20 will be fully audited, including Health and Food Safety workshops.

Furthermore, 2 750 producers will be supported with production economic services, using the budget allocation of approximately 74-million rand, to provide timely and relevant agricultural economic services to the sector in support of sustainable agricultural and agri-business development to increase economic growth.

**Madame Speaker**

In 2022/2023, Tompi Seleka and Madzivhandila agricultural colleges graduated 102 students with Diploma in Agriculture. This success was also realized in the training of farmers on various agricultural skills, wherein more than 400 farmers were trained.

**Agricultural Education and Training Programme** has been allocated a budget of 158-million rand for 2023/24 financial year. This budget is to cater for the student academic programme, college infrastructure revitalisation and learnership programmes.

**Madam Speaker**

The Department has initiated a program to employ young graduates in the field of agriculture, forestry and fisheries to mitigate the worrying socio-economic reality of youth unemployment in our society. Through the placement of unemployed agricultural graduate programme, the Department is placing young people with agriculture qualifications in various commercial enterprises across the Province.

During 2021/22, the Department placed 120-graduates on farms to gain work experience for a period of two years. This Placement of Unemployed Graduate program exposes graduates to further opportunities for support and linkages to establish and sustain own enterprises.

During 2023/24 the following four (4) enterprises owned by the graduates who completed the program will be supported:

- Sekgale Business Enterprise: Poultry enterprise in Sekhukhune District.
- Risana Agricultural Farming: Vegetable enterprise in Mopani District
- Livhatrl Farming: Vegetable enterprise in Vhembe District
- Shadtonez Farming: Vegetable enterprise in Capricorn District.

**Honorable Speaker and Members of this August House,**

As I conclude, allow me to share with this august House that the Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) requested the Premier of the Limpopo Province to host the 2023 annual BRICS Agriculture Ministers' Meeting. The Meeting will take place at the end of July 2023. The BRICS Agriculture Ministers Meeting is a build up to the BRICS Summit in August 2023, which will be hosted by the State President, His Excellency, President Ramaphosa, as the current Chair of BRICS.

Our Province will be working the national Department, supported by DIRCO to ensure that this becomes a success and to showcase the richness of Limpopo in terms of natural resources, our cultures and friendliness.

**Madame Speaker**

The Limpopo Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (LDARD) has received an allocation of one billion seven hundred and seventy million, seven hundred and eighty-six thousand rand (R1, 770, 786) in 2023/24. The allocation is made up of one billion four hundred and thirty thousand, four hundred and twenty rand of (R1 430 420) Equitable Share (ES) allocation and Conditional Grants (CG) amounting to three hundred and forty million, three hundred and sixty-six thousand rand (R340 366 000).

**Madam Speaker,**

Let me take this opportunity to acknowledge the front runners in this sector who are hard-working farmers, farm workers and agricultural technocrats. Let us leave no one behind, and let's continue to feed our nation and contribute to the much-needed jobs.

Let me express my deepest gratitude to the Hon Premier for his sterling leadership and guidance, to my colleagues in the Executive Council for your support, and to the Chairperson and Members of the Portfolio Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, Hon Maseko, for your diligent oversight role and keeping us on our toes. My gratitude also goes to team Agriculture and Rural Development, led by Head of Department, Me Maisela, for your hard work and dedication.

We leave no one behind until we meet all our objectives to deliver high standard Agricultural services to our commercial farmers, small holder farmers and each household in the province.

**Madam Speaker,**

Allow me to conclude by the words of Michael Esmeraldo, newly appointed managing director of Netafim South Africa, who recently wrote in the Farmers Weekly that *"Agriculture is a marathon, not a sprint. The trick is to stick it out, remain hopeful and always keep an open mind"*.

**I Thank you**

**Hi Nkomu**

**Ke a leboga**

**Rho livhuwa**

**Baie dankie**

## BUDGET SUMMARY

### LDARD 2023/24 BUDGET ALLOCATION

<b>Programme R thousand</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>Percentage Share</b>
Administration	339 063	19.1%
Sustainable Resource Use and Management	136 781	7.7%
Agriculture Producer Support and Development	792 327	44.7%
Veterinary Services	193 187	10.9%
Research and Technology Development Services	74 681	4.2%
Agricultural Economics Services	73 856	4.1%
Agricultural Education and Training	157 891	8.9%
<b>Total payments and estimates</b>	<b>1 770 786</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

<b>R thousand</b>	<b>2023/24</b>
<b>Equitable Share</b>	<b>1 430 420</b>
<b>Conditional Grant</b>	<b>340 366</b>
Land Care	13 480
EPWP	8 593
CASP	241 700
Letsema	76 592
<b>Total payments and estimates</b>	<b>1 770 786</b>