



LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT



BUDGET SPEECH 2024/2025



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Limpopo Department
of Agriculture and
Rural Development



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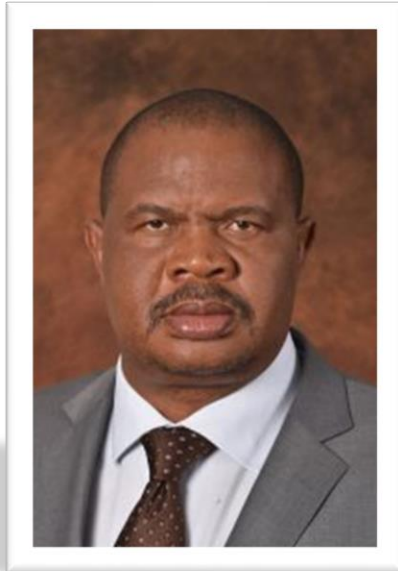
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LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

**2024/25 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: 14 March 2024

Honourable Speaker, Mme Rosemary Molapo
Honourable Deputy Speaker, Mr Tshitereke Matibe
Honourable Premier, Mr Stanley Chupu Mathabatha
Fellow Members of the Executive Council
Chief Whip of the Majority Party, Honourable Mokgonyana
Honourable Members of the Provincial Legislature
Leadership of the Ruling Party, the African National Congress
Leaders of Opposition Parties
Limpopo House of Traditional Leaders, led by Hosi Ngove
Members of the Agricultural Advisory Committee, and
Technical Working Group
Officials of Limpopo Department of Agriculture and Rural
Development,
Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development,
All Sector Departments and State Agencies
Representatives of the Organised Farming and Agri-Business,
Civil Society Organisations present.
Members of the Media
Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen
My sincere greetings to you

I rise before this august house today to table Budget Vote 4 of the Limpopo Department of Agriculture and Rural Development for the 2024/2025 Financial Year, and to give detailed service delivery reflection of the past year and plans for 2024/2025.

Today, South Africa is a much better place to live and farm in than it was in 1994 - *Namuntlha ku hlula tolo, mundzuku ku ta hlula namuhla, mundlwani ku ta hlula mundzuku*. Indeed, we are on a successful journey of empowering our province and improving the lives of our people. The country has made remarkable progress in dismantling the oppressive apartheid system, thus we proudly repeat behind President Cyril Matamela Ramaphosa's 2024 State of the Nation Address (SONA) that *"We have transformed the lives of millions of South Africans, provided the necessities of life and creating opportunities that never existed before"*.

Honourable Speaker, please allow me to reiterate the pronouncements made by the Premier Chupu Stanley Mathabatha on agriculture and rural development during the 2024/2025 State of the Province Address (SOPA).

"We have made significant progress in agriculture. We implemented agricultural support programmes, such as the Land-Care, Revitalization of Agriculture and Agro-processing Value Chain (RAAVC) Plan, and the Market Access Certification Programme".

Limpopo Department of Agriculture and Rural Development has developed a Service Delivery Model which follows Agro-Ecological Zone developmental approach. Five Agricultural Development Zones (ADZs) are clearly identified with a view to develop agriculture based on Commodity Approach model as follows:

Molemole Local area, in the Capricorn District, is pioneering the potato belt by involving the unemployed youth in Agriculture, and five young farmers are now suppliers of companies like McCain and Simba. The

Department has also identified Waterberg as the Red Meat Cluster, Mopani a Citrus and Subtropical Cluster, Vhembe a Subtropical and Vegetable Cluster, and Sekhukhune a Grain and Cotton Cluster. This agriculture production focus is integrated in the Limpopo District Development Model.

According to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) Report of 2023, there is a positive indication that the Agriculture Sector consistently contributed positively to the provincial GDP since 2013. The agriculture sector contributed 2.1% or R5.8 billion to the province's growth in 2013. This contribution increased to 2.3% (R6.9 billion) in 2014 and further to 2.7% (R10.2 billion) in 2017, correlating with years of bumper crops due to favorable climatic conditions.

Furthermore, Statistics South Africa's Quarterly Labor Force Survey of 2023 (QLFS data of 2023), indicates that, the employment trends in the agricultural sector had a positive impact on our people 's lives:

In 2008-2009, the agriculture sector created 274,000 jobs. However, a 4.74% decline (approximately 13,000 jobs) was observed in 2009, likely influenced by the global economic recession, which reduced economic activities.

In 2011-2013, there was a notable rebound in employment, with the addition of 140,000 jobs, a 44.16% increase. This surge is attributed to increased output in field crops and horticultural products.

In 2016/2017, the agricultural sector in Limpopo witnessed a 'bumper crop' due to favorable climatic conditions, leading to expanded production lines and the need for additional labour in the fields. Since then, in 2018, the sector witnesses a growth of 16,000 jobs (2.87%), increasing from 558,000 to 574,000 jobs compared to 2017.

This growth demonstrated the sector's resilience and its capacity to rebound. Over the past thirty years, government agricultural support

initiative has shown a direct link between food security and agricultural activities.

Statistics South Africa General Household Survey Report of 2022 reveals that Limpopo has the highest number of households with adequate access to food, at 95,5%, against the national average of 80,4%. This correlates with the number of people that are involved in agricultural production activities, at 35,2%, also the highest against the national average of 35,2%.

Honourable Members,

Limpopo had an honor to host BRICS Ministers of Agriculture in August 2023 under the theme, *“Strengthening collaborations towards sustainable agricultural production and increasing productivity”*.

We have started to see the positive results of BRICS summit: the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia finally lifted the ban allowing exports of red meat from South Africa. Saudi Arabia has also allocated an enormous budget of two billion dollars for the initial meat import from the BRICS countries. As part of the BRICS countries, South Africa has started exporting red meat to Saudi Arabia in January 2024.

On the 18th of August 2023, the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) announced that China will resume to import beef from South Africa and will only import meat from regions free of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD). I am proud to inform the people of Limpopo, these regions include our three districts, Waterberg, Capricorn, and Sekhukhune. The demand is estimated at 20 000 tons per year and China has resumed beef imports from South Africa since August 2023 as confirmed by Beijing Reuters.

Honourable Speaker,

Allow me to quote a public statement by ZZ2 Group of companies issued on 22 August 2023 about the 11 memoranda of understanding and

other agreements signed between South Africa and China. This includes the Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, Thoko Didiza signing an agreement on sanitary requirements for the export of avocados from South Africa to China.

The ZZ2 Group writes that *“Now that the Chinese market has been opened, the avocado industry could greatly expand its plantings creating not only direct employment on farms but many downstream job opportunities. Up until now, due to the oversupply of avocados into Europe mainly by Peru, the South African avocado industry has been reluctant to grow its production base due to a lack of market options. South Africa has the potential to triple its avocado plantings, and therefore is well placed to service these markets”*.

Thus, we would like to join the ZZ2 Group of companies in thanking the South African Avocado Growers Association for their untiring work in assisting the government from a technical standpoint to gain access to the China market and other established and emerging markets.

On meat production, we have seen massive agricultural innovations and developments since 1994. In the heart of the bushveld, Emmanuel Mudau's journey from a salesman to esteemed livestock farmer and educator, is truly inspiring. With over 15-years of experience, he imparts invaluable wisdom through Mathuba Genetics, nurturing the next generation of farmers and advocating for the preservation of indigenous farming practices.

A few years ago, Mudau who is based in Ha Ravele, in the Vhembe District, decided to transform his livestock business into a training institute to share his wealth of knowledge with fellow farmers, with the support of government extension officers and accreditation by Agri-SETA.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our quest for universal food security in the province is intertwined with the task of a deliberate and continuous effort to improve the quality of Public **Administration** and services thereof. We continue to enhance the capacity of the Department through skilled personnel and adequate recruits to bolster our Service Delivery Model of Agro-Ecological Zones.

We believe that our commitment to transformation is guided by affiliation to good governance. Thus, Department's quest for clean audit remains on course, as we continued to sustain unqualified audit opinions in the past five years, with continuous reduction matters of emphasis from the Auditor General. The Department continues to put credible systems of internal controls that ensure credible financial reporting, reliable performance reporting against predetermined objectives and compliance with laws.

We believe that the allocated budget of Three Hundred and Seventy Million Six Hundred and Thirty-Four Thousand Rand will enable us to strengthen our organisational capacity in the coming 2024/2025 Financial Year.

Honourable Speaker,

In the 2023/2024 financial year, **Sustainable Resource Use and Management Programme**, was bolstered by allocation of Fifteen Million and Four Hundred Twenty-Eight Thousand Rand for Land Care, to curb natural resource deprivation and build adaptive capacity of our farmers to the effects of climate change.

This previous budget allocation led to the following achievements: Construction of 25 kilometers of fence to improve agricultural productivity; Rehabilitation of 2 559 hectares from land deprivation; and

1 405 hectares were cleared of alien and invasive plants, as well as bush encroachment.

Furthermore, the Department was able to achieve 454 hectares cultivated under Conservation Agriculture practices, while 905 producers implemented climate smart technologies.

These achievements contributed to the Department's creation of 1 284 work opportunities in the Expanded Public Works Programme, with a budget of Eight Million Five Hundred Ninety-Three Thousand Rand (R8 593 000) in 2023/2024.

In 2024/2025 financial year, the Department has allocated Thirteen Million Four Hundred and Eighty Thousand Rand (R13 480 000) to Land Care Programme to spur efforts of combating soil erosion and improve agricultural productivity.

Honourable Members,

To deal with the consequences of industrialized agriculture it demands that serious attention is paid to advance ecological approaches to sustainable agriculture. This includes greater attention to alternative energy, soil quality, minimum tillage, and other forms of conservation farming.

The effects of climate change continue to weigh heavily on farmers. During the month of January 2024, the province experienced the above normal rain fall which were counteracted by the frequency of heat ways during the summer months in the province.

It is times like this, that as a caring government we should undoubtedly and strongly emerge to support our farmers. In November 2023, the Limpopo Department of Agriculture and Rural Development convened a Provincial Climate Smart Agriculture Dialogue to attend to challenges created by climate change.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with great honour to introduce to this august house, Ms. **Rosa Ramaifadi who is a small-scale farmer and agro-ecology advocate, who said “The climate is not going to go back to normal. It’s us who should go back to normal so that we can help the climate to go back to normal”.** Rosa is encouraging her community to use **climate-smart ways of farming to produce their own food and sell the excess harvest.** Ramaifadi is pioneering indigenous farming for community resilience. Her farm is based in **Onverwacht** - Dalmada, Polokwane City area, in the Capricorn District.

Despite the challenges affecting climate change on the agricultural sector, as a caring government we extended support to farming communities, through the other sub-programs of **Sustainable Resource Use and Management Programme** and continued to reinforce our participation in various research that promote the role of sustainable production strategies in the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

Through this programme, 875 farmers were assisted in line with the department priority of reducing vulnerability and risk associated with climate change.

There are 600 hectares of land cultivated under conservation agriculture practices on course and 69 infrastructure projects completed. More than 1 200 jobs created which ensures that the producers are resilient.

In 2024/2025 Financial Year, the Department has allocated **Sustainable Resource Use and Management** a budget of One Hundred Twenty-Five Million and Four Hundred and Forty-Nine Thousand Rand (R125 449 000). This will also enable the Department to make available relief measures to mitigate the predicted unusual extreme weather conditions, and assist farmers negatively affected by natural strains such as drought and veld fire.

Honourable Members,

Notable progress has been achieved regarding our transformation agenda by providing support to smallholder producers and subsistence farmers through our **Agricultural Development and Producer Support Programme**.

During the past year, the Department increased participation of producers in the integrated value chain through support of 8 700 producers across various agriculture commodity groups.

To date the department managed to support 13 298 producers across various agriculture commodity groups, 4 598 above the target. In the coming financial year, 2024/2025, the Department has targeted the increased participation of producers through the integrated value chain by supporting 9 414 producers across agricultural commodity groups. Furthermore, we fulfilled our 2023/2024 commitment to capacitate farmers by training 3 829 producers through demonstrations and farmers' days, an overwhelming achievement against our plans.

In 2024/2025 the department will capacitate 1 500 farmers through demonstrations and reaching a further 1 349 through farmers days. To alleviate poverty in households, a total of 4 539 subsistence producers were provided with mechanization support through government and contracted tractors to cultivate land in communal areas for food production.

However, our intentions to increase support to smallholder producers and subsistence farmers were negatively impacted by the volatile price escalation of inputs, especially fertilizers, due to the Russian-Ukraine conflict and other global and national market turbulence.

To maximise skills and knowledge, a total of 1 586 producers were capacitated in 2023/2024, and 1 000 farmers will be capacitated in

2024/25 through Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme (CASP).

Honourable Members,

Among the key deliverables of this **Agricultural Development and Producer Support Programme**, is Revitalisation of Small-Scale Irrigation Schemes. As we pronounced in the 2023/2024 budget speech, notable progress has been made in four irrigation schemes through the revitalisation of infrastructure development. The development of Mogalatšane Irrigation Scheme infrastructure is 100% complete and 40 hectares is now planted with cotton.

Significant progress has been achieved at Hereford Irrigation Scheme, owned by Tafelkop Farmers Association. A total of 15 producers each received full support package of irrigation system, the development included bulk water supply and in-field irrigation system development, establishment of shade nets covering one hectare per plot, refurbishment of packing facility, construction of ablution facilities, and storage facility to ensure compliance with South African GAP market requirements.

The Hereford Irrigation Scheme is redesigned to allow a free flow of water to reduce electricity cost and improving profit margins of farmers. Phase-2 of the project involves development of a further 16 plots with one hector shade net and packing shed to be implemented in collaboration with the national Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development. The department will continue with the provision of extension and advisory support to increase production and off-take on this scheme.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In 2023/2024 a total of 43 irrigation infrastructures have been developed, and in 2024/2025, a total of other 34 vegetable and 5 fruit production

projects will be supported with irrigation infrastructure.

The production of cotton at irrigation schemes in the Sekhukhune District, namely, Zamerkomste, Readira Baswa, Dichweung and Swara O Tiiše Molemi is also progressing well. Seasonally, an average quantity of cotton produced is 400 tons, with more than 300 jobs created.

In 2023/2024 a total of 33 irrigation projects costing of One Hundred and Seven million (107 million) rand benefiting 188 small holder farmers were completed, creating 99 jobs. In 2024/2025, a total of 36 irrigation projects will be implemented and 257 small holder producers will benefit from this programme, with an injection of One hundred million (100 million) rand and 603 temporary job opportunities benefit.

In 2023/24, a total of 399 hectares was cultivated as part of Sekhukhune cotton cluster development and 133 producers received training on cotton production, thanks to the Department's collaboration with Cotton SA and Agricultural Research Council (ARC). This intervention has greatly increased the knowledge and skills base of cotton producers and it is aimed at market access breakthrough.

In 2024/25, producers in the cotton production cluster will be supported with mechanization to put up 250 hectares of cotton production, in partnership with Cotton South Africa.

Honourable Speaker,

In the year under review, 250 breeding livestock and 10 000 fish breeding stock were earmarked for distribution to farmers to improve production, and 200 breeding livestock and 10 000 fish breeding stock were distributed to farmers to improve production respectively.

During 2024/2025, the Department will provide 200 breeding livestock through the departmental livestock loan scheme and departmental livestock re-sale scheme.

In 2024/2025 financial year, the **Farmer Support and Development Programme** has been allocated seven hundred and fifty-nine million two hundred and seventeen thousand rand (759 217 000), which constitutes 42.6 percent of the Departmental budget.

This budget includes allocation for farmer support programmes and projects, ranging from agricultural infrastructure and equipment for primary and secondary production activities; production inputs; food security initiatives; mechanisation support to farmers and capacity building.

The Department further envisages to review farmer support policy to ensure that subsistence farmers are not subjected to normal application process, we will continue to improve the application process and requirements of farmer support program to ensure that more farmers access our support, this includes supporting farmers from planning stage and acquisition of the legislated requirements such as water rights.

Honourable Members,

Our **Veterinary Services Programme** is our testimony to eradicate animal diseases, in particular livestock disease control, and further demonstrates our intentions to addressing all the aspects of production, value adding and market access.

Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) continues to threaten greater possibilities of the livelihoods of livestock farmers, not only in the Limpopo Province, but also the broader livestock industry in South Africa to export Red Meat. However, we can confidently, pronounce to this august house that the province has been FMD free in the past 24 months.

In 2023/2024, over 40 000 dogs and cats were vaccinated during the rabies month in September 2023 to reach the targeted mass vaccination

of 70% of pets in the province. Furthermore, thanks to the Limpopo Department of Health, over 400 Veterinary officials exposed to rabies during their activities were vaccinated and given boosters.

We remain vigilant against any animal disease outbreak especially the possible incursion of Theileriosis outbreaks currently occurring in Southern Zimbabwe.

We will work with the Border Management Authority (BMA) to instill adherence to biosecurity by our poultry industry to combat Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza outbreaks.

In August 2023, for the first time in the province, Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) outbreak was detected in the Waterberg District. However, the impact of this outbreak was contained and eradicated by our dedicated personnel of veterinarians and extension officers. Thus, we confidently report that we reclaimed our agricultural production status, free of HPAI.

To continue with the implementation of 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.

Honourable Speaker,

MB Waite, an American Agriculture Scientist, in his paper *The Importance of Research as a Means of Increasing Agricultural Production*, writes that “*The great new feature of the modern progress in agriculture is the rapid increase in the utilization of science and the results of scientific research as a source of information and guidance in improving and perfecting agricultural method*”.

In this regard, the Department is enhancing its research output by

initiating a program to revitalize the two agriculture research stations in the province, including the infrastructure development and human resource capacity.

Mara Research Station is currently the hub of livestock breeding, a major source of our livestock distribution in the farmer support programme, while Tlokoeng Research Station is currently conducting various research projects in plant production.

Thus, the Department is setting aside eighty-seven million five hundred and twenty-one thousand rand (87 521 000) for Research and Technology Development, to render agricultural research services and development of information systems about agricultural and natural resource utilization technologies.

Honourable Speaker,

In the Budget Speech of 2023/2024, we introduced to this august house our adopted slogan of ***“evangelizing agriculture and food production to be a culture by all, no longer just a leisure for some”***. As part of spreading this evangelism, the Department, through the **Agricultural Economic Services Program**, hosted a Revitalization of Agriculture and Agro processing Value Chain (RAAVC) Summit.

RAAVC Plan’s intention about the aspiration of the people of Limpopo is to contribute meaningfully 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 Limpopo Development Plan (LDP), Limpopo Socio-economic Recovery Plan and the Agriculture and Agro-processing Master Plan (AAMP).

Since 2021, RAAVC was allocated 80 million rand and the projects which are still under development include Majeje Citrus, Zebediela Citrus, Magadimane Citrus, Tafelkop Farmers Association, Potato belt and cotton cluster.

The success of the RAAVC plan is depended upon participation by all critical stakeholders in the sector. Going into 2024/2025 financial year, about R31 million is available for the continuation of the implementation of the RAAVC Plan.

The 2024/2025 RAAVC projects are a combination of continued projects as multiyear projects and new ones, which are as follows:

- Majeje Citrus in Mopani District, with the allocation of R6 million, will continue to be implemented with 142 hectares planted to date, 282 hectares de-bushed, 190 hectares of soil preparations, 190 hectares installed with irrigation infrastructure and solar with the power generating capacity of about 540 kva installed.
- Hydrological assessment at Zebediela Estate in Capricorn District has been completed and the refurbishment of water infrastructure will continue with the budget allocation of R3 million.
- Ten (10) million Rand is allocated for the establishment of Monyetla Hatchery in Modimolle, Waterberg District in line with the development of the White Meat Cluster.
- Independent Development Corporation (IDC) and Impact Catalyst, with another R10 million allocated during budget adjustment.
- TATS Greenery in Modimolle District is another key project that will be implemented in collaboration with IDC and Impact Catalyst with the budget allocation of R6,5 million, which is a combination of earmarked funding and CASP Conditional Grant.
- Kgarose Kgarose in Capricorn District and Tshilwavusiku Secondary Cooperative in Vhembe District will receive their last allocation under RAAVC, with the budget of R4 million each.

Land Bank is providing AgriBEE funds to Agripreneurs to a maximum of R20 million per application. The Kgodiso Development Fund has

invested about R10 million within the potato cluster in Mr. Raletjena P and Mr. Masoga T projects.

Honourable Speaker,

The **Agricultural Economic Services Program** also includes the development of the Cannabis plant production and the agro-processing part of this new industry. Thus, I am delighted to share with this august house that the coordination and facilitation of the support of the **Cannabis Master Plan** as committed in 2023/2024 financial year has progressed fairly well and the implementation of the Cannabis Master Plan will be intensified in the coming financial year.

A lot has commenced on the ground including the establishment of the Limpopo Cannabis Forum which is at the final stages. We shall further intensify awareness on hemp or cannabis and provide support to prospective producers with license applications across the province.

The Limpopo Cannabis Development Strategy is to be adopted and relevant implementation plans developed for establishment of the Cannabis industry with due considerations of the provisions of our legislative (regulatory) framework.

In 2024/25, the **Agricultural Economics Services Programme** has been allocated Sixty-Eight Million Four Hundred and Fourteen Thousand Rand (R68 414 000) to provide timely and relevant agricultural economic services to the sector in support of sustainable agricultural and agri-business development to increase economic growth. Included in this allocation is Thirty-One Million Three Hundred and Fifty Rand (R31 350 000) for funding of RAAVC projects.

Honourable Speaker,

The **Agricultural Education and Training Programme**, demonstrates

our commitment to agricultural education in addition to other policy interventions, and our resolve to build a prosperous and inclusive agricultural sector.

As part of expanding our agricultural evangelism to schools, in 2023/24 financial year together with our sister Department of Education, we committed to work closely on identification of mechanisms to support the eight agricultural schools in our Province.

It is worth noting that Agriculture as a school subject of choice, is beginning to take the spotlight among the new generation across the province. This school subject had long been termed too 'unattractive and for the lower class and not for the youth'.

The Department has since profiled the eight agricultural schools, and stakeholder consultative meetings are ongoing to establish funding sources for school farms and agricultural equipment.

In the meantime, the Department has assisted Harry Oppenheimer Agricultural High School with shade nets and drip irrigation, while Merensky Agri Academy was assisted with animal feeds.

In 2024/2025 financial year, all eight agricultural schools will be assisted with production inputs and EPWP workers to establish and maintain food gardens. Dimani Agricultural High School and Merensky Agri Academy will also receive support through construction of broiler houses and supply of production inputs.

Honourable Members,

Prof Wale Zegeye of the University of the Free State's Agricultural Economics Department writes in the January/February 2022 edition of Water Wheel Magazine that *"The youth have a crucial role to play in South African agriculture and ensuring that the nation has enough food. But while the country needs more food producers, its farmers are ageing.*

The average age of South African farmers is 62, even though young people (those between the ages of 18 and 34) make up a third of the population”.

However, the Limpopo Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, has been deliberately investing in youth in agriculture since 1994 to mitigate the challenge identified by Prof Zegeye, through programs such as young farmer awards, placement of graduates to farms, reopening of agricultural colleges, and provincial and district young farmers associations.

Thirty-years later, we are proud to join President Cyril Ramaphosa by introducing some ambassadors of our democratic dispensation in the province, our Tintswalos:

Kholofelo Kenneth Malatji, grew up in a rural area called Moletjie, in Polokwane, Limpopo. He is very passionate about agriculture, particularly livestock. He developed the love of animals from a young age because he was a herdboyc of his grandmother’s cattle and goats.

He completed matric in 2009 at Khaiso High School, then went to study BSc Animal Health in the North-West University from 2010-2013 which was funded by Limpopo Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. Kenneth embarked on an academic journey fuelled by a profound curiosity about infectious diseases, particularly in the realm of virology, and he is currently a PhD student focusing on Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD).

Dumisani Elmon Sibuyi, born in 1988 April 25 in Acornhoek, Bushbuckridge and grew up in Folovhodwe Village, Vhembe District, where he completed secondary level at Thengwe Secondary School. Whilst in grade 12, being amongst the top 10 achievers, Sibuyi refused applying for any studies, but agricultural studies, and told teachers, that he wants to be an engineer for farmers. The teachers would tell him, such a course does not exist.

In 2005, he applied and received a Bursary from our Departmental Bursary Program to pursue his passion at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. He completed his Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Engineering in 2010 and started at the Department as a Candidate Engineer and in 2023, Mr Sibuyi was appointed the Director of Engineering and Infrastructure Development Services.

The Department will continue to encourage our youth to participate in the Limpopo Youth in Agriculture Network Portal, in order to ease their frustrations. This app will become a lifeline for many who are cut out from the agricultural sector.

Honourable Members,

The unemployment rate among the youth in South Africa is on an upward trajectory, and Limpopo Province remains youthful, with a greater proportion of the population still between 18 and 34 years old. This calls on us to strengthen programmes that will address the challenge of youth through education, training, and employment.

Since 2019, two hundred and forty (240) young agriculture graduates have been given a post graduate practical experience in various farming skills such as plant production, animal production, mixed farming, and the need for carbon free and modern technology farming, to induct and incubate them in the actual farming operation and business.

During 2023/2024, two enterprises owned by graduates of this program were supported by the Department, namely, Risana Agricultural Farming (Vegetable enterprise in Mopani District), and Livhatri Farming (Vegetable enterprise in Vhembe District).

In 2024/2025, the other two (02) projects will also be supported: Shadtonez Project will be supported with the development of 7-hectares towable centre pivot, reservoir, booster pump, irrigation, fertigation unit,

medium pressure pipelines & connections to power source, pack shed and ablutions facilities. Sekgale will be supported with 1500-layer structure, grading, and ablation facilities.

In 2024/2025, this youth employment initiative, will absorb 140 unemployed graduates with agriculture qualifications, an increase of 20 from the cohort absorbed in the previous year, thanks to Agri-SETA contribution of 2.4 million rand.

This cohort will be placed in various commercial agricultural enterprises across the province for a period of two years to gain work experience. This Placement of Unemployed Graduate Program exposes graduates to further opportunities for support and linkages to establish and sustain their own enterprises. Furthermore, 68 graduates who recently completed the Program will undergo training for four weeks on enterprise development.

Honourable Speaker,

This educational effort to improve skills in the agricultural sector extend to our continued investment in the two Agricultural Colleges and the revitalisation of the two Agricultural Research Centres in the province. Since the re-opening of Madzivhandila and Tompi Seleka Agriculture Colleges in 2015, 288 Students have graduated, and currently we have enrolled 80 students for 2024 Academic Year.

These Agriculture Colleges are playing a pivotal role in integrating theory and practice to recognise the practical experience of farmers, and Tompi Seleka Agriculture College has recently been categorised by the Agri-SETA as one of the best agriculture colleges in the recognition of prior learning.

In 2024/2025 Financial Year, the Department is investing one hundred and forty-nine million and thirty-one thousand rand (**149 031 000**) to cater among others the two Colleges of Agriculture in the Province that

provide student academic programmes, College infrastructure revitalisation and learnership programmes.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Department continues to integrate rural development as a cross cutting element of all the programmes and projects to deal with rural poverty effectively through an integrated agrarian transformation and the strategic investment in agricultural infrastructure that will benefit farmers in rural communities.

Thus, Six Million Two Hundred and Eighty-Seven Thousand Rand (**6 287 000**) to cater for administration and coordination of rural development activities in the Department.

Honourable Members,

In summary, the overall budget for Vote 4 of the Limpopo Department of Agriculture and Rural Development is One Billion Seven Hundred and Eighty-Two Million, Six Hundred and Twelve Thousand Rand (**1 782 612 000**).

The budget is made up of One Billion Four Hundred and Sixty-One Thousand, Six Hundred and Fifty-Two Rand of (R1 461 652 000) **Equitable Share** allocation and **Conditional Grants** amounting to Three Hundred and Twenty Million, Nine Hundred and Sixty Thousand Rand (R320 960 000).

The overall Departmental budget has increased by Eleven Million and Eight Hundred Twenty-Six Thousand Rand (R11,826, 000) or a 0.7% increase year-on-year.

Honourable Speaker,

Let me thank the Honourable Premier, Mahlatji a Hlabirwa, for giving me the opportunity to serve the people of Limpopo in the Provincial Cabinet.

Let me also acknowledge the support of the Chief Whip of the majority and ruling party, the African National Congress, Honourable Essob Mokgonyana.

We also thank the guidance of Members of the Portfolio Committee and SCOPA, through their respective chairpersons, Honourable Jerry Maseko, and Honourable Donald Selamolela. Thanks to my colleagues in the Executive Council (EXCO) for the great team spirit.

Thanks to the former Head of Department, Mme Ramatsimela Maisela for holding the fort and providing strategic guidance and leadership during the past 10-years.

Further thanks to our Acting Head of Department, Mr Jethro Nowata, the Executive Management, and the entire workforce of the Department, the Agriculture Evangelists.

My heartfelt appreciation to all our farmers for continuing to work the land 24/7 and feeding the people of Limpopo, South Africa and sharing our produce with the world. Let me not forget to thank the people of Limpopo with the book of Ecclesiastes 7:8 *“Better is the end of a thing than its beginning, and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit”*.

Special thanks to My family; my wife Mrs Rabbie Mokone, and my two children Lethabo and Matome, for their support and allowing me to serve the people of Limpopo, I don't take it for granted my one.

I Thank you! Ha Nkhensa! Ku dya i ku engedala!

LDARD 2024/25 BUDGET ALLOCATION SUMMARY

Programme	2024/25 R'000	% Share
Administration	370 634	20.8%
Sustainable Resource Use and Management	125 449	7.0%
Agriculture Producer Support and Development	759 217	42.6%
Veterinary Services	216 059	12.1%
Research and Technology Development Services	87 521	4.9%
Agricultural Economics Services	68 414	3.8%
Agricultural Education and Training	149 031	8.4%
Rural Development	6 287	0.4%
Total payments and estimates	1 782 612	100.0%

Category	2024/25 R'000
Equitable Share	1 461 652
Conditional Grant	320 960
Land Care	13 674
EPWP	4 753
CASP	247 211
Letsema	55 322
Total payments and estimates	1 782 612

Where to find us

