



LIMPOPO

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT



Budget Speech

2025/26

2025/26 Financial Year
Budget Vote Speech
Vote 4 of the Department
Agriculture and Rural Development



Delivered by the
Member of the Executive Council, Hon. Nakedi Grace Kekana
to the Limpopo Provincial Legislature, Lebowakgomo

Date Delivered: 10 April 2025

**TABLING OF THE BUDGET VOTE 4 OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT FOR THE 2025/26 FINANCIAL YEAR,**

Honourable Speaker and Deputy Speaker

Premier Dr Phophi Ramathuba and EXCO members
Chief Whip of the Legislature Hon Mokgonyane
Leadership of the Ruling Party, African National Congress
Leaders of the Opposition Parties
All Hon members in the house
Executive Mayors, Mayors and Speakers
Limpopo House of Traditional Leaders, Led by Hosi Ngove
Officials from both Provincial and National Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
Representative from the Department of Land Reforms and Rural Development
Stakeholders from the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
Chapter 9 and 10 institutions representatives
All sector organisations
Business and Farming Communities
Media Community
Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen
THOBELA!!!!

Honourable Speaker

It is a profound honour for me to rise before this August House to table Budget Vote 04 of the Limpopo Department of Agriculture and Rural Development for the 2025/2026 financial year.

The true test of democracy lies not in the strength of our institutions alone, but in the tangible improvements we bring to the lives of ordinary South Africans—particularly those in rural and farming communities. Service delivery is not a tick-box exercise; it is the heartbeat of our social contract.

In the words of President Nelson Mandela: “What counts in life is not the mere fact that we have lived. It is what difference we have made to the lives of others that will determine the significance of the life we lead.”

Honourable Members,

This Budget Vote is anchored on the priorities outlined by President Cyril Ramaphosa for the 7th Administration, and it speaks directly to the urgent challenges confronting our people i.e. the high cost of living, persistent poverty, joblessness, and inequality.

As a Department, our strategic posture is clear:

We will drive inclusive growth, enable transformation, ensure food security, and build a capable and ethical developmental state—through agricultural production, agro-processing, and rural development.

Our new Five-Year Strategic Plan aligns with this vision. It aims to:

- Promote meaningful participation of black farmers,
- Advance the inclusion of women, youth, persons with disabilities, and military veterans, and lastly
- Transforming the emerging farmers into fully commercial producers.

This approach is inspired by the words of Amílcar Cabral, who reminded us that:

“Always bear in mind that the people are not fighting for ideas, for the things in anyone’s head. They are fighting to win material benefits, to live better and in peace, to see their lives go forward, to guarantee the future of their children...”

Honourable Speaker,

Agriculture is one of the key Economic drivers in our Province to fight poverty, create jobs and tackle the high cost of living. We are intensifying efforts in revitalising primary production and strengthening agro-processing capacity. But this work does not happen in a vacuum.

Climate change is no longer an abstract global threat—it is a daily lived reality in Limpopo. Our emerging and commercial farmers alike continue to feel the pressure of erratic weather patterns, prolonged droughts, natural hazards like the recent black frost, army worms, and floods that compromise productivity and livelihoods thus eroding our democratic gains.

Compounding these are geopolitical tensions that leads to the rising global input costs, including tariffs on key agricultural products, which inflate the prices of seed, fertiliser, and mechanisation.

In response to the above, the Department is:

- Investing in climate-smart agriculture and resilient farming systems,
- Scaling up RAAVC (Revitalisation of Agriculture and Agro-processing Value Chain) infrastructure projects,
- Promoting sustainable land use practices, and
- Developing critical and future-focused agricultural skills.

We are also countering the elitist, and imperialist narratives brought by the ultra-rights that seek to undermine our efforts to build a non-racial, non-sexist, united and prosperous democratic Society. We will remain resilient in our mission to bring dignity and opportunity to rural communities.

However Honourable Speaker, we are facing a structural crisis in the department. Our farmer population is ageing, while thousands of agriculture graduates remain unemployed. We must change the narrative and make Agriculture fashionable again from Early Childhood Development to tertiary institutions. We must reimagine agriculture as a career of innovation, science, technology, and social impact.

To this end, the Department will:

- Continue to absorb unemployed graduates into internships and training programmes,
- Implement a well-defined exit strategy to help them establish their own agri-businesses, and
- Use public employment programmes and cooperative support to create pathways to ownership and productivity.

Honourable Speaker

Limpopo province remains the most food-secure in South Africa, with 93.1% in terms of May 2024 General Household Survey. The remaining 6.9% of households remains our priority to ensure that they are food secured through our initiatives.

Our province is contributing 49% in citrus production ,32% in livestock and 36 % in grain Nationally. Over and above the province have introduced Canola as a new grain crop, yet our agro-industrial clusters remain underdeveloped. Our dominance in primary production is not matched by a thriving Value-Adding Agro-Processing sector, this must change.

We will invest in:

- Infrastructure,
- Research and innovation,

- Skills development,
- unlock the digital economy and
- Industrialise and beneficiate for inclusive Economic growth thus creating jobs.

To that effect Hon Speaker allow me to share a powerful story of hope and determination:

Edward Molatelo Kgarose, a 33-year-old from Ga-Molepo outside Polokwane, turned employment adversity into opportunity. In 2016, he founded Kgarose Kgaros, an agro-processing enterprise that produces “PotaYoga”—a yoghurt made from sweet potato. Today, his innovation is a shining example of what becomes possible when young people are supported to transform primary agricultural produce into high Co-value, market-ready products.

In line with this vision, the Department has provided strategic support to Edward in ensuring that as he expands, he contributes to job creation and Township and Rural economy. Currently he has employed four people, and once his newly acquired infrastructure is fully operational in Seshego Industrial Park where we have partnered with LEDET through LEDA, more hands will be required and jobs realised.

That does not stop there Hon Speaker. Edward tells me that he will need at least 60 tons of sweet potato a month, effectively opening opportunities for primary production farmers.

It is in that line that we will in turn, through the Farmer Support Programme, motivate farmers especially youth to meet the Kgarose Kgaros requirements.

This is how we move from subsistence to surplus, from raw to refined—and from potential to prosperity.

Honourable Speaker

In the quest to put South Africa to work and create job opportunities, the department was allocated R4,753 million for EPWP for 2024/25 F/Y from the Conditional grant and R2 million from the Equitable Share. The department managed to create 2 329 job opportunities, translating to 54% women and 5% Persons with disabilities respectively.

For 2025/2026 financial year, 1 550 job opportunities are targeted from the budget allocation of R5,289 million. Over and above the department participated in the Presidential Employment Stimulus (PES) an initiative by the President through the National department program, targeting temporary jobs and ultimately contributing to food security and Inclusive Economic Growth.

In furtherance with the National Development Plan (NDP), the LDP, National Youth Policy (NYP) 2020, and our very own Young Producers and Entrepreneurs Strategy (YPES), the Department has partnered with the Limpopo Department of Education. Vho MEC Hon Mavhungu Lerule-Ramakhanya with the endeavour to transform all agricultural schools

including the Special Schools and ECD's into Centres of Excellence thus equipping them with practical agricultural skills to promote food security at an early stage. In this first quarter, the Department will rollout agricultural support to 25 ECDs. (5 per District).

We have also supported Dimani High School with a poultry house for 1100 layers, and Merensky Agricultural Academy with 1000 chicken layers infrastructure. This is an initiative to plant seeds of change.

Young people are not only beneficiaries—they are the architects of our future. Their energy, advocacy and innovation challenge us to do better and be better. That is why the Department has allocated:

- R2.3 million via AgriSETA for the upskilling of departmental employees,
- Bursaries to five students in Veterinary Medicine, and
- Fifteen external bursaries in key fields such as Agricultural Engineering, Civil Engineering, and Veterinary Sciences.

Honourable Speaker,

Our efforts to invest in jobs reflected in our youth development programmes. During the 2024/25 financial year, we placed 440 unemployed graduates on farms to gain practical experience under the guidance of seasoned mentors. A further 140 graduates were appointed to 35 departmental projects, and five of them have exited the programme after securing better job opportunities—this is a success we welcome.

To bear testimony to this another Good story to tell is the 32 year-old young female farmer from Mogodi ga-Manthata Mashoto Ramafalo from Shatonez Farming who completed her 24 months of the unemployed graduate program in our department is currently listed amongst the aspirant commercial farmers for having been supported by the department with the agricultural infrastructure and mechanisation thus creating an enabling environment to attract the Land bank to enter into discussions with Mashoto when we were visiting her farm together with Ms Shertina Maremane from Landbank for further providing her with the support to become a complete commercial farmer.

For 2025/26 financial year, we will retain the 435 graduates for a 12-month experiential training programme and employ the exit strategy for them to take inspiration from Mashoto Ramafalo.

The same will be applicable to Wendy Moshakga whom we are planning in the next financial year to develop her newly acquired site at Moletji ga Kgoshi Moloto the III.

Honourable Speaker

A capable and ethical developmental state requires our human personnel to invest in the people by providing goods and services and this is testimony to the sterling work that our

department is living. Despite some disparities of the expenditure patterns not completed timeously as prescribed, the department was able to realise the overall expenditure of 99% above the prescribed norm by Treasury.

We will put our hands on deck to implement SCOPA and portfolio committees' resolutions, the internal audit and audit action plan in order to attain the clean audit, moving from the stagnant unqualified audit opinion. We are also finalising the recruitment process to complete appointment of critical skills and funded vacant posts.

We will continue to capacitate our supply chain personnel to implement forward planning and start procurement in the 1st quarter of the F/Y.

Honourable Speaker

In realising a better Africa and a better World, Limpopo has a twin agreement with Gaza Province in Mozambique for growth on trade in agriculture, particularly in the area of Fruit & Vegetables and Livestock. We plan to look into strengthening and formalising the current trade practices in view to provide a better conducive environment and ensure contribution into the economy thus promoting a Free Continental Trade.

My colleague from LEDET Honourable MEC Tshitereke Matibe in his budget vote, alluded to our combined efforts to grow Limpopo as an export-driven economy that which are gaining momentum and I quote. "...recent progress includes the export protocol agreement for avocados to China. This has opened lucrative markets for our local agriculture sector." We will work together to realise this endeavour.

Allow me also to inform this August House that the province will be hosting the Meeting of Chief Agricultural Scientists (MACS)-G20 during the 26-28 May 2025 as part of South Africa's hosting of the G20 Presidency for the year 2025. We stand to derive great advantages and opportunities. This platform could not have come at a better time. We will robustly advance our agricultural opportunities, priorities and interests thereof.

Dr. Jacob Mashilo, a Professional Scientist within our own department at Towoomba Research station who is attending these proceedings also adds to our good story to tell. He has made remarkable strides in the field of Horticultural Sciences, having published over 90 scientific articles to date.

In 2022, he achieved National and Continental recognition when he was ranked 32nd out of 500 top researchers in Africa in his category by SciVal, an international research analytics tool developed by Elsevier. This ranking is not just a number—it is a powerful testament to the calibre of professionalism we have within our ranks to employ requisite skills in order to build a capable, ethical and developmental state.

We are truly proud of Dr. Mashilo and commend his continued contribution to scientific research, innovation, and the global visibility of Limpopo's agricultural intellect and

together with the collective of the well-oiled machinery from the department will make this sector to thrive.

Madam speaker,

The department has through Agricultural Development and Producer Support Programme allocated R812 million for 2025/26 financial year. This allocation includes, amongst others, support on and off farm infrastructure, technical and advisory services as well as development training, to ensure participation of producers in integrated agricultural value chain across the commodities.

During the 2024/25 financial year, a total of 54 agricultural infrastructure investment projects were planned and successfully implemented across the province. The infrastructure rollout included the installation of water-efficient irrigation systems, environmentally controlled production facilities, and livestock water infrastructure—all designed to provide long-term solutions for drought mitigation, climate resilience, and agricultural recovery. These initiatives respond directly to the President's priority of driving inclusive growth through targeted infrastructure investment that supports local economies and improves service delivery.

For 2025/26 financial year, the Department has prioritised the implementation of 51 agricultural infrastructure projects. This programme is funded through conditional grants and equitable share allocations.

Moreover, these projects were not just about physical structures—they were also about people and capacity. As part of the rollout, targeted categories of farmers, including women, youth, and persons with disabilities, received technical training and mentorship, ensuring that our infrastructure investments are not only sustainable, but also inclusive and skills driven.

In keeping with our strategy on energy efficiency, the department incorporates solar energy as specification into some of the infrastructure projects as called upon by the President for green economy.

To ensure production of food and sustainable farming operations the department is implementing a mechanization subsidy scheme as provisioned in the Farmer Support Policy. Through this scheme three farmers in Capricorn were assisted to procure tractors and implements at a total cost of R2 .716 897 million in 2024/2025 financial year. In this scheme, farmers are subsidized at a rate of 80:20 for tractors up to R1m and implements up to R400 thousand

The provision of mechanization is crucial in ensuring that farmers operate optimally throughout the year.

In 2025/2026 F/Y the department is planning to support three more farmers (1 in Capricorn, 1 in Waterberg and 2 in Vhembe District) with an amount of R2,2 million to procure tractors and implements to make mechanization accessible to small holder farmers.

Honourable Speaker

Additional planning to support some of the farmers for the next phases will take place in 2025/2026 F/Y focusing on assessing the suitability of farms for intended agricultural operations. These activities are funded through the CASP and Ilima/Letsema conditional grants whereas over 1000 farmers have been trained by imparting soft and technical skills.

In the above activities, a particular focus to the designated groups in order to participate meaningfully in the mainstream economy, across the commodities and value chain will be considered.

In the Capricorn District potato belt, we are unlocking value and commercial opportunities. Four irrigation infrastructure projects have been completed at a cost of R21 million, adding 80 hectares of irrigated land to support smallholder potato farmers. This has resulted in the creation of 40 permanent jobs and over 200 seasonal job opportunities.

Two new producers—Mosibudi Farming and Nthekge in the District—will be supported in 2025/26 to develop irrigation and post-harvest infrastructure, adding 40 hectares of irrigated land. The total investment is R7.5 million.

A further R3.6 million is allocated to Nsete Primary Cooperative and Ramahwidi Projects to complete reservoirs, ablution, and pack shed facilities thus ensuring SA GAP compliance.

Honourable Speaker

We remain steadfast in utilising every available hectare of irrigable land to boost production and mitigate climate change. The Mogalatšane Irrigation Scheme is fully rehabilitated in 2024/25 F/Y, and we now boast 40 hectares dedicated to cotton. This marked the first cotton harvest in nearly 13 years—an incredible milestone—with 186.9 tons produced.

To sustain this momentum, an additional R3.2 million has been allocated for a new centre pivot “Spilpunt besproeiing” to expand irrigation to 70 hectares. Already, 35 hectares have been planted with maize this season.

Just like Mogalatšana which is currently thriving, we are hard at work to resuscitate Krokodile, Setlaboswana, Phetwane, Mphaane, and Malope schemes. Our intervention is pending compliance with set regulations.

A multi-disciplinary forum including respective local municipalities, is finalising plans and engaging communities. This is not by chance—it is the DDM in action and as a Provincial Champion for this model in Sekhukhune District we will continue in overseeing and support implementation of projects such as the Moutse-Bulk Water Supply, Malekane Steel Bridge thus employing the partnership between government, business, labour and members of the civil society.

Honourable Speaker

The department is celebrating other milestones on the success of Dibetso Serage the young Managing director of the Groundstone Peach Project in Lepelle Nkumpi Local Municipality, which has entered formal markets including Woolworths and Spar producing 12 hectares of quality nectarines, and peaches.

Through the social compact with Magoshi, further land to expand was provided for by the late Chief Sello Kekana the III of the Ndebele Tribal Authority may his soul rest in peace through the Induna Mojapelo “Sealeboga Ga- Moshate.” In 2025/26 F/Y the department will support the project with further shade nets for 9.74 hectares and other irrigation infrastructure.

In the Waterberg District, the red meat agro-ecological zone, we continued to provide support with projects for R4.5m creating 37 temporary jobs to David Monyamane (border camp fence), BN Agric Projects (stock water reticulation), Fufix Pty (Ltd) (Animal handling facilities and feed processing equipments) and Baradipelo Livestock (Stock water systems and fencing)

The Immerpan projects which includes solar-powered water systems across six farms, benefiting 36 individuals, maintaining 20 permanent jobs, and creating 31 temporary jobs is now 90% complete.

We also welcome and appreciate another investment into the Red Meat Value Chain by SAMPAADA Holdings (Pty) Ltd, who have developed a Livestock Farm and a Butchery in the Modimolle area. SAMPAADA is on track to become the largest 100% black-owned red meat producer in Limpopo, creating over 300 jobs. The company has invested on 20.5 ha of high-tech multispan tunnels for production of strawberries for export market in the European Union and Middle East countries through their GlobalGab certified packhouse.

In Sekhukhune District Construction of the Manini Holding Packing House will begin this financial year to support an 80-hectare citrus project valued at R60 million through blended funding and will create over 40 jobs.

A further total amount of R10 million has been allocated from Ilima-Letsema to support with inputs and mechanisation for grain and cotton producers also in Sekhukhune. We are

also exploring models for better utilisation of the government fleet to benefit secondary cooperatives.

In Mopani District the department created 485 job opportunities, including 248 for women, 43 for youth, and 2 for persons with disabilities for 2024/2025 F/Y.

For 25/2026F/Y, the department has targeted to create over 118 permanent jobs which will in the main benefit the designated groups.

For the support of Vegetables and Sub-tropical Fruits the department has put aside R20.6 million for agricultural infrastructure at Itumeleng Ba-Makhutswe, Thabina Irrigation Scheme, Madikhabeshe Farming, Tanani Matiko, and Manelaspruit Estate respectively.

R2.5 million has also been allocated to Anius Eden in Maruleng for animal handling and infrastructure, creating further 10 temporary jobs.

Honourable Speaker

The Vhembe District attest the support for Agro-Climatic Potential with 36 farmers developed at Nwanedi supported SA -GAP compliance. In Tshilwavhusiku, R7 million was spent on four projects, and Ha Gumbu, a chilli drying facility was established at R4.1 million.

Honourable Speaker,

The department has identified 33 producers with the potential to reach full commercial status within the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework period. Support will focus on water development packages, business development, and infrastructure to help these projects to progress.

One of such projects is Matika Subtrop Farming, which will expand production infrastructure with the allocated funding of R1.8 million. The farm specializes in macadamia nuts, avocados, and litchis. To date date, 49 job opportunities have been created with 32 males, 17 females and 31 youth. Collectively, the target for 2025/26 is to create 55 job opportunities through such infrastructure projects.

Honourable Speaker

In the 2024/25 financial year, the department has provided support to 14 military veterans with 52 breeding livestock, and the beneficiaries being placed to attend a 5-day meat-processing training by the Agricultural Research Council. Military veterans will continue to be recognised through our programmes.

I am also humbled by the correspondence received in March 2025 from the Provincial Chairperson of the Limpopo Military Veterans, attached to the Help Desk in the Office of the Premier.

May I please quote him as follows: “On behalf of all military veterans in the Province I would like to express my sincere and profound gratitude to the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development for providing farmer support to military veterans. Your department has in the previous years provided training in almost all districts of our province. The current initiative to support military veterans with animals is much appreciated. This is a trendsetter in the country and hope that other provinces will follow suit to mitigate the plight of military veterans”.

Madam Speaker

Through the Blended Finance Scheme, in partnership with the Landbank and National Department of Agriculture, six projects have received support to acquire land, procure implements, and secure production inputs.

Allow me also to report on the power of Public-Private Partnerships realised through the blended funding in Torofina Trading Post (Pty) Ltd in Blouberg for Producing potato SEEDS one of the scarce commodities in our Province, employing 11 permanent and over 50 seasonal workers.

We salute Mr Phophi Simon Raletjena the sole Director and shareholder of this entity. The farming operation, which was established in 2005, and the first black farmer to produce potato seeds.

- Mukatangi Farming Operations CC: Operating in Vhembe with 202 hectares, 120 planted with citrus, employing 35 permanent and 190 seasonal workers.
- Yarena Investments (Pty) Ltd: Owned by Ms. Mochenya Pinkie Ratjomane, has nearly 2,000 hectares for potato and tomato production, with 25 permanent and 123 seasonal workers.
- Mazeli Farming and Projects (Pty) Ltd: Based in Blouberg, the farm has 10-hectare centre pivot irrigation and mechanization, creating 10 permanent and over 20 seasonal jobs.
- Ndisedzi Group (Pty) Ltd: An egg production enterprise in Mopani employing two people, and job youth job creation plans is underway.

The department will contribute and also champion the transformation agenda by facilitating inclusion and prioritising domestic investment.

As such a successful partnership with Grain South Africa in Sekhukhune District has empowered communal farmers, helping them transit to commercial farming. A member of the Zaaiplaas Study Group, Mr. Jim Masemola, won the 2024 best smallholder farmer award for his 8 tons per hectare yield at the Grain SA National Awards.

There is a total of 833 communal farmers— who amongst them 235 subsistence producers—have received support to cultivate over 349 hectares of land. These farmers, who once operated at subsistence levels, are steadily transitioning into commercial space.

As part of our initiative to combat food insecurity, poverty, and hunger, we are launching the "One Household, One Backyard Garden" programme, which extends to churches and schools. This initiative is intended to be embraced by the community. It should start with us as Honourable Members of this house, to promote local food production for food security.

Kere go lena bahlomphegi Mogoma o TseneTemong, Ndzi tile na mbewu mita byala e makhaya for food security.

The Department has also initiated an environmentally controlled infrastructure program for poultry houses, with five sites handed over to contractors for repairs. These will support the Lebowakgomo abattoir, with completion expected by the end of June 2025.

Honourable Speaker,

The Limpopo Department of Agriculture and Rural Development continues to implement high-impact programmes that are changing lives of our people, specifically youth across the province. We will support youth projects, including Sekgale Farming, TAF, Livhatri, Nemabaka Layers, and Thuto Agro Nursery.

Honourable Speaker,

Moving into the Revitalization of Agriculture and Agro-processing Value Chain (RAAVC) projects that are catalytic in nature, their significant scale and scope has a substantial impact and contribution to the achievement of the vision and goals of our Province.

In alignment with investing in infrastructure, our department has in the previous financial year, allocated R31.35 million in its support.

Honourable speaker,

Majeje Citrus, which is in collaboration with commercial partners has 324 hectares of citrus trees already been planted out of the 450 hectares planned. Infield irrigation, two dams, and a solar system generating 520 kilovolt-amperes have been completed. The project has created 43 permanent and 30 seasonal jobs, with a projection to employ over 350 seasonal workers at full production capacity. The development at Majeje Citrus will conclude in 2025/26 financial year, whereafter 450 hectares of citrus would have been established.

At Zebediela Citrus Estate, we handed over the farm's revitalisation master plan developed by the Impact Catalyst to the Board of Trustees. The new Bjatladi CPA has been elected, and a steering committee has been established to lead implementation.

We are hard at work exploring various funding options through strategic partners for implementation of the completed Master Plan. We are currently having 50 permanent and 80 seasonal jobs that are sustained at the estate.

During the 2024/25 financial year, we have also supported the Tshilwavhusiku Secondary Cooperative with infrastructure for irrigation, pack sheds, and cooling facilities. With the support from the Perishable Products Export Control Board, we are assisting the cooperative with Global GAP and SAGAP certification processes to enable market access.

This initiative forms part of the broader Vegetable Cluster and has created 220 short-term and 145 long-term jobs.

Further catalytic support will be provided to the Tafelkop Farmers Association, to boost agro-processing and local employment. We also utilise the services of aggregators to assist with market access in these initiatives. The Kgapane project in Sekhukhune can attest to that kind of assistance.

The Makgoba Dieplaagte project is on land restored through the restitution programme to the Mamphoku Makgoba Community Trust (MMCT). The Department is providing funding on behalf of the project beneficiaries for 70 hectares of avocado development. This is another strategic partnership with ZZ2, who is providing funding for the project development.

The Vhembe Agricultural Multiplier Project, VAM, is unlocking 3 000 hectares of underutilized land by harvesting excess floodwater from the Limpopo River. The Department has signed a memorandum of understanding with VAM and various partners. There will be 1 500 new job opportunities created at completion of the first phase of the project.

Honourable Speaker,

The Department has also signed an MOU with Palabora Copper for development on Pompey Farm in the Ba-Phalaborwa Local Municipality. This initiative is an Integrated Agricultural Project aimed at commercializing 2 000 hectares.

Honourable Speaker,

Innovation and market access are key to growing the sector. At the inaugural AgriXpo, held from 13 to 15 March 2025, the Department showcased over 50 smallholder farmers and agro processors from across the province. We witnessed innovation in action—baobab coffee, avocado seed tea, moringa tissue oil, livestock genetics kits, and many more. These are tangible examples of how agriculture meets agro-processing, and how local enterprises are carving a place in new markets.

Honourable Speaker,

The Sustainable Resource Management Programme has been allocated R138 million for 2025/26 f/y. This programme supports our efforts in climate-smart agriculture, soil conservation, disaster mitigation, and water infrastructure development. It includes the LandCare Programme, which received R13.7 million in 2024/25 f/y. With that support, we have constructed 12 kilometres of fencing, rehabilitated 1 544 hectares of degraded land, and cleared 1 600 hectares of alien and invasive species. In 2025/26 f/y, we are increasing this allocation to R14.3 million to further scale up these vital interventions.

Climate change is no longer a distant threat—it is a daily reality for our farmers. In 2024/25 f/y, Limpopo experienced drought, veldfires, black frost, and flooding. To mitigate the impact of these disasters, we provided R5 million in drought relief, assisting 1,843 farmers; R12 million was allocated to support 985 farmers affected by black frost. We have submitted a request to the National Disaster Management Centre for R31.5 million to assist farmers impacted by floods.

The Department has used R11.5 million that was reprioritised from our equitable share to farmers who were affected by the natural disasters.

Honourable Members,

Veterinary Services remain the frontline in defending Limpopo's livestock economy. As outbreaks of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) continue to threaten farmers—especially in villages bordering the Kruger National Park—the Department will prioritise keeping Limpopo FMD-free through a range of interventions. These include vaccination, movement control, livestock inspections, and the rollout of the Livestock brand marking and Traceability System. We are resolute in our commitment to lifting the FMD Disease Management Area (DMA) in Collins Chabane, Thulamela and northeastern Musina during the 2025/26 financial year.

Following recent heavy rains, there is an increased risk of various livestock -borne diseases. We will continue with vaccination of cattle across communal areas.

We are also finalising efforts to ensure that our Veterinary Laboratories are accredited by the South African National Accreditation System (SANAS) during the 2025/26 period, reinforcing our commitment to international best practices in animal health.

In our fight against the scourge of stock theft, the Department will continue to work hand-in-glove with the South African Police Service, organised agricultural formations. To support this fight, we have allocated R3 million towards livestock brandmarking to ensure traceability.

Honourable Speaker,

In response to longstanding concerns of Redline Zone farmers, the department in collaboration with the Impact Catalyst and the Agricultural Research Council, plans to

develop a Master Plan to unlock market access and create a sustainable solution to farmers within the redline zone and to protect Limpopo's reputation as a leader in livestock production.

Honourable Speaker under CASP,

In 2024/25, R4.9 million was fully expended supporting 745 farmers. In this financial year, R3 million has been set aside to support 400 additional farmers in the fight against crop pests and diseases.

Honourable speaker

Following the Draft National Cannabis Master Plan for South Africa, the province is developing a Limpopo Cannabis Development Strategy. A plan to be taken through relevant processes for approval by EXCO.

Honourable Speaker,

For the financial year 2025/26, the department has allocated R160, 933 million for critical research in the innovations and the development of skilled professional personnel in the two colleges of Agriculture, that is Tompi Seleka and Madzivhandila. The advisory council board which plays a critical role in providing an oversight support in the management of both colleges has been appointed. The two colleges entered an MoU with the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) to advance online learning. On the same breath there are 82 graduates produced by the two colleges combined for the past financial year. We congratulate them.

Honourable Speaker,

As I conclude allow me to thank the Portfolio Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development chaired by Honourable Bella Kupa for the oversight support, the Standing Committee on Public Account for keeping us on our toes and the Farmers who, on every day, put food on everyone's table, the community, and all the aspiring farmers across the province, who together put food production on the rise!

Allow me to thank the ANC for entrusting me with the responsibility of leading the Limpopo Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Premier Dr. Phophi Ramathuba, Team Limpopo Department of Agriculture and Rural Development led by the Acting Head of Department, Me Mpho Abigail Mashamba, and Mr. Jethro Sandile Nowata, who steered this ship as the acting HOD during the previous financial year.

A special heartfelt appreciation is directed to my beloved family who have supported me through thick and thin on my endeavour to provide services to the people of Limpopo.

Rea leboga

I therefore table Budget Vote 04 for the Limpopo Department of Agriculture and Rural Development for the financial year 2025/2026.

SUMMARY BUDGET ALLOCATION OF VOTE 4 OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

LDARD 2025/26 BUDGET ALLOCATION PER PROGRAMME

Programme R thousand	2025/26	Percentage Share
Administration	381 293	19.97%

Sustainable Resource Use and Management	138 282	7.24%
Agriculture Producer Support and Development	811 941	42.51%
Veterinary Services	231 747	12.13%
Research and Technology Development Services	95 160	4.98%
Agricultural Economics Services	83 877	4.98%
Agricultural Education and Training	160 933	8.43%
Rural Development	6 5720	0.34%
Total payments and estimates	1 909 803	100.0%

LDARD 2025/26 BUDGET ALLOCATION PER SOURCE OF REVENUE

SOURCE OF FUNDING R thousand	2025/26
Equitable Share	1 563 790
Conditional Grant	346 013
Land Care	14 287
EPWP	5 289
CASP	242 853
Letsema	83 584
Total payments and estimates	1 909 803