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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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SEKHUKHUNE DRIVER OF THE YEAR IS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

By Nape Masemola

Farmers in Limpopo are now connected thanks to the interventions made by the MEC for Agriculture Me. Dikeledi Magadzi, who intervened in the communication challenges faced by the farmers. The Partnership between cellular phone network provider Vodacom and farmers Union TAU SA North was signed in Polokwane on Thursday 02 October 2008. The partnership agreement between the two parties will address the communication challenges faced by many farmers in areas where there is no cell phone reception and were Izinyoka were active by stealing Telkom copper cable

Mr. Steve Lukhwa, Vodacom Regional Manager: Corporate Sales welcomed everyone who was present during the signing ceremony. He said "We are here to cement the partnership between Vodacom and TAU SA North. It is the beginning of greater things, hoping to provide a communication solution to farmers in the province". He further announced that Vodacom has a fully fledged office in Limpopo which will reduce turnaround time in addressing telecommunication challenges in the Province.

Ms Marie Helm, TAU SA North Regional Manager speaking on behalf of the farmers

expressed her gratitude to MEC Magadzi for her involvement in making this partnership possible. "We have a committed MEC who has the interest of the farmers at heart" she said. MEC Magadzi was approached by TAU SA North with the communication problems faced by farmers in rural areas. Ms Helm said farmers rely on



Mr T Mamoepa (current winner) Mme Ramoroka A (Transport Officer Sekhukhune district) and Mr C J Mello (previous winner) showing off their Medals, certificates and trophies

telephones to communicate with markets and the outside world as most farm are in remote area far from towns.

Executive Head of Communication at Vodacom Ms Palesa Chabula said that for the past 15 years Vodacom has been South Africa's

leading cellular network. She said the partnership that is formed with TAU SA North is important in that they will have access affordable communication solutions. "This is the beginning of greater things" she concluded.

"There is perception that farmers do not care about technology. This is a challenge in Limpopo." These were the words of the Vodacom Regional Manager: Strategic, Mr. Emmanuel Ndou. Agriculture is a pillar of economy in the province that is similar to Tourism and Mining in Limpopo. This is why Vodacom is committed to continue its relationship with farmers

The Acting Senior Manager: Communication and Liaison Services, Mr. Thembu Makhubele represented LDA and said "This agreement symbolizes the Private Public Partnership providing a solution to challenges in the farming community of our Province." He went on to thank Vodacom on behalf of the MEC on speedily coming up with a solution to the farmers problems.

In conclusion Mr. Lukhwa said he believed the agreement is the beginning of better things to come for farmers in Limpopo.

TOMPI SELEKA HOST'S AGRICULTURE CAREER SHOW

By Magada Takalani

The Limpopo Department of Agriculture together with the Department of Education in Sekhukhune District held agricultural career show recently at Tompi Seleka. The hall was packed with grade 11 and 12 learners, teachers and officials who were really to learn about agricultural career courses and opportunities in the sector.

The Manager Internship and Learnership programme in the Department of Agriculture Me PHEME explained that the purpose of the exhibition was to create massive expose learners to various fields of study in agriculture, the qualifying criteria for entry to tertiary institutions and for bursaries in the Department. She also indicated that teachers must take time to encourage and motivate learners about Agriculture.

"I believe that if we can involve the department of education into teaching agriculture studies from primary level, young people can start showing interest at an early age and have a better understanding of the agricultural sector" she said in conclusion.

The schools from Sekhukhune district that attended the agricultural career show were Moshate, Mphahlele, Lekentle, Sizanani and Makhato.

NWANEDI "AN OASIS FOR FEMALE FARMERS"

By Zwi Maphiri

In Africa women play an integral part in farming, and providing food for their families. However women in Nwanedi are turning this traditional role into a

Intern colleague Takalani Livhalani were on hand to show off the successful female farmers in the areas.

The team visited the farm owned by Me Livhuwani Mulaudzi, her name is familiar to people in the farming industry because she is the winner of the 2006 Provincial Female Farmer of the Year Provincially and Nationally in the export category. She planted tomatoes on about 3½ hectares. She said that

produces butternuts and tomatoes on 10 hectares. She said she is proud of her achievements from humble beginnings and the fact that she is a self taught farmer. She said she makes enough money to take care of her and her family. On our arrival she told us that business is doing well for Female Farmers in Nwanedi.

The women said they owe their success to a women's co-operative in the area called Maanda Nga U Pfana , which organizes and empower women in the area. The co-operative is made up of 49 women from in and around Nwanedi, they



From left: Takalani Livhalani, Martha Mulaudzi and Marubini Mulovhedzi at Mulaudzi's Farm

on 1 hectare she plants about 36 000 seedlings, which

career from which they are earning thousands of rands. Nwanedi found in the far Northern part of Limpopo is one of the few farming area where many farms are owned by Women. Nwanedi is dry with shrubs but you will be surprised when you see the fresh produce from the area.

Temo Towers News visited some of the farms owned by women in order to monitor progress of the female farmers. The Departmental Extension officers Marubini Mulovhedzi together with his

means that on that 3 ½ hectares of land there are about 126 000 seedlings. Mulaudzi uses drip irrigation. She said she prefers drip irrigation because it saves water. Mulaudzi supplies her tomatoes to Tiger Brand, a Tomato puree producing company in Musina.

The team proceeded to visit a farm owned by Me Margaret Mukwevho. She

meet once a month to motivate and encourage each other in their farming enterprises.



Workers picking tomatoes at Margaret Mukwevho's farm

MARULENG SHOW TO BE STRENGTHENED

By Samson Mabunda

On 26 September 2008, the Mayor of Maruleng Municipality, Councillor Junior Mafogo officially opened the Maruleng Show. According to him, agricultural shows which occurred some time back were significant and should be revived. "We used to have shows. Currently we are no longer doing that. We need to reflect back and do it. We need shows in order to show to others what as individuals we can do," he said.

He played down the low turnout for the official opening and urged those involved particularly organisers and the public to ensure more people attend the show next year. Mayor Mafogo suggested that subsequent shows should be scheduled on times which suited everyone including the youth who are mostly learners. The appropriate time would be during school holidays. "We hope many people will come to the show next

year," he said.

He encouraged the public to inculcate the spirit of loving the rich South African cultures since "the nation which does not promote its culture is dead. He said the Maruleng community has shown responsibility in the fight against HIV/Aids based by creating awareness about the disease and engaging in responsible sexual behavior.

As a norm of taking the services to the people, some government institutions had exhibition stalls at the showground. The Limpopo Department of Agriculture's exhibition stall attracted many visitors. The Departmental stall incorporated a farmers market which was very popular with throughout the show. Visitors to the stall expressed their appreciation for the departmental information and the ability to purchase fresh vegetables.