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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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Editor-in-Chief: Thembi Makhubele, Editor: Mashudu Mabata, Graphic Designer: Zwiitwaho Ian Maphiri*

DEPARTMENT LAUNCHES LIWARD IN WATERBERG

By Obakeng Mogara

W A R D
(Women in
Agricultural

Rural Development) was the programme launched during the 2007 conference which was held in Durban by the Minister of Agriculture, Me Lulu Xingwane. This Summit was called to look at ways to improve agriculture in the country. The objective of this program is to advocate challenges experienced by rural women and create a platform for women to engage in dialogue on issues related to agriculture and land in the context of rural development. WARD is intended to be a mass-based movement which aims to ensure the socio-economic development of women.

These objectives were formed after women experienced the following challenges:

- Lack of access to land (women are still to a large extent not being allowed land ownership) which makes it difficult to engage in farming
- Lack of knowledge about land reform programmes, i.e. women do not know about policies, laws, their rights and administrative procedures used to implement policies and procedures (making it difficult for them to engage in government processes).

WARD looks at many ways to improve and support women in farming. The department assist women by training them to being eligible and independent farmers. Since the National summit held in Durban, this idea "WARD" cascaded to the Provinces, then to the Districts. In Limpopo it was named LIWARD (Limpopo Women in Agricultural Rural Development). In Waterberg District, it was launched on the 19 November at Ga-Pila in Mogalakwena Municipality. The aim of this launch was to formally introduce the LIWARD committee to the farmers, to outline the objectives most of all, to encourage more women to join this organisation.

LIWARD chairperson, Me Ramokone Shabangu, urged other women to be independent and work hard toward building a better life for their families. She outlined

the points to qualify as a member of the organisation which are if one:

- Prepared to volunteer their services
- Interested in the development of our fellow female farmers and
- To engage primarily in agriculture as farmers, farm workers or service provider to the agricultural sector.

"We are fortunate that the chiefs have given us land to farm while the government is giving us more land and support and trainings to

empower us, "We have the resources, let us go to the farm and show the world that Limpopo is indeed reach". Me Ramokone saying with pride at the event. She further proclaimed;

"There are different departments there to give assistance and guidance in reaching our goals, let us reach out for help". Amongst other departments that we can benefit from as a group of women are:

- LIBSA- It contributes towards women empowerment. Its mandate is to improve the lives of the people in the rural areas. People no longer have to travel long distances to the Department of Trade and Industry to register their companies. LIBSA is in various districts for the people's convenience. After registration, they assist in drawing business plans, marketing one's product as well as getting a supplier for business.

- SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT also improves the lives of the people mostly to alleviate poverty in the community. They assist in forming projects, drawing business plans and most of all, they give funds to project and help manage the funds according to the business plan. Afterwards, they do monitoring and evaluation.

- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM sent a representative, Mr



Waterberg LIWARD committee and coordinator

Dumisani Jele who explained how they work. They attend to all tourism based community projects. They assist where possible. If women want to start businesses such as guest houses, the department is prepared to give skills as well as advertising the accommodation to the tourists.

Me Lizzy Ledwaba, Female Farmer winner 2008 motivated women to stand up on their feet and stop waiting for the government to spoon feed them. "Women, show this world you are capable": She said. I started off with no money but with the loan from ARBC with small amount of chicken. "Unfortunately as time went on, the market got saturated and the market got tough." "I moved to Bela Bela but the problem was Vegetables were expensive". "Cabbage was bought for R10. Because I always wanted a better life, I started Ploughing cabbages, Lettuce beetroot etc" With the help of agricultural office in Bela Bela, I managed to feed for my family, friends and sell some to the restaurants"; Me Ledwaba pledging to the women farmers. Fellow women, do not be afraid to approach these small shops and restaurants to sell for them". "Go out there and market your products with confidence". She further encouraged women to start now preparing for Female Farmer competition 2009.

LDA Western Cluster holds Extension Seminar

The Limpopo Department of Agriculture in Western Cluster (Waterberg, Capricorn and Sekhukhune municipalities) recently held a one day seminar at the Lebowakgomo Civic centre to discuss and deliberate on the challenges facing extension officers in Limpopo. It also presented the platform for the extension officers in the three municipalities to voice their dissatisfactions and concerns they are facing when working with the farmers.

Among other issues that were discussed at the seminar, was the role of Agricultural extension in Project and Commodity Farming; challenges and Solutions facing extension in South Africa and How Limpopo can benefit; and Aligning Extension Service to contribute significantly to the LDA's implementation strategies. Extension Officers from all the three municipalities within falling under the Western Cluster came in numbers to be part of the seminar in order to find solutions to the challenges facing extension services. Speaking on the Aligning of extension services to contribute significantly to the LDA's implementation strategies, Dr.

Niber Baba Tierto indicated that principles of marketing, agro-enterprise development should be part of the foundation of extension realignment. Tierto said that each portion of the agricultural value chain must have critical mass of extension officers with aligned skills. Some considerations for alignment, according to Tierto, need a municipality focused implementation strategy by spearheading the development of self-managing team in order to create a self-mastery, problem solving and facilitation skills on the side of extension officers. He also highlighted that a collective action alignment criteria which will result from a massification

implementation strategy will enable extension practitioners to facilitate group formations and dynamics.

Speaking about the role of agricultural extension in project and commodity farming, Mr. Letsoalo from the Centre for Organic and Smallholder Agriculture (COSA) at the Tshwane University of



Mr. Joe Kgobokoe, Director Education, Training and Extension Services in the National Department of Agriculture addressing extension officers during the seminar

Technology, said some of the attributes of an agricultural extension practitioner include among other things, the ability to have agricultural skills coupled by the thorough knowledge of agricultural science, communication and most importantly, human behavior. He said these will lead to group behavior and understanding of cultural configuration in order to build the social structure. Letsoalo said that project and commodity farming is delineated to help people adjust to change and the attributes are also directed to help group and rural communities but he also stressed that there is a need to be relevant to the needs and aspirations of the intended

beneficiaries.

When addressing the extension officers on the challenges and solutions facing extension services in South Africa, Director of education, training and extension services in the national department of agriculture, Mr. Joe Kgobokoe said there is a need for the Norms and Standards in extension to be turned into a national policy. These, according to Kgobokoe will help restore the image and professionalism of extension services. Kgobokoe said there is a need for accountability and visibility, ICT literacy and Information Management, Knowledge and Skills capacity and the improvement of the extension to farmer ratios within the Limpopo Extension and Advisory Services. The establishment of a statutory body to guide and uphold the image of extension and the introduction of a national award system in recognition of service excellence were also tabled as planned solution to the image challenges. Kgobokoe further indicated the need to review the policy on transport particularly the provision of subsidised vehicles in order to enable extension officers to execute their responsibilities of working with the farmers. He also indicated that there should be a maximum utilization of Department of Agriculture's professional framework to recruit interns as a recruitment strategy. Kgobokoe further indicated that government has made R50 million available for the Extension recovery plan. Because Limpopo is categorised with acute human resources capacity gaps, the province therefore received higher share to enable a faster closing of these capacity gaps. The total allocation for Limpopo is just above R15 Million which leaves the other eight provinces to share the remaining R35 million budgets for the extension recovery plan.

By Samo Komana

EXCO VIST TO FETAKGOMO

On the 27th November 2008, hundreds of people gathered at Old Fetakgomo High School sport ground in Fetakgomo Municipality (Sekhukhune District) during Exco (Executive Committee) Visit to Fetakgomo by the Office of the Premier in collaboration with Departments of the Limpopo Province. The visit was graced by the Premier Sello Moloto, MEC OF Health and Social Development Seaparo Sekwati, MEC of Publics Works Machoene Semanya, Mayor of Fetakgomo Municipality Cllr C.M Marota and officials from other Departments.

The Exco visit served as a direct interaction between Government leaders and ordinary Citizens including Famers and other stakeholders. The ordinary citizens raised issues with Government,

and in turn, Government's Programme Action was communicated to the Public.

The issues ranged from Health and Social Development, Agriculture, Public Works, Safety and Security, and Housing. The youth wanted to know about bursaries and skills development whereby young Graduates are given a chance or Exposure to the practical work experience. Some public members for the government interventions in eviction taking place in some areas within that Municipality, while others alleged that there were unused and shortage of local clinics, Library and home affairs. Shortage water, lack of electricity, no speed Humps, no cell phone networks were the major issues raised by the Public.

In respond, MEC OF Health and Social Development Seaparo Sekwati indicated

that the community should be aware of the fact that the local clinics which are not serving its purpose should be first handed over to the community. On shortage of Local clinics, the Department is busy with programme of building new local clinics so that people should not travel long distances for medication.

Premier Sello Moloto said "the issues which were raised here are the same or familiar with issues raised by other members of the Public in other Districts, it seems to be concerns for every citizen of Limpopo, which means the Limpopo Provincial Government should have to be powerful in terms of service delivery "

By Fulufhelo Ramuhala

SEKHUKHUNE TO ELLIMINATE MOKOROKORO TREE AT ALL COST

The Sekhukhune Department of Agriculture and in particular the Land care section has embarked on an intensive campaign to eliminate Mokorokoro (*Lopholinercofolia*). This became clear when speaker after speaker mentioned how hazardous this tree is to Plants that are for human Consumption. The above was said during the district Land care celebration which was held at the Village of Driefontein Sports field in Marble Hall. The Event is part of the department's Land care week. When outlining the purpose of the day, Mr PH Mashiane who is the caretaker Manager at Sekhukhune told the gathered Crowd that the reason why they all here was to educate members of the Community about the programme Land care and why is it imperative for the department to have Land Care.

Preserving land and ensuring that the available Land is being utilized wisely for the benefits of future generations, land must be taken care of and hazardous plants must be wiped out of the planet as they hinder good growth process of plants that are for human consumption so said Mr Mashiane. In Conclusion he said that in some instances families' plant trees such as Mokorokoro for some rituals of which a permit need to be sought with the

environmental authorities as these plants are dangerous to nature.

Representing the Land care committee was Mr SK Malefo who explained thoroughly what land care is and what does it entail. In his address Mr Malefo said 'land care is Conservation of Natural resources'. Wheather



Me Mokganyetsi addressing the public at Driefontein

an individual speak of conserving Soil, Veld, Water, or Greening, they all form part of Land care and cannot be divorced. Mr Malefo went further to stress why Mokorokoro should be destroyed as it consumes more water than any other plant. Evidence of that is that the plant is always Green no matter what season is, and it also takes too much water for plants

that are for human consumption. **By Nape Masemola**

To deliver the key note address on behalf of the greater Sekhukhune District Mayor Cllr ND Masemola was Me Mokganyetsi who is the member of the Mayoral committee at the district. In her speech Me Mokganyetsi acknowledged the crucial role that the department is taking by educating the communities about Land care which in her words is the most critical for mankind survival. She said that if communities do not take care of the land there would be no space for settlement, production of food and that in turn would mean no Life. She went on to remind members of the public that Agriculture is one of the pillars that the World Economy is based on and that the land must be used effectively to produce food to achieve the millennium goals which is eradicating poverty. Me Mokganyetsi sent the holiday message to the public on behalf of the Mayor who is wishing every one a Merry Christmas and a prosperous new year. She further said that the Mayor appeals to youth to take care of themselves these holidays and not to engage in toxic drinks and lastly to be safe and Arrive Alive.

EMPOWERING FARMERS DURING FARMERS DAY IN THABAZIMBI

The department of agriculture is one of the institutions contributing towards alleviating poverty in our country. Land Reform is one of other ways used. Through the department of agriculture and Land Affairs, farmers can get assistance to acquire land to make a living as well as creating jobs. "It has been noticed that farmers do not rely only on the department of agriculture but also to other stakeholders". We are here to share information towards empowering you and support all farmers grow to being commercial farmers in future". Me Lungiswa Ritshuri said, during the farmers day celebration held on the 20th November at Nooitgedaght farm in Northam.

On his Welcoming note, Mr Rakgase gave a bit of his background on how he started farming. "I got this farm in 1991 through LRAD programme where we(I and my wife) made our children beneficiaries". This farm is known for being the best in cattle farming. The farm has grown and developed since then. They are now farming with livestock, cattle, mangos and piggery. He advised the non-commercial farmers to stop taking business outside. Taking your cow to the market will not make money for you." "All you need is to slaughter and sell. Either at the butchery or you start another

business of selling a plate of food". Indicating Rakgase with pride during the session.

There were a number of presenters to outline their function in helping contribute towards being successful farmers.

Land Bank did a presentation on what they do. Their mandate is to contribute to rural development, meeting the needs of sources for poor farmers and to service all sectors of agricultural economy. Land Bank offers financial assistance to individuals, close corporation, Farmers were advised the youth to make sure that they farm for profit, because agriculture is business. 'It is all about poverty alleviation through business. Mr Mabuza advised farmers to buy farms that can generate profit to make a living. Buying land or facilities for a farm is expensive. Farmers were informed about different loans Land bank offer and how best to pay.

Mr Montoedi from PFIZER educated farmers on how to take care of one's breeding and how best to treat certain diseases. He gave an example with a pig since it is a rare farming breed and farmers are now interested in going that route. Montoedi gave a

presentation on Pfizer livestock (pigs), How to check if your pigs are healthy, systematic look, common pig diseases, vaccination programme, both internal and external programme. **By Obakeng Mogara**

The reason for focusing this farmer's day mainly on piggery was that it has been noticed that most emerging farmers are now interested in pig farming but experiencing challenges caused by lack of best practices. Free range system (no formal proper structure), which leads to many diseases due to hygiene and proper food for these pigs. They end up working at a loss and discouraging others. As a result the Thabazimbi department of agriculture organized this day to educate those farmers who already have pigs and those who are interested in pig farming.

(South African Pork Producers, Organisation) was invited to do a presentation on "NEW MODERN STRUCTURE OF PIGS and HOW TO MANAGE THEM". By the end of the day everyone got a clear picture on this type of farming and all their questions were answered and given contacts of presenters in case they had follow-up questions.