



MEDIA STATEMENT

Att : ALL EDITORS

Media Houses

Date: Tuesday, 21 May 2024

NW AGRICULTURE TO ROLL OUT ARTIFICIAL INSEMINATION PROJECT

Mahikeng- The North-West Department of Agriculture and Rural Development is set to roll out the Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) project for cattle. Commonly known as Artificial Insemination, ART will benefit farmers across the province reaching 4000 heads of cattle over a period of 5 years. This means 800 breeding females would be inseminated per year beginning with the current financial year. MEC Desbo Mohono made this announcement during the hosting of ART Farmers' Day at Potchefstroom College of Agriculture held on 16 May 2024.

ART is a livestock improvement initiative aimed at prioritizing the growth rate, fertility, and milk production as breeding objectives. This will be achieved by empowering previously disadvantaged farmers through this innovative support to assist them to optimally produce livestock (beef cattle for now) with the required quality and genetics to be able to compete in the commercial value chain. An integrated development approach will be encouraged from all stakeholders, as well as Public/Private sector participation.

With this rollout, the Department has already received a donation of a collective 700 semen straws. 500 straws were from one Ventersdorp-based Stud Breeder, Mr Regomoditswe Malao and 200 straws from Mr Joel Nkuna of Nkunzi Genetics. This means the Department will roll out the programme well with the support of many existing players.

MEC Desbo Mohono, as she addressed the farmers, spoke about the potential that the province has especially with beef production. She said she believes that the North-West should be ranked highest as she has seen many renowned beef producers in the province. She believes that ART will improve beef production in the province and position local farmers as key players in the industry. "So, the intention with this programme is simply to improve livestock. We have brought

many specialists here so that they can share information with all of us on the potential of ART but also on the key demands. We need to get results so our preparation should be on par," MEC emphasised.

She appreciated the donors who have come forward to ensure that the program is realised. She encouraged other commercial farmers to join in and assist others. MEC further encouraged farmers to work together. She said the greatest achievement would be in collaborations with those who have been doing ART before.

MEC Mohono said although the programme is not new in the province. It was time for the province to relook into their beef production potential and replan how it would compete in the market. The Livestock Improvement project was initiated and started by Bojanala Platinum District, during the financial year 2020/2021. The project has thus far inseminated 190 breeding animals and 10 embryo implants from 11 farmers. Of the inseminated farms three participants are from the communal farming community.

The Departmental Extension and Advisory Services officers will assist in identifying interested farmers to participate in ART. The farmers will need to meet set requirements which include availability of water, crush pens, availability of grazing land and others.

Photos:

676A9295: Farmers across the province came through to learn more about ART process

676A9267: MEC Desbo Mohono and HoD Thupi Mokgatla observing practical demonstration of ART

676A9269: Industry experts led by Dr Masindi Mphaphati of the Agricultural Research Council, preparing equipment during ART practical demonstration.

ENDS

Issued by the Communication Services Directorate

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