



agriculture & rural development

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Agriculture and Rural Development
North West Provincial Government
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



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MEDIA STATEMENT

**Att : All Editors
: Media Houses**

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NORTH WEST DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT HOSTS SUCCESSFUL 11TH EXTENSION AND ADVISORY CONFERENCE

Mahikeng – The North West Department of Agriculture and Rural Development successfully hosted its 11th Provincial Extension and Advisory Conference from 21 to 23 May 2025 in Stillfontein, near Klerksdorp in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District.

Held under the theme *"Improving Agricultural Productivity through Quality Extension Services,"* the three-day event brought together over 150 extension officers, experts, and partners for a focused and productive gathering. The conference was marked by active engagement, valuable discussions, and a shared commitment to enhancing farmer support and strengthening internal systems.

Extension services remain a vital link between farmers and the latest research, innovations, and technical advice that help improve productivity, manage risks, and adapt to climate challenges.

In his opening remarks, Head of Department Mr Thupi Mokhatla described the conference as an important opportunity for the sector to reflect and plan for the future. "This conference is not just about exchanging information. It is about building an extension service that is responsive, skilled, and focused on making a real difference where it matters most," HoD Mokhatla said.

The Department outlined four key focus areas to improve extension delivery: expanding group extension methods to reach more farmers, developing digital advisory tools, strengthening partnerships, and investing in skills development to meet evolving demands.

Key partners such as the South African Council for Natural Scientific Professions (SACNASP), the South African Forum for Agricultural Extension and Advisory Services (SAFAEAS), the South African Society for Agricultural Extension (SASAE), and the Agricultural Research Council (ARC) played an active role in enriching the discussions.

Delivering the keynote address, MEC Madoda Sambatha emphasized the indispensable role that extension officers play in bridging the gap between government policies and the day-to-day realities faced by farmers.

He called for urgent and sustained investment in the provision of essential tools, resources, and ongoing professional development to ensure that extension services are effective and of the highest quality. "Extension

officers are the link between government and the farmer,” said Sambatha. “We cannot expect excellence without giving them the proper means to do their work,” MEC Sambatha said

MEC Sambatha also highlighted the importance of professionalising the extension sector, stressing that recognising extension officers as skilled professionals is crucial for building a motivated and capable workforce. He reaffirmed the Department’s commitment to supporting extension officers through continuous training, career development opportunities, and formal recognition, all of which are vital to enhancing their impact on food security and rural development.

“Be present, be responsive. Farmers depend on you,” MEC Sambatha concluded.

The successful three-day conference has laid a solid foundation for strengthening extension services, with a clear roadmap to drive sustainable agricultural growth and improve livelihoods across the province.

CAPTIONS:

IMAGE 676A8109:-Extension officers engaged attentively during the three-day event, which brought together over 150 participants for focused discussions on improving farmer support and strengthening internal systems.

IMAGE 676A8521:-MEC Madoda Sambatha addresses delegates at the recently held 11th Extension and Advisory Conference.

IMAGE 676A8632:-From left to right: DARD Chief Financial Officer Dedericks Mompei, Mamusa Local Area Office Manager Tuelo Sebekedi, and Mr. Theo Seepamore, the overall winner of the Best Paper award at the 11th Provincial Extension Conference receiving his certificate from MEC Madoda Sambatha and Chief Director for Agriculture Development and Support Ms Arlene Dikolomela.

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The North West Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

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