



MEDIA RELEASE

To: All Editors, All Journalists

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DARD and North West University Launch Agricultural Hub to Empower Farmers and Strengthen Regional Economy

Mahikeng – The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD), in collaboration with North West University's (NWU) Mahikeng Campus, officially launched an Agricultural Hub at the Molelwane Research Farm on Monday, 3 March 2025. This initiative aims to drive innovation, research, and skills development in the agricultural sector. The launch, attended by key stakeholders, marks a significant milestone in the province's commitment to enhancing agricultural productivity, ensuring food security, and empowering local farmers.

The Agri-Hub will serve as a centre of excellence, focusing on strengthening both livestock and crop value chains.

North West Premier Kagiso Lazarus Mokgosi highlighted the hub's role in positioning the province as a leading exporter of agricultural products. "The hub is a strategic investment in the local economy, reinforcing agriculture as a cornerstone of the province's economic foundation. It will provide farmers with essential resources to improve their livelihoods, increase productivity, and promote sustainable farming practices. Through market linkages, branding strategies, and supply chain optimization, we will elevate our province's status as a premier exporter of agricultural goods. Trade and exports not only generate revenue but also attract investments, create jobs, and stimulate industrial development. By aligning our agricultural output with international demand, we can open new doors for economic prosperity while ensuring long-term food security for our people," said Premier Mokgosi.

The MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development, Madoda Sambatha, highlighted that this collaboration between the Department and the university not only strengthens the capacity of farmers but also ensures that agricultural development keeps pace with modern technological advancements and meets global market demands. "This initiative is a testament to our commitment to the agricultural sector and the people who form its backbone," he added, underscoring the importance of supporting farmers and enhancing the sector's growth.

The Agri-Hub will offer tailored programmes in research, training, and skills development to address local agricultural challenges. NWU Vice-Chancellor, Professor Bismark Tyobeka, emphasized the hub's role in advancing agriculture, creating jobs, and fostering sustainable practices. He highlighted the opportunity for smallholder and emerging farmers to access training, modern tools, and global markets, while helping commercial farmers expand and improve competitiveness.

Stud farmers in the province hailed the launch as a great initiative by the Department and North West University, noting that it will greatly benefit both emerging and established farmers in the region.

More than just a project, the Agri-Hub represents a long-term investment in the future of agriculture. It is expected to drive job creation, rural development, and sustainable agricultural growth, ensuring the sector remains resilient in the face of challenges such as climate change, market fluctuations, and the increasing demand for food security.

A key component of the Agri-Hub is its focus on innovation. Additionally, skills development programmes will empower young people and aspiring entrepreneurs in rural communities, creating a pipeline of talent for the future of agriculture. The Agri-Hub's emphasis on hands-on training and capacity-building aims to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application.

Picture Captions:

IMAGE 676A9192: MEC Madoda Sambatha, Professor Bismark Tyobeka, and other dignitaries perform the ceremonial ribbon-cutting at the Agri-Hub launch.

IMAGE IMG 1124: During his address, Premier Lazarus Mokgosi emphasized the need for accelerated groundwork by the Agri-Hub structure.

IMAGE IMG 1125: Farmers in attendance were encouraged to reclaim their position as the country's leading producers of diverse agricultural commodities.

End.

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