



Western Cape Provincial Minister of Agriculture talks to Citrusdal farmers



The Western Cape Provincial Minister of Agriculture, Dr Ivan Meyer addressed the Olyfenboschkraal Farmers' Association in Citrusdal on 13 June 2023.

The Agriculture & agri-processing sectors continue to make critical contributions to the Western Cape's Gross Domestic Product(GDP). Minister Meyer continued: "The agriculture and agri-processing sectors contribute 11% to the Western Cape's GDP and employ 426 417 people combined. 16.2% of all jobs in the Western Cape are to be found in the agriculture sector. Here on the West Coast, agriculture plays a significant role with 39% of employed people in the West Coast District working in the agriculture sector".

Commenting on his engagement, Minister Meyer highlighted that while his message to farmers was one of hope and appreciation, he was concerned about the potential impact of South Africa's exclusion from the (United States of America) USA's African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) on exports.

He stressed that agriculture in the Western Cape is an export-driven industry and that threats such as the possible exclusion of South Africa from AGOA and the race-based approach to the issuing of water licenses create uncertainty and pressure on a key sector of the Western Cape economy. I encourage Minister Senzo Mchunu to scrap the Draft Water Regulations proposed in the allocation of water licenses which makes distinctions based on race. Currently out for public

comment, the proposed regulations may negatively impact the sector's ability to grow the economy and create jobs. The Western Cape Government has already resolved to oppose the race-based draft legislation.

Minister Meyer added: “More than 136 000 jobs in the Western Cape’s agriculture sector depend on AGOA. These jobs are found in the wine industry (36 302 jobs), Citrus and nuts (10 655 jobs); dairy (6 590 jobs) and deciduous fruit (83 073 jobs). As I have said previously any regulation which threatens jobs is simply a bad policy. With the country's devastatingly high unemployment rate and growing inequality, the government should open as many doors as possible to make getting a job as easy as possible. As the government, we have a critical role to play in creating an enabling economic environment, not destroying it.”

“It is for this reason that Premier Alan Winde has written to President Ramaphosa requesting that the national government withdraw the proposed race-based water regulations,” concluded Provincial Minister Meyer. Premier Winde is also currently in the US lobbying for the extension of AGOA beyond 2025.

The evening ended with Meyer handing over a certificate of appreciation from the Western Cape Government to the President of the Olyfenboschkraal Agriculture Association, Mr Kris-Jan Mouton. Olyfenboschkraal Agricultural Association has been serving the farming community for more than 20 years.

For more information:

Daniel Johnson

Tel: +27 79 990 4231

Email: Daniel.Johnson@westerncape.gov.za

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