



**PRESS BRIEFING ON YOUTH WHO GRADUATED IN DENMARK  
THROUGH THE AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (ADA)  
PROGRAM, FRIDAY 26 JUNE 2015**

**THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE IN KWAZULU-NATAL DEPENDS ON  
YOUNG FARMERS**

The generation of young farmers that the province is helping to develop today could become game changers for the province's economy.

The project is part of the Agribusiness Development Agency (ADA) Young Farmers Development Program. The graduates, who were selected from land reform farms, received training in modern livestock production and running commercial operations. Dalum is the largest and oldest Agricultural College in Denmark. The partnership with the college, was facilitated by the Office of the Premier.

The program will continue for the next three years with funding provided by the KZN Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD). The province's Strategy for Agrarian Transformation recognized that the future of agriculture in the province depended on growing the number of young farmers. South Africa had an ageing farming population with the average age of commercial farmers today, being around 63. It is imperative that we as government in cooperation with the farming sector find ways to attract young people to farming and unlock opportunities to them.

These opportunities must be more than training people for jobs. They must encourage young people to become agricultural entrepreneurs.

Taking agriculture to the youth was key to the Department's strategy to grow future generations of farmers. It involves long-term plans starting at primary school level to change the image of farming. Given our country's history, most young people view agriculture as work for laborers. Our plans involve career guidance to make the learner aware of the professional aspects as well as the business and scientific nature of the sector.

DARD is working in collaboration with KZN MEC for Education, Ms Peggy Nkonyeni to introduce agriculture as a subject to more schools. Earlier this year, MEC Cyril Xaba introduced a revitalization grant for the four agricultural schools in the province. The grant will assist in the provision of equipment and other infrastructure to improve the quality of agricultural education and practical training. It will make provision for skills upgrading as well as for agro-processing and agribusiness management to be offered as courses.

For South Africa to achieve food security and for agriculture to become a catalyst for economic growth in the country, young people are critical agricultural players. In KwaZulu-Natal they will certainly be given special attention and support as we endeavor to grow our future farmers.

MEC Xaba noted that the dinner was not only being held in Youth Month, it was also being held on the day the Freedom Charter was adopted 60 years ago. The youth represent the hopes and dreams of the thousands of South Africans, who had contributed to the vision of a free South Africa

as laid out in the Freedom Charter; and who were denied such opportunities. "Value the opportunities that you have today in a free South Africa and don't squander what you have been taught. Use your training to grow your farming enterprises. Share your knowledge by mentoring others and play your part in helping unleash the agricultural potential of our province.



MEC for KZN Agriculture and Rural Development Mr Cyril Xaba, together with KZN Agriculture and Rural Development Head of Department Dr Siphwe Mkhize and International Relations and Lecturer from Dalum Landbrugsskole Academy of Agricultural Business (Denmark) Mr Niels Erik Jespersen, addressing members of the media about the youth who graduated in Denmark through the Agribusiness Development Agency (ADA)



MEC Cyril Xaba together with Agribusiness Development Agency (ADA) Board Chairperson Dr Tshitshi Mbatha, having a light moment with Mr Siphesihle Phewa - one of the graduates during the hand over of certificates to students



MEC Cyril Xaba together with Dr Tshitshi Mbatha handing over a Diploma certificate on Livestock Management and Sustainable Agricultural Production to Mr Lungelo Bhengu



MEC Cyril Xaba together with KZN DARD Head of Department Dr Sipiwe Mkhize and International Relations and Lecture from Dalum Landbrugsskole Academy of Agricultural Business (Denmark) Mr Niels Erik Jespersen and Agribusiness Development Agency Board Chairpeson Dr Tshitshi Mbatha with the group of youth who graduated in Denmark through the Agribusiness Development Agency (ADA)