

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

DARD BUDGET VOTE SPEECH 2025/26



Fourth Raadzaal
11 April 2025



 Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

 @fsdardea

 @fs_dardea



agriculture & rural development
Department of
Agriculture and Rural Development
FREE STATE PROVINCE



BUDGET VOTE SPEECH

VOTE 11: AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Honourable Speaker

Honourable Premier

Honourable Members of the Executive Council

Honourable Members of the Legislature

Our Local Government leadership

Traditional leaders

Director General, Heads of Departments and our support staff

Our farmers and stakeholders in the agriculture sector

Distinguished guests

It is a privilege to present the budget and policy speech for the 2025/2026 financial year of Vote 11: Agriculture and Rural Development during Freedom Month, a period that commemorates our nation's arduous journey from the oppressive yoke of colonialism and apartheid, super-class exploitation as well as pronounced patriarchal underpinnings, to the dawn of democracy in 1994.

In addition, the month of April signifies historical moments in our struggle which include, amongst others, the executions of both Solomon Mahlangu and Chris Hani in 1979 and 1993, respectively. These continue to be pivotal moments in the history of our country. We dare not fail to pay tribute to those trailblazers whose selfless commitment and sacrifice have made possible our democratic dispensation. I remain deeply aware of our responsibility to honour their legacy through concrete action, where we strive for inclusivity, equity and justice.



It has certainly been an eventful few months since we took office and delivered the budget vote speech last year. One of the highlights has been our interaction and engagement with our farmers and producers, developing an appreciation of the depth of their skills, passion and creativity for their enterprises, both on-farm as well as the products they bring to the market.

Hon. Speaker, we are proud to share with you some of the products produced, processed and packaged in the Free State by emerging farmers and agripreneurs supported by the Department. We were able to purchase these products through the financial contributions of our own officials. I want to express my appreciation for these contributions as it symbolizes in a very direct and practical way our belief and confidence in the viability and sustainability of the projects that we support. In your packages, you will find:

- 1) A turmeric puree produced by Mme Kekeletso Mokhothu of the Mtswako project in Odendalsrus
- 2) An herbal tea produced by Mme Ntsioua Kobo of the Thitapoho project in Tweespruit;
- 3) Wine produced by Mme Teboho Ditsebe of the Botebo project in Jacobsdal;
- 4) Honey produced by Butle Mokhathi of the Atlisang Ditirelo project in Bethulie and
- 5) Spices produced by Mme Dimakatso Julia Molupe of the Lesika project in Botshabelo

They join us today as we celebrate their commitment to grow not only their respective enterprises, but also the growth of the Free State economy.



These products exemplify the practical impact of our budget allocations, reflecting our determination to create sustainable economic opportunities, promote local entrepreneurship, and to meaningfully transform the agricultural landscape of the Free State.

Agriculture is not just about on-and-off farm activities. We often neglect to acknowledge and celebrate excellence in its related industries. We therefore decided to share with you an autographed copy of the book, “A Country of 2 Agricultures – the Disparities, the Challenges, the Solutions” of Wandile Sihlobo. He is the Chief Economist of the Agricultural Business Chamber of South Africa and, amongst others, a member of the Presidential Economic Advisory Council. It provides thought-provoking insight into the role of agriculture in the South African economy from an agricultural economy perspective.

Through reading, we expand our knowledge and understanding, either entrenching or challenging us to rethink and develop our views, beliefs and opinions. It is an empowering and enabling tool that will strengthen and enhance the conversation about the inherent power of agriculture as a critical lever of economic growth.

LEGISLATIVE DEVELOPMENTS

Hon. Speaker, we welcome the promulgation of two key pieces of legislation enacted by the hon. President in January this year, namely:

- the **Preservation and Development of Agricultural Land Act**, which aims to ensure that agricultural land supports long-term food production and contributes to economic growth. It also sets out the purpose of provincial agricultural sector plans which will secure the



coordination and harmonising of agricultural land use policies and plans to preserve a sustainable agricultural environment; and

- the **Expropriation Act** which repeals the pre-democratic Expropriation Act of 1975. It is necessary to demystify the false narrative around the Act. By doing so, we must remind ourselves of where we come from. We are the products of colonial and apartheid regimes that systematically dispossessed our people of their ancestral lands, relegating the majority to barren homelands. The ramifications of these injustices are still evident today. Our rural communities remain trapped in poverty, lacking access to arable land and resources. Land reform and rural development are not mere policy choices; they are moral imperatives. The drafters of our Constitution recognized this and laid the foundation for what is now the Expropriation Act.

Though the constitutionality of the Act is contested, we believe that the Act aligns itself with the Constitution. The first important factor is that it provides for “just and equitable” compensation in line with section 25(3) of the Constitution and lists factors to be taken into account in calculating such.

The second most important factor is that it provides for the inclusion of a state power than enables the State to acquire property, not only for public purpose but also in the public interest. This mirrors the Constitutional property clause.

Section 12(3) of the Act also lists four circumstances in which it may be just and equitable for Expropriation Without Compensation (EWC) to take place. It focuses specifically on land which is not in productive



use. The “just and equitable” model of compensation will make expropriation for land reform more affordable for the state. The Act creates another enabling tool through which our land reform initiatives will gain momentum. It does not pose itself as the ultimate solution to our land reform issues.

2024 AGRICULTURE SECTOR PERFORMANCE & OUTLOOK FOR 2025

South Africa’s agriculture sector rebounded strongly in late 2024. In **Q4 of 2024**, agriculture grew by **17.2%** quarter-on-quarter (seasonally adjusted), making it the largest contributor to national GDP growth for the quarter. This surge added about 0.4 percentage points to South Africa’s 0.6% GDP growth in Q4, mainly due to increased field crop and livestock output. Over the full year 2024, however, agricultural GDP underperformed – the sector shrank in real terms compared to 2023. This reflects the steep mid-2024 drought impacts (Q3 contraction) that offset later gains.

The Crop Estimate Committee’s (CEC) March 2025 and Final Winter 2024 estimates, confirm that the Free State remains South Africa’s agricultural backbone. We are one of the most productive crop-growing provinces as the country’s number one producer of white maize (52 %), sunflower (51.5 %) and soybeans (47.3 %). The Free State is also the leading groundnut producer (47 %) and second in sorghum (32.6%) and dry beans (33.2%).

The Free State also plays a leading role in the livestock sector, especially with cattle and sheep farming. We account for approximately 20.3 % of the national sheep herd and about 16 % of the national cattle herd. Our heavy weight in grains and livestock means that our fortunes greatly influence South Africa’s food security and commodity exports. This



Budget

BUDGET VOTE

2025/2026

dominance also means climate shocks in Free State (drought, floods) have outsized economic impact. Diversifying and adding value to this production is critical for resilience and growth

Our agriculture sector is, of course, vulnerable and exposed to the recent tariff developments imposed by the USA. South African's agricultural exports to the US are estimated at around 4 % in 2024 and comprises of mainly citrus, grapes, wine and juices.

Let us remind ourselves that every challenge brings about its own opportunities. The African continent accounts for the biggest share of South African exports and opportunities inherent to the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) must be optimized.

The Free State can leverage South Africa's strategy of expanding agricultural trade with BRICS partners and other emerging economies. **China and India** in particular are massive importers of food and fibre that align with Free State's production. **China** is now the world's largest agricultural importer and opened up to SA beef in 2023. It is currently the top buyer of SA wool. **India** similarly is a huge market (especially for pulses, edible oils, and fruits) where SA's presence is minor. The Free State, through national export programs, could target **India for pulses and groundnuts** and **China for wool, beef, and maize**.

New BRICS members like **Saudi Arabia**, the **United Arab Emirates (UAE)** and **Egypt** are also high-potential export regions for Free State products. These countries import vast quantities of food, presenting an opportunity for Free State's grain, meat, and horticulture producers. An export diversification strategy must be underpinned by a targeted



promotion and marketing programme for South African products whilst urgently addressing phytosanitary and tariff barriers.

MEDIUM TERM DEVELOPMENT PLAN (MTDP), SECTOR PRIORITIES AND TARGETS

Hon Speaker, we have tabled our Strategic Plan 2025-2029 and Annual Performance Plan 2025-26. These documents are aligned to the priorities and outcome interventions of the MTDP 2024-2029. Our Department shall lead and/or contribute under the following priorities:

- **Priority 1: Drive inclusive growth and job creation**

Our contribution shall include:

- a) Support of subsistence and emerging farmers, including commercialization of black farmers
- b) Agricultural land rehabilitation
- c) Promotion of conservation agricultural practices
- d) Creation of green jobs
- e) Empowerment of women, youth and persons with disability
- f) Promotion of market access
- g) Promoting inclusive rural economy and rural safety

- **Priority 2: Reduce Poverty and Tackle the High Cost of Living**

Our contribution shall include:

- a) Coordinate and implement the Provincial Food and Nutrition Strategy with the participation of all sector departments
- b) Invest in food insecure rural areas



c) Provide skills development and training for farmers and rural communities

- **Priority 3: Build a Capable, Ethical and Developmental State**

Our contribution shall include:

- a) Strengthening partnerships with Traditional Leaders, municipalities, commodity groups and the private sector.
- b) Review and implement rural development sector plans as our contribution to achieve the DDM model and coordinate investment of sector departments investment in rural areas.
- c) Effectively participating in the implementation of the rural safety strategy and
- d) Improving accountability and control systems in the department towards achieving a clean audit

PERFORMANCE 2024/25 AND COMMITMENTS FOR 2025/26

PRIORITY 1: DRIVING INCLUSIVE GROWTH AND JOB CREATION

Hon Speaker, Farmer Support and Development remains an important intervention to ensure effective integration of emerging farmers and producers within a thriving agricultural sector. We have conducted a comprehensive review of the application process, project selection and management as well as our monitoring and evaluation processes to strengthen the implementation of viable and sustainable projects.

For the 2025/26 financial year, a total of 1337 applications for funding were received; 340 from Xhariep, 359 from Thabo Mofutsanyana, 169 from Fezile Dabi, 170 from Lejweleputswa and 299 from Mangaung.



These numbers are indicative of the need for support throughout the Province. These applications will serve as the foundation for the development and implementation of a comprehensive Provincial Farmer Register that will be prioritized in 2025/26.

We implemented a youth outreach strategy through our Youth in Agriculture dialogues in all districts that resulted in the engagement with approximately 1400 young people in agriculture. They used that platform to identify and articulate many barriers and challenges that limits their meaningful participation in the sector. Most importantly, young farmers deliberated on solutions that could potentially address these limitations.

These sessions culminated in the first-ever Youth in Agriculture Summit that took place at the end of March 2025. Our journey with the youth has been an eye-opening and invigorating experience. Youth in agriculture is a very diverse and dynamic group of individuals with different socio-economic backgrounds, geographic locations, levels of education, and access to resources. We had to acknowledge the painful truth that one of the barriers faced by our youth is the bureaucratic processes and systems of the Department itself.

We must adapt to the fact that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to enhance youth participation in agriculture. It requires of us, for example, to re-engineer our funding processes. One of the commitments we made during the Youth Summit is to create a specific fund to be utilized to address immediate and short-term interventions required by the youth in our sector. This will be done within our current funding envelope and specific details will be finalized during the first quarter of the financial year.



In the 2025/26 financial year, we aim to initiate further outreach programmes focusing on Women and Persons with Disability in our provincial agricultural sector. Land is, of course, fundamental to agriculture. In partnership with the Department of Land Reform and Rural Development, we will convene a Provincial Land Summit this year that will focus on the acquisition, allocation and utilization of available land for agricultural purposes in our province.

FARMER SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTION

Hon Speaker, during the 2024/2025 financial year, we initiated a review of previously-funded projects deemed to be either fully or partially non-operational starting from 2018. Our preliminary review identified a total of 25 projects;

- 5 projects in Fezile Dabi, including 3 poultry, 1 red meat and 1 vegetable
- 6 projects in Lejweleputswa including 3 piggery, 2 poultry and 1 vegetable
- 4 projects in Mangaung, including 2 poultry, 1 vegetable and 1 abattoir
- 6 projects in Thabo Mofutsanyana including 1 aquaculture, 2 vegetable, 2 piggery and 1 mixed farming
- 4 projects in Xhariep including 2 aquaculture, 1 red meat and 1 vegetable

Thus far, we have met with beneficiaries and intervened in a number of these non-operational and/or distressed projects as follows:



- We have reached agreement and provided financial support to the Kokoma Piggery Project in Bothaville. The matter is under investigation by the Department, the Office of the Public Protector and law enforcement agencies. Investigation processes will continue unhindered and further consequence management will follow.
- We reached agreement with the beneficiaries of the Parys Poultry Project that never reached full functionality due to challenges created by both implementing agents and beneficiaries. We will attend to unfinished obligations but will be directly responsible for the financial aspects arising from such obligations.
- We will provide financial support to the new beneficiaries (identified by the Ngwathe Local Municipality) of the Parys Vegetable project and resuscitate existing infrastructure and facilities.
- We have provided financial support to the Lesabasaba vegetable project in Bloemfontein to address operational challenges.
- We will provide financial support to the original beneficiaries of Melkkraal farm and the Kutlwanong Farmers Trust in the Odendalsrus district and the Khauhelo Project in the Kroonstad-district. These are Land Reform projects that received inadequate or no post-settlement support following the initial land acquisition.
- The service provider of one project in Thabo Mofutsanyana has been handed over to the Office of the State Attorneys for recovery of funds

An investigation committee will systematically deal with these projects and will advise on appropriate action required.



Budget **BUDGET VOTE** 2025/2026

Other highlights of our performance during **2024/25** include:

- The CASP grant supported 40 projects to the value of R64.112m. Projects included Red Meat, Poultry, Horticulture and Marketing.
- The Illima/Letsema grant supported 14 projects to the value of R32.1m. Farmers planted 1 955 hectares in support of the grain sector with 900 hectares of maize, 855 hectares of sunflower and 200 hectares of soya beans.
- 9 projects were supported with 7 tractors, 1 combine harvester and implements to the value of R20.650m.
- 266 graduates and 223 farmers attended formal and non-formal training
- 18 commonages across the province (5 in Thabo Mofutsanyane, 2 in Lejweleputswa, 3 in Mangaung Metro, 3 in Fezile Dabi and 5 in Xhariep) were supported.
- We invested in 9 agro-processing and marketing projects which created 44 job opportunities
- 305 job opportunities were created through our LandCare programmes.

Our **commitments for 2025/26** include the following:

- The R81.195m **ILIMA/LETSEMA conditional grant**, will be implemented in support of (i) Individual Farmers targeting grains,



oilseeds and horticulture amounting, (ii) food security as well as (iii) our Youth and Women Entrepreneur Awards (WEA) programmes.

- The **CASP conditional grant** amounts to R194.909m and will support; Veterinary Services, Glen College, the Xhariep Aquaculture Training & Development Centre, Marketing & Agro-processing, the *Kaonafatso Ya Dikgomo* programme, Risk Management, the Graduate Placement Programme, Agricultural Extension Recovery Plan, Training and Capacity Building, Mechanization, Commonages and CPAs as well as LandCare programmes.

With regard to **LandCare**, we have initiated a process that will focus on the medium and long-term impact of the 2022 Jagersfontein mine disaster on our agricultural sector. I have met commercial and emerging farmers as well as the inter-departmental coordinating structure dealing with the agricultural impact of the mine disaster. Our commercial, emerging and subsistence farmers continue to suffer consequences relating to the restriction of farming activities and loss of income. Arable and grazing land as well as water sources are severely affected. The required environmental restrictions on farming activities on affected areas have been renewed.

We have multiple concerns, including the scope and pace of support that farmers are receiving from the mine in terms of the rehabilitation of farm lands and compensation for losses of small-scale and emerging farmers as per the agreement reached with the mine. The farming community of Jagersfontein cannot be abandoned in the aftermath of this disaster. We have escalated the Jagersfontein case



to both the Minister and the national Department of Agriculture so that we jointly find a resolution to this very complex challenge.

GLEN COLLEGE

Glen College has recently been in the news for all the wrong reasons and temporarily closed down to allow for maintenance and renovation work to be undertaken. We have had to take significant action to restore order at the College. This includes initiating consequence management involving 3 officials directly attached to the College. Further consequence management involving another 5 officials may be initiated, pending the outcome of current investigations.

We are working with the Free State Department of Public Works and Infrastructure for maintenance and renovation work to be performed by their artisans. We have also joined hands with the Free State Department of Education to assist us to further strengthen and capacitate the Glen College management team. Let me acknowledge and appreciate the assistance we received from the MECs and the HODs of the two Departments. The College is set to re-open on 22 April, depending on progress with regard to maintenance and renovation work. An academic recovery plan has been developed.

The College offers a Diploma in Agriculture, currently enrolling 195 students. During 2024/25, the College conducted a curriculum review process which resulted in new modules including biosecurity, sustainability and job creation through enhanced entrepreneurship skills. The 5-year College strategy and quality management systems have also been developed and/or reviewed.



Other achievements include the awarding of 78 diploma certificates during the January 2025 graduation ceremony whilst 390 learners obtained a National Certificate in Farming (NQF4) through our Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Programme.

VETERINARY SERVICES

Our Provincial Vet Laboratories in Kroonstad and Bloemfontein are at different stages of SANAS assessment relating to accreditation. The filling of posts at these labs remains a key priority. We also have 9 provincial primary animal health care facilities that provide veterinary care to areas that do not have access to the private sector as well as the projects supported under CASP. During 2024/25, a total number of 14 thousand, 785 (14785) clients were serviced by these facilities.

I must highlight the critical role that our Veterinary Services play with regard to biosecurity risks such as Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD). We acknowledge the unease caused by the outbreak of FMD along towns bordering the Free State and KwaZulu-Natal Province. FMD is a controlled animal disease in terms of the Animal Diseases Act, 1984 (Act No 35 of 1984). The Act prescribes certain control measures, like isolation and movement control, that are enforced by Veterinary Services. Disease control measures have been implemented from July 2023. We continuously monitor the management of the FMD outbreak and its potential impact on the Free State. This includes the following:

- Chief State Veterinarians, supported by Animal Health Technicians, are located in Warden and Harrismith –areas most vulnerable to the spread of FMD along the KZN border.



- We participate in weekly national meetings on the management of the continued spread of FMD in infected provinces.
- The Chief State Veterinarians continuously interact with farmers and farm unions in their respective areas. They are also in contact with security surveillance camera companies to investigate suspicious livestock movements in these areas.
- We have received numerous requests for roadblocks to be implemented. There is currently no legal basis as the area considered to be a threat, has not been declared a Disease Management Area (DMA) by the Minister of Agriculture. We continue to work closely with our Community Safety, Roads and Transport Department and the SAPS. Roadblocks will be implemented as and when necessary.
- Our farmers are our critical partners in our fight to keep the Free State FMD-free. We are appreciative of farmers who implement sound biosecurity measures and adhere to the principle of only introducing new livestock with proven health records and/or disease freedom. This is our strongest weapon against the further spread of FMD. Additional work, however, needs to be done to improve the enforcement of security measures at auctioneers and prospectors.
- Veterinary services play a critical role in export and the registration of export facilities as well as the registration and continued monitoring of abattoirs in the Free State. During 2024/25, a total number of 10 762 export permits were issued.



NATURAL DISASTERS

The 2024 veld-fire season was another devastating period for the Free State. Over 9,300 incidents were recorded and nearly 480,000 hectares burnt. These incidents claimed the lives of 13 people with various injuries sustained by others. Devastating losses of livestock, game, property, agricultural infrastructure and grazing land were experienced. Fire activity extended into November and December, signalling a shift in seasonality.

These realities demand stronger preparedness, greater coordination, and sustained investment in integrated, inclusive fire risk management. We have strengthened inter-governmental cooperation to improve the planning and coordination of preparatory and mitigation measures against veldfires. During January, our Department, DESTEA and COGTA facilitated a Joint Assessment of the 2024 Veld-fire Season for the provincial and local government sector.

Resolutions addressed, inter alia, an assessment of current capacity at provincial and municipal level, training needs, and municipal partnerships with Working on Fire. During 2025/26, we will be focusing on the organization of subsistence and emerging farmers into formalized Fire Protection Associations, training and implementing an extensive programme relating to veld-fire management. We have stated with distribution of fire-fighting equipment to provincial resorts and reserves as well as identified farming cooperatives and farmers in priority fire-belt areas have commenced.

OTHER MATTERS

Attention is particularly drawn to the following activities under the CASP grant for 2025/26:



Budget **BUDGET VOTE** 2025/2026

- Stipends of 136 graduates on the Graduate Placement Programme will be maintained
- 1 200 Beneficiaries will be trained and 20 projects to be supported with mentorship
- 13 Agricultural Advisors and 35 Assistant Agricultural Practitioners will be appointed on a 3-year contract under Extension Recovery

Our engagement and partnership with Agri SETA has yielded additional funding of R1.8 m for the implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and capacity building of College Staff members.

The NARYSEC programme has recruited 66 rural youth from 12 municipalities in the Free State. They will participate in different programmes, including National Geomatics with the Department of Land Reform & Rural Development, Cyber Security with NEMISA, Meat Classification with TADI, Drone Pilots with Bidvest Protea Coin Group and Construction and Handyman with CIDB and COGA.

We are particularly pleased to announce that the Da Vinci Institute has offered us 15 formal training opportunities of 12 months, targeting particularly young women in the field of Artificial Intelligence in Agriculture. This will support our commitment to invest in education and training for the future of Agriculture. These skills will not replace traditional expertise but will create a hybrid workforce to boost productivity, sustainability and profitability.

PRIORITY 2: REDUCE POVERTY AND TACKLE THE HIGH COST OF LIVING



Various successful food security programmes were facilitated during 2024/25. Our annual World Food Day took place on the 31st October 2024 in Tweespruit and 173 households were identified and supported with production inputs and garden tools. The International Day for Poverty Eradication took place in Soutpan where 69 households were supported. In addition, 17 food security projects and 27 institutions (schools, educare and disability centres, hospices and old-age homes) were supported.

Whilst continuing our work in collaboration with the Departments of Education and Social Development to support the establishment of food gardens at our schools and Community Development Nutrition Centres (CNDCs), we have also established various partnerships that will enhance our current food security programmes. These partnerships include supporting:

- **AFASA's 23 Series Programme** with approximately 500 beneficiaries participating in a food security programme in QwaQwa in the Thabo Mofutsanyana district
- 12 cooperatives of the **Eden Community Development Initiative** of Serdev in Edenville in the Fezile Dabi district
- **Red Cross** apple tree project at Woodbridge 1 in Thaba Nchu in the Mangaung District

Further partnerships with organizations such as **Meals on Wheels**, focusing on the support of food gardens, are being concluded. These partnerships aim to establish anchor food security projects in each of the five Districts. Our aim is to create a bigger empowerment network, linking our back-yard and small-scale farmers to more established food security



Budget **BUDGET VOTE** 2025/2026

projects and to fresh food markets. Food security intervention projects will also target specific economically-depressed rural areas, including Bethany, Tierpoort, Soutpan, Arlington, VanStadensrus and Verkeerdevlei. We will be identifying additional areas in consultation with COGTA and the House of Traditional Leaders.

The roll-out of the Presidential Employment Stimulus Programme (PES3) commenced late in the last quarter of 2024/25 and continues into the 2025/26 financial year. A total of 3,238 verified beneficiaries will receive agricultural input support. R37.250m is allocated in the 2025/26 towards Provincial Anchor Food Security programmes, the coordination of integrated Food and Nutrition Security, World Food Day and other awareness initiatives.

PRIORITY 3: BUILD A CAPABLE, ETHICAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL STATE

Hon. Speaker, during the 2024/25 financial year, the Department and the State Security Agency (SSA) commenced with the vetting process of the management echelon as well as certain higher-risk units in the Department. The vetting process will continue during 2025/26.

As a member of the JPCS Cluster, we will foster Rural Safety Partnerships through multi-sectorial safety coordination and promote rural safety initiatives focusing on rural communities. We will further collaborate with our Department of Community Safety, particularly on cross-border safety and stock and crop theft. In addition, we will support municipalities with commonage development and collaborate with traditional councils. Rural Development will strengthen the implementation of the Integrated Rural



Development Sector Strategy (IRDSS) with direct emphasis on its 6 Pillars.

The department obtained an unqualified audit opinion for the 2023/24 financial year, though the audit outcome of its performance management information leaves much to be desired. This remains an on-going area of work and is intrinsically linked to the necessity to develop and implement more effective monitoring and evaluation measures.

BUDGET ALLOCATION

Honourable Speaker, the budget vote structure and programmes of this Vote has not changed as the transfer of the Environmental Affairs function is not yet complete. We are awaiting the proclamation by the Presidency as well as pursuing consultations with the DPSA and National Treasury.

The Department receives a budget allocation of **R833.720 million in 2025/26** with outer year funding of R911.577 million and R949,933 million in the 2026/27 and 2027/28 financial years respectively. The Department's final allocation has increased by 0,5% on equitable share allocation. Overall, there is a decrease in the Department's allocation of 2,7% for the 2025/26 financial year compared to the adjusted allocation for 2024/25.

Equitable Share Funding amounting to R533.297 million is allocated as follows:

- Administration: R223. 677 million
- Sustainable Resource Use & Management: R41.489 million,
- Agricultural Producer Support & Development: R113.841 million,



- Veterinary Services: R53.632 million,
- Research and Development: R47.056 million
- Agricultural Economics Services: R14.507 million,
- Agricultural Education & Training: R25.207 million and
- Rural Development: R13.888 million

The Infrastructure Enhancement Allocation (IEA) amounts to **R50.262 million** with **R10 million** from Earmarked Funds (Disaster Management) Conditional grants amount to **R285.855 million**. This comprises of CASP at **R 194.909 million**, Ilima/Letsema in the amount of **R81.195 million** and Land Care of **R9.751 million**.

CONCLUSION

Hon. Speaker, we remain appreciative of the constructive engagements and input with our agriculture industry stakeholders such as AFASA, NAFU, Free State Agriculture, our WARD and YARD structures, BRICS Youth and commodity organizations such as VKB, OVK and SenWes. We have structured positive collaborations with non-profit organizations such as Red Cross SA, Meals on Wheels and Serdev. This is the solid foundation from which we position agriculture to drive inclusive growth, women and youth empowerment, job creation and dealing with poverty and under-development.

I want to express my appreciation to the former Head of Department, the current acting Head of Department, the Executive Management and our Departmental Officials for the work done towards compiling this Budget Vote and the plans contained herein. This is only the first phase of the work as the second phase, namely execution, will determine the impact we make on the FS agriculture sector.



To the Chairperson and Members of the Portfolio Committee, I want to express my appreciation for the constructive engagements we continue to have.

Let me also thank my family for their support and understanding of the dynamics of our work environment.

To my organization, the African National Congress as well as the Premier and Members of the Executive Council, we remain appreciative of your leadership and guidance. Let me also take this opportunity to thank my family and the unconditional support.

Honourable Speaker, I table the 2025/26 budget vote of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.

I thank you



Action Plan 2025/2026

Our budget for 2025/26 will seek to implement the priorities of the 7th Administration and distributed in all our districts as follows:

1. **Administration:** Provide leadership, administration and financial support
2. **Sustainable Resource Management:** Provide agricultural support services to land users in order to ensure sustainable development and management of natural resource
3. **Farmer Support and Development:** Provide support to producers through agricultural development programmes. Enable and support transformation of the agriculture sector to actively contribute to economic growth, inclusion, equality and the creation of decent work. Increase food production through producer support and development initiatives.
4. **Veterinary Services:** Provide Veterinary services to clients in order to ensure healthy animals, sustainable and profitable animal production enterprises, and safe trade in animal's products of animal origin and the wellbeing of animals and the public.
5. **Research and Development:** Provide expert, problem focused and client centric agricultural research, technology development and transfer impacting on development.
6. **Agricultural Economics:** Provide timely and relevant agricultural economic services to ensure equitable participation in the economy.
7. **Education and Training:** Provide and facilitate structured and vocational agricultural education and training to establish a knowledgeable, prosperous and competitive sector.
8. **Rural Development:** Facilitate rural development strategies for socio-economic growth.



Annexure A

<i>Budget allocation per programme</i>	2024/25
	(R'000)
Programmes	
ADMINISTRATION	196 962
SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	66 712
FARMER SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT	348 657
VETERINARY SERVICES	76 633
TECHNOLOGY, RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES	80 255
AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS	15 516
STRUCTURED AGRICULTURAL TRAINING	32 619
RURAL DEVELOPMENT	11 738
Total for Programmes	

<i>Budget allocation per economic classification</i>	2024/25
	(R'000)
<i>Economic classification</i>	
Compensation of employees	470 656
Goods and Services	316 738
Transfer payments	2 110
Payment for Capital assets	39 588
Total for Economic classification	829 092

<i>Budget allocation per conditional grants & IEA</i>	2024/25
	(R'000)
CASP	197 896
Ilima/Letsema Grant	53 740
Landcare grant	9 333
EPWP Grant	2 000
Disaster Management	6 000
Infrastructure Enhancement Allocation (IEA)	56 262
Total for Conditional grant & IEA	325 231