

Press release: More Eden drought aid needed.

Date: 3 June 2010

Body: Western Cape Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Gerrit van Rensburg, asked National Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Tina Joemat-Pettersson, for an additional R50 million disaster aid towards the drought stricken Eden District. “The R26.9 million received from National Government earlier this year is spent”, Van Rensburg said today. The Eden District was declared a disaster area in November 2009 due to an ongoing drought.

Feed coupon vouchers were issued to 810 livestock farmers during April to the value of R14.2 million, of which R12.1 million were drawn on during the same month. In May, feed vouchers to the value of R11 million were issued to 928 farmers, Van Rensburg said.

Van Rensburg added: “A balance of R1 million is being reserved for transporting, processing and distributing donated feed from elsewhere in the country. The donated feed will be earmarked for small farmers suffering from the drought”.

The Western Cape Department of Social Development is also assisting farm worker families in the drought stricken area. The Department of Social Development is focussing on farms that did not benefit from the feed voucher aid, which is reserved for livestock producers. There are also many vegetable and fruit farmers in the drought stricken district. Farm workers, who are at risk of losing their jobs as a result of the drought, are being assisted with food parcels worth R1000 for a period of three months.

The Department of Social Development is working with Agri Western Cape in identifying families in dire need. An understanding was reached with farmers to keep people in employment, and to top up the food parcel value with cash wages in order to comply with minimum wage legislation. Currently 43 families are being supported through this initiative.

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