

**BUDGET ADDRESS DELIVERED BY WESTERN CAPE  
PROVINCIAL MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, DR IVAN MEYER,  
DURING BUDGET DEBATE ON VOTE 11, WESTERN CAPE  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.**

**Tuesday, 26 March 2024: Western Cape Provincial Parliament**

Honourable Speaker and Deputy Speaker

Honourable Premier Honourable Members of the Provincial Cabinet

The Honourable Leaders of the Opposition

Honourable Members of the Provincial Legislature

Special guests, the media, and members of the public

1. Honourable Speaker, today I rise to table the Western Cape Department of Agriculture's 2024/2025 Appropriation Budget of R1.018 billion.
2. Honourable Speaker when I arrived at the Legislature this morning, I was met by the Western Cape's 2023 Agri Worker of

the Year, Vivian Jacobs, and members of the Western Cape Prestige Agri-workers Forum. I welcome Vivian to the House today.

3. Honourable Speaker, Annemarie Verwey also fondly known as Suster Ann or Mammie is my special guest today
4. Suster Ann has been involved in voluntary community activities in Murraysburg for more than 23 years.
5. In 2023 she received the gold award at the Western Cape Service Excellence Awards in the category Best Citizen: Individual.
6. Agbare Speaker, die dame met die hoed het 'n nasionale ambassadeur vir die Karoo geword toe sy in Februarie 2024 'n aanbieding by die Landbou Weekblad se 'Oplossings vir Suid-Afrika se Platteland'-konferensie gedoen het.

7. Dankie, Tannie Ann, dat jy 'n verskil gemaak het en dat jy my vereer het deur my uitnodiging te aanvaar om vandag my spesiale gas te wees.
8. Honourable Speaker, when I took up my position as the Provincial Minister of Agriculture, I immediately set about establishing five ministerial priorities - each with a clear goal and a measurable outcome. Today, I reflect on the successes of the agriculture sector.
9. Honourable Speaker, Agriculture in the Western **Cape has thrived on the edge of the chaos – chaos primarily caused by the National ANC Government.**
10. What makes this achievement remarkable, Honourable speaker is that agriculture has thrived despite the failures of the National Government – failures that impact directly the growth and job opportunities within the agricultural sector.
11. Honourable Speaker the most pressing failures, according to the

Agbiz/IDC Agribusiness Confidence Index results for the fourth quarter of 2023, include:

- intensified delays and inefficiencies at the ports
- rising crime and
- deteriorating rail and road infrastructure
- rising protectionism in key export markets
- increased geopolitical uncertainty and
- load-shedding.

12. Honourable Speaker, my first priority was **structured education, training and research.**

13. Over the last five years, the Western Cape Department of Agriculture has:

- Provided agricultural education and training to 2,248 registered students since 2019.
- Offered short skills courses to 17 098 beneficiaries.
- Approved financial support to 539 qualifying students.
- Introduced a New Diploma in Agriculture.

- Obtained accreditation from the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations for qualifications such as Livestock Farmer (Supervisor) and Orchard and Vineyard Foreman.

14. There has also been a 77.4% increase in the number of schools that have expanded their curriculum to include at least one agricultural subject.

15. Honourable Speaker, our research aims to help grow the the agricultural sector and create jobs.

16. Central to that growth is the quality of our scientific support for our producers as highlighted by:

- Our Bull Project making genetically superior bulls available to smallholder farmers to bolster the quality of their herds.
- The 17th Annual Ostrich Auction bolstered the ostrich industry with superior genetic material.
- The seventh round of funding of the Alternative Crops Fund (ACF) allocated R1,944 million to nine research projects.

- The Western Cape Cannabis Framework and Implementation Plan (CanPlan) and
- The Flyover Project which I will return to later.

17. Honourable Speaker my second priority is **farmer support**.

18. Honourable Speaker, the past five years have not been easy for our producers and exporters of agricultural products.

19. **Despite this Agriculture is however thriving on the edge of chaos.**

20. As promised at the beginning of our term we have:

- increased the Gross Value Added (GVA) of primary agriculture production in the Western Cape by an average of 3% over the past four years. This is against the background of drought, COVID-19, floods, the energy crisis and failing infrastructure and

- Supported the expansion of our commercial primary agricultural sector, both White and Black, to ensure regional food security and increase export earnings.

21. Honourable Speaker, the Department's Food security initiatives continue to make a difference in the lives of vulnerable households. Thank you to our project management company, Casidra for your work in this regard.
22. Honourable Speaker, I am excited that the youth are taking on the issue of food security in our communities.
23. One such example is the Feed the Khaltsha Community Garden based at the premises of Sibongile Day and Night Care Centre in Khayelitsha.
24. Their unwavering determination accompanied by infrastructural development and support from the Department of Agriculture had propelled them towards sustainable vegetable production.

25. Honourable Speaker, allow me to welcome the youth behind Feed the Khaltsha Community Garden - Mthandazo Xabanisa, Baluleka Sisusa and Mandla Bhomela, - with only a rake, a spade and a passion for agriculture have taken up the fight against poverty and food insecurity in their community.
26. Another recipient of the support of the Western Cape Government is Caroline Charles from Beaufort West, who is the proud gardener of Aunty Cares Home-Food Garden.
27. Agbare Speaker, in Caroline Charles (sy is met ons vandag) se woorde: "*Wanneer jy 'n groentetuin het , het jy kos en jy is ook instaat omselfs die armes te voed*".  
Baie Dankie vir jou teenwoordigheid vandag Caroline Charles.
28. Honourable Speaker during the period under review the Western Cape Government has supported 170 black commercial farmers and conducted 20 349 visits to farmers to provide advisory services.

29. Honourable Speaker, one of the recipients of our support is the Akkedisberg Workers Trust. They are the owners of the Akkedisberg Boedery Pty (Ltd) represented here today by Christel Moses and Mariette Moos. I recently visited them in the Overberg region.

30. Ten years ago, 20 beneficiaries - all agri-workers – successfully negotiated a 30-year lease agreement of 20 ha with the Dryer family (owner of the land) and established the Akkedisberg Boedery Pty (Ltd). They immediately established 16 ha of different wine cultivars on a 20 ha portion of land. Today, ten years later they are *the proud owners of the award-winning Southern Treasures Pinotage 2021.*

Thank you, Christel and Mariette, for joining us today.

31. Speaker, our research has proven that for land reform to be successful the project must have access to land tenure security, capital, passionate, hardworking beneficiaries, mentors, access to markets and production input investment.

32. This is confirmed in a recent independent external evaluation of the Western Cape Department of Agriculture's support to agricultural land reform businesses which, revealed a 83% success rate of a representative sample of land reform businesses funded and supported by the department for the last five years.
33. Honourable Speaker, last week I joined our partners from the Partnership for Agricultural Land Solutions (PALS) in Aurora, Piketberg.
34. With innovative funding from Nedbank the recipients of the Pele a Pele Agri, Simon Mabete and his son Romeo Mabete were able to receive the title deed to almost 1 500 hectares of prime agricultural land.

35. This was made possible through the willingness of the farmer, Gerrit van Merwe and his son Arno van Merwe supported by the excellent facilitation of the team at PALS to embrace the role farmers can play in transforming the agricultural sector.
36. Facilitated by the team at PALS the project brings together two generations of van der Merwe and two generations of Mabete committed to embracing the future and growing together.
37. Agbare Speaker, my derde prioriteit, landelike veiligheid, is in lyn met die Wes-Kaapse regering se fokus op veiligheid.
38. Agbare Speaker, die Wes-Kaap het hard gewerk om die Provinsiale Landelike Veiligheidsplan te implementeer, wat vereis dat die regering vennootskappe met die Suid-Afrikaanse Polisie, Buurt- en Plaaswagte, die privaatsektor en enige ander struktuur wat kan bydra om ons landelike gemeenskappe se veiligheid.
39. Ons plaaswerkers en eienaars moet in staat wees om hul

besigheid te doen om die nasie te voed en ons ekonomie 'n hupstoot te gee sonder om bekommerd te wees dat hulle deur misdadigers geteiken sal word.

40. Ons vennootskappe met landelike gemeenskappe en die 450 geregistreerde plaas- en buurtwagte speel 'n kritieke rol in die verwesenliking van ons droom van 'n misdaadvrye landelike landskap.
41. Honourable Speaker, with the support of my colleague, the Western Cape Minister of Police Oversight and Community Safety, Reagan Allen, I will continue to forge ahead with plans to ensure that farmers, agri-workers and rural communities who are the backbone of our agricultural economy, are safe.
42. Honourable Speaker, my fourth priority was **market access**.
43. Honourable speaker as highlighted by my colleague, the Western Cape Minister of Economic Opportunities, Minister Mireille Wenger, in the 2023 Provincial Economic Review and Outlook

(PERO), the Agricultural sector grew by 37% over the last ten years (2013-2023).

44. Since 2018 agriculture and agri-processing exports increased from R63 billion to R104 billion in 2023 which is an annual average growth of 11%.
45. During this period we have seen the relative share of Western Cape agri-processing exports to Africa increased from 35% to 37%.
46. The relative share for both primary agriculture and agri-processing in the Americas has increased from 6% to 9% and 7 to 10% respectively.
47. The relative share of WC primary agriculture exports to Asia have increased from 31% to 35%.
48. Honourable Speaker, Jacobs Jam Company is a family-owned (husband & wife) start-up green fields jam processing company

49. With the support of the Western Cape Department of Agriculture Jacobs Jam has been able to demonstrate remarkable business growth.
50. Presently they have been listed at Checkers, Shoprite, Pick n Pay and Spar – all made possible by the ongoing support the Department of Agriculture has provided.
51. Nigel and Christynn Jacobs, the co-owners of Jacobs Jam are with us today.
52. Honourable Speaker, our Veterinary Services play a key role in export facilitation.
53. Over the last five years our Veterinary Export Certificate Office Issued 36 657 export certificates thereby facilitating exports to the value of R1.5 billion.
54. Last year we presented a very successful inaugural Provincial Veterinary Week which had a strong focus on biosecurity.

55. **Speaker, Agriculture is thriving at the edge of chaos**
56. Honourable Speaker the fifth Ministerial priority was **climate change.**
57. Honourable Speaker, the aerial mapping of agricultural commodity production and infrastructure in the Western Cape provide accurate data on crop yields and production trends, crucial for production forecasts and understanding market dynamics.
58. In this regard the FlyOver Project which is unique to the Western Cape Department of Agriculture Project gives insight into the impacts of micro-climate and the regional change on crop suitability in traditional growing areas.
59. Eugene du Preez of SIQ, the company that did the actual flying and data gathering for our third iteration of Flyover joins us today.

60. Thank you, Eugene du Preez and your team, for strengthening the Western Cape Government's evidence-led governance approach with credible and reliable data.

61. Honourable Speaker, during this period under review the Western Cape Department of Agriculture:

- Contributed to the sustainability and development of agriculture by rehabilitating 142 708 hectares of agricultural land with 2 990 hectares of cultivated land under Conservation Agriculture Practices.
- Created 5 794 green jobs in rural areas
- Rendered 5 195 technical services (LandCare) to mitigate the impacts of climate change and enhance resilience and
- Co-hosted the X International Symposium on Irrigation of Horticultural Crops with the University of Stellenbosch.

62. Honourable Speaker, the MOU between the Departments of Agriculture and Environmental Affairs and Development Planning and the University of Stellenbosch School for Climate Studies will give further impetus to our national and international collaboration and seek global research partners and climate change funding.
63. Honourable Speaker, In 2022 Karen Ross the Secretary for the Californian Department of Food and Agriculture and I signed an MOU to promote cooperation in agriculture.
64. Today I can report that officials from Western Cape Department of Agriculture and the Californian Department of Food and Agriculture have successfully engaged 13 other Mediterranean Regions and concluded the Mediterranean Action Partnership agreement at the recent COP28 in Dubai.
65. Honourable Speaker earlier this year in line with the Western Cape Government's commitment to respond proactively to the impact of climate change, the first Western Cape Cabinet Inter-Ministerial Committee on Climate Change was established. The Western Cape also held its inaugural Climate Change Indaba.

66. Honourable Speaker, **Agriculture is thriving on the edge of chaos.**
67. Honourable Speaker, there are ambitious investment plans underway for the expansion of Cape Winelands and the development of airport infrastructure and an intermodal transport hub, with aspirations to connect rail, road, sea and air in the future.
68. I am excited about the potential for the development to become an Agri-corridor.
69. Honourable Speaker, I welcome Deidre Davids of the Cape Winelands Airport to the House today.
70. As I conclude, Honourable Speaker, I make the following key announcements: Budget 2024/2025 and MTEF allocates the following budgetary allocations:

- **R196.2 million to promote the sustainable use and management of natural resources. R40.3 million is budgeted for ecological infrastructure, R38.5 million for river protection works and R38 million towards flood damage support.**
- **R216.4 million towards producer support services,**
- **Extension and Advisory Services R35. 4 million and Food Security R16. 7 million.**
- **R57.8 million to provide animal health services to prevent and control animal diseases**
- **R97.8 million to improve agricultural production through research, focusing on mitigation and adaptation options for farmers in response to climate change.**
- **R30.5 million to provide production economics and marketing services to agri-businesses**
- **R48.2 million towards education and training, and agricultural skills development**
- The refurbished Provincial Veterinary Lab will be open for business from 1 April 2024 and has already received its SANAS accreditation.

- Honourable Speaker I will open 39<sup>th</sup> World Veterinary Association Congress which will take place in Cape Town, Western Cape from 16-19 April 2024

71. Honourable Speaker, over the last five years Agriculture **has thrived on the edge of chaos and will continue to do so.**

72. Agriculture is ready to continue its mission of growing the economy and creating jobs.

73. Honourable Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to table the Western Cape Department of Agriculture's Budget of R1.018 billion for deliberation in the House.

74. Honourable Speaker, this is a budget to invest in agriculture and the economy of the Western Cape.

75. I thank you.

