

Minister Thoko Didiza announces interventions to assist agricultural sector during Coronavirus COVID-19 lockdown

6 Apr 2020

The Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, Ms Thoko Didiza, MP is pleased to announce the department's interventions to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19.

The department has ring-fenced R1.2 billion for assistance to mainly target financially distressed small-scale farmers. Of the R1.2 billion, R400 million has been allocated for farmers within the Proactive Land Acquisition Strategy (PLAS) programme and the remainder will be channeled towards all other farmers that are mainly within the following commodity sectors:

- Poultry: Day old chicks, Point of lay chickens, feed, medication and sawdust;
- Other Livestock: Feed and medication.
- Vegetables: Seedlings, fertilizer, pesticides, herbicides and soil correction.
- Other commodity sectors will be evaluated on a case by case basis, as the Department continuously monitors the impact of COVID-19 on the sector at large.

Qualifying criteria for farmers

- South African citizens who have been actively farming for a minimum of 12 months and currently in the production season or cycle.
- Be registered on farmer register, commodity database or provincial database [Those who are not on the Farmer Register will be registered to benefit].
- Communal farmers.
- Smallholder farmers with annual turnover between R50 000 and R1 million.
- The adjudication will prioritise women, youth and people with disabilities.

Exclusions

Mechanisation, infrastructure and overhead costs will NOT be supported. This is not comprehensive support but intervention package amid COVID-19.

Farmers who are preparing for the 2020 summer production season will not be supported. The aim is to provide immediate to near-term support to smallholder farmers currently affected by COVID-19.

Farmers who are currently receiving support through other programmes of government and its entities.

No payment for debts.

The applications for this funding will be open from 08 April 2020 and will close on 22 April 2020. No late entries will be accepted. Application forms will be available on 08 April 2020 on the departmental website – www.dalrrd.gov.za and through national, provincial, district and local offices of both the national Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development and Provincial Departments of Agriculture. Applications will be lodged electronically at applications@dalrrd.gov.za or submitted to the offices as outlined.

The Minister wishes to also encourage all stakeholders within the sector to observe and implement regulations as published by Government Notice No. 318 of 18 March 2020, as amended by Government Notices Nos. R 398 of 25 March 2020 and R419 of 26 March 2020. The observation and implementation of these prescripts on health and occupational safety is also critical for the farmworkers, who are the backbone of the food supply system.

“I urge all employers within the sector to fully comply with all the applicable prescripts. Together, as stakeholders within the sector we have a mandate to ensure that there is access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food for our country,” said Minister Didiza.

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