

New hatching machine to boost farmer centre output

The purchase of a large hatching machine by the Kgora Farmers Training Centre in Mahikeng is expected to increase poultry production capacity.

In a statement on Wednesday, 30 August, the North West Department of Agriculture and Rural Development said the purchase of the equipment is also in response to the request by Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development Minister, Thoko Didiza, during a visit to the centre in February this year.

During a meeting with MEC Desbo Mohono, the minister highlighted a need for the centre to also hatch broilers, stating that there is a shortage of day-old broilers in the country.

The new machine is both a hatcher and setter combined and can also hatch ducks, geese, quail and pigeons.

The department said that this is an upgrade as the hatchery used by the centre could only produce up to 2 000 chicks per week and could not meet the high demand of chickens meant for food security projects. The new machinery is expected to increase poultry production capacity at the centre to 12,000 chicks a month.

Mohono commended the development, noting that the department will now be able to produce more broilers.

"This is indeed an improvement and a step in the right direction. This also means we will now increase the number of beneficiaries because the chickens that we produce here are donated to farmers in the province for rearing and others are donated to different applicable projects as part of departmental food security programmes," Mohono said.

About the centre and skills offered

Kgora Farmer Training Centre is a state-owned agricultural skills training centre based in Mahikeng and tasked with the responsibility of improve farming skills of all levels.

The centre is accredited by the Agricultural Sector Education and Training Authority (AgriSETA), as an education and training provider in the agriculture sector on animal and plant production.

Kgora introduced for the first time basic hatchery management training to its list of skills development courses last year. The course aims to train aspiring poultry, as well as experienced farmers to improve their results.

Farmers who enrol for the training learn the practical aspects of hatchery management, which includes the biology of fertile egg production and handling, setter and hatcher environment, processing day-old chicks and hatchery biosecurity.

"On successful completion of courses, students are offered national certificates, National Qualifications Framework (NQF) 1 – 4 that are recognised by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), in terms of the SAQA Act of 1995.

Training at the centre ranges from excursion, demonstrations, and refreshers up to credit bearing unit standards to address knowledge and skills gaps on arable farming, livestock husbandry, agribusiness, aquaculture, as well as organisational, marketing and financial management," the department said.

It further emphasised that the centre can only accept up to a certain number of participants at a time, therefore "it is operated on a first come first serve basis".

"Members of the public are urged to enquire with the local agricultural offices on skills development courses offered at Kgora Farmers Training Centre," the department said.

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