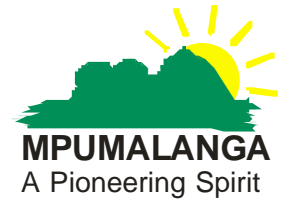




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Livestock Improvement (Masibuyele Esibayeni) Programme

Masibuyele Esibayeni (MESP) is aimed at improving the performance parameters of the production stock through provision of specific genetic pool by supporting emerging farmers with quality sires and dams. Farmers get well equipped with dam lines, to introduce a similar bloodline sire for enhancing the performance of their dams that would be depicted in their progenies. Masibuyele Esibayeni was first piloted in 2011/2012 in all the seven CRDP municipalities, namely: Bushbuckridge, Chief Albert Luthuli, Dr JS Moroka, Mkhondo, Nkomazi, Dr Pixley ka-Isaka Seme and Thembisile Hani.

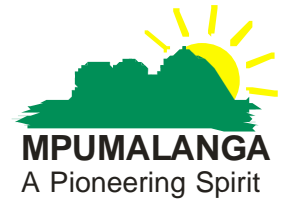
During financial year 2012/13, the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Land Administration (Dardla) had set aside R5,5 million for the Nguni Cattle Breeding Project, in conjunction with the University of Limpopo and the IDC, which contributed R2,5 million towards the re-introduction of these indigenous breed. Qualifying farmers are loaned 30 Heifers and 1 Bull, as a nucleus for production and will pass a new stock to others beneficiaries after a period of five years. The Dardla further established the Livestock Improvement Programme (inclusive of Nguni as a Project) under the auspices of Bull and Heifer, Ram and Ewe and Buck and Doe, supporting farmers at the ratio of 1 sire: 25 dams per specific project.

The major challenge facing the emerging and communal cattle farmer is the lack of supply of good quality production stock due to lack of financial resources to procure quality breeding sires. This problem leads to a serious livestock mismanagement that normally end up in inbreeding and stunted growth – a breeding system that is not promoted as it leads to loss of performance vigour.



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Despite the surmountable achievements the MESP Programme has attained, there were challenges as well. During 2012/13 winter season, the province experienced heavy ambient temperature drops that resulted in animals losing lots of their body reserves, ultimately suffering unabated hypothermia mortalities in areas around Msukaligwa and Thembisile Hani Local Municipalities. At the time, there was a sudden drop in the nutritional status of the grasslands due to nutrients leaching, thus the grass sward cracked and lost nutrients much earlier than anticipated. A sudden spread of the tick-borne disease such as Red-Water, also resulted in sudden unexpected mortalities.

The department came up with numerous intervention systems to deal and counteract all possible future risks and challenges that the MESP Programme had come across in the past, at both the Micro and Macro levels:

- The application of the effective Culling and Selection Methodologies through the development of the Livestock Disposal and Acquisition Strategy and Plan; and
- Development of an activity schedule for on farm systems maintenance;

The MESP Programme's vision is to create an environment for all livestock farmers to meaningfully participate in both the red and white meat industries, with the ultimate aim of improving the provincial rural economy. Emerging farmers who have already benefitted from it are applauding its contributions in changing their farming lives.