

EXTENSION OFFICERS

key to increasing farmer productivity

In 2018, the Department of Gauteng Agriculture and Rural Development (GDARD) and the NAMC joined hands to examine the role of extension officers in increasing farmer productivity.

“The study was undertaken to assess the extension services as catalyst for improved farm productivity in Gauteng province of South Africa based on the four objectives” said agricultural economist Lindikaya Myeki.

Seventy-nine (79) Gauteng extension officers from all the Gauteng municipal districts were interviewed.

According to the NAMC’s Markets and Economic Research Centre (MERC), the study revolved around four objectives; a) determining the status of the extension services, b) identifying extension services factors that enhance productivity and profitability of the smallholder farming, c) developing a model that ensures efficiency and productivity of farm enterprises and d) assessing the socio-economic impact of the quality extension service.

The former Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) Directorate: National Extension Reform (NER) had started the process of developing a new integrated national policy on extension and advisory services.

A NER website was developed to this effect, to “facilitate a harmonised extension and advisory services approach for South Africa; give extension and advisory services a sector-wide dimension and representation.”

In lieu of this, GDARD began the process of evaluating its extension services as little was known off its impact. Quite significantly, the

study findings were interesting.

“37% of sampled extension officers indicated that extension service needs to be integrated and coordinated to the value chain approach in order to achieve better farm productivity and profitability” Myeki asserted.

Furthermore, the study proposed four areas extension services can be boosted to increase farm productivity and profitability wherein;

- technology (improved seeds, livestock genetics, irrigation, mechanization, machinery),
- environment (soil, rainfall, temperature, humidity, weather, drought and floods),
- capacity utilization (technical efficiency), and
- scope and scale economies (influenced by incentives, tax and subsidies).

In finality, did the study achieve on its four objectives?

“Indeed, however GDARD will be the suitable institution to answer if the four objectives of the study were met” reported Myeki.

NAMC provided its comprehensive report to the recent Gauteng Validation Workshop and a full report shall be issued by GDARD.

For more information on the study, contact; Lindikaya Myeki lindikaya@namc.co.za

Physical Address:

536 Francis Baard Street,
Meintjiesplein Building, Block A,
4th Floor, Arcadia, 0007

Postal Address:

Private Bag X935, Pretoria,
0001

Telephone: (012) 341 1115

Website: www.namc.co.za

Follow us on:

