

Agriculture

Farming bodies unite for food security and stability of rural areas

CONCERN ABOUT DECAY OF SMALL TOWNS



by **Garth Johnstone** • about 23 hours ago

 120 Views



As dozens of towns in KZN struggle with food security, Kwanalu, Agri SA and various partners have worked together to provide more than R5m in food aid. Pictures: Supplied

MEANDER CHRONICLE REPORTER

Food donations to the value of R5m have been moved into rural towns and communities of KwaZulu-Natal, feeding an estimated 500 000 people, and helping provide food security for a further 300 000 in the upcoming weeks, through the work of the **KZN Agricultural Union (Kwanalu)**, **Agri SA** and partners after the recent unrest.

In response to the threat to food security in the province after the unrest, violence and looting in July, Kwanalu and Agri SA amalgamated resources with WeareSouthAfricans and their partners, ReMAX SA, One Logix, Toyota Knights, various Round Tables and Hino Pietermaritzburg, to bring in more than five tons of donated food from Gauteng, 32 tons of mielie meal donated by SenWes, four tons of food donated by Karino Farms Mpumalanga, through OrangeHearts (Citrus Growers Association), potatoes and onions from OneFarmShare (Hello Choice) and two tons of sugar from UCL Pty Ltd, **amounting to a total of R5m worth of food aid.**

RURAL STABILITY

“Kwanalu has undertaken to restore value chains, address rural security and restore rural stability, on behalf of our members, to the rural communities surrounding our members’ businesses. Added to this, our leaders in these towns are advancing on ideas on strengthening civil society to achieve stability and to stop the decay of these critical towns across the province,” said CEO of Kwanalu, **Sandy la Marque**.



A survey revealed that 31 rural towns suffered massive destruction, while a further 10 were temporarily left without food for their surrounding rural communities.

During the unrest across the province, Kwanalu conducted a real-time survey among its members to assess the extent of the damage to farms, rural towns, and their surrounding communities. The survey revealed that 31 rural towns suffered massive destruction, while a further 10 were temporarily left without food for their surrounding rural communities.



Agri SA
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KZN farmers donate food aid despite suffering hardship

The KwaZulu-Natal Agricultural Union (Kwanalu) and Agri SA have distributed food donations to the value of more than R5 million in an ...
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“The resilience of the farming community and the spirit of philanthropy of our many partners, turned this disaster into an opportunity for assisting vulnerable communities, resulting in a total of donations to the value of R5m,” said Hurly.

“Rebuilding the decimated rural towns is not going to be easy but it does provide an opportunity to review how rural towns operate and to identify how safety, security and stability can be strengthened. The unrest of July 2021 has shown that the functioning of rural towns is critical to the survival of thousands of people in the deep rural areas of KZN,” she said.

She continued that the affected towns are all dependent on external parties to provide their supplies including food, cash, and services.

“This tragedy must be used to strengthen the independence of rural towns, that the businesses of the townships and towns be better integrated ensuring solidarity into the future and that where business opportunities exist that these be investigated and funded to provide the much-needed jobs in rural areas,” said Hurly.



The stability and security of rural towns is on the minds of many, in all aspects of the farming sector.

“Kwanalu has further developed a business plan aimed at supporting women and youth in rural businesses and entrepreneurship, and when training is combined with a business stimulus and business incubation, it can be used as a vehicle to reconstruct the 31 rural towns. Because it is aimed at the whole agriculture value chain, it can grow new farmers but more importantly provide a mechanism to link these farmers into local and new markets,” said Hurly.

For further information on Kwanalu, [click here](#).

In an [article published by TimesLive](#), it was reported that a range of supportive interventions would be required to save many small-scale farmers, fresh produce markets and emerging livestock farmers in KwaZulu-Natal from bankruptcy, after the threat to food security caused by the riots.

This was according to Nkosi Zwelivelile Mandela, chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Agriculture, Land and Rural Development, which conducted oversight visits to the province to investigate the impact recent of the riots and looting.

The oversight committee noted that the loss of life was the greatest tragedy of the saga.

“The loss of life has been the greatest tragedy of the sad saga of riots and looting. We tend to forget that the loss of one human life can impact the food security value chain. However, from our oversight visit we have observed widespread impact on the logistics and access to market. This will be with us for the foreseeable future and though all business will be impacted by this, small scale farmers, fresh produce markets and small farmers in the livestock industry have been more than adversely affected,” said Mandela.

The committee visited Cedara Agricultural College in Hilton, as well as Hlabisa, Vryheid, Utrecht, Ugu, Ethekeini and uMfolozi.