



INTERNET ARTICLE

Mitigation plans to deal with drought

14 November 2019

The Joe Gqabi District Municipality in partnership with the Department of Water and Sanitation, Farmers Associations and other sector departments convened a Joint Operations Committee (JoC) meeting in Barkley East, on 14th November 2019. The District is one of the regions that are severely affected by the drought, no drinking water and the dying livestock.

According to Disaster Manager, Mr. Pat Moko, the current situation in the region is so dire and it needs government departments to strategize together to mitigate the effects of drought. Eight towns that fall under the jurisdiction of Chris Hani District Municipality have become dry. They are Barkley East, Maclear, Ugie, Mt. Fletcher, Gemstown, Aliwal North, Burgersdorp and Lady Grey”.

The meeting was attended by various departments and farmer associations, including Department of Public Works (DPW), Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (Cogta), Health, Provincial Treasury, Department of Rural Development and Agrarian Reformed (DRDAR), Social Development and Department of Economic Development and Environmental Affairs, and Senqu Local Municipality.

“The Cogta releases an amount of R100 million to mitigate drought in the Province. In this amount of 100 million, the JGDM received R2.1 million that will be utilized for dam cooping, supplying feed for livestock, purchase of Jojo tanks and refurbishment of boreholes around the district”, said Moko.

Monwabisi L. Mvumbi of DRDAR said they received R20 million from Cogta to assist farmers in the region, feed will be supplied to farmers and the remaining money will need motivation on how to utilize it.

There is 74 million rand which was shared among drought stricken municipalities in the Province such as Amathole District Municipality, Sarah Baartman District, and added Moko.

Sector departments in this District expressed their frustration to the committee where about the challenges posed by the lack of water. There was no drinking water and as a result, most of them were forced to release their personnel in early afternoon.



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Sicelo Phongoma of JGDM presented a detailed report on the status of drought in JGDM and intervention programmes to ease the situation. In towns such as Maclear de-silting of dams and identify additional groundwater sources, Mt. Fletcher, the district is busy exploring additional groundwater and water restrictions in place with water supplied every second day (5:00 – 13:00), Ugie level 3 water restrictions in place. At Lady Grey, the municipality drilled and equipped 14 of 15 boreholes that are currently used to supplement dams. Barkley East water restrictions are in place and the municipality is implementing Level B drought tariffs. JGDM is implementing level 3 water restrictions in Aliwal North.

Agric Eastern Cape, Gialie Geyverstein told the meeting that “awareness is made to the farmers during this drought period not to burn grassland because there is no rainfall, livestock is dying but at this stage they are not prepared to down size their livestock”.

“DWS informed the committee that communication about drought need to be strengthened and awareness campaigns on drought and water conservations will be effected in this district. Water Service Authorities must also check the amount of water in the farmers according to the law”, said Mr Thembilizwi Macatshaza.

Lameki Jumba