**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 1188**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER [No 12-2021 SIXTH PARLIAMENT]
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**1188. Inkosi R N Cebekhulu (IFP) to ask the Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development:**

Whether she has a strategy in place to assist small-scale farmers in the 2021-2022 financial year to boost their production; if not, why not; if so, (a) what is the (i) nature and (ii) estimated budget of the strategy and (b) how will the strategy contribute in ensuring that small-scale farmers gain access to expert support about finance, markets and technology?                                                           **NW1379E**

**THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT:**

Yes. The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) has the Commercialisation Strategy and the newly reviewed Blended Funding Scheme to support farmers.

(a)(i) These are a combination of grants and loan funding to support production.

1. The budget for commercialising small-scale farmers is a joint partnership between the Jobs Fund and the DALRRD wherein each partner contributed R300 million each totalling to R600 million. The Blended Funding Scheme is being implemented in partnership with Fund Managers including the IDC. DALRRD will make an annual contribution of R200 million towards the implementation of the BFS, which will be determined from time to time based on uptake and as per National Treasury approval.
2. Over and above these interventions, DALRRD continues to provide effective agricultural support services to farmers through the Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme (CASP) and Ilima/Letsema conditional grants. The support provided is intended to promote and facilitate agricultural development to all producers throughout the value chain for domestic use and export purposes. In support of agricultural production for the 2021/22 financial year a total amount of R1.4billion has been allocated for CASP and R597million allocated for Ilima/Letsema. DALRRD supports farmers with Extension Support Services inclusive of new technologies and one of the key extension approach towards market access is the Smallholder Horticulture Empowerment Programme (SHEP). Through this approach, farmers are encouraged to change their mindset from “**grow and sell**” for their products to “**grow to sell**” which boosts income levels of farmers. The Minister for Agriculture, Land Reform and all the nine Members of the Executive Committee (MECs) held a series of joint SHEP webinars from the 12th April starting with Mpumalanga and the last was held with Free State on the 6th of May 2021. DALRRD is also finalizing the draft policy on comprehensive producer development support which will be the overall national policy framework for the agriculture sector in South Africa and shall guide interventions (support) provided to the various categories of producers.