**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 2250 / NW 2424E**

**MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES:**

**Mr H C C Krüger (DA) to ask the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries:**

**QUESTION:**

 (1) Whether (a) his department and/or (b) the department of agriculture in Mpumalanga provided any form of assistance to the Kwasimu Farmers Association after the livestock mortality disaster in the Thembisile Hani Local Municipality in the 2012-13 financial year; if not, in each case, why not; if so, what are the relevant details of all assistance provided, including (i) the names of all beneficiaries, (ii) the number of cattle each beneficiary received, (iii) where the cattle were purchased, (iv) what was the condition of the cattle and (v) the average age of the cattle;

(2) whether his department and/or the department of agriculture in Mpumalanga gave any livestock to traditional leaders following the specified livestock mortality disaster; if so, what are the relevant details in each case;

(3) whether any small-scale farmers affected by the specified livestock mortality disaster were excluded as beneficiaries for assistance; if so, (a) why and (b) which small-scale farmers were excluded? **NW 2424E**

**REPLY:**

Yes, the Mpumalanga Provincial Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs did compensate the livestock farmers of Kwasimu farmers association those affected by the disaster by replacing their livestock.

1. **What are the relevant details of all assistance provided to the farmers**

The Provincial Cabinet took a resolution that the Department should compensate the farmers who were affected by replacing their livestock. Agricultural Advisors, Animal Health Technicians and Veterinarians were deployed to visit the affected farms. During the visits the Departmental officials verified the number of animals that had died and a list was developed based on the verification. All the farmers who reported to the Department that they lost livestock were visited for verification. The Department had set a period whereby affected farmers were given an opportunity to register the dead livestock. The farmers who did not report any loss of livestock during that period to the Department were unfortunately not recorded in the Departmental list of affected farmers

As part of the compensation, the Department procured **1 000** Nguni Heifers for the farmers based on the approved list of **399** affected farmers who lost **1 583** animals. The replacement livestock was kept within Thembisile Hani Local Municipality at Leeuwkop farm, in Verena for diseases monitoring before handing over to the verified beneficiaries. A task team was formed which was led by department officials based at the Province and District. Ward councilors and farmers’ representative (chairperson of Kwasimu farmers association) formed part of the task team for coordination.

An official handover of the livestock was done by the Hon MEC Gamede on the 18th April 2015 at Kwaggafontein.The distribution of the livestock then commenced on the 19th April 2015 to Saturday 30th April 2015 at Leeuwkop farm.

A distribution strategy was used to ensure a fair and transparent distribution of the livestock to the affected Thembisile Hani livestock beneficiaries:

* All affected farmers received letters which indicated how many cattle each farmer will receive and the date on when they will come to collect their livestock
* Farmers provided their own transport for collection
* A formula was developed by the Department to determine on how many cattle each farmer would receive as compensation. This formula enabled all the farmers to receive livestock and those that have lost more livestock received more livestock as per the formula
* The farmer signed an acknowledgement letter after receiving the livestock, kept as portfolio of evidence
* A permit was also provided to allow them to take the livestock to their different locations.

By the end of the distribution period 847 cattle were distributed to the 355 farmers. Some farmers on the list were no longer traceable using their contact numbers and officials went to an extent of delivering the invitations into their homes and dipping tank committees, CDWS and councilors were engaged as an endeavor to get all the listed farmers. A grace period until the 4th of May 2015 was given to allow the farmers who didn’t pitch for collection to come and collect their livestock. After the grace period, the remaining livestock was taken out from Leeuwkop farm on the 14th May 2015 to a farm near Marapyane College research farm, this was to avoid high costs for keeping the livestock on the holding farm.

1. **the names of all beneficiaries,**

List of beneficiaries who received the livestock is attached.

1. **the number of cattle each beneficiary received,**

A formula was developed to enable the Department to compensate all the

affected farmers as per the attached list

1. **Where were the cattle purchased**

An approval to procure directly from the breeder Mr. HA Rassouw (Duma Investment) was obtained from the Accounting Officer

1. **what was the condition of the cattle and**

Most of the heifers were in a good condition as they were certified by local Veterinarians on arrival for diseases and were also monitored on daily basis during the distribution period

1. **the average age of the cattle;**

Most of the cattle provided were first time calving heifers and were pregnant. Some gave birth during the distribution period on the holding farm

(2)  **Whether his Department and/or the Department of agriculture in Mpumalanga gave any livestock to traditional leaders following the specified livestock mortality disaster;**

Yes, from the surplus of the specified livestock mortality disaster, 28 (twenty eight) Traditional Leaders including the Ingwenyamas were given 155 (Hundred and fifty five) cattle following the pronouncement by the then Premier of the Mpumalanga Province Honourable DD Mabuza that the Traditional Leaders should also be supported with livestock.

**(3) whether any small-scale farmers affected by the specified livestock mortality disaster were excluded as beneficiaries for assistance; if so, (a) why and (b) which small-scale farmers were excluded?**

No affected small scale farmers were excluded.