**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 699**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER [No 6-2021 SIXTH PARLIAMENT]
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**699. Mr N P Masipa (DA) to ask the Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development:**

Whether, with reference to her reply to question 2817 on 21 December 2020, her department visited the Northern Cape in January 2021; if not, why not; if so, what were the findings? **NW817E**

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

Yes, the visit was undertaken during the week of 23-26 March 2021 and the two districts being Namakwa and ZF Mgcau were visited. The findings of the visit was that indeed farmers who had applied for drought relief received vouchers to purchase fodder. A total of 3900 farmers across all categories have benefitted in all affected districts. The vouchers received by farmers were equivalent to more than 30 bags of fodder per farmer depending on the number of Livestock Units (LSUs) and this was confirmed by some farmers who were visited. The challenge reported by the farmers was that they are experiencing the aggressive infestation of Prosopis trees which consumes a lot of water. The province is working on this issue through the Land Care programme to eradicate the trees. The fodder bank project was also visited and it was indicated that more than 30 bales of 250kg were harvested and made available for the farmers. The fields were already being prepared for next planting of Lucerne which will be in May 2021. It was also observed that the recent summer rainfalls provided some relief in some areas across the province as there was noticeable veld improvement and also dams contained some rain water.