**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 944**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER [No 16-2019 SIXTH PARLIAMENT]
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**944. Mr J W W Julius (DA) to ask the Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development:**

Whether the Westonaria Agri-park in the Rand West City Local Municipality is operational and functional; if not, (a) why not and (b) what plans has her department put in place in order for the agri-park to be operational and functional; if so, (i) who are the beneficiaries and (ii) how did the beneficiaries benefit since the inception of the agri-park? **NW2098E**

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

Yes. In addition, the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) has developed a detailed implementation plan for the Farmer Production Support Unit (FPSU) to be implemented by 31 March 2021 in order to further strengthen the services currently delivered from the FPSU. The plan is to provide additional production tunnels; upgrade the packhouse; and construct a new storage facility; security lighting; water reservoir and reticulation services; accommodation for FPSU Manager; mechanics workshop for local repairs and maintenance; and a shed for machinery and implements. The Gauteng Provincial Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (GDARD) will also deploy crop and soil scientists.

(a),(b) Falls Away.

1. 87 farmers in a 20km radius have been profiled to make use of the facility. In addition, four cooperatives are currently active in the FPSU. The Voice-Out-Deaf and Boo-Letsholo Cooperatives have been operating from the site for approximately two-years, whereas the Seeds of Change Cooperative (occupying a 6000 m² shade net structure) and City Harvest Cooperative occupying the Vertical Chamber farming structure have both taken occupation of the facility during October 2019 after an open tender process was concluded. The Voice-Out-Deaf harvest kale, lettuce and spinach. This group also won the Provincial and National Female Farmer Award on the category of disabled people in agriculture. Boo-Letsholo plant only spinach.
2. Several farmers have benefitted from bringing their produce for storage in the FPSU packhouse prior to sending the produce to the market. Veterinary and Extension Support Services are also available to all farmers in the FPSU catchment area. Mechanisation support is available to farmers, the tractors and implements are currently stored off site at a municipal facility, pending the completion of the warehouse. A farmer training facility is available at the FPSU.