Media statement

01 October 2008

**EC wool is bringing foreign currency - NWGA**

Kolomane sheep wool is “earning” foreign currency, it is sent to China, India and European countries so said national General Manager (GM) of National Wool Growers Association when he commended both the quality of wool from Kolomane and the Agriculture Department’s efforts in improving wool in the rural areas.

To a loud applause, the GM Leon De Beer announced that the income of provincial emerging farmers has grown from R1, 5 million in 1997 to a whooping R45 million and he attributed this to the department’s endeavours of providing the necessary infrastructure for the rural farmers.

De Beer was speaking during a landmark launch of six new shearing shed, including one renovated at Kolomane village near Seymour on Tuesday – the shearing shed are in the Amathole district and the are a result of a partnership between the department, NWGA and Standard Bank.

He applauded the department for ensuring that they have a “close relationship” with the private sector, adding that the private-public-partnership between NWGA and the department was a “living example” to the entire country.”

Six-years ago the NWGA and the department entered into a partnership to improve the flock of sheep in the province where the department committed R4 million towards the provision of rams to the rural communities.

De Beer hailed this initiative as “on of the prosperous projects” that the NWGA is involved in, revealing that to this end 19 000 rams have be delivered to the rural communities around the province and this has raised the income generation in wool to between 50% and 60%.

The department has seconded eight extension officers to the ram programme and De Beer told the crowd that they were enjoying support from all the departmental officials, from the MEC and the HOD.
The community of Kolomane was chosen to be the site of the massive launch because in 2004 they were awarded an award of being the best quality wool producers despite that they were using a shack, which was polished with cow dung.

The process of building six sheds was released after a memorandum of understanding was signed between the department and NWGA three years ago and they partnered with Standard Bank, which donated R650 000.

The total costs of the sheds is R3,5 million and they are situated in Ngqamakhwe 600 square metres), Butterwoth and Kolomane both 200 m2 and Ndakana and Nonone in Ngqushwa both 132 square metre.

Amathole agriculture acting district senior manager announce that Kolomane has been chosen to be the pilot area where wool producing sheep will be stored in the department bid to improve wool production.

The community of Kolomane, through different speakers thanked the department for its strides in ensuring that the lives of the poor are improved while they assured the department that the shearing shed will make them more determined.

Issued by Senior Communications Officer Thozi Manyisana in the Department of Agriculture, Eastern Cape. For more information contact him on: 040 609 3965 or 082 494 3600