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Media Release

Department honours farmer entrepreneurs

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Christiana - The MEC for Rural, Environment and Agricultural Development, Manketsi Tlhape says the 2016 DAFF Female Entrepreneur Awards are a befitting gesture to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Women's march. MEC Tlhape said the department was honoured to add a voice through awards to the difference made by women of 1956. "The historic march in 1956 was the nexus in the role of women in the struggle for freedom and society at large. We are celebrating Women's month in August as a tribute to the pioneers of the women's movement in this country, dating back to 1913," she said. The DAFF FEA Awards were held in Christiana, Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati district to reward the efforts and contribution of women.

Speaking to about 500 members of the audience, predominantly farmers, MEC Tlhape said it was imperative for the department to empower women. "We would like to use the programme to increase the participation of women, young women and women with disabilities in the sectors of agriculture, forestry & fisheries and to accentuate the significant role played by women entrepreneurs in food security, job creation, poverty alleviation and economic growth," she emphasised.

We recognize the role played by all women in building our country and Bokone Bophirima Province. It is because of their strides that our government continue to make efforts in improving the living conditions at household level, she added.

She further said it was important for women to see themselves climbing the success ladder and being in powerful positions. She encouraged them to do away with misconceptions of women in power. "When it comes to thinking about women in powerful positions and women in power or women 'doing it for themselves', we are too often blinded by the daggers of the mind, infected by the mean mind bugs that mire us in the prejudices of the past.

The 2016 which awards attracted a lot of entries had 18 participants reaching the final round competing in six categories. The competitors included women in vegetable production, livestock production, broilers, processing as well as horticulture. The 09 final winners each emerged with R125 000 cash prize and runner ups with R32 000 each winner. The best female Farmworker category which is meant to acknowledge women who do basic work in the relevant sector and have grown in the structures of farm operations get R50 000 prize money.

The Overall winner, Ms Tlamelo Mfaladi is a previous winner of the National Informal Markets 2009 and Young Provincial Female Farmer Category, a runner up of READ Commercial 2011 Female Entrepreneur Award. She started vegetable farming in 2007 from her family backyard on a 2,5 ha land. She has now expanded her business to 286ha farm called Vlakfontein, near Delareyville, Tswaing Local Municipality. A joyful Tlamelo said she will further growth her business and mainly concentrate on improving the infrastructure.

Another winner, Thembeke Nyaqela of Lwazi piggery who won both the MEC Special Award and a runner up for the Top Entrepreneur processing award says the accolades have challenged her to work even harder. "I am grateful for the

recognition and appreciate the effort by our government. This just motivates me to elevate my work pace. The 32 year old Nyaqela said she will also use the opportunity to bring more young people on board and share her skills. Lwazi piggery started in 2015 and is based in Schweizer-Reneke area of Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati.

Photos:

3029: The Overall winner, Ms Tlamelo Mfaladi of Tlamelo Fresh Produce

2912: Ms Comfort Manamela of Komkhulu Agriculture Solutions is the Best Female worker winner

9374: Ms Thembeke Nyaqela of Lwazi piggery walked away with MEC Special Award

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