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Department:
**Rural, Environment and Agricultural
Development**
North West Provincial Government
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



AgriCentre Building
Cnr. Dr. James Moroka
& Stadium Rd
Private Bag X2039,
Mmabatho 2735
Republic of South Africa

CHIEF DIRECTORATE: CORPORATE SERVICES
DIRECTORATE: COMMUNICATION SERVICES

Tel: +27 (18) 389 5684
Fax: +27(18) 384 4571
Email: esetlhako@nwpg.gov.za

MEDIA RELEASE

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POTCHEFSTROOM COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE GRADUATE ADAMANT OF AGRICULTURE PROSPECTS

Rustenburg - The 22 year old Keabetswe Jiyane, the first class reward recipient and a graduate from the Potchefstroom College of Agriculture (PCA) plans to face the world and explore her passion for agriculture. Jiyane is one of the 49 students who have successfully completed a three year diploma in mixed agriculture during the PCA graduations recently.

Reflecting on her journey, Jiyane said her love for land and farming started early in high school and she never looked back. Although her parents did not understand her passion, they did not stand in her way. "It's a bit difficult to explain especially for people who really understand that we have life because there is agriculture. I wanted to discover the mystery behind the significance of soil and what it can produce. I pursued my studies because through the knowledge one discovers that the potential in this industry cannot be compared with any," Jiyane remarked passionately.

She has been a top performer since starting her studies at PCA and she was the first class in her second year. She said she owned it to herself to beat all odds and work hard. "It was not easy with all the work, but I persevered. I kept the courage and I also wanted other female students to believe that we can also do better than our male counterparts.

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Jiyane said she was never intimidated by life after graduations as she was aware of a myriad of opportunities in the agriculture sector. She wants to further be in animal health production to fulfil her love for animals otherwise she sees herself as an entrepreneur in the agricultural sector.

About four students from PCA have shared the reward with Keabetswe Jiyane and passed their third year with First Class.

The 2019 graduations were graced by amongst others, the North West Premier, Professor Job Mokgoro, the Acting MEC for Rural, Environment and Agricultural Development (READ), Dr Mpho Motlhabane, the Executive Mayor of JB Marks Local Municipality, Cllr Kgotso Khumalo, Dr Poncho Mokaila, Head of the Department of READ, Professor Magano of the PCA Advisory committee, Dr Ronald Thomas of the Agriculture Research Council also an alumni of PCA and many sector stakeholder representatives, Department of READ and College Management.

Speaking during the ceremony when delivering the keynote address, Premier Job Mokgoro encouraged the students to work hard to assist the provincial government to achieve in line with the NDP Vision. “We have a huge task at hand as the North West Provincial government through the agricultural colleges. And the mission is to ensure great achievements of the provisions of the National Development Plan, Vision 2030. According to the NDP, the colleges and other higher learning institutions are expected to improve the ratio of graduates from 1 in 17 people to 1 in every 6 people in South Africa,” he emphasised.

He further reiterated that great investment needed to be made in agriculture in line with this sector potential. “Every conversation around agriculture at the moment, asserts that this is a sector which plays a critical role in the economy of many developing countries. In South Africa, as in many of these developing countries, the contribution that agriculture does to efforts of employment is well documented. It is said that in our country, about 6 million peoples’ livelihood is contingent on agriculture. This is about 10% of the South African population. So the contribution of this sector to key government priorities such as food security, exports, Growth Development Plan and foreign exchange is detectible.

Premier congratulated the learners and assured them of opportunities within the sector. “We remain adamant that the agricultural sector carries dynamic opportunities which present an upper hand to any young person who is passionate about it. The evolution of technology has made it even far stimulating to be part of this sector,” he said.

Dr Ronald Thomas, Alumni of the PCA now part of the ARC commended graduates and urged them continue learning. He further advised them to be prepared for challenges ahead and not to quit when the going gets tougher. Thomas emphasised that the land debate was a perfect state for young people to help and develop the agricultural industry. “A journey of thousand miles starts with a single step”, he said.

The college is one of two state owned colleges in the province tasked with training young people with passion for agriculture. Since its establishment, the institution continues to thrive in the training sphere and continues to live up to its vision of being a leading centre of excellence in training. The college has for the 2019 academic year registered 79 first year students this reflecting a growing trajectory as compared to the previous years. The Department of READ has for the year 2018/19 budgeted R46m to support both the Taung and Potchefstroom Agricultural Colleges.

6424 – Keabetswe Jiyane (Centred) with the Colleges Pricincipal, Dr Karabo Mabe, Head of Department of READ, Dr Poncho Mokaila, JB Marks Executive Mayor, Cllr Kgotsso Khumalo and Acting MEC for READ, Dr Mpho Motlhabane

6502 – In Celebratory mood - The 2019 Potchefstroom College of Agriculture graduates

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Enquiries: Ms Emelda Setlhako

Tel: 018 389 5684

Cell: 060 745 4020

Email: ESetlhako@nwpg.gov.za

Website: www.nwpg.gov.za/Agriculture/

Facebook: www.facebook.com/nwpread