Democratic Alliance speech by

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DA Gauteng Spokesperson for Agriculture and Rural Development

Gauteng Agriculture budget fails to invest in combating climate change and food insecurity

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**Honourable Speaker**,

Climate change and food insecurity are two of the greatest development threats to our economy and communities, yet this department continues to treat them as distant policy considerations.

The global agrifood system emits one-third of all greenhouse gases, drives deforestation, consumes 70% of freshwater, and is the leading cause of biodiversity loss. However, here in Gauteng, where millions still rely on small-scale farming for their survival, not a single new investment has been allocated to climate-smart agriculture.

This budget has failed to invest in the future. It excludes critical support needed to build a climate-resilient agricultural sector. It makes no provision for climate-smart agriculture extension services for small-scale farmers, offers no support for the adoption of resilient seed varieties and neglects the need for water-saving irrigation infrastructure.

Furthermore, it ignores the urgent necessity of transitioning to low-emission, sustainable farming systems.

This budget should have prepared farmers to face climate shocks and feed their communities by scaling up climate-smart agriculture practices that deliver the triple win:

* Higher productivity,
* Greater resilience, and
* Lower emissions.

In addition, it should have prioritised the training of extension officers, the rollout of smart and efficient irrigation systems, and the proper equipping of farmers, not leaving them abandoned in the face of a growing crisis.

What we need is a budget that reflects the real needs of both the people and the planet. If this department took climate resilience seriously, it would be investing in climate-smart agricultural training, expanding access to drought-tolerant crops, and decarbonising agro-processing. It would also prioritise support for subsistence and smallholder farmers to feed communities while protecting ecosystems.

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