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SA agricultural training in Denmark proving successful

11:01 (GMT+2), Thu, Thursday, May 12, 2016

By Lloyd Phillips

South Africa's Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Senzeni Zokwana, visited Denmark in mid-April 2016 to cement agricultural business relations with that country.

While there, Zokwana visited the Dalum Landbrugsskole (Academy of Agricultural Business) where 13 students from KwaZulu-Natal are currently participating in a 40-week agricultural studies programme.

According to the minister's spokesperson, Bomikazi Molapo, Zokwana was so impressed with the quality of these studies and the KZN students' progress in this regard, that he indicated his intention to have the SA government-funded programme expanded to other provinces.

"The minister has thus tasked the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries to engage with the KZN Agribusiness Development Agency, other national departments, provincial departments, and municipalities, in coining a comprehensive Concept Note to expand and consolidate the gains of this programme," Molapo said.

The 13 KZN students currently at Dalum are the second batch of three similarly-sized, government-sponsored groups studying at the Danish facility for 40 weeks each over a period of three consecutive years.

During Zokwana's visit to Dalum, the academy's principal, Jens Munk Kruse, explained that these students were receiving theoretical and practical training in the likes of pig and cattle production, crop and environmental health, and farm management and leadership.

"The programme is then concluded by an internship in South Africa," Molapo said.

Niels Erik Jespersen, Dalum's international relations officer, said that the facility's management used Zokwana's visit as an opportunity to discuss

options to strengthen the relevance of the SA students' training with the minister.

"The Dalum programme needs to be accredited by official South African schools and universities so that students can transfer their credits and become approved all over South Africa," said Jespersen.

"We also pointed out to Minister Zokwana the need to integrate the Dalum graduates into South Africa's land reform programmes, redistributed farmland projects, education, extension, and even into government entities. This will allow these students to gain full value from their studies, and to ensure that their knowledge and experience can be transferred and multiplied," Jespersen said.

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