

Democratic Alliance statement by  
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# Gauteng drought relief funding not enough to stop food shortages

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The R20 million drought relief set aside by Gauteng Finance MEC, Barbara Creecy, in her 2016/17 budget will offer small relief to the agricultural sector in the province when at least a R140 million is required to mitigate the impact the drought has had.

This drought, the worst in 104 years, has had a tremendous impact on the 720 smallholders and 500 commercial farmers in the province that there has been an increase in the number of unemployed farm workers, increased food prices, food insecurity among the poorest of the poor and will see many farmers going out of business.

The DA calls on Gauteng Premier David Makhura and his cabinet to push to have an agricultural drought declared in Gauteng, in support of the declaration of a National Disaster.

Premier Makhura must also ensure that the drought relief includes support in the commercial sector such as farm worker wage subsidies, providing soft production loans for farmers in severe distress, rigorously introducing conservation agriculture principles in all Gauteng Department of Agriculture and Rural Development activities, and providing interest rate subsidies to commercial farmers in distress for the winter planting season.

If these steps are not followed immediately, Gauteng will not only face an agricultural drought, but also a socio-economic drought where physical water shortages will directly affect the health and daily prospects of the people of Gauteng.

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