

Women make their mark in farming

Young rural women are making a name for themselves. Inga Mdunyelwa, co-owner of the Pondoland Brand Milling plant has won the Eastern Cape Female Entrepreneur of the Year award.



The 23-year-old from Flagstaff in the OR Tambo district received her prize from Rural Development MEC Xolile Nqatha at the Female Entrepreneur of the Year awards. The ceremony took place at Thobi Kula Indoor Sport Centre in Komani on Thursday.

Inga produces maize and poultry feed and sells her products in Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal.

After winning the award, which came with a R250,000 cash prize, she said she planned to buy a delivery truck. "My partners and I are about to open a depot in Durban, but we were concerned about transport. Now we will be able to buy another truck," said Mdunyelwa.

Rural, economic development

She learnt about farming by watching her late mum tending to a veggie garden. "I wish my mum were still alive to see one of her wishes come true. She always wanted her children to be successful."

Inga said she and her partners planned to produce sorghum and sweet beans.

Nqatha praised Inga and other businesswomen for venturing into the agricultural sector. "Agriculture is the backbone of rural development in the province," said Nqatha. "You're not just producing food or rearing animals to feed your families, you're also participating in job creation, poverty alleviation and economic development. What you're doing is restoring the dignity of black people. We're happy that you're part of the farming industry," he added.

The national leg of the ceremony will be held in Buffalo City later this month.

The following **Eastern Cape businesswomen** are up for awards:

- **Best Female Worker:** Linda Mgedezi
- **Best Smallholder:** Zoliwe Rhum
- **Best Commercial Farmer:** Sophia Wanganela
- **Best Agro-Processor:** Inga Mdunyelwa
- **Best Export:** Noluthando Mbilase

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