



## Gauteng Launches Nguni Cattle Breeding Project for Emerging Black Farmers

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### **By Emmanuel Koro**

For centuries, the majority of South African black cattle farmers have continuously opted not to breed the drought resistant and predominantly grass-fed Nguni cattle species. Instead, they opted for cattle breeds from Europe.

Yet, the Nguni cattle have many advantages over the European cattle breeds. Indigenous to Southern Africa, the Nguni cattle is not only economically valued for its meat but also for its hide. Currently, big car manufacturing companies such as BMW and Mercedes Benz are using Nguni cattle hide for making leather car seats. Some local furniture manufacturing companies have also started using the Nguni cattle hide which is valued for its softness and non-loss of its fur, for making leather sofas.

The Nguni meat is also said to be softer and tastier than that of other European cattle breeds, making it a little known delicacy.

Despite the huge economic benefits that black commercial farmers can reap from the production of the Nguni cattle, very few of them know about this cattle breed's comparatively unique economic value over that of European cattle breeds.

There is great potential to trade in both Nguni meat and hide internationally. However, the challenge is that very few local farmers are producing Nguni cattle at a large scale. This means that the current volumes of Nguni meat and hide do not meet the international

demand.

The other advantage is that one can stock more Nguni per hectare than they can the European breeds. This suggests that the Nguni cattle production costs per hectare are cheaper than the European breeds.

Nguni cattle farming is also considered strategic as the drought resistant Nguni cattle are best suited to the ongoing climate change caused droughts that we continue to experience in Southern Africa, including South Africa.

The over 615-year period during which the majority of black farmers have discontinued breeding the Nguni cattle is therefore a missed economic opportunity for local farmers.

It is against this background that the South African government and lately the Gauteng Provincial Government, through the Gauteng Department of Agriculture and Rural Development [GDARD] ,Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) Nguni Cattle Development Trust; are making efforts to promote large scale breeding of the drought resistant Nguni cattle among black cattle farmers, in order to reap maximum economic benefits. The project is the brain child of the IDC and is run in partnership with provincial governments and academic institutions.

As part of his efforts to re-introduce the production of Nguni cattle in Gauteng, in order to unlock big local and international economic opportunities that can arise from this farming activity, the MEC for the Gauteng Departments of Economic Development and Agriculture, Environment and Rural Development, Mr Lebogang Maile, together with the Gauteng IDC Nguni Cattle Development Trust launched the Gauteng Nguni Project in Rust de Venter on the 7<sup>th</sup> of May 2015.