



1st, 2nd and 4th from left to right LDARD Chief Directors; Messrs William Moeng, Lesetja Kola and Jethro Nowata with Tshepiso Mametja at the 2018 Yafa after her enterprise, Maswele Farming earned her R150 000.00, a certificate and a trophy.

LDARD hosts Young Aspirant Farmers Awards

By Samson Mabunda

The Limpopo Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (LDARD) has yesterday, 26 July 2018 recognised young farmers who make a difference in the farming sector, through the annual LDARD Young Aspirant Farmers Awards (Yafa) in Polokwane.

Since the Yafa promotes youth participation in the sector, schools also competed. Ramohlale Primary School from Capricorn pocketed R30 000.00 after outshining its competitors in the Primary School Top Producer section, whilst Eunice Mukwevho from Vhembe walked away with R40 000.00 after being crowned the champion Backyard producer. Ontibile Mohlaga from Waterberg, Maswele Farming and North Elephant Farming enterprises from Mopani went home smiling with R150 000.00 each for being top winners in the Informal and National Markets as well as the Special categories respectively.

In the previous Yafa, the Special category was not there. However, after discovering some special character in the latter farm, its owner, Len Matheere was found deserving such an award. The young man is innovative and was struggling on his own without any assistance of

some kind. For this, it was felt the LDARD should motivate him to continue with farming. It was established from Mr Mashiloane Thulare, Deputy Director Extension Support at the department's Head Office.

Head of Department (HoD), Ms Jaqueline Maisela urged young farmers to continue farming. She said Agricultural business which ranges from actual farming to the whole value chain required commitment. In her view, just doing it because the next door neighbour does it cannot be helpful, but it must come from the heart. "The future is in the hands of the youth. We must change the way we look at or do things. If you know what you want as some say, 'you will [knock] all the doors where you think you will get assistance.' "There is a potential to increase production in the Province. Agriculture is viewed as the potential to create more job opportunities," she indicated.

Winners also received certificates and trophies, whereas second and first runner-ups did not go home empty handed. Besides certificates, they received prize monies ranging from R15 000.00 to R120 000.00. "The awards have inspired me to move from the backyard farming to expanding my farming," indicated