

Canola plan hits problem

 By [Zandile Mabelela](#)

4 Dec 2015

The Eastern Cape's flagship canola oil farming project in Alexandria has hit a major snag due to a lack of funding, resulting in it being unable to buy vital machinery and other services to pave the way to commercialisation.



Veganbaking.net via [Wikimedia](#)

Agro-processing company Anati Oils, which had a trial 50 hectares of crop this year, was unable to harvest last month and its yield has effectively gone to waste. Had the company had means to harvest, the crop would have been sent to the Western Cape, the major centre for canola production, to assess oil content and the quality of the crop. The unharvested canola seeds will, however, benefit chicory farmers who are making use of the land under a rotational crop system.

Financial support

Anati Oils' chief executive Weza Moss is desperate to secure funding from the provincial Department of Rural Development and Agrarian Reform, to which he first applied in March. "We have seen that the area is conducive for canola oil farming and in our quest to commercialise, we need help with input costs that will go towards purchasing seeds and fertiliser, as well as for training and acquiring the equipment to sow and harvest," Moss said.

The Eastern Cape Development Corporation (ECDC), which has a 25% stake, pumped in more than R1 million in capital. The project has also received support from the provincial Economic Development Department. Another objective of the project, which employs 32 people, is to create 600 direct and indirect jobs by the end of next year.

Moss said there were no harvesting machines for canola in the province, with only maize harvesters that needed to have the blades changed to suit canola.

While Moss was concerned about the loss of the yield, he said chicory farmers were set to benefit from the now-fertilised land and stood to harvest 25% more than normal.

While Anati Oils will go ahead with planting 500ha of canola should they source enough funding, the quality of the crop would only be determined when harvested.

Source: Herald

ABOUT ZANDILE MBABELA

I'm a reporter at The Herald newspaper writing mainly on education, but am also a bit of an all-rounder. I love writing, be it hard news or features.
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