



Leaders in Environmental Management

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Luxury estates eat agricultural land – Dowry

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Western Cape agricultural MEC Cobus Dowry has hit out at urban sprawl and luxury housing estates which are eating into the province's small amount of high quality arable land.

Dowry warned farmers and municipalities not to make precious agricultural land available to developers for short-term profit, saying it would take more than "promises of BEE" to get him to release agricultural land for development.

Dowry was speaking in Cape Town at the launch of a new agricultural publication, Wes Kaap/West Cape Agri.

"I want to fully support and endorse my colleague in the Western Cape cabinet, Tasneem Essop," said Dowry. "She was quoted in weekend papers with a strong stance against developers of golf estates and luxury housing estates.

"On a daily basis I am approached by developers who bring proposals and we are provided with promises of the huge economic impact for the province, the BEE benefits and job creation.

"New luxury developments in wine estates, for instance, are also adding to less land available and this will not contribute to the wine industry and to agriculture in general."

Dowry said about 85 percent of South Africa was used for some form of agricultural production or forestry, but only three percent of this could be classified as land with high agricultural potential.

"I have done my utmost to protect agricultural land and I will most definitely do so in future," he said.