

'Clover spread false reasons for relocation claims' - Cwaile

MAFIKENG MAIL – MAHIKENG: Following the reports that Clover was to relocate its cheese factory from Lichtenburg to Queensburgh in Kwa-Zulu Natal due to poor service delivery by Ditsobotla local municipality, North West Premier Professor Job Mokgoro established a team of at least four MECs to try and intervene on the matter to avoid job losses.

The MEC's included Mmoloki Cwaile for Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements, Traditional Affairs, Desbo Mohono for Agriculture and Rural Development, Public Works and Roads, Gaoage Molapisi and Economic Development, Environment, Conservation and Tourism, Kenetswe Mosenogi. MEC Cwaile who is part of the team, said they had made several requests to meet with the management of Clover in an effort to establish the reasons for the decision to relocate from the province, but they were not getting the necessary cooperation from the company. MEC Cwaile said they had met with all other stakeholders who included Milk South Africa, employees of Clover as well as the North West Business Chamber to outline the provincial government's intention to assist the municipality to provide basic services to enable all businesses to thrive and respond to the plight of the community in Ditsobotla. He said it was disingenuous of Clover to blame the municipality for their decision to relocate when the company announced on June 24 2016 their intention to establish an export business plant in Kwa Zulu Natal. He said the company met with the municipality last year when they had already closed the first plant and it was in that meeting that the company announced its decision to close the second plant in 2021.

He said some of the employees he had met with and who had been working for the company for more than 19 years, also confirmed that since they have been working for Clover, they never had to stop production because of water supply challenge as alleged by the company. "The reason for the company to relocate, has got nothing to do with service delivery challenges, instead the company wants to get into the export market. He concluded that the provincial government would continue to engage with other role players as well as clover, if they interested based on the request to meet with them to find an amicable solution such as getting the equipment they are using or that they are leaving behind, to the good use and to create job opportunities to the locals.