



FUTURE AGRI-ESTATE: An artist's impression of the R3.4 billion Crossways Farm Village, which will consist of 780 residential units. It will be the first farm village of this size to be established in South Africa and will incorporate a light industrial, commercial and retail component along the N2.

Pioneer farm village developer welcomes Gauteng stance

DR CHRIS MULDER, one of the pioneers of the farm village concept, which combines residential development with agricultural activity has welcomed the stance of the Gauteng government on such developments at the expense of golf estates.

Mulder's plans for a traditional village in a modern idiom on the successful dairy farm, Crossways, near the Van Stadens River Gorge, were recently approved by the Eastern Cape's Department of Economic Affairs, Environment and Tourism without

any preconditions.

Stands in the development are set to come on the market towards the end of November.

"That the concept of productive farm villages, also called agri-estates, is now receiving support from the Gauteng government is an important step forward in preserving the country's diminishing agricultural land and creating work in impoverished rural areas," Mulder said.

Gauteng's agriculture MEC, Nandi Mayathula-Khoza, was recently reported saying that if her depart-

ment's new policy on agricultural land was adopted, residential golf estates could become a thing of the past.

"The ANC earlier identified rural development, food security and land reform as among the government's priorities for the five years from May 2008.

Mulder said his development, which would be known as Crossways Farm Village, would fulfil all the ANC's policy objectives.

"The R3.4 billion development will consist of 780 residential units suited to the needs of a large cross-section

of the country's population, and will create an important development node in this area.

"It will be the first farm village of this size to be established in South Africa and will also incorporate a light industrial, commercial and retail component along the N2.

"Run by its future home owners' association, Crossways Farm Village will have its own mini-municipality that will provide essential services, from electricity and water to refuse removal and sanitation.

"It will also contribute to food security; as the current

farming operation will be doubled in size. A state-of-the-art milking parlour will be built and a full range of dairy products will be produced on the farm, as well as a range of organic fruit and vegetables.

He said an on-site education training facility "will offer courses in farm and dairy management to equip farm workers with added skills".

"The profits of the farming operation will be divided equally between the home owners' association, the farm management and the farm workers, who will receive

houses in the development and be members of the home owners' association.

"Projections done by Urban-Econ, a leading firm of development economists, showed that once the development had been completed, it would offer 2 383 permanent jobs, in addition to the farming operations. This is over and above the 11 860 temporary job opportunities at various skills levels that will be created on site during the eight to 10 years it will take to build all the houses and contingent facilities," Mulder said.