



AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES

The total contribution of agriculture to the economy increased from R38 billion in 2002 to R68 billion in 2008. South Africa's dual agricultural economy comprises a well-developed commercial sector and a predominantly subsistence-oriented sector in the rural areas.

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Following the general election in 2009, a new administration took over that saw several changes to government. These included, among other things, adding the functions of fisheries and forestry to the Department of Agriculture.

Agricultural activities range from intensive crop production and mixed farming to cattle ranching in the bushveld, and sheep farming in the more arid regions.

About 12% of the country can be used for crop production. High-potential arable land comprises only 22% of total arable land. Some 1,3 million ha are under irrigation.

Economic contribution

Primary agriculture contributes about 3% to the gross domestic product (GDP) of South Africa and about 8% to formal employment.

However, there are strong linkages into the economy, so that the agro-industrial sector comprises about 7% of GDP.

Although South Africa has the ability to be self-sufficient in virtually all major agricultural products, the rate of growth in exports has been slower than that of imports. The only increase in agricultural export volumes occurred during the period of exchange-rate depreciation in 2002 and came to about nine million tons (Mt). Major import products include wheat, rice, vegetable oils and poultry meat.

Production

Producer prices of agricultural products increased, on average, by 14,3% from 2007 to 2008, compared to an increase of 24,6% during the previous year. In 2008, the producer prices of field crops rose by 22,4%, against an increase of 44% the previous year. This increase was mainly the result of a 48,3% increase in the price of summer grains, and increases of 33,4%; 32,7%; and 30,4% in the prices of tobacco, cotton and oil seeds respectively.

Producer prices of horticultural products increased by 5,8% in 2008 compared to 2007. Prices of vegetables increased, on average, by 2,6% during 2008, while the prices of fresh fruit increased by 15,2%.

The producer prices of animal products were 14,5% higher in 2008 than in 2007.

Prices received for pastoral products increased by 2%.

The price farmers received for milk was 21,3% higher. Prices received for poultry products rose by 10%.

Gross value of agricultural production, 2008 (R'000)

Field crops	
Maize	18 592 005
Wheat	4 759 004
Hay	2 483 645
Grain sorghum	458 224
Sugar cane	4 118 551
Groundnuts	675 156
Tobacco	194 742
Sunflower seed	3 320 212
Cotton	113 077
Other	2 608 718
Total	37 323 334
Horticulture	
Viticulture	3 037 520
Citrus fruit	5 406 395
Subtropical fruit	1 843 832
Deciduous and other fruit	6 931 413
Vegetables	5 749 887
Potatoes	3 491 404
Other	1 656 145
Total	28 116 596
Animal products	
Wool	1 499 505
Poultry and poultry products	22 489 165
Cattle and cattle products	12 218 500
Sheep and goats slaughtered	2 818 915
Pigs slaughtered	2 592 813
Milk	9 279 426
Other	2 577 268
Total	53 475 592
Grand total	118 915 522

Source: Directorate: Agricultural Statistics, Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

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Since 1994, the Farmworkers' Development Programme of the former Department of Agriculture funded 68 projects at a cost of R12,3 million, benefiting more than 150 000 farm workers.



Between 2004 and 2008, the department instituted the Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme consisting of 450 projects, some 20 700 beneficiaries and costing R120 million. The department supported 93 461 emerging farmers. Of these, 11 815 were women, 37 408 were youth and 266 were people with disabilities.

Field crops and horticulture

- Maize is the largest locally produced field crop, and the most important source of carbohydrates in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) for animal and human consumption.

It is estimated that more than 8 000 commercial maize producers are responsible for the major part of the South African crop, while the rest is produced by thousands of small-scale producers.

Maize is produced mainly in the North West, the Free State and Mpumalanga. A total of 13,2 Mt of maize was produced in 2007/08 on two million hectares of land.

- Wheat is produced in the Western Cape and the Free State. In 2008, 2,1 Mt was produced on 748 000 ha.
- South Africa is the world's 12th-largest producer of sunflower seed. An area of 564 300 ha was planted in 2007/08, producing 872 000 t.
- Some 20 Mt of sugar are produced per season. About 50% of this is marketed in southern Africa, while the rest is exported to markets in Africa, the Middle East, North America and Asia.
- South Africa is the leading exporter of protea cut flowers, which account for more than half of proteas sold on the world market.

Some other crops:

- Deciduous fruit is grown mainly in the Western Cape and in the Langkloof Valley in the Eastern Cape. Smaller production areas are found along the Orange River and in the Free State,

Mpumalanga and Gauteng. In 2007/08, income from deciduous fruit rose by 10,6% to R6 425 million.

- In 2008, the gross income from horticultural products increased by 16,8% to R29 879 million.
- In 2008, income from deciduous and subtropical fruit rose by 19,8% and 20,1% to R6 886 and R2 022 million respectively.
- South Africa is the ninth-biggest wine producer in the world, with 102 000 ha cultivated to vine, representing 3% of global output. For the 12 months to April 2009, the country exported just over 403,3 million litres (Ml) of wine to reflect a year-on-year growth of 17%.

Sales to the country's biggest markets all increased, namely, to the United Kingdom (UK) by 27%, to Germany by 12% and to Sweden by 26%.

South Africa remains the fastest-growing segment in the UK, occupying fifth position with a 10% share of the market, is the fourth-biggest player in Germany and the biggest in Sweden.

- Citrus production is largely limited to irrigation areas and takes place in Limpopo (16 255 ha), Mpumalanga (11 681 ha), the Eastern Cape (12 923 ha), KwaZulu-Natal (4 004 ha), the Western Cape (9 524 ha) and Northern Cape (639 ha). In 2008, income from citrus showed an increase of 27% that amounted to R5 830 million.
- Pineapples are grown in the Eastern Cape and northern KwaZulu-Natal. Other subtropical crops such as avocados, mangoes, bananas, litchis, guavas, papayas, granadillas, and macadamia and pecan nuts are produced mainly in Mpumalanga and Limpopo and in the subtropical coastal areas of KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape.

Livestock

Nearly 80% of agricultural land in South Africa is mainly suitable for extensive livestock farming. Livestock are also kept in other areas, usually in combination with other farming enterprises. Numbers vary according to weather conditions. Stockbreeders concentrate mainly on developing breeds that are well adapted to diverse weather and environmental conditions. The livestock sector contributes up to 49% of agricultural output.

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The livestock sector contributes up to 49% of agricultural output. South Africa generally produces 85% of its meat requirements, while the remaining 15% is imported from Namibia, Botswana, Swaziland, Australia, New Zealand and Europe. The livestock industry is the largest national agricultural sector.

Food security

The Integrated Food Security and Nutrition Programme aims to achieve physical, social and economic access to safe and nutritious food for all South Africans. Its goal is to eradicate hunger, malnutrition and food insecurity by 2015.

The Household Food Production Programme, which provides seedlings, seeds, fertiliser, pesticides and other production inputs to beneficiaries, assisted about 30 000 households in 2009. In the 2008 supplementary budget, the programme was expanded by an additional R76 million, which assisted in reaching the targeted 70 000 households.

By March 2009, 6 503 schools in the country had vegetable gardens. School communities had also been trained in tree planting as well as planting fruit trees in schools as part of the Plant a Million Trees Campaign.

Land and Agricultural Development Bank of South Africa (Land Bank)

The bank provides a comprehensive range of retail and wholesale financial products and services designed to meet the needs of commercial and developing farmers and agriculture-related businesses.

Forestry

The forestry industry is one of the strategic economic sectors in South Africa with a significant contribution towards economic growth and job creation. The sector has been identified as one of the important contributors to the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa as a result of its intensive operations, which involve the employment of people from the rural communities of South Africa.

South Africa has 178 primary wood-processing plants, 174 of which are owned by the private sector and four of which are owned by local and state authorities. Of these, 102 are sawmills; 13 are mining-timber sawmills; 38 pole-treating plants; 20 pulp, paper and board mills; one match factory; and four charcoal plants.

The total roundwood intake into these processing plants in 2007 was 19,8 million m³ valued at R5,2 billion. The value of sales of timber products produced by these primary processing plants totalled R18,5 billion. Some R15,8 billion was invested in primary roundwood-processing plants (at book value). At market value, this increased to an estimated R40 billion.

Plantations cover about 1,3 million ha of South Africa. Over 80% of them are found in Mpumalanga, KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape. They produced almost over 20 million m³ (or 17,8 Mt) of commercial roundwood, worth R5,2 billion, according to a study conducted in 2007. They provide direct employment for about 107 000 people, of whom 67 500 are in formal employment, 30 000 are contract workers and 39 500 are small growers and their helpers.

Including the processed products, the total industry turnover was about R18,5 billion in 2007, including R9,8 billion worth of wood-pulp.

Indigenous forests

There are about 530 000 ha of indigenous or natural forests in the country, which occur mainly along the southern and eastern escarpment, the coastal belt and in sheltered kloofs or ravines.

There has been an increase in the use of natural forests as sources of medicine, building material, fuel wood and food.

It is estimated that around 80% of South Africa's population still uses medicinal plants, most of which are sourced from natural habitats.

South Africa has a detailed inventory of all its natural forests, which is used to accurately monitor changes in forest areas. The former Department of Water Affairs and Forestry completed a classification of natural forests, represented by 24 broad forest types.



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The Natural Forests Protected Areas System guides the setting aside and redemarcation of natural forests as protected areas.

Restructuring the forests

The Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries is pursuing a restructuring programme in the forestry sector, which will eventually see the department becoming a sector leader and regulator of forestry in South Africa.

Fisheries

The South African coastline covers more than 3 200 km, linking the east and west coasts of Africa. South Africa's shores are particularly rich in biodiversity, with some 10 000 species of marine plants and animals having been recorded.

The productive waters of the west coast support a variety of commercially exploited marine life, including hake, anchovy, sardine, horse mackerel, tuna, snoek, rock lobster and abalone.

On the east coast, squid, linefish and a wide range of intertidal resources provide an important source of food and livelihood for coastal communities. Marine life that is not harvested, such as whales, dolphins and seabirds, is increasingly recognised as a valuable resource for nature-based tourism.

The South African fishing industry, which was once concentrated in the hands of a few, largely white-owned companies, has undergone intensive transformation over the past 10 years.

In 2009, South Africa proclaimed a new Marine Protected Area (MPA), spanning 180 000 square kilometres around the Prince Edward islands in the Southern Ocean. This paved the way for increased conservation and protection of vulnerable species such as albatrosses, penguins, seals, and killer whales.

The new preserve, roughly the size of the state of Oklahoma, is to be known as the Prince Edward Islands MPA, and will be South Africa's 21st marine preserve.

It will be the fourth-largest ocean preserve on Earth. The new preserve will also be South Africa's first offshore protected area.

