

# Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries on release of Statistics South Africa jobs data for last quarter of 2017

The Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries sectors contributed significantly to South Africa's gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate of 3.1% in the fourth quarter of 2017. The statistician-general released the GDP growth figures this week. According to the Stats SA Quarter Four Labour Force Survey, agriculture created an additional 39,000 jobs.

As identified within the National Development Plan and New Growth Path, agriculture remains critical for employment and food security. Agriculture delivers more jobs per rand invested than any other sector, and NDP estimates that agriculture could potentially create, one million jobs by 2030.



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The industry's growth in the fourth quarter of 2017 was mainly the result of higher production of animal products. This is despite challenges with animal and pest disease outbreaks and the persisting drought.

The size of the commercial maize crop is reported at 16,820 million tonnes, 76,000 tonnes higher than the previous forecast of 16,744 million tonnes. For white maize, the recalculated crop size is 9,916 million tonnes (0.24% higher than the previous forecast) while yellow maize is reported at 6,904 million tonnes (up by 0.77%).

Within the beef market, total beef slaughtering declined by 4.1% in the fourth quarter of 2017, and it is expected that slaughtering will continue to decline in 2018 as herd rebuilding continues after the recovery of good rains and improved

grazing conditions.

In his State of the Nation address, President Ramaphosa spoke about the importance of this sector and the 14% budget increase will see the sector increasing its contribution to the economy. The department will reprioritise R581.7m for the black producer commercialisation programme. This will see increased production across all commodities and transform the sector; contributing significantly to poverty alleviation and development for rural economies and the sustainability of food supply.

"Notwithstanding all the challenges the sector faces, it continues to contribute positively to the economy. This is only possible when all stakeholders work in partnership. I want to thank all stakeholders in these three sectors for the role they have played to grow our economy. Working together we can achieve more production, create more jobs and open new markets for South African produce," Minister Zokwana concluded.

*Issued by: Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries*

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