



## agriculture, land reform & rural development

Department:  
Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

### CHIEF DIRECTORATE: STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

Private Bag X833, Pretoria, 0001; 184 Jeff Masemola Street, Pretoria, 0001  
Tel: 012 - 312 8511; E-mail: [queries@drdlr.gov.za](mailto:queries@drdlr.gov.za); Website: [www.dalrrd.gov.za](http://www.dalrrd.gov.za)

## MEDIA STATEMENT

16 May 2023

## MINISTER DIDIZA WELCOMES THE LATEST 1ST QUARTER STATS ON THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR'S POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO SOUTH AFRICA'S JOB CREATION DRIVE

The Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development Ms. Thoko Didiza MP is encouraged by the agricultural sectors overall contribution to the country's employment. In the first quarter of 2023, about 888 000 people were employed in primary agriculture, up 3% quarter to quarter and 5% year on year. This is well above the long-term agricultural employment of 780 000.

The resilience shown by the, KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng and Western Cape in this annual job improvement is encouraging, and speaks to efforts these regions and stakeholders have made to support the agricultural sector. The strong production conditions of various field crops, fruits, forestry and aquaculture were behind the improvement in agricultural jobs in the first quarter, and mainly in these provinces.

Other provinces of the country experienced production challenges that weighed on employment at the start of the year.

While the crop planting in different areas of the country were delayed due to excessive rains, and farmers also have to face high input costs, and persistent load-shedding, the outlook for the sector still looks positive.

"Various government interventions to ease the load-shedding burden on farmers, such as the launch of the Agro-Energy Fund with Land Bank, load curtailment by Eskom expansion of the diesel rebate to the food value chain will have a positive impact" said Minister Didiza

Through the government's Crop Estimate Committee, we estimate that 2022/23 commercial maize harvest will be at about 15,9 million, 3% higher than the 2021/22 season's harvest and the third-largest harvest on record. In addition, Soybeans harvest is estimated at a record 2,8 million tonnes and sugar cane crop will likely increase by 3% to 18,5 million tonnes in 2023/24.



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Temothuo, Kabobotjha ya Naha le Tlhabollo ya Dibaka tsa Mahae: Lefapha la Temothuo, Pusetso dinaga le Tlhabollo ya Metsemagae:  
ISebe lezoLimo, uBuyekezo lwemiHlaba noPhuhliso lamaPhandle

We are also positive about the harvest in various field crops and fruits, which supports better employment prospects over the medium term.

“In conversations with farmers and agribusinesses, we have noticed the rising concerns that the geopolitical tensions across the world, and its impact on trade are key issues that keep stakeholders up at night. As a Department, we will continue to work to ensure that we retain the existing export markets for the country, and expand market access to growing markets.




“We also note the challenges presented by deteriorating infrastructure and will work with relevant departments and stakeholders to address these challenges and support continuous growth and job creation in the sector.”

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**Issued by the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development:**

- **Media Liaison Officer and Spokesperson: Mr Reggie Ngcobo, 0662980980 or MLO.Minister@dalrrd.gov.za.**
- **Eviction Toll-free Number 0800 007 095**

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