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Agricultural sector rebounds in 2025

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Source: INC 42



South Africa's agricultural sector showed clear signs of recovery in 2025, with output and exports rebounding after a difficult period marked by a mid-summer drought and persistent logistical bottlenecks.

According to the latest [South African Agricultural Exporters Report](#), industry data points to a sector that finds itself on an upward trajectory, supported by favourable weather forecasts, strong global demand and increasing adoption of technology.

Agri exports remain a key bright spot for the local economy, say the report's compilers, fin-services firm Verto.

The sector is on course to surpass the 2024 record of \$13.7 billion (R251bn), with export values rising by 10% year-on-year (y-o-y) in the first nine months of 2025.

Growth has been driven largely by horticulture, particularly citrus, grapes, apples, pears and macadamia nuts. The latter has stood out, recording a sharp 92% y-o-y increase in the second quarter of 2025.

Producers are also actively diversifying export markets.

While Africa remains the largest destination, accounting for 38% of exports, Asia and the Middle East make up 25%, followed by the European Union at 23%.

Verto has also found that there is a concerted push to expand access to Brics markets, including China, India, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, as exporters seek to reduce reliance on regions where trade barriers are rising.

The outlook for the 2025/26 summer crop is positive, underpinned by forecasts of an ongoing La Niña weather system, which typically brings higher rainfall to parts of southern Africa.

At the same time, farmers are increasingly adopting precision agriculture technologies such as drones, artificial intelligence and IoT (internet of things) sensors, alongside smart irrigation systems and renewable energy solutions like solar power.

These innovations are helping to mitigate risks linked to water scarcity, climate volatility and unreliable electricity supply.

The full implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area is also viewed as a major opportunity to unlock regional trade and support further export growth.

