

South African agricultural exports reach US\$15.1bn in 2025

South Africa's agricultural exports reached a record US\$15.1 billion in 2025, up 10 per cent from 2024. Export activity remained firm across all quarters. In the fourth quarter, exports totalled US\$3.4 billion, an increase of 7 per cent year on year, supported by higher volumes and improved commodity prices.

Products leading exports in the final quarter of 2025 included table grapes, berries, citrus, apples and pears, nuts, fruit juices, apricots, cherries, and peaches.

Port performance improved during the year following policy adjustments in network industries. However, operational constraints at the Port of Cape Town in November and December added costs for fruit exporters. Other ports continued to facilitate shipments.

Regionally, Africa accounted for 53 per cent of the total export value in the fourth quarter. Asia and the Middle East represented 17 per cent, the European Union 16 per cent, the Americas 4 per cent, and the rest of the world, including the UK, 10 per cent.

Exports to the United States declined during the second half of the year amid tariff developments. Agricultural shipments to the U.S. fell by 11 per cent in the third quarter to US\$144 million and by 39 per cent in the fourth quarter to US\$81 million. Annual exports to the U.S. totalled US\$504 million, down 3 per cent from 2024. Product composition remained largely unchanged, with citrus, fruit juices, and nuts among the main categories.

The U.S. introduced adjustments to reciprocal tariffs and exempted certain food items, easing some trade pressures. South African producers of oranges, macadamia nuts, and fruit juices are among those impacted by the exemption.

On the import side, South Africa brought in US\$7.8 billion worth of agricultural products in 2025, up 4 per cent year on year. Imports include rice and palm oil, which are not widely produced domestically.

Accounting for both exports and imports, the agricultural sector recorded a trade surplus of US\$7.3 billion in 2025, up 18 per cent compared to the previous year.

Source: Wandile Sihlobo (<https://wandile.substack.com/p/south-africas-agricultural-exports-42c>)

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