

'Hormuz reopening offers fertile ground for summer crops'

17 Jun 2026



The reopening of the strait of Hormuz could provide relief for South African agricultural exporters by easing fuel and fertiliser costs. Source: Goran_tek-en

The reopening of the Strait of Hormuz following reports of a ceasefire and diplomatic efforts to end the conflict between Israel and Iran could provide relief for South African agricultural exporters by easing fuel and fertiliser costs and helping to normalise trade flows with key Middle Eastern markets, according to Agbiz chief economist Wandile Sihlobo.

While analysts caution that shipping schedules and supply chains may take time to normalise, Sihlobo says the reopening of the strait would be positive for South African agriculture.

Lower input costs would be welcome ahead of South Africa's 2026/27 summer cropping season, with fertiliser prices currently about 50% higher than a year ago following disruption caused by conflict in the Middle East, he says. Fuel costs have also remained high.

"The reopening of the Strait of Hormuz is a positive development ahead of the start of the 2026/27 summer cropping season in South Africa, where

higher input costs have been our main concern," Sihlobo says.

The Middle East remains an important destination for South African agricultural exports, accounting for around 8% of export value over the past five years. Key markets include the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Kuwait, Jordan and Qatar. Products exported to the region include citrus, grapes, apples, pears, maize, beef and various nuts.

He says there is hope that the extension of the ceasefire and the reopening of trade routes would allow the region to return to previous purchasing patterns over time. South Africa's agricultural exports reached a record US\$15.1 billion in 2025, according to Trade Map data.

Analysts have, however, cautioned that shipping schedules may take time to normalise as vessels reposition and delayed cargoes move through the region.

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