

South Africa 

Trump's actions fuel hatred, South Africa's biggest farm lobby says

AgriSA's CEO speaks out.

By Antony Sguazzin, Bloomberg 12 Feb 2025 ⌚ 00:25

KAL GROUP **R46.10** 0.07%

11/02/2025, 17:00



Cattle graze on the Ehlerskroon farm, outside Delmas in the Mpumalanga province. Image: Bloomberg

US President Donald Trump's pronouncements on South Africa are fueling hatred and jeopardising an economic success story, South Africa's biggest farm group said.

Trump, who cut off aid to South Africa after making false claims about a land expropriation law and persecution of Afrikaners, an ethnic group descended mainly from Dutch and French settlers, has divided the farming community, Johann Kotzé, CEO of [AgriSA](#) and an Afrikaner himself, said.

Read: [Trump threatens South Africa on land expropriation](#)

Afriforum, a conservative white Afrikaans rights group, has been accused of misinforming Trump with years of campaigning over land grabs that never took place and alleged persecution of white people. Right wing farmer groups and separatist organisations have praised Trump's comments.

"I disagree to what they stated out here. I didn't experience that as organised agriculture in South Africa," Kotzé said in an interview on Tuesday.

"The radicalism that took place after Donald Trump's statement, that fuels hatred."

Trump, in an [order](#) on 7 February and other statements, accused the South African government of treating "certain classes of people VERY BADLY" and said he planned to offer Afrikaners refugee status.

His claims have been amplified by South African-born Elon Musk, the world's richest man and one of Trump's top allies.

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"It's quite bizarre," Kotzé said of the refugee offer.

"In agriculture and the way we farm and the success we have with exports and the life we have. Why would you leave that to be in a country where you don't have any citizenship?"

Since the end of apartheid in 1994, when a whites-only government dominated by Afrikaners ceded power to the black majority, agricultural output has doubled in South Africa and farm exports have risen more than sixfold.

The sector provides 935 000 jobs.

"We are at the brink of starting something new and creating something new," Kotzé said. "We don't need negativity now."

He expressed concern that Trump might cut off South Africa's duty-free access to the US market.

he expressed concern that Trump might cut off South Africa's duty-free access to the US market for some goods including farm products such as wine and citrus fruit.



Johann Kotzé, CEO of AgriSA. Image: Supplied

AgriSA, many of whose members are Afrikaners, represents 1 000 farmer associations across South Africa's nine provinces and also has consumers of farm products as members.

Following Trump's actions Orania, a small Afrikaner-only settlement, demanded greater self-determination.

Afriforum, while saying Trump's actions aren't in the interests of the country, said the South African government is to blame for aid being cut off by the US.

The **Transvaal Agricultural Union**, which advocates Christian values and private property rights, thanked Trump for his intervention.

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Kotzé also dismissed claims, that have been fueled in the past by Musk in posts on X, that Afrikaans farmers are being murdered for political reasons.

"Crime in South Africa is too high," he said. "If a murder is on a

farm, we call it a farm murder. But remember that same night somebody was also murdered in the little township where the farm workers came from.”

Most farmworkers in South Africa are black.

Expropriation concerns

Still, Kotzé said, AgriSA does have concerns about the Expropriation Act signed into law by South African President Cyril Ramaphosa about two weeks ago, such as when land can be taken without compensation and may take legal action to have it clarified.

But, he added, disputing Trump’s statement, “no farms were taken without compensation. None. Land grabs did not take place.”

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