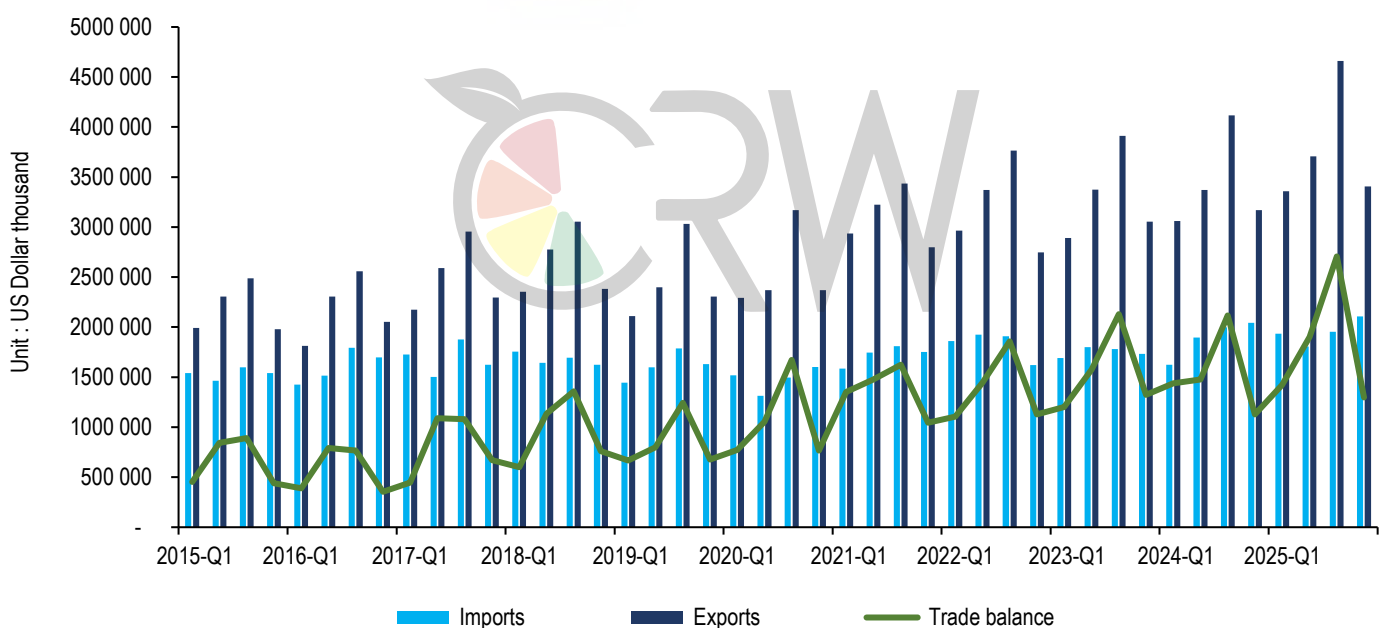


South Africa's agricultural exports reach a fresh high in 2025

- South Africa's agricultural exports have remained strong throughout 2025 despite significant trade policy shifts and uncertainty. Agricultural exports in 2025 reached a record US\$15.1 billion, up 10% from 2024.
- The exports were strong every quarter. The latest data for Q4 shows that South Africa's agricultural exports totalled US\$3.4 billion, up 7% from the same period a year ago. This is due to higher volumes of various product exports and better commodity prices.
- The products that dominated the export list in the last quarter of 2025 were mainly table grapes, maize, berries, wine, citrus, apples and pears, sugar, nuts, fruit juices, wool, apricots, cherries, and peaches, among others. While the various ports' efficiency has improved notably in recent months on the back of ongoing policy reforms in South Africa's network industries, challenges at the Port of Cape Town in November and December 2025 added to the financial difficulties faced by some producers in the fruit industry. Still, the country's overall agricultural export performance remained solid, as other ports were functioning reasonably well and continued to support export activity.

Exhibit I: South Africa's quarterly agricultural trade



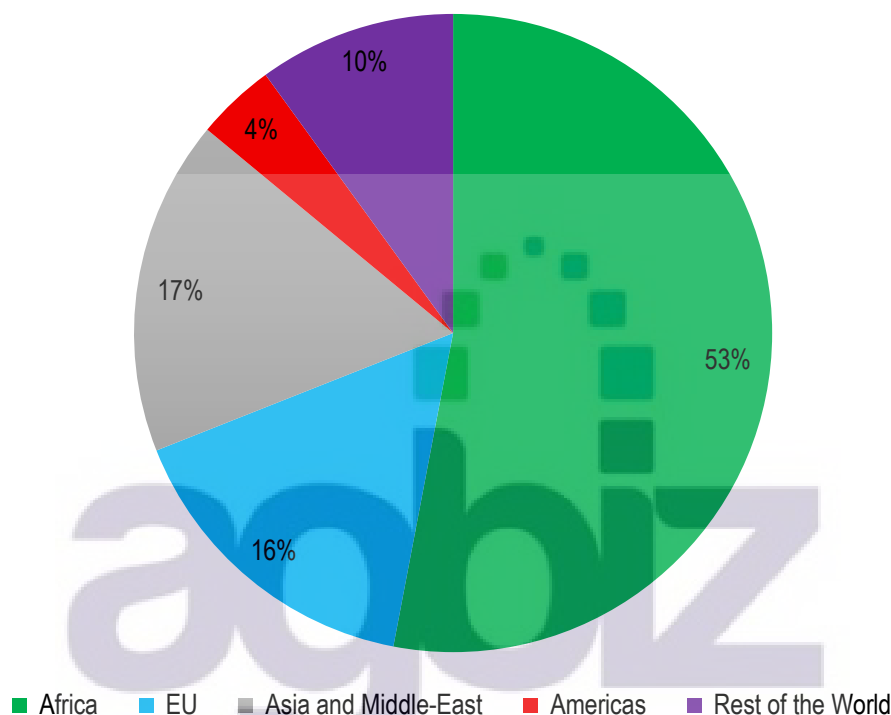
Source: Trade Map and Agbiz Research

- From a regional perspective, the African continent accounted for the lion's share of South Africa's agricultural exports in the last quarter of 2025, with 53% of the total value. The products leading the export list in the African continent were roughly similar to those in the previous quarters, mainly maize, maize meal, apples and pears, sugar, soybean, wine, and fruit juices, amongst others.
- As a collective, Asia and the Middle East were the second-largest agricultural markets, accounting for 17% of total agricultural exports in the fourth quarter of 2025. Wool, citrus, berries, apples and pears, beef, apricots, grapes, lamb, wine and sugar dominated exports to Asian and Middle Eastern regions in the last quarter of 2025.
- The EU was South Africa's third-largest agricultural market, accounting for 16% of total exports in the fourth quarter of 2025. The exports to this region primarily included grapes, berries, wine, fruit juices, citrus, apricots, cherries, peaches, plums, wool, nuts, sugar, and dates, among other products.
- The Americas region accounted for 4% of South Africa's agricultural exports in the last quarter of 2025. The main exported products include citrus, berries, grapes, wine, fruit juices, apples, pears, apricots, and nuts, among others.
- Given ongoing concerns about the higher "Liberation Day" tariffs South Africa faces in the U.S., it is worth highlighting that after some exporters took advantage of the 90-day pause of the higher tariffs and exported more volume than usual during that period in the second quarter of the year, we saw some cooling of exports in the third and fourth quarters of 2025. Notably, South Africa's agricultural exports to the U.S. decreased by 11% in the third quarter of 2025, compared to the same period in 2024, at US\$144 million. In the last quarter of 2025, South Africa's agricultural exports to the U.S. fell sharply by 39% to US\$81 million. The composition of the products hasn't changed much; it is mainly citrus, wine, fruit juices, and nuts, amongst other typical agricultural exports to the U.S.
- From an annual perspective, South Africa's agricultural exports to the U.S. in 2025 totalled US\$504 million, down 3% from the previous year. This slight annual decline doesn't suggest that the 30% "Liberation Day tariffs" aren't affecting the industry; we benefited from substantial exports in the second quarter. We believe that in 2026, we will be able to get a clearer picture of the impact of all these tariffs.
- It is also worth noting that the U.S. has decided to modify its reciprocal tariffs and exempt certain food products, thereby easing agricultural trade friction, which is costly to both exporting countries and U.S. consumers. The exempted products include coffee and tea, fruit juices, cocoa, and spices, as well as avocados, bananas, coconuts, guavas, limes, oranges, mangoes, plantains, pineapples, various peppers, tomatoes, beef, and additional fertilizers. From a South African perspective, the oranges, macadamia nuts and fruit juices will benefit from the exemption.
- Last week, we commented on the extension of AGOA for the year in an upbeat tone. However, that extension guarantees only that tariffs on the U.S. won't rise to 33%, but will remain at 30%. The 3% is

the lower end of the U.S.'s Most Favoured Nation tariff rate before the "Liberation Day" tariffs. Therefore, the U.S. market remains constrained, and the key is to reach a trade deal.

- The rest of the world, including the United Kingdom, accounted for 10% of South African agricultural exports in the last quarter of 2025.

Exhibit 2: South Africa's agricultural exports by region in Q4, 2025



Source: Trade Map and Agbiz Research

- South Africa also imports various agricultural products. In the last quarter of 2025, South Africa's agricultural imports totalled US\$2.1 billion, a 3% increase year-over-year. The result is due to slightly higher volumes of major products South Africa imports, such as wheat, palm oil, poultry, and whiskies. Still, the cumulative agricultural imports in 2025 are US\$7.8 billion, up by 4% from 2024.
- As we have highlighted on various occasions, South Africa lacks favourable climatic conditions for growing rice and palm oil and thus relies on imports of these products. Regarding wheat, South Africa imports nearly half of the annual consumption. In the Free State province, which was once one of the country's major wheat-growing regions, production has declined notably over time due to unfavourable weather conditions and the lower profitability of wheat compared to other crops. Meanwhile, imports account for around 20% of the annual domestic poultry consumption.
- Consequently, when exports and imports are accounted for, South Africa's agricultural sector recorded a trade surplus of US\$7.3 billion in 2025, up 18% from the previous year.

- Overall, in the current environment of heightened geoeconomic tensions, South Africa's export-oriented agricultural sector must maintain its existing export markets and expand into new ones. The focus for both policymakers and agribusinesses and organized agriculture should be on improving logistical efficiency. This entails investments in port and rail infrastructure, as well as improving roads in farming towns.
- In addition, South Africa must work diligently to maintain its existing markets in the EU, Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and the Americas. The South African Department of Trade, Industry and Competition, the Department of International Relations and Cooperation, and the Department of Agriculture should lead the way in expanding exports to current markets and exploring new ones.
- South Africa should expand market access to key BRICS countries, including China, India, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt. There is also a need to increase focus on the broader Asia and Middle East regions, with the intention of securing lower tariffs and the removal of phytosanitary barriers.

WEEKLY HIGHLIGHT

The South African agriculture may soon have broader access to China

- We are yet to receive the full details, but we wanted to flag that South Africa may soon have better access in the Chinese market. South Africa's Department of Trade, Industry and Competition stated this morning that: *"Minister Parks Tau and China's Minister of Commerce, Wang Wentao, have signed the China–Africa Economic Partnership Agreement (CAEPA), a landmark deal set to grant South African exports duty-free access to the Chinese market while boosting investment into South Africa's economy."*
- This framework includes the agricultural sector, but we are not yet clear on the tariff level changes or product inclusion. What is key to state is that many of South Africa's agricultural industries have struggled with higher tariffs in China. For example, the wine industry faces duties of 14-20%, the macadamia industry 12%, and several other products face higher tariffs. Therefore, including the agricultural sector and reducing these tariffs would increase our competitiveness in the Chinese market. We will comment further once the full details are available. But this statement signals a positive outlook for agriculture.
- For us in agriculture, China has long been a priority market for deepening access. Before this news, we had a small presence in the Chinese market. For example, in 2023, South Africa accounted for a small share of China's agricultural imports, at about 0.4% (US\$979 million) of US\$218 billion. We are keen to see an increase from this small share.
- We have a large volume of products to export, including fruits, wine, grains, and meat products. We also want to underscore that China is among the world's leading agricultural importers, accounting for 9% of global agricultural imports in 2024 (before 2024, China was the leading importer). This is promising news in key markets, and we must continue these export efforts in other markets as well. This export push is key to South Africa's long-term agricultural growth.

What are we watching this week?

- We are in another quiet week on the global front. We only have two major data releases. On Tuesday, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will release the **U.S. Crop Production data**. Moreover, on Friday, the USDA will release the **U.S.'s Agricultural Projections to 2035**.
- On the domestic front, we also have a reasonably quiet calendar. On Wednesday, the South African Grain Information Services (SAGIS) will publish its **weekly data on South Africa's Grain and Oilseed Producer Deliveries**. In the previous release on January 30, South African farmers delivered 56,177 tonnes of maize to commercial silos. This was the 40th weekly delivery for the 2025-26 marketing year (which corresponds with the 2024-25 production season), bringing the overall maize deliveries so far to 15.09 million tonnes. South Africa's 2024-25 maize harvest is estimated at 16.44 million tonnes, a 28% increase year-on-year, primarily due to expected annual yield improvements.
- The 2025-26 oilseeds marketing year began at the start of March 2025. In the first 48th weeks, soybean producer deliveries totalled 2.73 million tonnes, accounting for 98% of the harvest of 2.77 million tonnes. In the case of sunflower seeds, the first 48 weeks of the new 2025-26 marketing year's producer deliveries totalled 696,209 tonnes, representing 98% of the harvest of 708,300 tonnes.
- South Africa's 2025-26 winter wheat harvest has ended and farmers continue to deliver the crop to commercial silos. In the first 18 weeks of this 2025-26 marketing year, farmers have delivered about 1.67 million tonnes of wheat to commercial silos. This is 87% of the expected harvest of 1.93 million tonnes for the season.
- On Thursday, SAGIS will publish its weekly **South Africa's Grains and Oilseeds Trade data**. In the week of January 30, South Africa exported 49,369 tonnes of maize, with approximately 40% going to Zimbabwe, 27% to Mozambique, and the remainder to other countries in the Southern African region. This placed South Africa's 2025-26 maize exports at 1.5 million tonnes, out of the expected seasonal exports of 2.4 million tonnes. The current marketing year only ends in April 2026. We expect more robust export activity this quarter, driven by stronger demand in the Southern Africa region.
- While South Africa has an ample harvest and will remain a net exporter of maize, minor imports of yellow maize from Argentina are expected to continue for South Africa's coastal regions. For example, so far in the 2025-26 marketing year, South Africa has imported 110,448 tonnes of yellow maize for feed in the country's coastal regions. These importers mainly take advantage of the affordable prices of Argentinian supplies.
- South Africa is a net wheat importer, and January 30 marked the 18th week of the new 2025-26 marketing year. The cumulative imports to date have totalled 511,765 tonnes from the United States, Latvia, Canada, Australia, Brazil, Romania, Lithuania, Russia and Poland. We expect South Africa's 2025-26 wheat imports to reach 1.75 million tonnes, down from 1.83 million tonnes in the 2024-25 marketing year.