

Western Cape Agriculture and Agriprocessing Employment Performance First Quarter of 2026

Executive Summary

The Western Cape agricultural sector remains a critical driver of employment and rural economic activity, contributing **26%** of South Africa's total agricultural jobs (249,270 jobs) in Q1 2026.

Employment increased **16%** quarter-on-quarter, signalling strong seasonal recovery, while annual growth remained modest at **2%**, indicating structural constraints.

Growth was driven by crop production, while:



Livestock employment declined significantly due to disease outbreaks

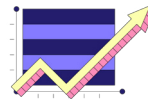


Agri-processing contracted, highlighting value-chain weaknesses. Agriculture and agri-processing account for 12% ($\approx 345,000$ jobs) of total provincial employment.

Key Highlights



Strong provincial leadership
• Western Cape remains the largest agricultural employer nationally (26% share)



Quarterly growth rebound
• +34,668 jobs added q/q (+16%)



Horticulture dominates employment
• Crop production accounts for 84% of agricultural jobs



Livestock sector contraction
• -18% q/q, -20% y/y due to Foot-and-Mouth Disease



Agri-processing under pressure
• -3% q/q and -17% y/y decline

Click on the link to access the full report: [Employment-Brief-Q1_2026.pdf](#)

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