

Number of SA commercial farmers falls

IOL reports that the number of commercial farmers in South Africa is set to fall from 40 000 to 15 000 over the next 15 years. Experts believe that without enough viable commercial farms, South Africa's food security is endangered.

According to the *IOL* report, the loss of farmers would also lead to the loss of jobs in the rural areas, where commercial agriculture is the only significant employer. Ernst Janovsky, head of Absa AgriBusiness, is reported to have said that in 1980 there had been around 128 000 commercial farmers, by 1997 the number had fallen to 58 000. Today, there are fewer than 40 000, and it is predicted were that numbers would fall to 15 000 in the next 15 years, according to the *IOL* report.

South Africa used to export more food than it imported, but it became a net importer of food since 2007. According to Organised agriculture, says the *IOL* report, the reasons for the decline in South African agriculture include the fact that input costs of farming are rising faster than output, and the lack of clarity on the part of government regarding its land policy has created great uncertainty. Moreover, according to the *IOL* report, another concern, says KwaZulu-Natal Agricultural Union CEO Sandy La Marque, is the scale of stock theft cases in KZN.

For more:

- *IOL*: [South Africa's ever-shrinking farmers](#)

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