

# Drought has not sparked farm job cuts, says union

The prevailing drought conditions and water shortages have not filtered into clear signs of job losses in the agricultural sector, according to SA's largest farm workers' union.



Tim via [Wikimedia Commons](#)

The Food and Allied Workers Union (Fawu) said yesterday it had not yet been widely consulted by employers on retrenchments in the sector, which directly employs 680,000 people. Various government departments are working towards mitigating the effects of water shortages in many provinces, with analysts already alluding to the effect of reduced agricultural production on farmers and inflation.

Last month, Statistics SA's third quarter labour force survey indicated that the economy had added 28,000 jobs from the second quarter to the third, or 3% growth. Year-on-year employment growth saw the addition of 211,000 jobs in the agricultural sector or 30,8%.

Fawu general secretary Katishi Masemola said the union welcomed government interventions to mitigate the effect of drought conditions. Last week, the government said it was considering emergency relief measures for KwaZulu-Natal's sugarcane farmers.

As of yesterday, Fawu had not been approached by employers in any concerted manner to discuss retrenchments, with the exception of a sugar producer in KwaZulu-Natal, which had indicated restructuring was likely, said Masemola.

Grain SA economist Wandile Sihlobo said farmers were taking measures to mitigate the effects of the drought, such as crop-rotation, alternative crops or drought resistant variants, but one of the major pressure points was a strain on finances following poor harvests.

*Source: Business Day*

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