

Food & Water Security in South Africa WEEKLY MONITOR

18 February - 24 February 2017

Prepared by Augustus Consulting

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1.0 Key Daily Trends, Themes and Issues

- **South Africa's President Jacob Zuma has sent the Expropriation Bill back to the National Assembly for review, some 10 months after Members of Parliament approved it**
- **An outbreak of fall armyworms that has attacked maize plants in South Africa may spread to sugarcane in the KwaZulu-Natal province, where a warm climate would help the pest survive through the year**
- **Cosatu in the North West says farm workers continue to be subjected to unfair treatment in the workplace**
- **EFF says it might be willing to assist Rural Development and Land Reform Minister Gugile Nkwinti if he is genuine about amending the constitution to effect land restitution without compensation**
- **The nationwide drought has had a devastating effect on the agriculture sector and its value chain**
- **South Africa's improved economic outlook is not sufficient to reduce mass unemployment, poverty and inequality**
- **Minister of Finance Pravin Gordhan has announced an increase of 30c/litre in the general fuel levy**
- **Heavy rain in the past few days seems to have had little impact on dam levels in some parts of KwaZulu-Natal**
- **Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan increased the social grants assistance from R164.9 billion in 2016/17 to R209.1 billion by 2019/20 to protect low-income households in his budget speech of 2017**

- Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan's budget speech offered very limited evidence to suggest radical transformation, particularly in terms of land reform, is about to be accelerated
- North West municipality has been suffering from a two-and-a-half year drought due to poor infrastructure as the region's Swartruggens dam is due to run out of water again in 100 days
- Committee chairman Mlungisi Johnson hit out strongly on Saturday, saying he'd 'summon' Mokonyane to explain
- City of Cape Town does not plan to disrupt the supply of water to residents in an effort to conserve water
- City of Cape Town has issued a plea to residents in the Western Cape to cut down on water consumption as dam levels have dropped to 34,5%, a further 1,7% down from a week ago
- City of CT considers lowering water pressure in attempt to reduce usage
- Department of Water and Sanitation says the water restrictions will continue despite the heavy rains that are falling across parts of the country
- The drought's not over yet and the Vaal and Lesotho dams are not full enough
- Cape Town groundwater project on hold until 2022 due to financial constraints
- As Vaal dam reaches 85%, Western Cape still critical as drought bites
- Johannesburg Water announces that water restrictions will only be reviewed in May despite the recent good rains

1.1 Food Security

1.1.1 South Africa's President Jacob Zuma has sent the Expropriation Bill back to Parliament for review, some ten months after Members of Parliament approved it

On 17 February, *eNCA* reported that President Jacob Zuma has sent the Expropriation Bill back to the National Assembly for review, some 10 months after MPs approved it, his office said on Friday.¹

1.1.2 An outbreak of fall armyworms that has attacked maize plants in South Africa may spread to sugarcane in the KwaZulu-Natal province, where a warm climate would help the pest survive through the year

¹ Expropriation Bill sent back to Parliament, *eNCA*, 17 February 2017, <http://www.enca.com/south-africa/expropriation-bill-sent-back-to-parliament>

On 17 February, *Bloomberg* reported that an outbreak of fall armyworms that has attacked corn plants in South Africa may spread to sugarcane in the KwaZulu-Natal province, where a warm climate would help the pest survive through the year, the Agricultural Research Council said.²

1.1.3 Cosatu in the North West says farm workers continue to be subjected to unfair treatment in the workplace

On 18 February, *Reuters* reported that Cosatu in the North West says farm workers continue to be subjected to unfair treatment in the workplace.³

1.1.4 EFF says it might be willing to assist Rural Development and Land Reform Minister Gugile Nkwinti if he is genuine about amending the constitution to effect land restitution without compensation

On 20 February, *Cape Times* reported that the EFF says it might be willing to assist Rural Development and Land Reform Minister Gugile Nkwinti if he is genuine about amending the constitution to effect land restitution without compensation.⁴

1.1.5 The nationwide drought has had a devastating effect on the agriculture sector and its value chain

On 22 February, *Fin24* reported that the nationwide drought has had a devastating effect on the agriculture sector and its value chain, Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan said in his 2017 Budget Speech.⁵

1.1.6 South Africa's improved economic outlook is not sufficient to reduce mass unemployment, poverty and inequality

On 22 February, *IOL Business* reported that South Africa's improved economic outlook is not sufficient to reduce mass unemployment, poverty and inequality.⁶

² Armyworms may invade sugar, Matthew Hill, Bloomberg, 17 February 2017, <http://www.iol.co.za/business-report/markets/commodities/armyworms-may-invade-sugar-7804243>

³ Cosatu decries abuse of farm workers in N West, Reuters, 18 February 2017, <http://www.sabc.co.za/news/a/94a18580401d9a5a9785ff75889f6f7e/Cosatu-decries-abuse-of--farm-workers--in-N-West-20171802>

⁴ EFF says it will take up ANC's land expropriation offer, Khaya Koko, Cape Times, 20 February 2017, <http://www.iol.co.za/news/politics/eff-says-it-will-take-up-ancs-land-expropriation-offer-7842958>

⁵ Drought has had 'devastating impact on agriculture sector' – Treasury, Kyle Venkess, Fin24, 22 February 2017, <http://www.fin24.com/Budget/drought-has-had-devastating-impact-on-agriculture-sector-treasury-20170222>

⁶ #Budget2017: Private sector holds back growth, Nicola Mawson, IOL Business Report, 22 February 2017, <http://www.iol.co.za/business-report/budget/budget2017-private-sector-holds-back-growth-7877626>

1.1.7 Minister of Finance Pravin Gordhan has announced an increase of 30c/litre in the general fuel levy

On 22 February, *TNA* reported that Minister of Finance Pravin Gordhan has announced an increase of 30c/litre in the general fuel levy.⁷

1.1.8 Heavy rain in the past few days seems to have had little impact on dam levels in some parts of KwaZulu-Natal

On 23 February, *SABC News* reported that heavy rain in the past few days seems to have had little impact on dam levels in some parts of KwaZulu-Natal.⁸

1.1.9 Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan increased the social grants assistance from R164.9 billion in 2016/17 to R209.1 billion by 2019/20 to protect low-income households in his budget speech of 2017

On 23 February, *TNA* reported that the Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan increased the social grants assistance from R164.9 billion in 2016/17 to R209.1 billion by 2019/20 to protect low-income households in his budget speech of 2017 in Cape Town on Wednesday.⁹

1.1.10 Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan's budget speech offered very limited evidence to suggest radical transformation, particularly in terms of land reform, is about to be accelerated

On 24 February, *Business Day* reported that Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan's budget speech offered very limited evidence to suggest radical transformation, particularly in terms of land reform, is about to be accelerated.¹⁰

1.2 Water Security

1.2.1 North West municipality has been suffering from a two-and-a-half year drought due to poor infrastructure. The region's Swartruggens dam is due to run out of water again in 100 days

On 17 February, *News24* reported that the North West municipality has been suffering from a two-and-a-half year drought due to poor infrastructure.¹¹

⁷ Fuel levy hike for SA, TNA Reporter, 22 February 2017, <http://www.thenewage.co.za/fuel-levy-hike-for-sa/>

⁸ KZN still faces drought despite heavy rains, Nonkululeko Hlophe, SABC News, 23 February 2017, <http://www.sabc.co.za/news/a/d12ae180402c3462a21bebf8e0b8bbd7/KZN-still-faces-drought-despite-heavy-rains-20172302>

⁹ Social grants assistance grows by approximately 45 Billion, TNA Reporter, 23 February 2017, <http://www.thenewage.co.za/social-grants-assistance-grows-by-approximately-45-billion-2/>

¹⁰ Budget shows land reform has stalled, says agricultural chamber head, Bekezela Phakathi, Business Day, 24 February 2017, <https://www.businesslive.co.za/bd/national/2017-02-24-budget-shows-land-reform-has-stalled-says-agricultural-chamber-head/>

¹¹ Dept stalling as waterless municipality waits for R147m pipe, Paul Herman, News24, 17 February 2017, <http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/dept-stalling-as-waterless-municipality-waits-for-r147m-pipe-20170217>

1.2.2 Committee chairman Mlungisi Johnson hit out strongly on Saturday, saying he'd 'summon' Mokonyane to explain

On 18 February, *ANA* reported that Committee chairman Mlungisi Johnson hit out strongly on Saturday, saying he'd 'summon' Mokonyane to explain.¹²

1.2.3 City of Cape Town does not plan to disrupt the supply of water to residents in an effort to conserve water

On February, *News24* reported that the City of Cape Town does not plan to disrupt the supply of water to residents in an effort to conserve water, an official said on Monday.¹³

1.2.4 City of Cape Town has issued a plea to residents in the Western Cape to cut down on water consumption as dam levels have dropped to 34,5%, a further 1,7% down from a week ago

On 21 February, *traveller24* reported that the City of Cape Town has issued a plea to residents in the Western Cape to cut down on water consumption as dam levels have dropped to 34,5%, a further 1,7% down from a week ago.¹⁴

1.2.5 City of CT considers lowering water pressure in attempt to reduce usage

On 21 February, *Eyewitness News* reported that with dam levels at 24.5%, officials say the city only has around 129 days of useable water left.¹⁵

1.2.6 Department of Water and Sanitation says the water restrictions will continue despite the heavy rains that are falling across parts of the country

On 21 February, *SABC News* reported that the Department of Water and Sanitation says the water restrictions will continue despite the heavy rains that are falling across parts of the country.¹⁶

1.2.7 The drought's not over yet and the Vaal and Lesotho dams are not full enough

On 22 February, *Huffington Post South Africa* reported that the drought's not over yet and the Vaal and Lesotho dams are not full enough, says the Gauteng water authority.¹⁷

¹² Water affairs department 'undermining' partly committee on water crisis, *ANA*, 18 February 2017, <http://citizen.co.za/news/news-national/1431833/water-affairs-department-undermining-parly-committee-kgetlengrivier-water-crisis/>

¹³ Water-shedding not in the pipeline - Cape Town, James de Villiers, *News24*, 20 February 2017, <http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/water-shedding-not-in-the-pipeline-cape-town-20170220>

¹⁴ Western Cape Water crisis: 129 days of useable water left as dams dip 1.7%, Louzel Lombard Steyn, *traveller24*, 21 February 2017, <http://traveller24.news24.com/Explore/Green/western-cape-water-crisis-129-days-of-useable-water-left-as-dams-dip-17-20170221>

¹⁵ City of CT considers lowering water pressure in attempt to reduce usage, Natalie Malgas, *Eyewitness News*, 21 February 2017, <http://ewn.co.za/2017/02/21/city-of-ct-considers-lowering-water-pressure-in-attempt-to-reduce-usage>

¹⁶ Water restrictions remain despite heavy rains, Mthobisi Mkhali, *SABC News*, 21 February 2017, <http://www.sabc.co.za/news/a/4affa40040273b0299bdfb75889f6f7e/Water-restrictions-remain-despite-heavy-rains-20172102>

1.2.8 Cape Town groundwater project on hold until 2022 due to financial constraints

On 22 February, *Cape Argus* reported that a crucial pilot project which could have somewhat eased Cape Town's water crisis was, in 2012, halted and pushed back by more than 10 years due to financial reasons.¹⁸

1.2.9 As Vaal dam reaches 85%, Western Cape still critical as drought bites

On 23 February, *City Press* reported that the City of Cape Town is set to take drastic measures as dam levels drop to 26.2% of usable water.¹⁹

1.2.10 Johannesburg Water announces that water restrictions will only be reviewed in May despite the recent good rains

On 24 February, *TMG Digital* reported that the good rains in Johannesburg this week, which are filling up dam levels, will not lead to a swift suspension of water restrictions.²⁰

¹⁷ Keep Saving Water, Beggings Rand Water, Staff Reporter, Huffington Post South Africa, 22 February 2017, <http://www.huffingtonpost.co.za/2017/02/22/keep-saving-water-begs-rand-water/>

¹⁸ Cape Town groundwater project on hold until 2022, Siyabonga Sesant, Cape Argus, 22 February 2017, <http://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/western-cape/cape-town-groundwater-project-on-hold-until-2022-7874033>

¹⁹ As Vaal dam reaches 85%, Western Cape still critical, Ndileka Lujabe, City Press, 23 February 2017, <http://citypress.news24.com/News/as-vaal-dam-reaches-85-western-cape-still-critical-20170223>

²⁰ Water restrictions will only be reviewed in May - Johannesburg Water, TMG Digital, 24 February 2017, <http://www.timeslive.co.za/local/2017/02/24/Water-restrictions-will-only-be-reviewed-in-May-Johannesburg-Water>

2.0 Daily Infographics:

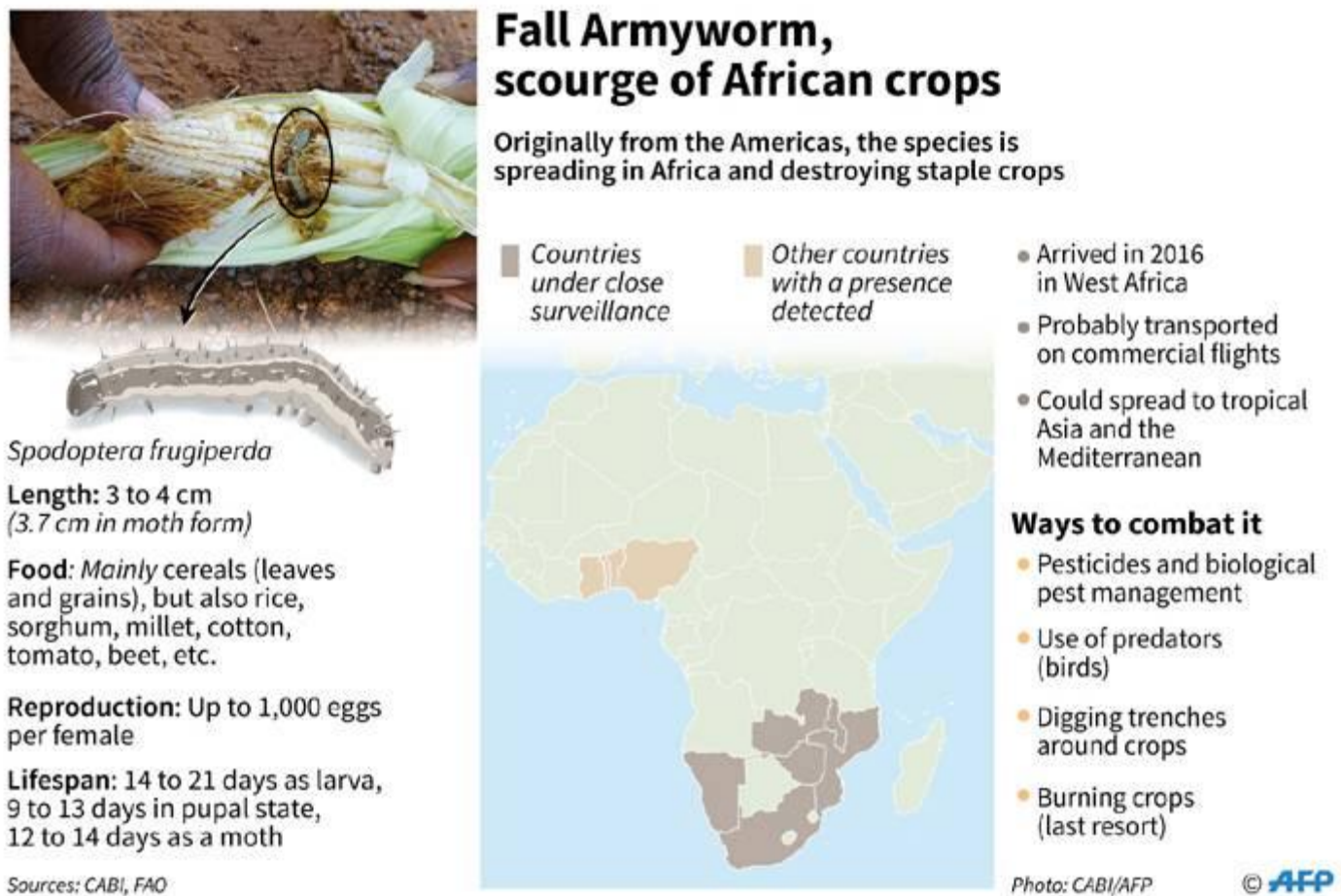


Figure 1. Fall Armyworm, scourge of African crops (Sources: CABI, FAO)

3.0 Overall Assessment

- ❖ The Fall Armyworm continues to spread in South Africa as the country struggles to contain the armyworm amid the drought crisis and increasing food insecurity
- ❖ Cape Town's water crisis deepens as the drought exposes the inadequacy of drought mitigation planning in the Western Cape Province
- ❖ The latest, low budgetary allocation to land reform in South Africa implies that agrarian reform is still not being viewed as a major policy issue despite the deepening land crisis in the country.
- ❖ Economic growth prospects for South Africa remain dim, as low-income households become more food insecure due to rising food prices amid the persistent drought