

Food & Water Security in South Africa WEEKLY MONITOR

5 August – 11 August 2017

Prepared by Augustus Consulting

Augustus Consulting monitors reports of food and water security in South Africa, including media articles, blogs, opinion pieces and other announcements. Unless otherwise indicated (such as in articles written by Augustus Consulting), the language and views contained in the search results reflect those of the originating author and/or publication and do not necessarily represent the views of Augustus Consulting. Archived media reviews are available: <http://www.augustusconsulting.co.za>

1.0 Key Weekly Trends, Themes and Issues

- **South Africa's sugar industry could take years to recover from the effects of the 2015-16 drought amid reports that the sector is responsible for 85,000 direct and 350,000 indirect job opportunities with export earnings of R2.5bn a year**
- **Credit rating agency Standard & Poor (S&P) warns that South Africa's current negative outlook poses a risk to its sovereign rating which could be lowered in the next twelve months**
- **South Africa's maize harvest for 2017 is estimated around 16 million tonnes, posing a problem to farmers as it will cause the price of maize to fall**
- **Chicken prices may rise as avian flu spreads across South Africa amid reports of possible shortages of chicken**
- **Unemployment in South Africa remains at a stubborn 14-year high amid reports by Statistics South Africa that 27.7% of the working age population is jobless as a skills deficit, poor confidence levels and a weak economy are making it difficult to put a dent in the jobless rate**
- **Cape Town takes drastic measures to save water by installing devices to restrict water to the homes of 100 top consumers amid reports that the City of Cape Town's existing measures to reduce water consumption to 500 million litres per day have failed as fears grow that the city will run out of water in around 60 days**
- **Relief as new water system comes on line in the water scarce Nelson Mandela Bay municipality as the recently completed phase two of the Nooitgedagt low level water scheme has undergone a week of testing and is now approved for ongoing supply to the city**
- **City of Cape Town advises residents to use water sparingly as consumption remains too high, exacerbated by the warmer weather and associated evaporation amid reports that dam storage levels are currently at 29.4%, with usable water at 19.4%**

- **George Municipality in the Southern Cape enforces new water restrictions as the Garden Route Dam dropped to below 45%**

1.1 Food Security

1.1.1 South Africa's sugar industry could take years to recover from the effects of the 2015-16 drought amid reports that the sector is responsible for 85,000 direct and 350,000 indirect job opportunities with export earnings of R2.5bn a year

On 4 August, *Business Day* reported that the South African sugar industry could take years to recover from the effects of the 2015-16 drought which has led to the industry failing to meet export orders.¹

1.1.2 Credit rating agency Standard & Poor (S&P) warns that South Africa's current negative outlook poses a risk to its sovereign rating which could be lowered in the next twelve months

On 4 August, *SABC News* reported that rating agency, Standard & Poor (S&P) has warned that South Africa's current negative outlook poses a risk to its sovereign rating which could be lowered in the next twelve months.²

1.1.3 South Africa's maize harvest for 2017 is estimated around 16 million tonnes, posing a problem to farmers as it will cause the price of maize to fall

On 5 August, *SABC News* reported that South Africa's record maize harvest for 2017 is estimated around 16 million tonnes.³

1.1.4 Chicken prices may rise as avian flu spreads across South Africa amid reports of possible shortages of chicken

On 7 August, *IOL Business* reported that poultry producers on the JSE have proven to be resilient in the midst of the avian influenza outbreak, but experts warned that if the disease continued to spread South Africans could expect shortages of chicken and prices to rise.⁴

1.1.5 Unemployment in South Africa remains at a stubborn 14-year high amid reports by Statistics South Africa that 27.7% of the working age population is jobless as a skills deficit, poor confidence levels and a weak economy are making it difficult to put a dent in the jobless rate

¹ Sugar industry could take years to recover from 2015-16 drought, Reitumetse Pitso, Business Day, 4 August 2017, <https://www.businesslive.co.za/bd/economy/2017-08-04-sugar-industry-could-take-years-to-recover-from-2015-16-drought/>

² S&P warns of further possible downgrade, Amina Accram, SABC News, 4 August 2017, <http://www.sabc.co.za/news/a/9b251200421edcdd9a42de66f9b1a2e0/S&P-warns-of-further--possible-downgrade-20170408>

³ SA expects 16 Million tonnes of maize harvest, Bafedile Moerane, SABC News, 5 August 2017, <http://www.sabc.co.za/news/a/050bd5004220f5fad20fd66f9b1a2e0/SA-expects-16-Million-tonnes-of-maize-harvest-20170508>

⁴ Chicken prices may rise as avian flu spreads, Sandile Mchunu, IOL Business, 7 August 2017, <http://www.iol.co.za/business-report/economy/chicken-prices-may-rise-as-avian-flu-spreads-10670435>

On 7 August, *SABC News* reported that the number of people out of work in the country remains at a stubborn 14-year high.⁵

1.2 Water Security

1.2.1 Cape Town takes drastic measures to save water by installing devices to restrict water to the homes of 100 top consumers amid reports that the City of Cape Town's existing measures to reduce water consumption to 500 million litres per day have failed as fears grow that the city will run out of water in around 60 days

On 6 August, eNCA reported that the City of Cape Town is taking drastic new measures to reduce water consumption.⁶

1.2.2 Relief as new water system comes on line in the water scarce Nelson Mandela Bay municipality as the recently completed phase two of the Nooitgedagt low level water scheme has undergone a week of testing and is now approved for ongoing supply to the city

On 6 August, *ANA* reported that residents in the water scarce Nelson Mandela Bay municipality can heave a small sigh of relief as a new water system comes on line for the city.⁷

1.2.3 City of Cape Town advises residents to use water sparingly as consumption remains too high, exacerbated by the warmer weather and associated evaporation amid reports that dam storage levels are currently at 29.4%, with usable water at 19.4%

On 7 August, *News24* reported that the City of Cape Town is urging residents to further reduce their water usage during the unseasonably dry weather that Cape Town is currently experiencing.⁸

1.2.4 George Municipality in the Southern Cape enforces new water restrictions as the Garden Route Dam dropped to below 45%

On 8 August, *SABC News* reported that the George Municipality in the Southern Cape has urged households to cut their water usage by half to ensure they don't exceed the limit.⁹

⁵ 27.7% of the working age population jobless, Devan Murugan, *SABC News*, 7 August 2017,

<http://www.sabc.co.za/news/a/9bfe198042286cbf937bb3af459a8520/27.7-of-the-working-age-population-jobless-20170708>

⁶ Cape Town takes drastic measures to save water, eNCA, 6 August 2017, <http://www.enca.com/south-africa/cape-town-takes-dramatic-measures-to-save-water>

⁷ Relief as new water system comes on line in NMB, *ANA*, 6 August 2017,

<http://www.sabc.co.za/news/a/788c4e8042251fbbb483f466f9b1a2e0/Relief-as-new-water-system-comes-on-line-in-NMB-20170608>

⁸ Cape Town residents advised to use water sparingly during hot weather, Lizeka Tandwa, *News24*, 7 August 2017,

<http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/cape-town-residents-advised-to-use-water-sparingly-during-hot-weather-20170807>

⁹ George Municipality enforces new water restrictions, Sagree Chetty, *SABC News*, 8 August 2017,

<http://www.sabc.co.za/news/a/f019d1804229c6aabdbfbdaf459a8520/George-Municipality-enforces-new-water-restrictions-20170808>

2.0 Weekly Infographics: Biodiversity is essential for food security



Figure 1. Biodiversity is essential for food security (Source: FAO)

3.0 Overall Assessment

- ❖ The rapidly spreading avian flu poses a major threat to food security in South Africa. Therefore, the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) is urged to act more decisively on the avian flu problem

- ❖ **The City of Cape Town has failed to reduce water consumption by residents. Thus, the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) is urged to become more robustly involved in the deepening drought crisis in the Western Cape Province.**
- ❖ **With the possibility of a prolonged drought in South Africa is increasing, increasing the risk of increasing food and water insecurity. Therefore, the Government of South Africa is urged to urgently put in place a comprehensive and sustainable drought mitigation plan**