

Food & Water Security in South Africa WEEKLY MONITOR

28 October – 3 November 2017

Prepared by Augustus Consulting

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1.0 Key Weekly Trends, Themes and Issues

- **Whites own 73% of South Africa's farming land, even after 23 years of government efforts to redistribute land to the black majority**
- **South African food producer Rhodes Food expects profits to decrease by 22% due to drought**
- **17 million social grant recipients face uncertainty over payments, threatening the food security of poor households in South Africa**
- **South Africa's Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries says it is in the process of establishing a Fisheries Transformation Council that will ensure the equal distribution of fishing rights and resources to fishing communities**
- **South Africa's unemployment at record high for third quarter in a row amid slow growth and rising political uncertainty**
- **Poor planning by the City of Cape Town identified as one of the major reasons behind the deepening water crisis**
- **Western Cape water structures under extreme pressure as the drought takes its toll**
- **South Africa's Finance Minister Malusi Gigaba gives City of Cape Town go-ahead for budget changes in an effort to effectively implement drought mitigation efforts as the water crisis deepens**
- **North Riding residents in Johannesburg warned against possible tap water contamination as poor water quality remains a major threat to water security in South Africa**
- **South Africa's President Jacob Zuma urges citizens to do more to address the problem of climate change**

1.1 Food Security

1.1.1 Whites own 73% of South Africa's farming land, even after 23 years of government efforts to redistribute land to the black majority

On 30 October, Bloomberg reported that white farmers own almost three-quarters of South Africa's agricultural land, even after 23 years of government efforts to redistribute land to the black majority, City Press reported, citing a land audit by farm lobbying group Agri SA.¹

1.1.2 South African food producer Rhodes Food expects profits to decrease by 22% due to drought

On 31 October, IOL Business reported that Rhodes Food fell more than 3.5% in early trade yesterday after the group announced that it expected profits for the year ended October to decrease by up to 22% as the Western Cape drought and international business weighed on the bottom line.²

1.1.3 17 million social grant recipients face uncertainty over payments, threatening the food security of poor households in South Africa

On 31 October, IOL Political Bureau reported that social security payments to 17 million beneficiaries are heading for another crisis as no headway has been made in securing another entity to distribute the grants.³

1.1.4 South Africa's Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries says it is in the process of establishing a Fisheries Transformation Council that will ensure the equal distribution of fishing rights and resources to fishing communities

On 31 October, SABC News reported that the Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Department says it is in the process of establishing a Fisheries Transformation Council that will ensure the equal distribution of fishing rights and resources to fishing communities.⁴

1.1.5 South Africa's unemployment at record high for third quarter in a row amid slow growth and rising political uncertainty

¹ Whites own 73% of South Africa's farming land, Kevin Crowley, Bloomberg, 30 October, <https://www.iol.co.za/business-report/economy/blackmonday---whites-own-73-of-south-africas-farming-land-11774961>

² Rhodes Food expecting profits to decrease by 22% due to drought, Kabelo Khumalo, IOL Business Report, 31 October 2017, <https://www.iol.co.za/business-report/companies/rhodes-food-expecting-profits-to-decrease-by-22-due-to-drought-11777943>

³ 17m social grant recipients face uncertainty over payments, Mayibongwe Maqhina, IOL Political Bureau, 31 October 2017, <https://www.iol.co.za/news/politics/17m-social-grant-recipients-face-uncertainty-over-payments-11785304>

⁴ Council to push for equal distribution of fishing rights, Lynne Arendse, SABC News, 31 October 2017, <http://www.sabc.co.za/news/a/e6c6c380432bf2408baa8fead114bc74/Council-to-push-for-equal-distribution-of-fishing-rights-20173110>

On 31 October, Fin24 reported that the unemployment rate in South Africa was stable at 27.7% for the third quarter in a row, although still at record high levels last seen in 2003, Statistics South Africa announced on Tuesday.⁵

1.2 Water Security

1.2.1 Poor planning by the City of Cape Town identified as one of the major reasons behind the deepening water crisis

On 29 October, Weekend Argus reported that experts claim that over the past few winters in Cape Town there were clear signs that a drought was approaching and action by the various roleplayers to prolong its direct effect on residents of the city and the province could have been effected well in advance.⁶

1.2.2 Western Cape water structures under extreme pressure as the drought takes its toll

On 29 October, SABC News reported that the Water Institute of Southern Africa (WISA) says the current drought crisis in the Western Cape is placing existing water structures under extreme pressure. WISA CEO Lester Goldman says alternative methods such as grey water re-use, storm water harvesting and desalination plants are already being explored.⁷

1.2.3 South Africa's Finance Minister Malusi Gigaba gives City of Cape Town go-ahead for budget changes in an effort to effectively implement drought mitigation efforts as the water crisis deepens

On 30 October, Eyewitness News reported that Finance Minister Malusi Gigaba has given the go-ahead for the City of Cape Town to make budgetary changes to address current water shortages.⁸

1.2.4 North Riding residents in Johannesburg warned against possible tap water contamination as poor water quality remains a major threat to water security in South Africa

On 1 November, News24 reported that a sewage leak may have contaminated tap water in the North Riding area, Johannesburg Water has warned in a statement.⁹

⁵ Unemployment at record high for third quarter in a row, Liesl Peyper, Fin24, 31 October 2017, <https://www.fin24.com/Economy/unemployment-at-record-high-for-third-quarter-in-a-row-20171031>

⁶ 'Cape Town's water plans are 10 years too late', Tanya Petersen, Weekend Argus, 29 October 2017, <https://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/western-cape/cape-towns-water-plans-are-10-years-too-late-11760735>

⁷ Western Cape water structures under extreme pressure, SABC News, 29 October 2017, <http://www.sabc.co.za/news/a/2c0036804325966ba76af7a6f567fb66/Western-Cape-water-structures-under-extreme-pressure-20172910>

⁸ Gigaba gives City of CT go-ahead for budget changes amid water shortage, Kevin Brandt, Eyewitness News, 30 October 2017, <http://ewn.co.za/2017/10/30/gigaba-gives-city-of-ct-go-ahead-for-budget-changes-amid-water-shortage>

⁹ North Riding in Johannesburg warned against possible tap water contamination, Lizeka Tandwa, News24, 1 November 2017, <http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/north-riding-in-johannesburg-warned-against-possible-tap-water-contamination-20171101>

1.2.5 South Africa's President Jacob Zuma urges citizens to do more to address the problem of climate change

On 2 November, News24 reported that President Jacob Zuma has called on South Africans to do "extraordinary things" to address climate change.¹⁰

2.0 Weekly Infographics: Post-harvest losses are a major cause of poverty and food insecurity in Africa



Figure

1. Post-harvest losses are a major cause of poverty and food insecurity in Africa (Source: AgriFoodAID)

3.0 Overall Assessment

- ❖ The poor planning that is evident in the water crisis in Cape Town and Western Cape suggests that South Africa needs to establish the 'South African National Water Authority' as a matter of urgency. South Africa also needs to develop a comprehensive Climate Change Mitigation Plan that safeguards the country's food and water security

¹⁰ We must do extraordinary things – Zuma on climate change, Jan Gerber, News24, 2 November 2017, <http://www.news24.com/Green/News/we-must-do-extraordinary-things-zuma-on-climate-change-20171102>