

Big jump in employment in South Africa's aquaculture industry

 By [Wandile Sihlobo](#)

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The [recent jobs data](#) told an interesting story about the South African aquaculture industry. There were an additional 3,000 jobs in the industry in the second quarter of 2018 from the corresponding period last year. This placed South Africa's aquaculture jobs at 11,000, according to the latest Quarterly Labour Force Survey conducted by Statistics South Africa.



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This is the highest number of jobs in this industry since the last quarter of 2014. Within the aquaculture space, a notable uptick in jobs was in fish hatcheries and fish farms, with a modest uptick in ocean and coastal fishing jobs. It is not quite clear what was driving the activity in this space – something I will have to look at closely in the coming weeks.

This job creation was, of course, a modest contribution when one considers the overall agricultural sector, but it caught my attention because of the notable uptick.

The overall South African agricultural jobs were up by a percentage point in the second quarter of this year compared to the same period last year at 843,000 jobs. This was supported by an improvement in employment in the Western Cape, the Eastern Cape, Limpopo and the Northern Cape provinces. This is underpinned by increased activity in the grain and horticultural subsectors during the harvesting (largely citrus) period.

The improvement in the Western Cape agricultural jobs came as a surprise, as most horticulture industries recorded a double-digit decline in production due to drought. The province remains a leading agricultural employer, accounting for a 21% share in the national agricultural jobs.

If there is anything to take home in this [data](#), it is that South Africa is still far behind its target of creating a million agricultural jobs by 2030 as envisaged in the [National Development Plan](#).

As [noted](#), if the country is to move closer to improving growth and employment in the agricultural sector, the key subsector to focus on is horticulture. This is because it is labour-intensive and there is a growing demand for horticultural products on the global market (the rise of technology is not an immediate threat to jobs in this subsector due to its nature of production and harvesting – it's labour intensive).

Read the [original article](#) on *Agricultural Economist Today*.

ABOUT WANDILE SIHLOBO

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