

SA State can make agricultural sector flourish

A new report on the outlook for SA's agriculture sector is surprisingly upbeat on its prospects, predicting that "food security" crops such as maize will stage a recovery from the drought, and points to opportunities for export-oriented crops such as fruit. But the report, by the [Bureau for Food and Agricultural Policy](#) (BFAP), warns that farmers are unlikely to invest in new capital or labour-intensive production as long as there is uncertainty about property rights in the sector.



GregMontani via [pixabay](#)

The National Development Plan (NDP) in 2011 targeted the creation of 1-million new jobs in agriculture by 2030. But the BFAP report says the sector has not grown as it could have, nor enabled new farmers to put down roots, despite the NDP goals and a plethora of commitments and plans to unlock growth and transformation.

Money is not necessarily the problem. "Many of the constraints that have hampered growth can be turned around through an efficient and effective bureaucracy, and clear and direct leadership," say report authors Prof Ferdi Meyer and Tracy Davids.

"Small things, which require no further requests to the Treasury but merely a realignment of resources in the government, have the potential to bring large returns," they say.

Entrepreneurs, black and white, would jump at greater policy certainty, improved incentives, security of tenure, secure water rights and stability in the sector, they say, and speakers at the launch of the report pointed to improving water

infrastructure as one crucial way in which government could support the sector.

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