



National Agricultural  
Marketing Council  
Promoting market access for South African agriculture

# Markets and Economic Research Centre

## Macroeconomic Digest



*An Update on Selected  
Macroeconomic Indicators*

*Labour - July 2019*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- *Employment*



South Africa's unemployment rate increased by 1.4 percentage points to 29 % in the second quarter of 2019 (April to June 2019). This is the highest unemployment rate since the first quarter of 2008 (January to March 2008). The total quarterly employment increased by 0.1% (21 000 jobs) during the second quarter of 2019 (April to June 2019) compared to the first quarter of 2019 (January to March 2019), from 16 291 000 to 16 313 000 jobs. The main drivers of employment growth were Trade (84 000 jobs), Community and Social Services (48 000), Construction (24 000) and Manufacturing (9 000), between the first and second quarter of 2019. Nevertheless, the biggest employment decline was recorded in Private Households (49 000), followed by Transport (42 000), Mining (36 000) and Finance and other Business Services (21 000), during the same period. Compared to the first quarter of 2019, employment in Agriculture increased by 0.6% (5 000 jobs) and reached 842 000 in the second quarter of 2019.

Agricultural employment, per province, between the first and the second quarter of 2019, showed the largest increase recorded in the Mpumalanga Province with 25 000 jobs (32.3%), with the Western Cape Province experiencing the largest decline contributed to Agriculture, during this quarter (-19.3%).

In addition, men actively involved in Agriculture were 594 000, while women amounted to 248 000 during this period. Women employment in Agriculture declined by 10.8% compared to the previous quarter, while men increased by 6.3% when compared to the previous quarter.

## Table of Contents

1. Introduction .....	3
2. Employment by Industry .....	3
3. Gender Composition in Agriculture .....	5

### 1. Introduction

Macroeconomic indicators are statistics that present the current status of the economy of a country depending on a particular industry of the economy (industry, labour market, trade, etc). The purpose of this publication, the Macroeconomic Digest Report Vol (1) – Labour (July 2019) is to synthesise key information on employment with a special focus on Agriculture so as to enable stakeholders and the public at large to engage in discussions and analysis of policies and strategies. The data for this publication is obtained from official releases of Statistics South Africa (Stats SA).

### 2. Employment by Industry

**Table 1** shows that the total quarterly employment increased by 0.1% (21 000 jobs) during the second quarter of 2019 (April to June 2019) compared to the first quarter of 2019 (January to March 2019), from 16 291 000 to 16 313 000 jobs. The main drivers of employment growth were Trade (84 000 jobs), Community and Social Services (48 000), Construction (24 000) and Manufacturing (9 000), between the first and second quarter of 2019. The biggest employment decline was recorded in Private Households (49 000), followed by Transport (42 000), Mining (36 000) and Finance and other Business Services (21 000), during the same period. Compared to the first quarter of 2019, employment in Agriculture increased by 0.6% (5 000 jobs) and reached 842 000 in the second quarter of 2019.

Compared to the same period last year (April to June 2018), total industry employment improved by 25 000 jobs, primarily driven by Trade (210 000 jobs), Finance and other Business Services (96 000) and Manufacturing (45 000). Employment in Agriculture though, decreased by 1 000 compared to the same period last year (April to June 2018).

**Table 1: Total Industry Employment**

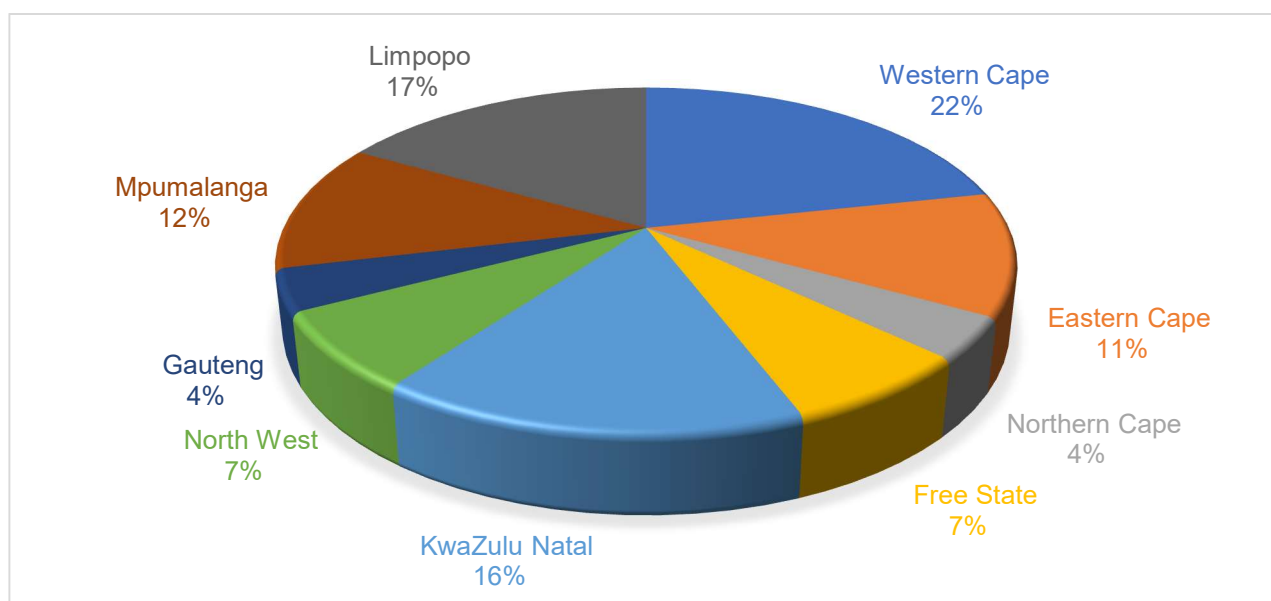
Industry	Apr-Jun 2018	Jan-Mar 2019	Apr-Jun 2019	Qtr-to-qtr change	Year-on-year change	Qtr-to-qtr % change	Year-on-year % change
	Thousands				Percentage		
<b>Total</b>	<b>16 288</b>	<b>16 291</b>	<b>16 313</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>0.2</b>
Agriculture	843	837	842	5	-1	0.6	-0.2
Mining	435	417	381	-36	-54	-8.7	-12.4
Manufacturing	1 744	1 780	1 789	9	45	0.5	2.6
Utilities	161	150	151	1	-9	0.9	-5.8
Constructing	1 476	1 339	1 363	24	-113	1.8	-7.6
Trade	3 219	3 345	3 429	84	210	2.5	6.5
Transport	1 014	1 025	983	-42	-32	-4.1	-3.1
Finance and other business services	2 399	2 516	2 495	-21	96	-0.8	4.0
Community and social services	3 692	3 574	3 622	48	-70	1.3	-1.9
Private households	1 296	1 301	1 251	-49	-45	-3.8	-3.5

*\*Note: Total includes "other" industry. Due to rounding, numbers do not necessarily add up to totals.*

Source: Stats SA, 2019

Agricultural employment, per province, between the first and the second quarter of 2019, showed the largest increase recorded in the Mpumalanga Province with 25 000 jobs (32.3%), while the Western Cape Province experienced the largest decline contributed to Agriculture, during this quarter with 44 000 less jobs (-19.3%).

**Figure 1** illustrates the employment status in Agriculture (842 000 jobs) in the second quarter of 2019 in South African provinces. Although Western Cape's contribution to the employment growth between the first and second quarter of 2019 declined, it is still the main contributor to Agriculture, representing 22% (182 000 jobs). Gauteng and Northern Cape provinces had the lowest contribution of 4% (33 000 jobs) each to Agriculture during this period.



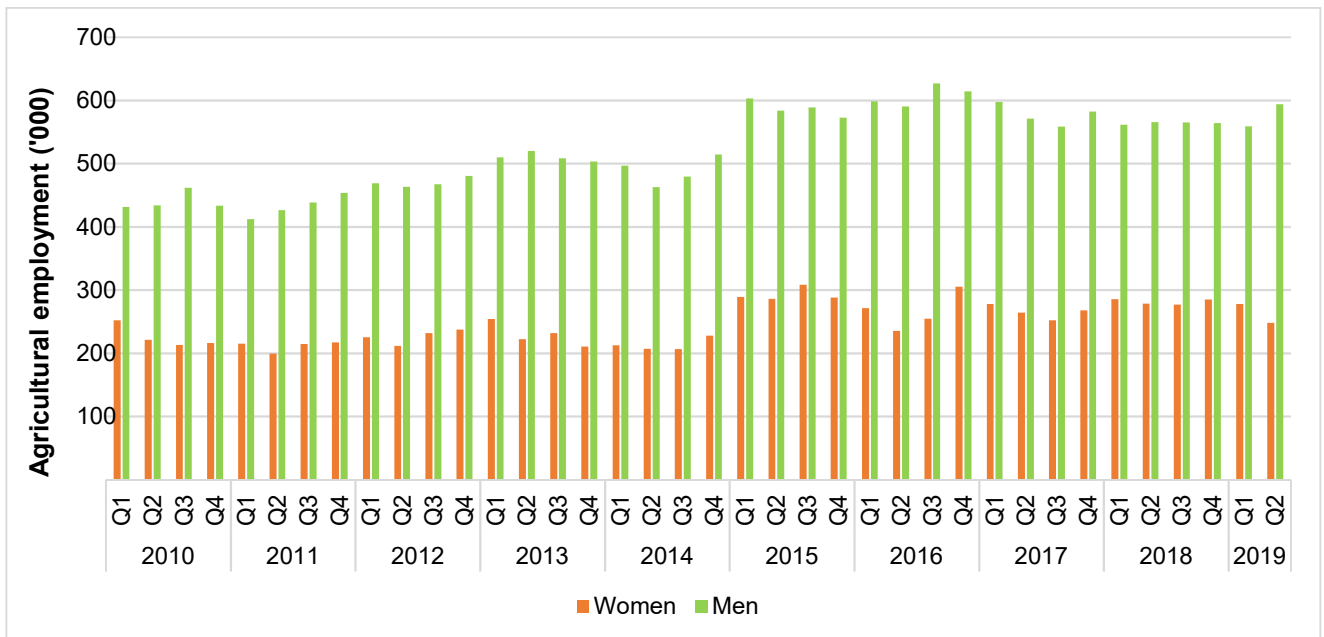
**Figure1: Agricultural employment at the provincial level (second quarter of 2019, April to June 2019)**

Source: Stats SA, 2019

### 3. Gender Composition of Agricultural Employment

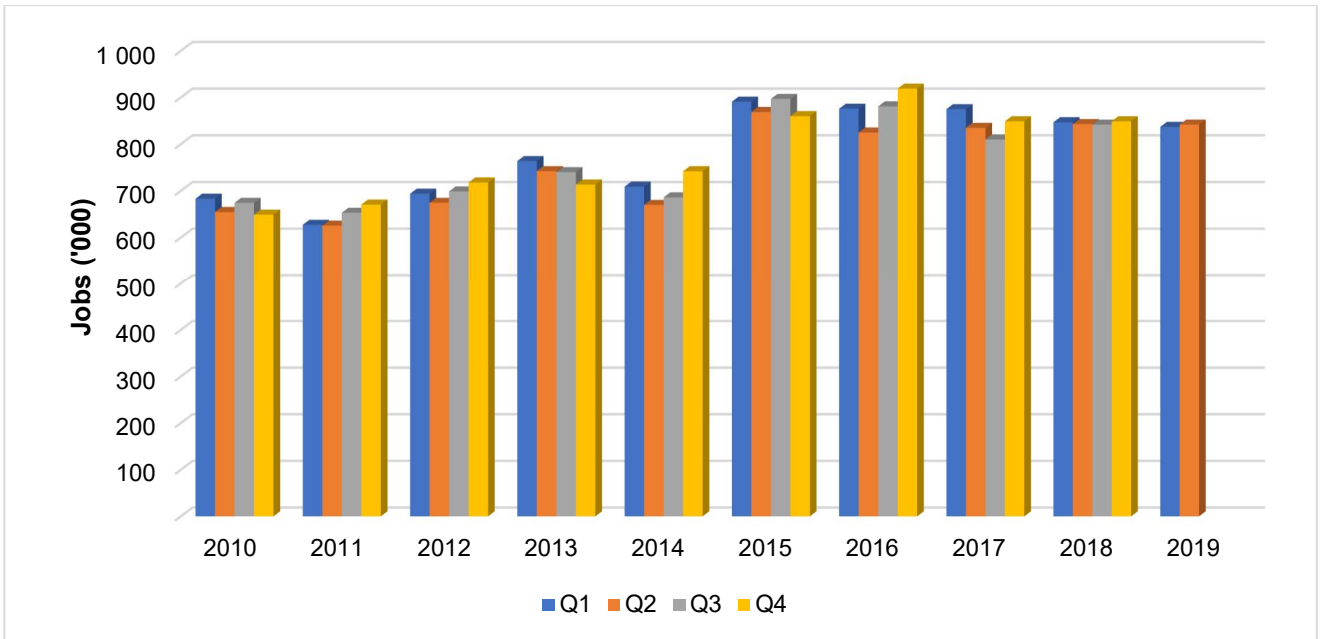
The gender dimension is crucial from the economic transformation point of view. Gender inequality affects access to- and control over resources, which could undermine sustainability and inclusive development of the Agricultural sector. Gender plays a significant role in enhancing food security and household welfare.

**Figure 2** provides an overview of gender distribution of employment within the Agricultural industry in South Africa. According to the findings from the recent Stats SA release on Agriculture, men were the main participants in agriculture over the past few years. In the second quarter of 2019 (April to June 2019), men actively involved in Agriculture were 594 000, while women amounted to 248 000 during this period. Women employment in Agriculture declined by 10.8% compared to the previous quarter, while men employment increased by 6.3% when compared to the previous quarter.



**Figure 2: Employment by gender distribution, in Agriculture**  
**Source: Stats SA, 2019**

**Figure 3** demonstrates the current state of Agricultural sectoral employment on a quarterly basis since 2010. Employment increased by 28.6% between the second quarter of 2010 and the second quarter of 2019.



**Figure 3: Agricultural employment trends**

Source: Stats SA, 2019

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