



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 - May 2019*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- *Employment*



The unemployment rate increased by 0.5 of a percentage points to 27.6% in the first quarter of 2019 (January to March 2019), compared to 27.1% reported during the fourth quarter of 2018 (October to December 2018). Total employment decreased by 0.8% (176 000 jobs) during the first quarter of 2019, from 16 529 000 to 16 291 000 reported during the fourth quarter of 2018.

Transport (59 000), Trade (25 000), Utilities (16 000) and Manufacturing (14 000) were the main drivers of employment growth between the fourth quarter of 2018 and the first quarter of 2019. However, employment declined in six of the ten industries with the biggest decline recorded in Construction (142 000) followed by Finance and other Business Services (94 000) and Community and Social Services (50 000), during the same period. The employment in Agriculture decreased by 1.4% (12 000 jobs lost) between the fourth quarter of 2018 and the first quarter of 2019, reaching 837 000 jobs during the first quarter of 2019.

Considering Agricultural employment per province, the Western Cape province was the main contributor to the Agricultural sector, representing 27%. The Gauteng province had the lowest contribution to Agriculture during this quarter (4%).

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### 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). Indicators are pertinent to a broader economy, at a national level. Macroeconomic indicators are key statistics that influence the direction of a particular large-scale market.

The purpose of this publication, the Macroeconomic Digest Report Vol (1) is to provide valuable factual and analytical information on employment that can empower 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** illustrates that the total quarterly employment decreased by -1.4% (237 000 jobs) during the first quarter of 2019 (January to March 2019) (from 16 529 000 to 16 291 000), compared to the fourth quarter of 2018 (October to December 2018). Transport (59 000), Trade (25 000), Utilities (16 000) and Manufacturing (14 000) were the main drivers of employment growth between the fourth quarter of 2018 and the first quarter of 2019. However, employment declined in six of the ten industries with the biggest decline recorded in Construction (142 000) followed by Finance and other Business Services (94 000) and Community and Social Services (50 000), during the same period. The employment in Agriculture decreased by -1.4% (12 000 jobs) between the fourth quarter of 2018 and the first quarter of 2019, reaching 837 000 jobs during the first quarter of 2019.

Compared to the same period last year (January to March 2018), total industry employment decreased by 86 000 persons, largely driven by Community and Social Services (211 000), Construction (92 000) and Manufacturing (69 000). Employment in Agriculture decreased by 9 000 persons to reach 837 000 persons compared to the same period last year.

**Table 1: Total Industry Employment**

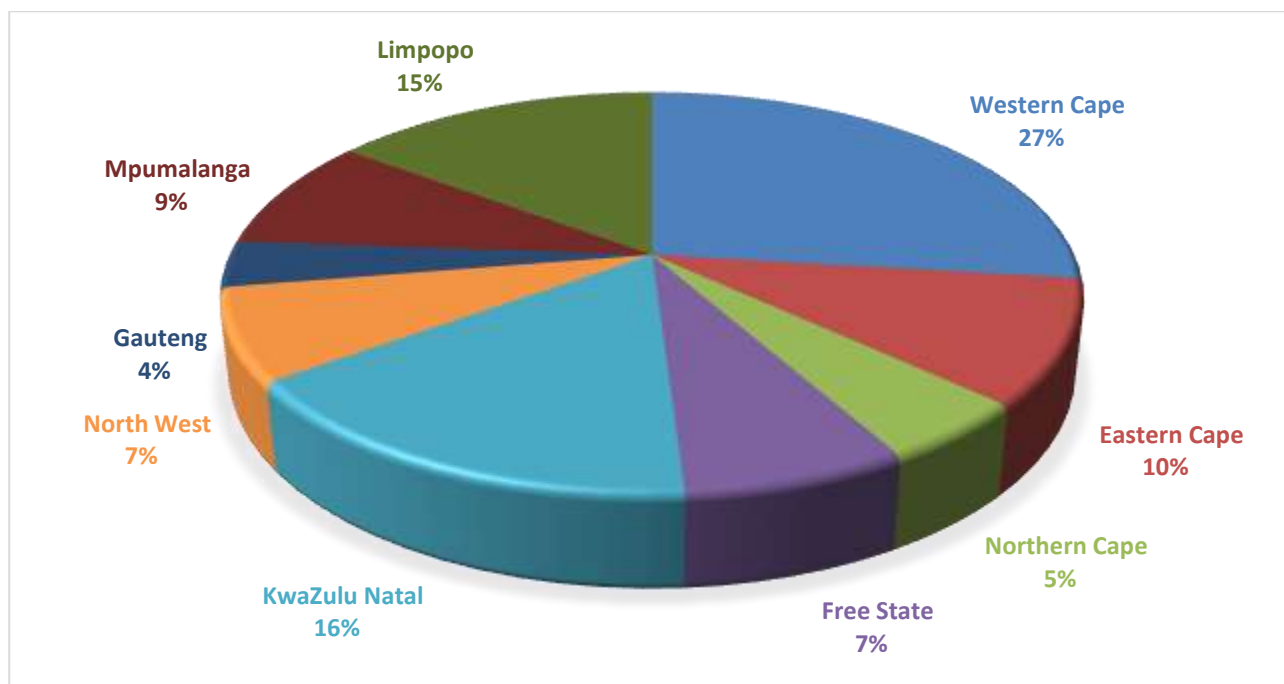
Industry	Jan-Mar 2018	Oct-Dec 2018	Jan-Mar 2019	Qtr-to-qtr change	Year-on-year change	Qtr-to-qtr % change	Year-on-year % change
	Thousands				Percentage		
<b>Total</b>	<b>16 378</b>	<b>16 529</b>	<b>16 291</b>	<b>-237</b>	<b>-86</b>	<b>-1.4</b>	<b>-0.5</b>
Agriculture	847	849	837	-12	-9	-1.4	-1.1
Mining	397	438	417	-20	20	-4.6	5.2
Manufacturing	1 849	1 766	1 780	14	-69	0.8	-3.7
Utilities	143	134	150	16	7	12.1	4.7
Constructing	1 431	1 481	1 339	-142	-92	-9.6	-6.4
Trade	3 276	3 320	3 345	25	69	0.8	2.1
Transport	960	965	1 025	59	64	6.1	6.7
Finance and other business services	2 402	2 611	2 516	-94	114	-3.6	4.7
Community and social services	3 785	3 624	3 574	-50	-211	-1.4	-5.6
Private households	1 275	1 332	1 301	-31	26	-2.3	2.0

*\*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 fourth quarter of 2018 and the first quarter of 2019, showed the largest Agricultural employment increase recorded in the Western Cape with 13 000 jobs (5.9%). The Mpumalanga Province experienced the largest decline contributed to Agriculture, during the first quarter (-21%).

**Figure 1** demonstrates the employment status in Agriculture in the first quarter 2019 in South African provinces. Western Cape province was the main contributor to Agriculture, representing 27%. While the Gauteng province had the lowest contribution to Agriculture during this quarter (4%).



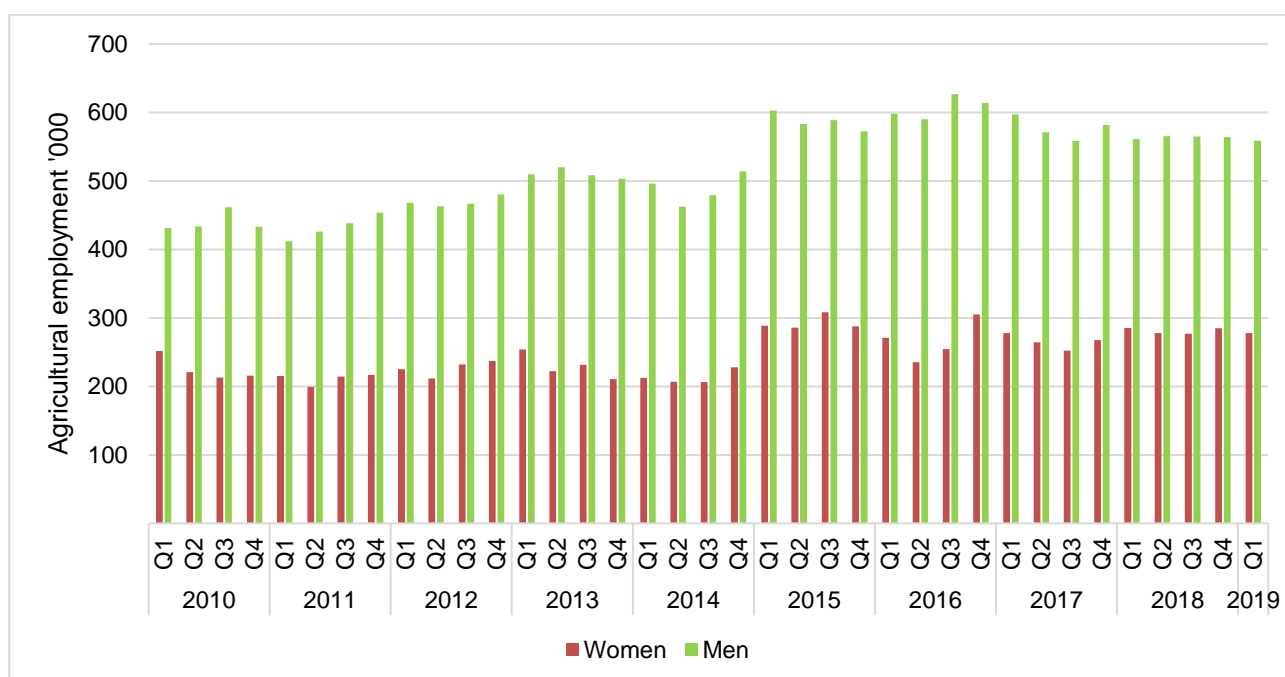
**Figure1: Agricultural employment at the provincial level (first quarter of 2019, January – March 2019)**

Source: Stats SA, 2019

### 3. Gender Composition of Agricultural Employment

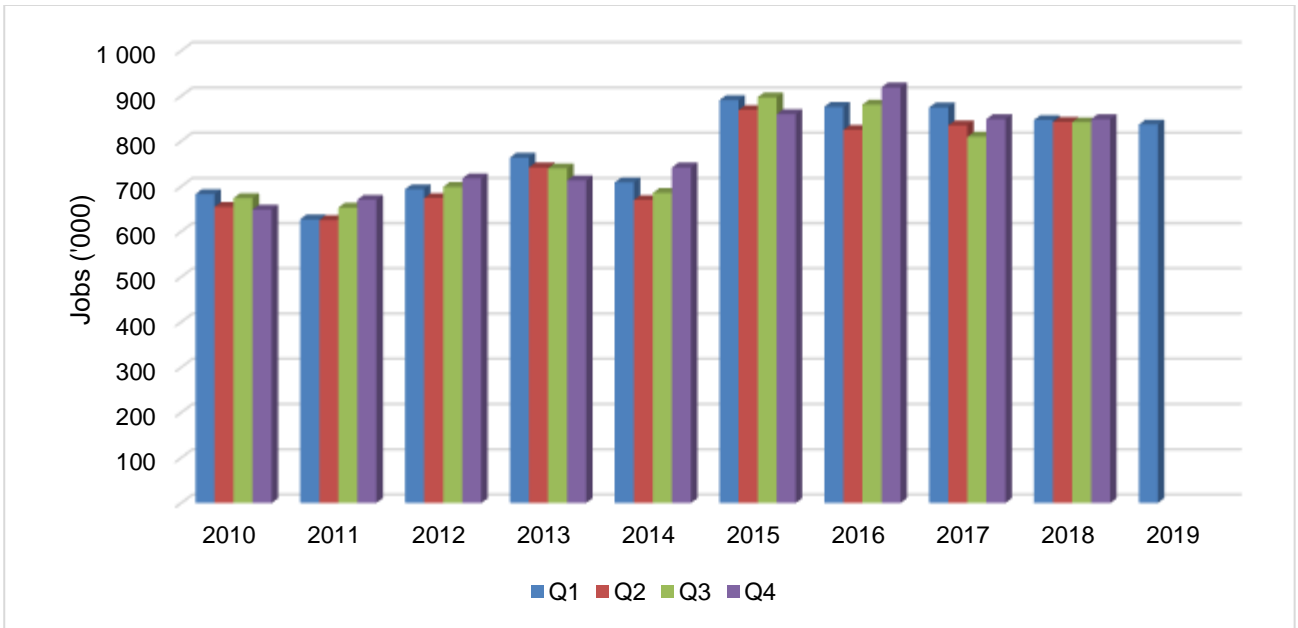
Gender dimension is crucial for economic and transformation point of view. The gender inequality affects access to- and control over resources, which could undermine sustainability and inclusive development of the Agricultural sector. Gender plays a significant role in enhancing food security and household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

**Figure 2** provides an overview of employment status on gender distribution within the Agricultural industry in South Africa. In reviewing findings available from recent Stats SA release on agriculture, men were the main participants in agriculture over the past years. In the first quarter of 2019 (January – March 2019), men actively involved in Agriculture were 559 000, while women amounted to 278 000. Women employment in Agriculture declined by 2.4% during this quarter, while men declined by 0.9% compared in the previous quarter.



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

**Figure 3** shows the current state of Agricultural sectoral employment on a quarterly basis since 2010. The employment increased by 22.5% between the first quarter of 2010 and the first quarter of 2019.



**Figure 3: Agricultural employment trends**  
**Source: Stats SA, 2019**

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