



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 – February 2020*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The unemployment rate remains unchanged at 29.1% in the fourth quarter of 2019 compared to the third quarter of 2019. The employment increased in six industries between quarter 3 of 2019 (July - September 2019) and quarter 4 of 2019 (October - December 2019). Community and Social Services (113 000), followed by Finance (76 000) and Transport (36 000) were the main drivers of employment increases. Construction and Mining industries went up to 1 350 000 and 430 000 respectively. The Agricultural sector also upsurge with 6 000 jobs to reached 885 000 during the fourth quarter. Declines in employment were however reported in the Trade (159 000), Manufacturing (39 000) and Utilities (14 000) industries. Private households remained ceteris paribus.



The Western Cape province is the main region contributing 27% (236 000) of jobs to the Agricultural sector during the fourth quarter. This is followed by KwaZulu Natal and Limpopo provinces with 162 000 and 140 000 jobs, respectively. The Northern Cape and Gauteng provinces had the lowest contribution to Agricultural employment with 4% (36 000) and 3% (30 000), respectively. Gender based employment indicated that men were by far the largest participants in the Agricultural industry between October and December 2019. The number of men in the sector were recorded is 583 000 while women amounted to 302 000.

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### 1. Introduction

Macroeconomic indicators are statistics that present the current performance of the economy of a country. There are ten industries used to measure the South African economy, depending on these industries, labour markets, trade, foreign investments and others, indicators are pertinent to a broader economy at national level as they influence the direction of the market.

The purpose of the Macroeconomic Digest Vol (1) – Labour publication is to provide a valuable, factual and analytical insight of employment trends within the country's economy for relevant stakeholders to be empowered together with the general public to engage in dialogues, analyse present situations to make informed discussions and policies that will help to shape the country's economic performance. The data utilised for this publication is obtained from the official labour statistics of Statistics South Africa.

### 2. Employment by Industry

The unemployment rate remains constant at 29.1% in the fourth quarter of 2019 compared to the third quarter of 2019. The employment increased in six industries between quarter 3 of 2019 (July - September 2019) and quarter 4 of 2019 (October - December 2019) as illustrated in **Figure 1**. Community and Social Services (113 000), followed by Finance (76 000) and Transport (36 000) were the main drivers of employment increases. Construction and Mining industries went up to 1 350 000 and 430 000, respectively. The Agricultural sector upsurge with 6 000 jobs to reached 885 000 during the fourth quarter. Declines in employment were however reported in the Trade (159 000), Manufacturing (39 000) and Utilities (14 000) industries. Private households remained *ceteris paribus*.

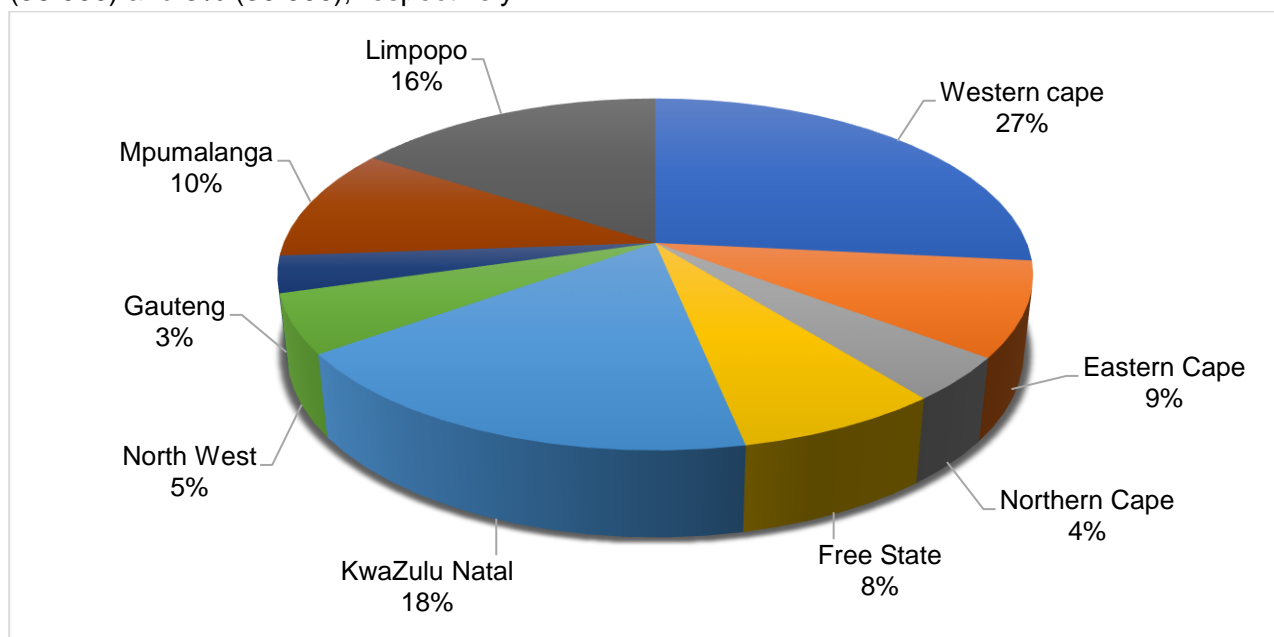
**Table 1: Total Industry Employment**

Industry	Oct-Dec 2018	Jul-Sept 2019	Oct-Dec 2019	Qtr-to- qtr change	Year-on- year change	Qtr-to- qtr change	Year-on- year change
	Thousands					Percentage	
<b>Total</b>	<b>16 529</b>	<b>16 375</b>	<b>16 420</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>-108</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>-0.7</b>
Agriculture	849	880	885	6	36	0.6	4,2
Mining	438	419	430	11	-8	2.5	-1.8
Manufacturing	1 766	1 760	1 720	-39	46	-2.2	-2.6
Utilities	134	133	120	-14	-14	-10.2	-10.5
Constructing	1 481	1 339	1 350	12	-131	0.9	-8.8

Industry	Oct-Dec 2018	Jul-Sept 2019	Oct-Dec 2019	Qtr-to-qtr change	Year-on-year change	Qtr-to-qtr change	Year-on-year change
	Thousands					Percentage	
Trade	3 320	3 408	3 249	-159	-70	-4.7	-2.1
Transport	965	975	1 011	36	46	3.7	4.7
Finance and other business services	2611	2 492	2 568	76	-43	3.0	-1.7
Community and social services	3 624	3 679	3 792	113	168	3.1	4.6
Private households	1 332	1 286	1 286	0	-46	0.0	-3.5

**\*Note: Total includes "other" industries. Due to rounding, numbers do not necessarily add up to totals.**  
**Source: Stats SA, 2020**

**Figure 1** illustrates the provincial employment status in the South African Agricultural sector (885 000 jobs) during the fourth quarter of 2019. The Western Cape province is the main region contributing 27% (236 000) of jobs to the Agricultural sector during the fourth quarter. This is followed by KwaZulu Natal and Limpopo provinces with 162 000 and 140 000 jobs, respectively. The Northern Cape and Gauteng provinces had the lowest contribution to Agricultural employment with 4% (36 000) and 3% (30 000), respectively.



**Figure1: Agricultural employment at provincial level, fourth quarter of 2019, September to December 2019**

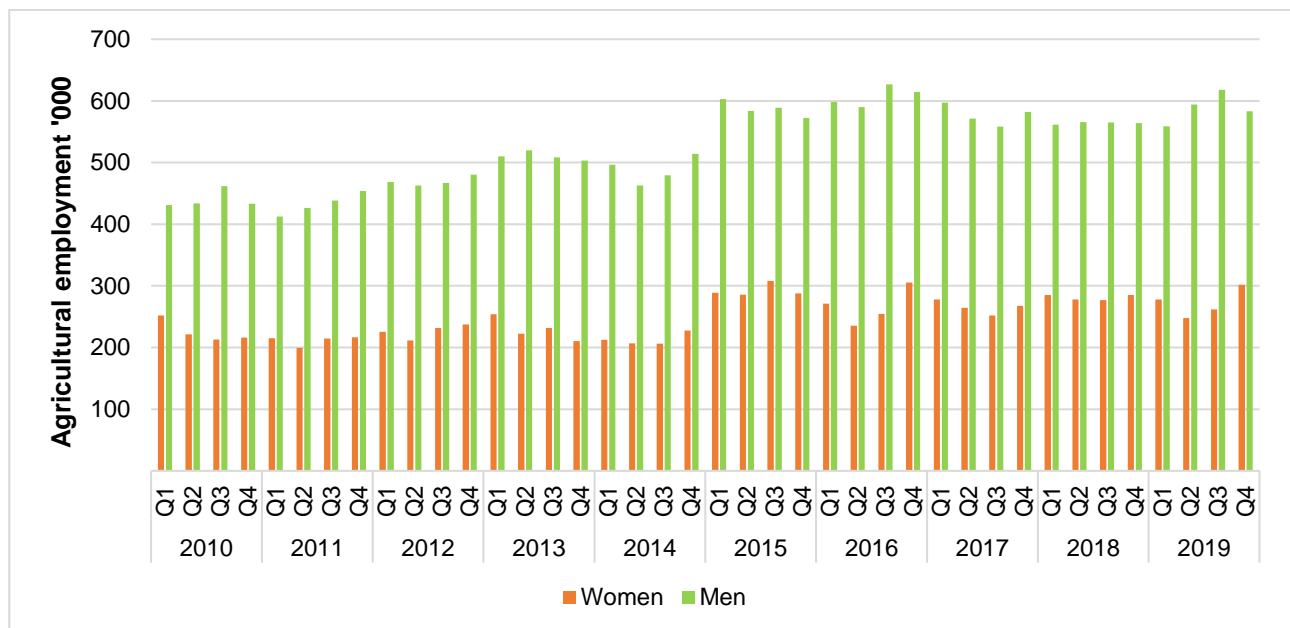
**Source: Stats SA, 2020**

### 3. Gender Composition of Agricultural Employment

The gender dimension is crucial from an economic and transformation point of view. Gender inequality affects access to/and control over resources, and this can have detrimental consequences in developing a sustainable and inclusive Agricultural sector. Gender is a crucial dimension when talking about issues related to social welfare and food security within societies thus a country as whole.

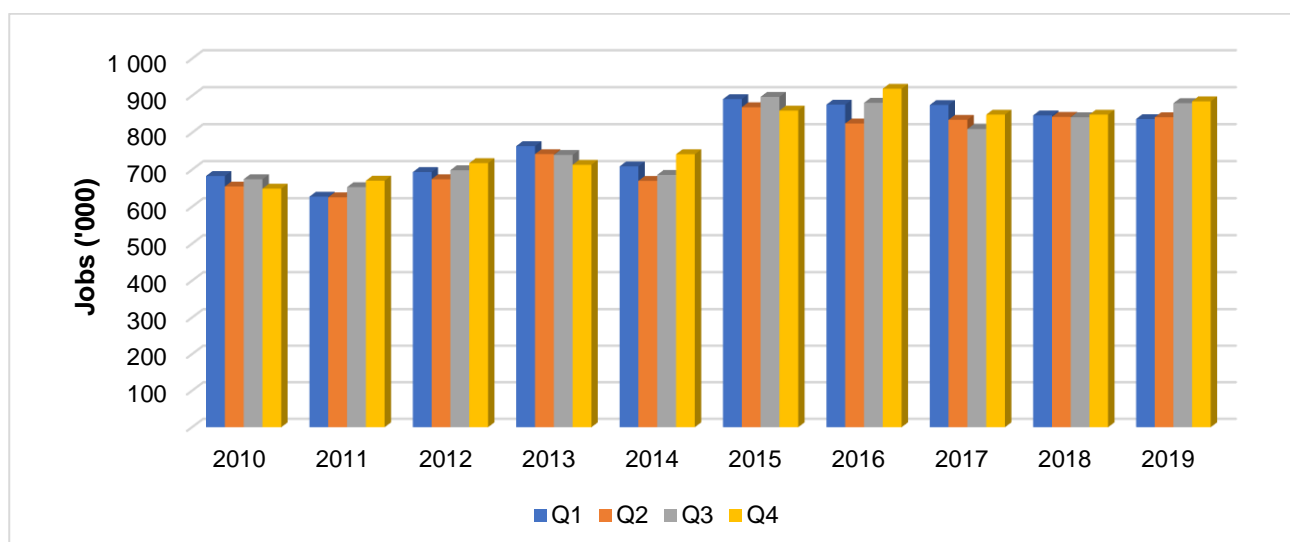
**Figure 2** below provides a general idea on the employment status of gender distribution within the South African Agricultural industry. Both men and women participation in agriculture have improved

since the third quarter (July to September) of 2019. Gender based employment data from Stats SA indicated that men were by far the largest participants in the Agricultural industry between October and December 2019, and this has been the trend over the past years as can be seen from the graph below. The number of men in the sector were recorded is 583 000 while women amounted to 302 000.



**Figure 2: Employment by gender distribution, in Agriculture**  
Source: Stats SA, 2020

**Figure 3** below demonstrates the current state of Agricultural sectoral employment on a quarterly basis from 2010 to 2019. Employment has increased by 36.4% between the fourth quarter of 2010 and the fourth quarter of 2019. Compared to the same quarter of 2018, total employment improved by 4.2%.



**Figure 3: Agricultural employment trends**  
Source: Stats SA, 2020

Compiled by:

Fezeka Matebeni  
Corné Dempers  
Rika Verwey  
Simphele Ngqangweni  
Thabile Nkunjana

Enquiries Christo Joubert: +27 12 341 1115 or [christo@namc.co.za](mailto:christo@namc.co.za)

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**Contact us**

**Tel:** +27 341 1115 | **Fax:** +27 12 341 1811  
Block A | 4th Floor | Meintjiesplein Building | 536 Francis  
baard Street  
Arcadia | Pretoria | 0002  
**Email:** [info@namc.co.za](mailto:info@namc.co.za)  
[www.namc.co.za](http://www.namc.co.za)