

# Political turmoil will affect agriculture



**P**olitical turmoil continues to plague the country and agriculture will not escape. Free trade, working toward resource maximisation and adding growth to national income and wealth, largely remain in place. The question is, will its relevance fade?

We need to mentally gear ourselves for rising populism. The call for land redistribution without compensation from certain role-players, does create some anxiety. Land tenure is the cornerstone of our democracy. Certainty that the interest of the country and all its people will come first, is critical for the prosperity of all South Africans.

## Policy consistency is key

Policy consistency is key to the prosperity of the agricultural industry, while the building of capacity in the state to support and stimulate agriculture, is important to growth particularly for new incumbents. The reduction in available funds for state functions is likely to incapacitate this initiative, even if there were good intentions.

The slow economic growth will in the long term continue to have a negative effect on buying power, while the weaker rand will increase the input costs for a variety of essential agricultural production items, including fertiliser and fuel.

The positive outlook for crop volumes in the country bodes well for the agricultural industry. South Africa, the largest producer of maize on the continent, is set to produce the largest maize crop in 36 years (14,54 million tons) and achieve the highest yield per hectare in its history. Predictions are for a maize crop that will be 87% larger than last year, when the crippling drought significantly restricted production.

## Largest crop in SA history

The expected soya bean crop of 1,23 million tons, will be the largest in the history of South Africa and 66% larger than last year. This is a milestone in the history of soya bean production in this country and a result of the favourable soya bean prices, advantages of crop rotation and major efforts by various parties regarding the technology of production.

The sunflower crop of 853 470 tons is 19% larger than last year and one of the highest quantities produced over the last ten years, but still a way behind the 1,1 million tons of 1999.

Growth in canola production in the winter rainfall area has also been encouraging, with a crop of 105 460 tons. Although below the 121 000 tons achieved in 2014, it is an indication of how canola production is expanding year after year.

Dr Erhard Briedenhann

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**Published by:** Plas Publishing (Pty) Ltd  
217 Clifton Ave, Lyttelton, Centurion, RSA  
Private Bag X2010, Lyttelton, 0140, RSA  
Tel: +27 12 664 4793 • [www.veeplaas.co.za](http://www.veeplaas.co.za)

**Chief editor:** Lynette Louw  
+27 84 580 5120 • [lynette@veeplaas.co.za](mailto:lynette@veeplaas.co.za)

**Sub-editor:** Chris Jooste  
+27 12 664 4793 • [chris@veeplaas.co.za](mailto:chris@veeplaas.co.za)

**Design & layout:** Karien van Wyk  
+27 12 664 4793 • [karien@veeplaas.co.za](mailto:karien@veeplaas.co.za)

**Advertising**  
Monique van der Walt  
+27 71 893 3731 • [monique@veeplaas.co.za](mailto:monique@veeplaas.co.za)

Karin Changuion-Duffy  
+27 82 376 6396 • [karin@veeplaas.co.za](mailto:karin@veeplaas.co.za)

Susan Steyn  
+27 82 657 1262 • [susan@veeplaas.co.za](mailto:susan@veeplaas.co.za)

Esmarie Moodie  
+27 76 330 0745 • [esmarie@veeplaas.co.za](mailto:esmarie@veeplaas.co.za)

**Accounts:** Marné Anderson  
+27 72 639 1805 • [accounts@veeplaas.co.za](mailto:accounts@veeplaas.co.za)

**Subscriptions:** Rochelle Mabebe  
+27 74 153 8380 • [rochelle@veeplaas.co.za](mailto:rochelle@veeplaas.co.za)

**Printed and bound by:** United Litho  
+27 11 402 0571

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Published on behalf of:  
Protein Research Foundation  
PO Box 1564, Rivonia 2128  
Tel: 011 803 2579 • Fax 011 803 2287 / 086 634 8067  
Enquiries: [gkeun@proteinresearch.net](mailto:gkeun@proteinresearch.net)