

Coronavirus could threaten global agricultural trade

The unexpected and alarming spread of the coronavirus (Covid-19) has sparked fears of a global economic slowdown. "The current uncertainty of the markets and the subsequent global economic slowdown is adding additional pressure on the debilitating South African economy. The growing impact of the Covid-19 coincides with the announcement of a 1,4% retraction in our economy as well as a decline of 7,6% for agriculture in the fourth quarter of 2019," says Omri van Zyl, Agri SA's executive director.



Image source: [Gallo/Getty](#)

South African agriculture exports approximately 25 commodities amounting to a value of more than \$10bn annually.

On Friday, 28 February 2020, the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared the Covid-19 outbreak as a global pandemic, resulting in governments around the world to strengthen their containment measures. Last week, the global market lost more than \$6tn resulting in the worst economic week since the global recession in 2008.

"At this stage, it is difficult to quantify the economic impact on South African agriculture. Over the short term we are expecting supply chain and logistical disruptions that may cause harm to export-driven agricultural sectors," says Van Zyl.

Agri SA will continuously work alongside industry bodies to monitor the impact of Covid-19

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