

South African drought could have long-term impact on the economy

The drought currently hitting South Africa's Western Cape could affect long-term growth in the country's economy, including agriculture.

“The Western Cape is probably South Africa’s most important export province in terms of agricultural products. The deciduous fruit industry, wine industry and increasingly the citrus industry, are all key export [commodities] that contribute significantly to the overall agri-economy of the country,” Dawie Maree, head of information and marketing at FNB Agribusiness said.

The recent wide-spread rain across the province had done little to alleviate the dry conditions, according to Maree.

Socio-economic consequences as a result of increased unemployment due to the drought further exacerbate the situation.

“The Western Cape has the biggest agricultural workforce in South Africa at 24.5%. The drought will have a major impact on seasonal employment in the fruit industry, as possible lower production, [will result in fewer] seasonal workers being employed,” explained Maree.

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