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## The Effect of Globalisation & Liberalisation on Small-holder Farmers

*Colleen Janse van Rensburg*

South Africa's agricultural sector is a major employer, with a total labour force of 835 000, as reported in August 2017. In terms of our current employment market, this represents a relatively high number of jobs and shows a rise in employment in the sector of more than 29 % since 2011. The first quarter of 2017, however, saw 44 000 job losses with a further 40 000 job losses in the second quarter.

While these losses are in line with normal seasonal trends seen at the end of harvesting periods, a large number of these job losses also occurred as a result of the drought and losses in agricultural production. Hampering the agricultural sector further, are disease outbreaks including the recent avian influenza, foot-and-mouth disease outbreaks, as well as economic pressures affecting consumer spending patterns.

A significant concern regarding job losses is the result of globalisation and trade liberalisation which is increasingly making employment in the agriculture insecure.

Since South Africa's agricultural sector is export-orientated, it is also more vulnerable to changes in rules of international trade. Globalisation describes the changes in foreign and domestic policy-making that affects the way people trade in goods. It is based on a liberalisation or a "free-trade" approach to economic management, opening local markets to products from other countries. In a free-trade approach, governments stay out of the way to allow competition to occur between domestic and foreign markets with little state interference or regulation.

To lower the tariffs South Africa faces in foreign markets and increase South Africa's share of the world market and promote its agricultural export, South Africa entered into trade agreements with the World Trade Organisation as well as with the European Union. These organisations put increasing pressure on South Africa to liberalise its trading practices and reduce barriers such as quotas, tariffs and price regulation.

This liberalisation in trade means that the South African government plays a limited role in protecting its agricultural economy from the adverse effects of international trade. Before 1996, farmers were heavily subsidised and protected from foreign competition. However for new entrants and small-scale farmers, the support they need to compete with established farmers who had benefited from years of state subsidisation, is limited.

The effects suffered by farmers also affect farm workers and other industries that depend on agricultural production. Competition with foreign producers has increased - rich countries subsidise their farmers - resulting them to export to South Africa cheaply - while South African farmers do not enjoy the same subsidised protection.

For farmers to continue with production, the only solution lies in the reduction of production costs. To reduce labour costs, permanent workers are often retrenched, or reduced to temporary workers - contributing to an increasingly insecure agricultural labour environment.

The South African government needs to acknowledge the negative effects of globalisation and trade liberalisation and join other countries in challenging the authority of the WTO. Together with the private sector and workers organisations they may be able to contribute towards compensating those negatively affected by globalisation and trade liberalisation.



*Colleen Janse van Rensburg*

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Tips and tools  
for advisors

### Temperature Requirement for Crops

*Portia Phahlane*

Climate is the dominant factor in deciding the suitability of a crop to a particular area. Temperature is one of the climatic factors that influence growth, development, and yield of crops.

Every crop has a well-defined range of temperatures to which they are tolerant as well as the high and low-temperature limits where they can survive (the minimum, the optimum, and the maximum temperatures).

Temperatures that are too high or too low will result in abnormal development and resultant reduced production. For every crop, planned for planting, knowledge of its temperature requirements is important for best growth and product quality.

## ESO Provincial User

Portia Phahlane

Extension Suite Online® is South Africa's premier decision support system for Agricultural Advisors. One of the many reasons for this is the diligent utilisation by users who appreciate its relevance for service delivery. This month we interviewed one of these users: Montshi Moeleso from the Free State.

Before joining the Department, he was working as a facilitator for private companies and was responsible for training farmers. Montshi now works as an Agricultural Advisor in food security for the Department of Agriculture in the Xhariep District of the province. He joined the Department on the 1st of October 2016, and his immediate supervisor is Ms. Mantombi Mbongo. His primary duties include advising farmers on how to commercialise their produce, to offer technical support, and drive the implementation of the Fetsa Tlala programme.

Montshi is originally from Qwaqwa where his interest in subsistence farming as practiced by the people of the area, developed to a career in agriculture. He finds job satisfaction in seeing quality produce and his farmers achieving maximum harvests. As a hobby, he has started a food garden at the office, donating the harvest to disadvantaged community members.

Montshi started using ESO right after his appointment in 2016 to enhance his technical knowledge which is required for his interaction with farmers, and to build his self-confidence by having relevant answers to their questions. The system helped him with technical information, and he says most of the success of his work is attributed to ESO. He is now able to offer credible information to his clients when and where needed.

Montshi uses ESO to access information on vegetables - soil types and their properties, planting methods and pest control. He also uses ESO for information on animal vaccination to assist farmers during vaccination programmes in the district.

His experience of ESO is very positive, and his farmers are satisfied with his work and services which he ascribed his improved knowledge base, derived from the system(ESO).

In conclusion, he says that ESO is significant as it played a role in restoring farmers' trust of Extension Officers since they can answer all of their questions, and because one can search and find information when and where needed.

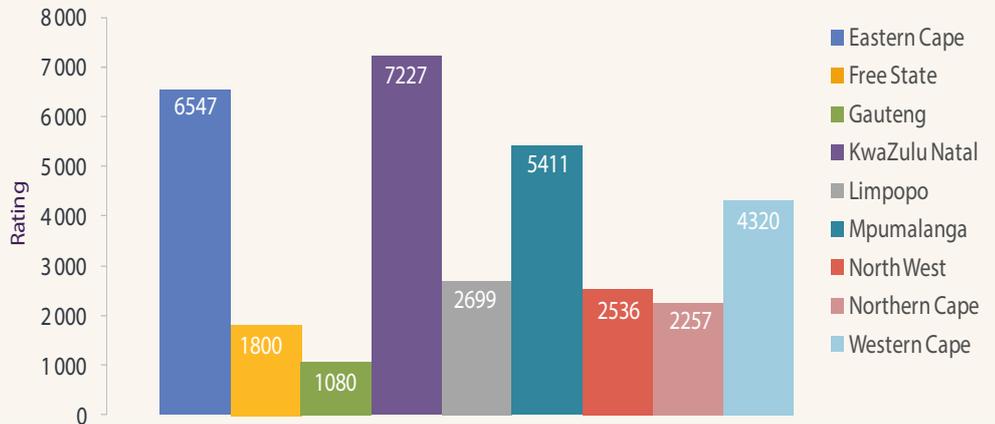
## EXTENSION SUITE ONLINE® UTILISATION: September 2017

Extension Suite Online® (ESO) utilisation is determined through monitoring user utilisation in the nine provinces and by attaching values to Visits, Pages Visited, Data Transferred, and the Duration of Visits. A rating is then calculated to establish the ESO National Top User of the Month.

## ESO PROVINCIAL TOP USERS

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## ESO PROVINCIAL TOP USER GRAPH



## CLIMATE WATCH

### Issue #21

The first ten days of September continued with the July/August trend of cold fronts bringing rain to the Western and Eastern Cape, while the rest of South Africa remained dry. Extremely warm temperatures for September were recorded over large parts of the northern regions, with temperatures reaching well above 30° C around the 10th of September. Read more...



Read the full article on the Manstrat AIS website.

[www.manstrat.co.za - Climate Watch](http://www.manstrat.co.za - Climate Watch)

## ESO TIPS:

Deon Erasmus

### Chrome Extensions

With the Internet becoming an integral part of our daily lives, keeping our browsing activities secure and optimising our data use has also become increasingly important. To assist users, developers have been creating browser extensions that we can install to enhance your browser of choice, mainly allowing us to build a "custom" browser without any required coding experience.

One such extension is Disconnect, an "install and forget tool" available for most modern web browsers. Disconnect is designed to protect a user from the mass collection and tracking of

your online behaviour, which is mostly used by advertising platforms to target you with personalised advertisements. This is wonderful if you don't want to be tracked, but additionally, speeds up browsing and reduces data usage, protecting you from unseen scripts and cookies.

Every major web browser has a dedicated store for these extensions, some free and some paid for, and can be found by doing a quick online search, of course.

## National ESO Top User



Congratulations to **Dumisani Nzama** the ESO National Top User for **September 2017**.

**Do you have any technology related questions?** Send them to [newsletter@esuite.co.za](mailto:newsletter@esuite.co.za), with your name, province and the question and we will answer them in a following newsletter edition.

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