

# Press Release



SOUTH AFRICAN  
INSTITUTE OF  
RACE RELATIONS

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## South Africa remains a net food exporter

South Africa is a net a food exporter, selling abroad 30% more agricultural goods than it imported in 2010, according to the latest *South Africa Survey*, published last week by the South African Institute of Race Relations in Johannesburg.

Agricultural exports grew by 10% between 2008 and 2010, with total agricultural exports amounting to \$6.8bn in 2010. During the same period, agricultural imports increased by just less than 1% and amounted to \$5.2bn. Agricultural exports stood at 5% of South Africa's total exports in 2010, with agricultural imports accounting for 2% of total imports.

The Institute's analysis was based on data supplied by the Foreign Agricultural Service at the United States Department of Agriculture. The data revealed that the Netherlands was South Africa's largest agricultural export destination, accounting for a little over 10% of South Africa's total such exports in 2010, worth \$700m.

Between 2008 and 2010, the demand for South African agricultural exports grew in Asia and Africa while the proportion of such exports going to European countries declined.

Argentina has remained South Africa's largest source of agricultural imports since 2008. However, the proportion of such imports from Argentina has fallen from 17% in 2008 to 12% in 2010, when they were worth \$628m.

The ratio of agricultural imports to exports has increased since the mid 1960s, when the ratio of imports to exports stood at 1 to 5. In the decade between 1995 and 2005 the ratio of agricultural imports to exports stood at 2 to 3. In 2007 agricultural imports temporarily exceeded agricultural exports by a ratio of 11 to 10.

'Recent data indicates that demand for South African agricultural products is not only holding steady, but is in fact growing' said Mr Jonathan Snyman, a researcher at the Institute. 'Food security is an especially precarious state of affairs in sub-Saharan Africa, so it is a positive development that South Africa has maintained its status as a net agricultural exporter' added Mr Snyman.

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