



agriculture, land reform  
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Department:  
Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

## **Trade Performance Review of the Agricultural sector of South Africa: 2019**

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## Executive Summary

The purpose of this annual report is to inform sector stakeholders about the status of South Africa's import and export performance of agricultural products by analysing trade flows for 2019 compared to 2018.

### Key observations on export performance in 2019 (variations 2018-2019):

- South Africa's exports of agricultural products increased by 2.2 % in value terms.
- The total export value of agricultural products was R141.87 billion for the 2019 calendar year.
  - South Africa's total export value for primary agricultural products was R74.16 billion. (52.3% of total agricultural exports)
  - The total export value for secondary Agricultural products was R67.71 billion. (47.7% of agricultural exports)
- Edible fruits and nuts (HS08) were South Africa's largest product grouping export category with a value of R49.42 billion. (36.2% of total agricultural export basket)
- Exports of sugars and sugar confectionary (HS17) had the highest growth rate of 34.2% per annum from 2018 to 2019. (mostly weather dependant variations)
- Netherlands was the largest export destination market; with an export value of R12.02 billion. The main products that were exported to the Netherlands were: fresh grapes, fresh oranges and wine.
- Among the top 10 destination markets identified, South Africa's export growth of agricultural products to China decreased by 11%. The three major products exported to China were: wool, fresh or dried nuts and fresh oranges.
- South Africa's exports to Malaysia increased 89.6% p.a. in growth. The main exports were: cane sugar, fresh apples and fresh oranges.

### Key observations on imports in 2019 (variations 2018-2019)

- South Africa's imports of agricultural products increased by 6% p.a. in value terms.
- South Africa's total import value of agricultural products amounted to R90.98 billion for the 2019 calendar year.
  - South Africa's total import value of primary agricultural products was R30.06 billion.(33% of total agricultural imports)
  - The total import value for secondary agricultural products was R60.92 billion. (67% of total agricultural imports)
- Cereals (HS10) were South Africa's largest import product grouping with a value of R14.45 billion (15.9% share).
- Imports of beverages, spirits and vinegar (HS22) had the highest annual import growth rate of 24.9% p.a.
- Argentina was the largest country supplier of agricultural products to South Africa, with an imported value of R5.97 billion (6.6% of total the agricultural import basket). The main products that were imported from Argentina were: soybean oilcake, maize corn, other than seeds and sunflower seed or safflower oil.
- Argentina also reported the highest annual import growth of 35.3% p.a.

- Imports from Brazil reported a declining annual growth rate of 14.4% and the three major products imported from Brazil were: frozen chicken cuts, uncut chicken meat and coffee.

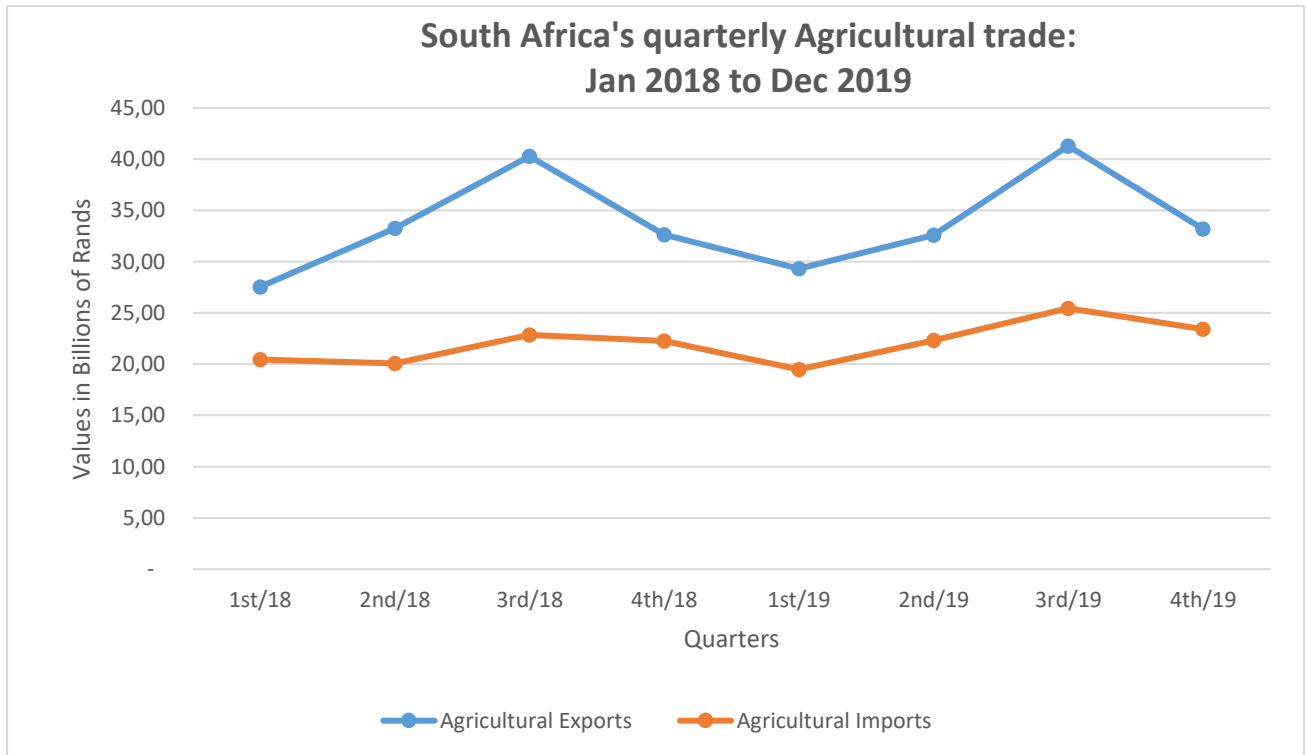


Figure 1: Quarterly series of South Africa's agricultural trade per quarter for 2018 and 2019

### 1. Analysis of South Africa's major agricultural export markets and product drivers in 2019 (variations from 2018 - 2019):

Table 1: South Africa's top 10 largest export destinations for agricultural products by value in 2019

Partner Country	Values (Billion Rands) 2019	% share of total exports by value	% Change from 2018 to 2019	Top 3 products exported into major markets (4HS)
<b>Total</b>	<b>141,87</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>2.2</b>	
<b>Netherlands</b>	12,02	8.5	- 4.1	Fresh grapes Fresh oranges Wine ≤ 2L, excluding sparkling wine
<b>United Kingdom</b>	10,64	7.5	- 3.5	Fresh grapes Wine Fresh apples

Partner Country	Values (Billion Rands) 2019	% share of total exports by value	% Change from 2018 to 2019	Top 3 products exported into major markets (4HS)
Botswana	10,60	7.5	19.0	Maize corn, other than seeds Waters Rice
Namibia	9,93	7.0	11.8	Maize corn, other than seeds Prepared animal feed Cane or beet sugar
Mozambique	8,04	5.7	15.5	Cane or beet sugar Maize corn, other than seeds Groats and meal of maize corn
China	8,00	5.6	- 11.0	Wool Fresh or dried nuts Fresh oranges
Lesotho	5,48	3.9	13.8	Groats and meal of maize corn Cigarettes containing tobacco Wheat or meslin flour
United States	5,18	3.7	7.7	Shelled macadamia nuts Wine ≤ 2L Fresh oranges
Swaziland	4,39	3.1	10.9	Maize corn, other than seeds Waters Rice
Malaysia	4,22	3.0	89.6	Solid cane sugar Fresh apples Fresh oranges

Source: Global Trade Atlas, 2020

The top ten export destination markets for agricultural exports contributed 55% of the total export value of R141.87 billion, reported for 2019. From 2018 to 2019, exports increased in value by 2.2%.

In 2019, **the Netherlands** was largest export destination market for South Africa's agricultural products with a value of R12.02 billion and has been the largest market for the past three years. The share of total agricultural exports to the Netherlands was 8.5%, with a decline in growth rate of 4.1% p.a. The top three products exported to the Netherlands were: fresh grapes, fresh oranges and wine that is less than two litres in size, excluding sparkling wine.

**The United Kingdom** was the second largest export destination market with a value of R10.64 billion. Exports of agricultural products to the United Kingdom decreased by 3.5% p.a. and had a market share of 7.5% of the total agricultural products exported. The top three product exports to the United Kingdom were: fresh grapes, wine and fresh apples.

**Botswana** was the third largest export destination market, with a value of R10.60 billion with a market share of 7.5% % of the total agricultural product basket exported from South Africa. Exports of agricultural products to Botswana increased by 19% p.a. and the top three products exported to Botswana were: maize corn (other than seeds), waters and rice.

**Namibia** was the fourth largest export destination market, with a value of R9.93 billion and market share of 7% of the total agricultural product basket exported from South Africa. Exports

from South Africa to Namibia increased by 11.8% per annum. The top three products exported to Namibia were: maize corn (other than seeds), prepared animal feed and cane or beet sugar.

**Mozambique** reported the fifth largest export destination market for South Africa's agricultural products with a value of R8.04 billion, a share of 5.7% of the total agricultural exports. The annual growth rate increased by 15.5% p.a. The top three products exported to Mozambique were: cane or beet sugar, maize corn (other than seeds), groats and meals of maize corn.

### 1.1. Export market growth analysis during 2019 (variation 2018 – 2019)

**Table 2: South Africa's growing and declining agricultural export markets in 2019**

Growing export markets during 2018/2019						
Ranking	Top 3 growing markets	Values (Billion Rands)	Export growth (%)	Top 3 products driving export growth and their individual growth percentage		
1	India	1,55	91,8	Cane sugar (117,0%)	Wool (6,4%)	Fresh pears (1253,3%)
2	Malaysia	4,22	89,6	Cane sugar (193,1%)	Fresh apples (17,4%)	Fresh oranges (21,1%)
3	Saudi Arabia	2,15	21,1	Fresh oranges (0,6%)	Lemon and limes (47,0%)	Lucerne meal and pellets (46,8%)
Shrinking export markets during 2018/2019						
Ranking	Top 3 shrinking markets	Values (Billion Rands)	Export shrinkage (%)	Top 3 products driving export shrinkage and their individual shrinkage percentage		
1	Vietnam	1,24	- 60,9	In shell macadamia nuts (- 50,3%)	Cotton (- 65,0%)	Frozen boneless meat of bovine (- 18,3%)
2	Japan	1,96	- 21,1	Edible vegetable products (- 22,8%)	Fresh or dried grapefruit (- 23,9%)	Inedible fish flours, pellets and meals (- 9,2%)
3	Zimbabwe	2,82	- 13,5	Animal feed preparations, excluding dog or cat food (- 14,5%)	Soybean oil and fractions (- 44,5%)	Sauces (- 30,2%)

Source: Global Trade Atlas, 2020

Table 2 shows growth and shrinkage from a selection of SA's export destination markets with a minimum export value that is greater than or equal to one billion Rand. South Africa's export of agricultural products to India, Malaysia and Saudi Arabia were the fastest growing markets

in value terms. In 2019, exports of fresh pears and cane sugar to India had annual growth of 1253.3% and 117.0%, respectively. Export of cane sugar to Malaysia recorded an annual growth rate of 193.3%. The table further shows a declining annual growth of exports to Vietnam, Japan and Zimbabwe. The decline was mostly due to the exports of in shell macadamia nuts and cotton from Vietnam, with a decline of 50.3% and 65.0% p.a. respectively. Soybean oil and its fractions from Zimbabwe with declined with 44.5% p.a.

## 1.2. Export market analysis at product grouping level (HS2) in 2019 (variations 2018 – 2019)

**Table 3: South Africa's top 10 major agricultural product groupings by value in 2019**

Sub-sector description	Exported value (Bill Rands)	Sub-sector share in SA total agriculture exports (%)	Sub-sector growth (%)	Top 3 products exported within the sub-sector (4HS)	Top 3 export markets by value
<b>HS08</b> Edible fruit and nuts	49,42	34,8	1,4	Fresh or dried citrus Fresh or dried grapes Fresh apples, pears and quinces	Netherlands United Kingdom China
<b>HS22</b> Beverages, spirits and vinegar	18,69	13,2	-0,3	Wine Waters Ethyl alcohol	United Kingdom Namibia Botswana
<b>HS20</b> Prepared vegetables, fruit and nuts	8,86	6,2	-0,4	Fruit or vegetable juices Prepared or preserved fruit and nuts Prepared vegetables and not frozen	Netherlands Botswana Namibia
<b>HS17</b> Sugars and sugar confectionary	8,55	6,0	34,2	Solid, pure sucrose cane or beet sugar Sugar confection, excluding cocoa Sugars and caramel	Malaysia Mozambique Namibia
<b>HS21</b> Miscellaneous edible preparations	6,47	4,6	8,4	Food preparations Sauces, mixed condiments and seasonings and prepared mustard Soups and broths	Mozambique Botswana Namibia
<b>HS10</b> Cereals	5,79	4,1	-21,4	Maize corn Rice Wheat and meslin	Botswana Namibia Eswatini
<b>HS23</b> Food industry residues and prepared animal feed	4,29	3,0	1,5	Preparations used in animal feeding Flours, meals and pellets of meat, not used for human consumption Soybean oilcake and other residues	Namibia Botswana Eswatini

Sub-sector description	Exported value (Bill Rands)	Sub-sector share in SA total agriculture exports (%)	Sub-sector growth (%)	Top 3 products exported within the sub-sector (4HS)	Top 3 export markets by value
<b>HS19</b> Prepared cereal, flour, starch, milk and bakers wares	3,85	2,7	7,9	Malt extract, flour and meal food preparations Bread, pastry, cakes, biscuits and other bakers' ware Prepared foods from roasting cereals	Botswana Namibia Mozambique
<b>HS02</b> Meat and edible meat offal	3,39	2,4	-3,9	Fresh, chilled or frozen meat and edible offal of poultry Fresh or chilled meat of bovine animals Frozen meat of bovine animals	Mozambique Lesotho China
<b>HS04</b> Dairy products, birds eggs, honey and edible animal products	3,39	2,4	3,9	Concentrated and sweetened milk and cream Milk and cream, not concentrated or sweetened Buttermilk, yogurt and kephir	Mozambique Botswana Namibia

Source: Global Trade Atlas, 2020

The top 10 agricultural export product groups in table 3 were highly concentrated with a market share of 75% of total agricultural exports.

In 2019, **edible fruits and nuts** remained the leading product grouping with an exported value of R49.42 billion, slightly higher than the value of R48.74 billion that was reported in 2018. The product grouping had a market share of 34.8% of South Africa's agricultural exports and an annual export growth rate of 1.4%. The main export products by the product grouping were: fresh or dried citrus fruits, fresh or dried grapes, fresh apples, pears and quinces. The top three destination markets were: the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and China.

**Beverages, spirits and vinegar** was the second largest export product grouping with an exported value of R18.69 billion and a share of 13.2% of South Africa's agricultural exports basket. From 2018 to 2019, exports of beverages, spirits and vinegar exports declined by a rate of 0.3% per annum. The main beverages from the product grouping were: wine, waters and ethyl alcohol. The top three destination markets were; the United Kingdom, Namibia and Botswana.

**The prepared vegetables, fruits and nuts** product grouping was the third largest with an exported value of R8.86 billion and a product grouping share of 6.2% of South Africa's agricultural exports. The product grouping had decline of growth rate of 0.4% per annum from 2018 to 2019. The main export products by this product grouping were: fruit or vegetable juices, preserved fruit and nuts, and prepared vegetables. The top three destination markets for the sub-sector were: Netherlands, Botswana and Namibia.

**Sugars and sugar confectionary** products grouping was the fourth largest, with an exported value of R8.55 billion and a share of 6.0% of South Africa's agricultural exports. From 2018 to 2019, the value of exports of sugars increased by 34.2% per annum. The main export products from this grouping were solid, pure sucrose cane or beet sugar, sugar confection, excluding cocoa and sugars, not elsewhere specified or included (nesoi), and caramel. The three largest destination markets were: Malaysia, Mozambique and Namibia.

The fifth largest exporting industry was **miscellaneous edible preparations**, with an exported value of R6.47 billion and a product grouping share of 4.6% of South Africa's total agricultural exports basket. There was a positive export growth rate of 8.4% per annum between 2018 and 2019. The main products exported by the grouping were: food preparations, sauces, mixed condiments and seasonings, and prepared mustard, soups and broths. The top market destinations were: Mozambique, Botswana, and Namibia.

## 2. Analysis of South Africa's major suppliers (imports) of agricultural products in 2019

Table 4 shows the top 10 supplier markets of agricultural products to South Africa.

**Table 4: South Africa's top 10 suppliers of agricultural products in value during 2019 (variations from 2018 – 2019)**

Top 10 import markets	Imported value 2019 (Billion Rands)	Share in SA's imports (%)	Import growth 2018-2019 (%)	Top 3 products imported into major markets (4HS)
World	90,98	100.0	6,0	
Argentina	5,97	6.6	35.3	Soybean oilcake Maize corn, other than seeds Sunflower seed or safflower oil
Thailand	5,44	6,0	- 0.5	Semi or wholly milled rice Dextrins and other modified starches Broken rice Cassava starch
Eswatini	5,16	5.7	24.2	Solid cane sugar, not containing added flavour or colour, <b>specified on Note 2 to Chapter 17</b> Solid cane sugar, not containing added flavour or colour Refined cane or beet sugar
United States	4,92	5.4	26.9	Frozen chicken cuts and edible offal Wheat or meslin flour Food preparations
Brazil	4,68	5.2	- 14.4	Frozen chicken cuts and edible offal Frozen, uncut chicken meat and offal Coffee
Germany	4,43	4.9	17.0	Wheat or meslin flour Frozen swine meat Food preparations



Top 10 import markets	Imported value 2019 (Billion Rands)	Share in SA's imports (%)	Import growth 2018-2019 (%)	Top 3 products imported into major markets (4HS)
China	4,18	4.6	12.4	Animal guts, bladders, stomachs and parts, excluding fish Apple juice, Peptones and proteins Tomato paste, not prepared with vinegar
United Kingdom	4,04	4.4	7.8	Whiskies Gin and geneva Food preparations,
Namibia	4,02	4.4	- 9.7	Live cattle, excluding pure breed Malt beer Live sheep
Netherlands	3,63	4.1	11.2	Malt beer Refined soybean oil and fractions Coffee extracts, essences and concentrations

Source: Global Trade Atlas, 2020

## 2.1. Import market analysis

In 2019, **Argentina** was South Africa's largest supplier of agricultural import products with the value of R5.97 billion and a market share of 6.6%. South Africa's import of agricultural products from the Argentina increased by 35.3% per annum. The main three products that South Africa imported were: soybean oilcake, maize corn, other than seeds and sunflower seed or safflower oil.

**Thailand** was the second largest supplier with the value of R5.44 billion and a share of 6.0% of South Africa's agricultural imports. From 2018 to 2019 the annual imports declined by 0.5%. The three major products imported from Thailand were: semi or wholly milled rice, dextrans and other modified starches and broken rice.

**Eswatini** was the third largest supplier of agricultural products to South Africa with the imported value of R5.16 billion and a market share of 5.7% of South Africa's agricultural imports basket. South Africa's import from Eswatini had a growth rate of 24.2% per annum, between 2018 and 2019. The main products imported were: solid cane sugar, not containing added flavour or colour, solid cane sugar, not containing added flavour or colour and refined cane or beet sugar.

**United States** was the fourth largest supplier of agricultural products to South Africa, with the value of R4.92 billion and a market share of 5.4% of South Africa's agricultural imports. Between 2018 and 2019, South Africa's imports of agricultural products from the United States increased by 26.9% per annum. The main three products imported from the partner country were: frozen chicken cuts and edible offal, wheat or meslin flour and food preparations.

**Brazil** was the fifth largest supplier of agricultural products with a value of R4.68 billion and a market share of 5.2% of South Africa's agricultural imports. From 2018 to 2019, imports from Brazil decreased by 14.4% per annum. The main three products were: frozen chicken cuts and edible offal, frozen, uncut chicken meat and offal, and coffee.

Table 5 below list growing and declining supplier markets of agricultural products. South Africa's import suppliers that had an import value greater or equal to one billion Rand was listed. The top three growing import markets were: Mexico, Bulgaria and Poland. The top three shrinking import markets were: Russia, Zimbabwe and Brazil.

**Table 5: South Africa's growing and declining suppliers (imports) of agricultural products in 2019 (variations from 2018 – 2019)**

Growing import markets						
Ranking	Top 3 growing markets	Values (Billion Rands)	Annual import growth (%)	Top 3 products driving import growth and their individual growth percentage		
1	Mexico	1.35	141,2	Malt beer (200,9%)	Cordials, Liqueurs, Kirschwasser, ratafia, etc. (34,8%)	Food preparations (18,9%)
2	Bulgaria	1,31	67,8	Sunflower seed or safflower oil (71,1%)	Refined sunflower seed or safflower oil (118,8%)	Chocolate and other cocoa preparations (108,5%)
3	Poland	1,81	51,3	Frozen chicken cuts and edible offal (219,0%)	Food preparations (10,2%)	Wheat and meslin (67,9%)
Shrinking import markets						
Ranking	Top 3 shrinking markets	Values (Billion Rands)	Annual import shrinkage (%)	Top 3 products driving import decline and their individual shrinkage percentage		
1	Russia	1,46	- 37,5	Wheat and meslin (- 38,5%)	Millet seed (- 48,3%)	Dried shelled peas (- 45,3%)
2	Zimbabwe	1,22	- 26,8	Wholly or partly stripped tobacco (- 51,8%)	Cotton (- 15,8%)	Tobacco waste (- 15,1%)
3	Brazil	4,68	- 14,4	Frozen chicken cuts and edible offal (- 50,5%)	Wholly or partly stripped tobacco (- 7,3%)	Frozen meat of swine (- 15,9%)

Source: Global Trade Atlas, 2020

In 2019, imports of malt beer from Mexico had annual import growth rate of 200.9%. Imports of frozen chicken cuts and edible offal from Poland also had high annual import growth rate of 219.0%. Refined sunflower seed or safflower oil, and chocolate and other cocoa preparations from Bulgaria had growth rates of 118.8% and 108.5%, respectively. Frozen

chicken cuts and edible offal from Brazil and wholly or partly stripped tobacco from Zimbabwe declined from 2018 and 2019.

## 2.2. Imports analysis by product grouping level (HS2) during 2019

**Table 6: South Africa's top 10 major agricultural import product groupings by value during 2019 (variations from 2018 – 2019)**

Sub-sector description	Imported value (Bill Rands)	Sub-sector share in SA total agriculture imports (%)	Sub-sector growth (%)	Top 3 products imported within the sub-sector (4HS)	Top 3 import markets by value
<b>HS10</b> Cereals	14,45	15,9	10,5	Rice Wheat and meslin Maize corn	Thailand Germany India
<b>HS22</b> Beverages, spirits and vinegar	10,07	11,1	24,9	Ethyl alcohol <80% Beer made from malt Sweetened waters	United Kingdom Mexico Namibia
<b>HS15</b> Animal or vegetable oils, fats and waxes	9,14	10,1	4,3	Palm oil and its fractions Sunflower seed, safflower or cotton seed oil and fractions Soybean oil and its fractions	Indonesia Malaysia Bulgaria
<b>HS02</b> Meat and edible meat offal	8,46	9,3	-7,5	Fresh, chilled or frozen meat and edible offal of poultry Fresh, chilled or frozen pork meat Edible offal of bovine, sheep, goat, horse and swine	Brazil United States Poland
<b>HS17</b> Sugars and sugar confectionary	6,43	7,1	11,7	Solid, pure sucrose cane or beet sugar Sugar confection, excluding cocoa Sugars and caramel	Eswatini China Zambia
<b>HS23</b> Food industry residues and prepared animal feed	5,46	6,0	0,3	Preparations used in animal feeding Soybean oilcake and other solid residues Oilcake from vegetable fats and oil	Argentina Netherlands France
<b>HS21</b> Miscellaneous edible preparations	4,87	5,4	5,9	Food preparations Extracts of coffee, tea and mate Sauces, mixed condiments and seasonings and prepared mustard	United States Netherlands Germany

Sub-sector description	Imported value (Bill Rands)	Sub-sector share in SA total agriculture imports (%)	Sub-sector growth (%)	Top 3 products imported within the sub-sector (4HS)	Top 3 import markets by value
<b>HS20</b> Prepared vegetables, fruit and nuts or other plant parts	3,77	4,1	20,2	Fruit and vegetable juices Prepared or preserved fruit and nuts Prepared or preserved tomatoes	China Argentina Italy
<b>HS24</b> Tobacco and manufactured tobacco substitutes	2,79	3,1	-15,1	Cigars and cigarettes Unmanufactured tobacco and its refuse Tobacco and its substitutes, extracts and essences	Switzerland Zimbabwe Brazil
<b>HS09</b> Coffee, tea, mate and spices	2,73	3,0	1,2	Coffee, coffee husks and other substitutes with coffee Tea Peppers	India Brazil Malawi

Source: Global Trade Atlas, 2020

The top 10 import product groupings were highly concentrated with a share of about 51% of total agricultural imports.

In 2019, **cereals** was the largest product group imported, with an imported value of R14.45 billion and a market share of 15.9% of South Africa's total agricultural imports. From 2018 to 2019, the product grouping's growth rate was 10.5% per annum. The top three products imported during the reporting period were: rice, wheat and meslin, and maize corn. The top three suppliers were: Thailand, Germany and India.

**Beverages, spirits and vinegar** was the second largest import product group, with an imported value of R10.07 billion and a market share of 11.1% of South Africa's total agricultural imports basket. From 2018 to 2019, the product grouping had a growth rate of 24.9% per annum. The top three products imported during the reporting year were: ethyl alcohol with strength less than 80% beer made from malt and sweetened waters. The top three suppliers were: the United Kingdom, Mexico and Namibia.

**Animal or vegetable oils, fats and waxes** product grouping was the third largest product group imported, with an imported value of R9.14 billion and a market share of 10.1% of South Africa's total agricultural imports basket. The product grouping reported a growth rate of 4.3% per annum from 2018 to 2019. The three major import products palm oil and its fractions, sunflower seed, safflower or cottonseed oil and fractions, and soybean oil and its fractions. The three main suppliers of this product grouping were Indonesia, Malaysia and Bulgaria.

The fourth largest product grouping of imports was **meat and edible meat offal** with R8.46 billion worth of imports and a market share of 9.3% of total agricultural imports. The product grouping's supply declined by 7.5% from 2018 to 2019. The top three import products were: fresh, chilled or frozen meat and edible offal of poultry, fresh, chilled or frozen pork meat and

edible offal of bovine, sheep, goat, horse and swine. The top three supplier partners were: Brazil, United States and Poland.

**Sugars and sugar confectionary** were the fifth largest product group imported, with a value of R6.43 billion and a market share of 7.1% of South Africa's total agricultural imports. The product group's imports increased by 11.7% per annum, from 2018 to 2019. The top three products imported under this grouping were: solid, pure sucrose cane or beet sugar, sugar confection, excluding cocoa, and sugars and caramel. The top three supplier partners were: Eswatini, China and Zambia.