

The Witness  
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# Decline in farm killings

## Murder rate lowest in 20 years – AgriSA

### EDWARD WEST

FARM murders have decreased to their lowest level in more than 20 years, a report by agricultural organisation AgriSA has found.

This is contrary to controversial statements from organisations such as AfriForum and right-wing doomsday preppers Die Suidlanders that farm attacks and farm murders were out of control. AgriSA's figures, which are based on police statistics, its own research and media reports, do, however, show a slight increase in farm attacks.

KwaZulu-Natal Agricultural Union (Kwanalu) CEO Sandy la Marque said AgriSA's statistics for KwaZulu-Natal were in line with the trend as reported to Kwanalu.

The number of farm attacks was falling and from January 1, 2018 to date there had been one murder and seven attacks on farmers in KwaZulu-Natal, said La Marque.

In 2016, Kwanalu's Security Desk recorded 27 farm attacks and seven farm murders.

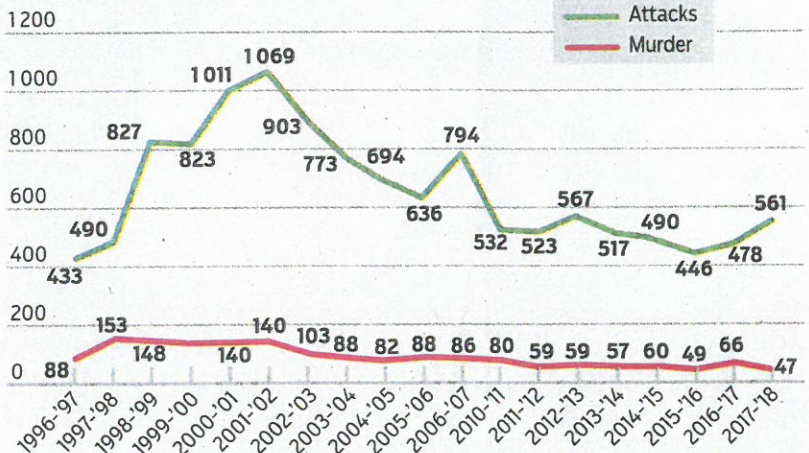
AgriSA's report showed that 24% of farm attacks in six years occurred in North West, followed by Gauteng (21%), KwaZulu-Natal (15%) and the Free State (10%).

With regard to farm attacks, the Northern Cape was the safest province at one percent, while North West was the most violent.

Kobus Visser, AgriSA's director for Rural Safety and General Affairs, said in the report the occurrence of farm attacks was one of the biggest challenges facing

### Farm attacks and murders

NATIONAL COMPARISON



Source: SAPS

Graphics24

agriculture.

Visser said, under AgriSA's rural safety strategy, violence against all people living and working on and visiting farms and smallholdings make up the statistics for farm attacks.

"People who live on farms in rural areas are particularly vulnerable to armed farm attacks, where response times are lengthy because of the remoteness of farms," he said.

"This offers the attackers an opportunity to linger on the premises for longer, with a greater chance of the victim being subjected to a high degree of violence and brutality, compared to crimes in urban areas where the police, security companies and neighbours arrive sooner to render assistance."

AgriSA warned that it was essential to have accurate statistics around farm attacks and farm murders to avoid making unfounded claims and stirring up emotions in the process.

The increase in attacks comes nowhere near the record high seen in 2001/2002, when 1 069 farm attacks were recorded. Farm attacks increased from 478 in 2016/2017 to 561 in 2017/2018.

According to AgriSA's statistics, farm murders decreased from 66 recorded incidents in 2016/2017 to 47 in 2017/2018. This was less than a third of the record highs recorded in the late 1990s, when 153 murders were recorded in 1997/1998.

— With News24.