

KZN

farmers investing in future

HELMO PREUSS

The 15.3% year-on-year (y/y) increase in tractor sales last month showed that farmers were still investing in their future despite the political rhetoric about land expropriation without compensation.

The rise in the first four months of this year is 12.8% y/y, far higher than the flat sales the South African Agricultural Machinery Association expected at the beginning of the year.

The threat to property rights has resulted in a negative reaction which has prompted damage control by the government.

Minister of International Relations, Lindiwe Sisulu, issued a media statement on March 4 that the international community should not panic over the Parliamentary process on land reform.

"The (State) President remains committed to engage all stakeholders during this process," Sisulu said.

Farmers' optimism about the future is not merely reflected in improved tractor sales, but also in hiring intentions.

The Manpower survey for the first quarter of this year showed stable hiring intentions in KwaZulu-Natal both on a quarter-on-quarter and y/y comparison with the net employment outlook at +6%, but KZN farmers had one of the strongest hiring intentions at +12%.

The only sector that matched that growth was the KZN tourism sector, which also had a Net Employment Outlook of +12% as well.

This is likely to have been boosted by the positive feedback from this week's Africa's Travel Indaba in Durban, where the number of buyers and exhibitors are more than last year.