

Agricultural decline in SA households

THELMA NGOMA

THERE has been a decline in the number of South African households engaged in agricultural activities from 2011 to 2016.

There were 550 000 fewer agricultural households in 2016 than in 2011. This decline was mainly due to the drought.

There has also been a decline of 6.6% in the proportion of households engaging in agricultural activities nationally. Only 19.9% of all South African households were involved in agriculture in 2011 and that number has since declined to 13.8% in 2016.

The Eastern Cape had the highest proportion of agricultural households in the country at 27.9% (down from 35.4% in 2011) in 2016, followed by Limpopo with 24.1% (33% in 2011) and KwaZulu-Natal with 18.6% (28.2% in 2011).

Western Cape and Gauteng recorded the lowest proportions

of households engaging in farming activities, with 3.6% (5.2% in 2011) and 4.9% (7.1% in 2011) respectively.

Livestock farming constituted the main form of household agricultural activity in six of the nine provinces, with the three exceptions being Western Cape (27.5%), Free State (31.9%) and Gauteng (18.3%).

Nationally, farming of "animals only" and "crops only" farming accounted for 42.9% and 34.6% of households' engagement in agriculture respectively.

According to Statistics SA, the majority of agricultural households (21.5%) were headed by persons within the 45-54 years age group.

A high percentage of agricultural households were headed by individuals who had no schooling. The highest proportion of agricultural household heads recorded with no schooling were found in Mpumalanga (26.3%), Limpopo (24%) and KZN (22.7%).

thelman@thenewage.co.za