

Food crisis looms as KZN agricultural production and value chains are halted

As the recent unrest in KwaZulu-Natal continues to affect major roads and halt agricultural transportation networks, Sandy La Marque, CEO of KZN Agricultural Union (Kwanalu), warns of a looming long-term food crisis with farmers unable to continue with the day-to-day business of farming.



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"The looming food crisis is only going to get worse; not only have most shops being destroyed in smaller towns around KZN, but now farmers are unable to keep up production to be able to supply the country with the massive volumes consumed daily. The knock-on effect of the looting and rioting is threatening to derail the highly sensitive production and agricultural value chain," said La Marque.

"Feedstock for livestock, chickens, pigs and other animals is being depleted on farms, milk producers are dumping their milk, egg, fruit and vegetable producers are unable to get their produce to the end-users, and sugarcane and timber producers are not able to deliver to mills. The transportation of all produce has been brought to a standstill; it is a desperate situation," said La Marque.

"Equally affected are fuel supplies, packaging for commodities such as eggs, milk, vegetables and fruit; the situation is dire," said La Marque.

La Marque estimates the losses for the KZN agricultural community to be in the billions of rands.

"We are not yet able to assess the financial, social and unemployment implications of the unrest. It has decimated the rural and agricultural sectors of KZN and will take quite some time before the impact can be truly quantified," said La Marque.

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