



FARM ATTACKS

One of Agriculture's Challenges



AGRI SA

We develop the South African Agricultural Industry.
Ons ontwikkel die Suid-Afrikaanse Landbou Industrie.



Introduction

Farmers worldwide are subject to crime, in South Africa the difference is that the farming community must also contend with farm attacks – something farmers in the rest of the world do not experience. Farm attacks are already an emotional aspect and for this reason statistics must be applied with circumspection.

The safety of the farming community remains one of the challenges that farmers across South Africa must deal with, which is why Agri SA and its provincial organisations have prioritised this matter. The Agri Securitas Trust Fund therefore continues to strive towards providing financial support for farming communities in their battle against farm violence with a view to creating a safer environment.

Within the Agri SA structure, much time is devoted to policy development and liaison with the government in an attempt to create a safer farming environment and promote food security.

Treat farm attack statistics with caution

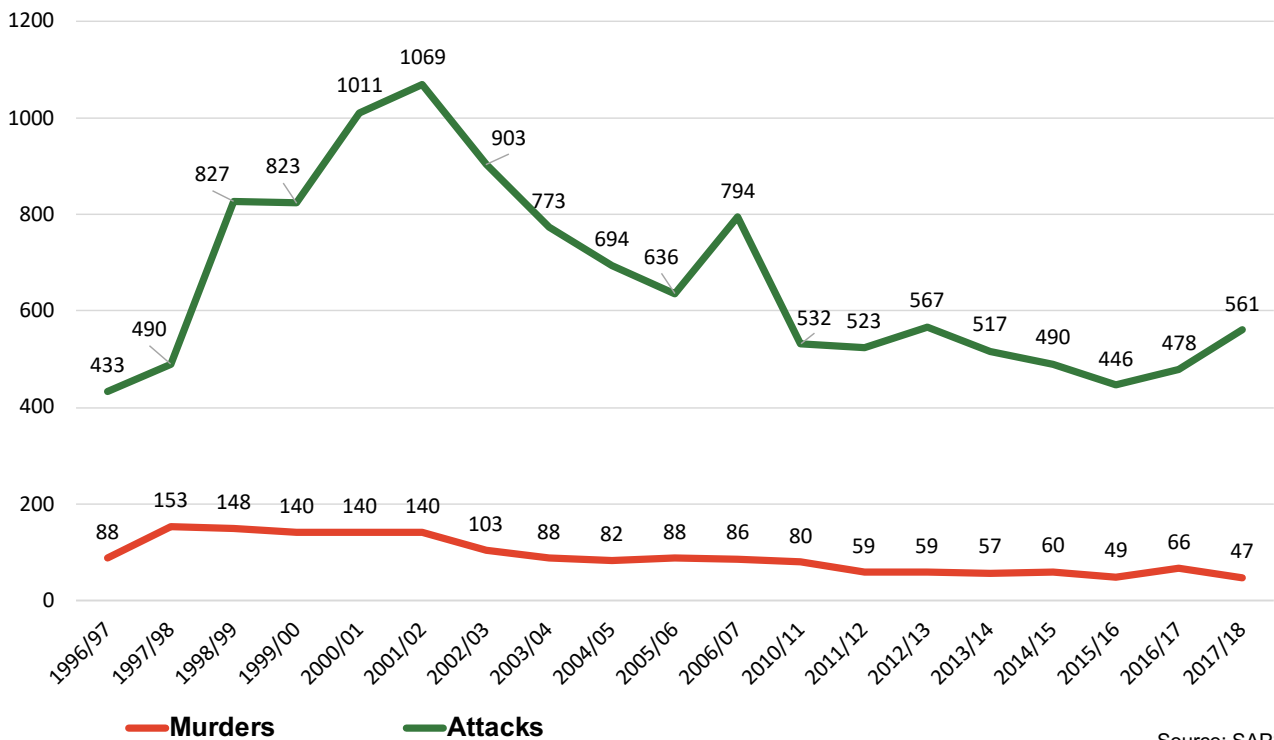
Reliable statistics are essential in accurately assessing the magnitude of farm attacks and farm murders. It also serves as an aid to determine trends and where resources should be applied to deal with the crime problem. It is important, however, not to include incorrect information in the statistics and so-doing make unfounded inferences and stir up emotions.

The definition in the Rural Safety Strategy, which includes all violence against people living on farms and smallholdings, as well as persons who work there or visit the premises, serves as the basis for gathering farm attack statistics. This includes crimes such as murder, rape, robbery and causing bodily harm. It also includes all violence aimed at destroying farm infrastructure and property with a view to disrupting legitimate farming activities. Against this background, farm attack statistics do not only include crimes against commercial farmers, but also smallholding owners involved in a farming activity, emerging farmers, farm workers, their family members and visitors.



Farm Attacks and Murders

National Comparison: 1996/1997 – 2017/2018



Source: SAPS

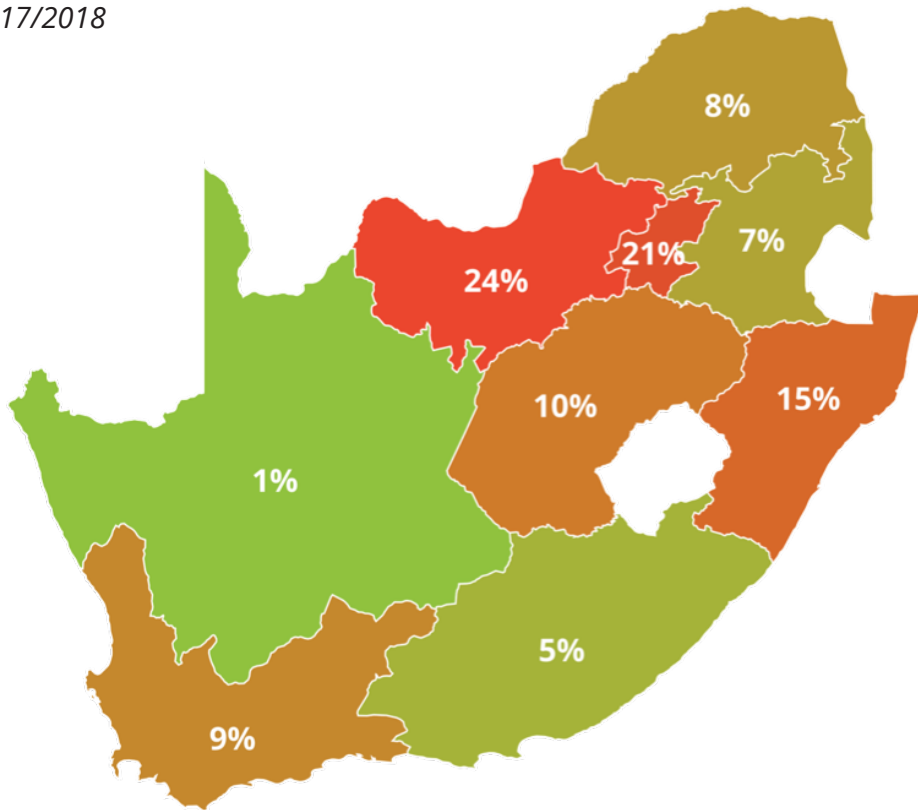
The period 2001/2002 saw the highest incidence of farm attacks in history, with 1 069 attacks recorded in that year. The highest incidence of farm murders was recorded in the 1997/1998 period, namely 153. When police statistics, as announced in Parliament for the past six years, are viewed more closely, it appears that farm attacks had increased while murders declined on a year-on-year basis. Over the past 19 years starting from 1996/1997, there have been 12 567 farm attacks and 1 733 murders, with an average of 661 attacks and 91 murders a year. The figures provides a clear picture of the magnitude of farm attacks and the threat to farm safety that the community experiences daily.

According to these statistics, the North West province recorded the most farm attacks, namely 722, followed by Gauteng with 644. Most murders occurred in Gauteng, namely 69, while KwaZulu-Natal and North West each recorded 61 murders. In the analysis of Gauteng's statistics, it is important to take into account that most farm attacks occur on smallholdings.



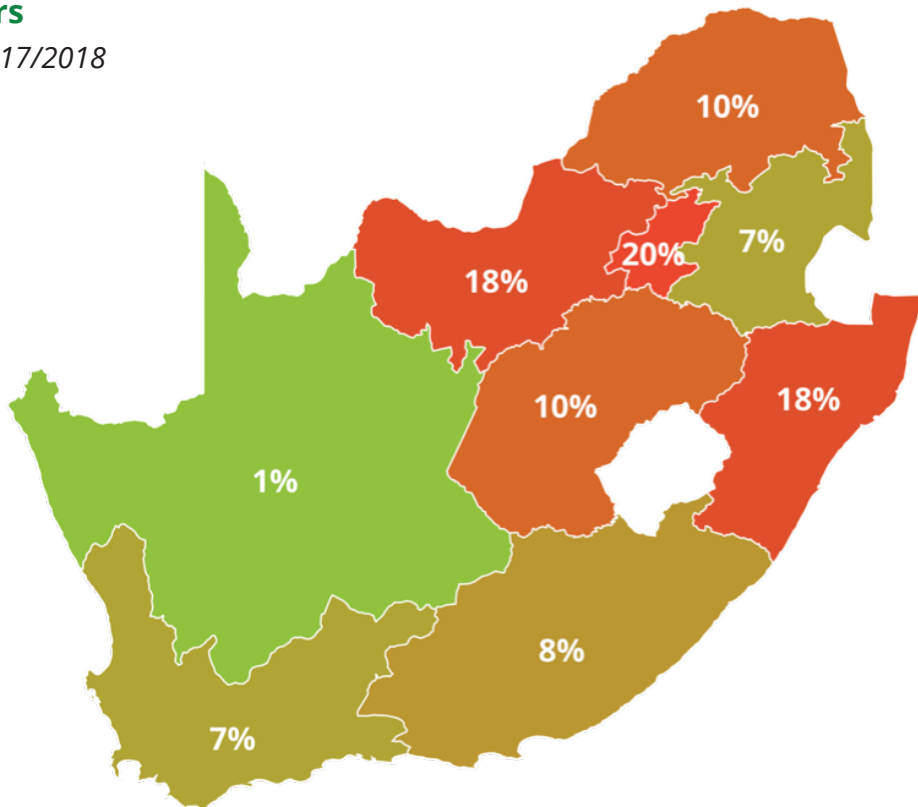
Farm Attacks

2012/2013 – 2017/2018



Farm Murders

2012/2013 – 2017/2018





The map of South Africa shows that 24% of farm attacks in the past six years had 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 1%, while North West was the most violent. Gauteng recorded the most murders, namely 20%, followed by North West and KwaZulu-Natal recording the second highest incidence of murders, namely 18% each. Once again, the Northern Cape at 1% was the province that recorded the lowest number of farm murders.

National crime statistics of the previous year show that murders in South Africa have increased for the fifth consecutive year, while robbery with aggravating circumstances, including home and business burglaries and vehicle hijackings, has also increased. The latter three, known as trio-crimes, are probably the most feared by the public and to which the farming community is exposed on an ongoing basis. The same trend was also observed with the increase in farm attacks during the past two financial years.

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. 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.

Notwithstanding the above, the continued attacks on the farming community remain cause for concern, especially since the community is responsible for producing sufficient food for a growing population – something they manage to do very successfully.



A farmer's safety plan

The agricultural community alone cannot be held responsible for combatting crime. It remains the government's responsibility to keep all citizens safe; however, the threat to rural safety is of such a nature that the farming community must continue to ensure their own security.

And yet the community has over the past 19 years not stood alone in its battle against farm crime. With an ally such as the Agri Securitas Trust Fund, farmers are still devising plans to ensure their safety. The Trust Fund has over the years contributed financially towards rural safety systems at farmer association level, including the installation of camera and communication systems, the installation of boom gates, and providing safety equipment such as night vision cameras, drones and even trauma counselling.

In conjunction with the Trust Fund, the community is devising plans to help protect themselves and their farm workers, as in the case of Hartbeesfontein farmers in North West and the Albany Bathurst District Agricultural Union in the Eastern Cape.

Both these areas are affected by crime such as stock theft, home burglaries, armed robbery and farm attacks. Rural safety plans have been developed, with the police participating in crime-fighting efforts. Camera systems, funded partially by the Trust Fund, are used to monitor vehicle movement in the areas. The cameras essentially provide information that is constantly monitored by a control room, thus offering a permanent observation capability across the entire area.

Co-operation between the police and the rural community of Hartbeesfontein has resulted in several successes. Crime is combatted proactively, with the focus on problem areas as well as crimes considered by the community as a priority. In a short period of three weeks after installation of the camera system in the Albany Bathurst area, the farming community managed to provide the police with information in five cases involving suspicious-looking vehicles.



Help us to protect the farming community

You can help us to protect our country's farmers, farm workers and their families against the violence of farm attacks and so-doing prevent the negative consequences thereof.

Contributions to the Agri Securitas Trust Fund, which is managed by a Board of Trustees, can be made as follows:

Account: **Agri Securitas Trust Fund**
Bank: **ABSA**
Account number: **4055781687**
Branch code: **632005**

Every contribution to the Fund will help us to safeguard our farming community and make a difference to their safety.



Kobus Visser

Director: Rural Safety and General Affairs Chamber