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Agricultural industry, 2023

An overview of the results

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DDG: Economic statistics

Embargo: 26 June 2025, 09h00

Image: lrewolede, unsplash.com



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The survey

Aim

- To provide financial, production, employment and related information for the commercial agricultural industry in South Africa.
- Based on a large sample of farmers registered for value-added tax (VAT)
- The PDF report is titled: *Agricultural industry, Report No. 11-01-01 (2023)*

Period covered

- The information was collected from enterprises for their financial year, which ended on any date between 1 July 2022 and 30 June 2023
- Animals on farms as at 30 June 2023
- Employment as at 30 June 2023

Previous reports

- This is the first large sample survey conducted for commercial agriculture
- The most recent publications available for the industry include the *Annual agricultural survey for 2023 (P1101)* and the *Census of Commercial Agriculture (CoCA) for 2017, Report No. 11-02-01 (2017)*



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1. Income

2. Employment

3. Products

Exploring the industry



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1

2

3

Income



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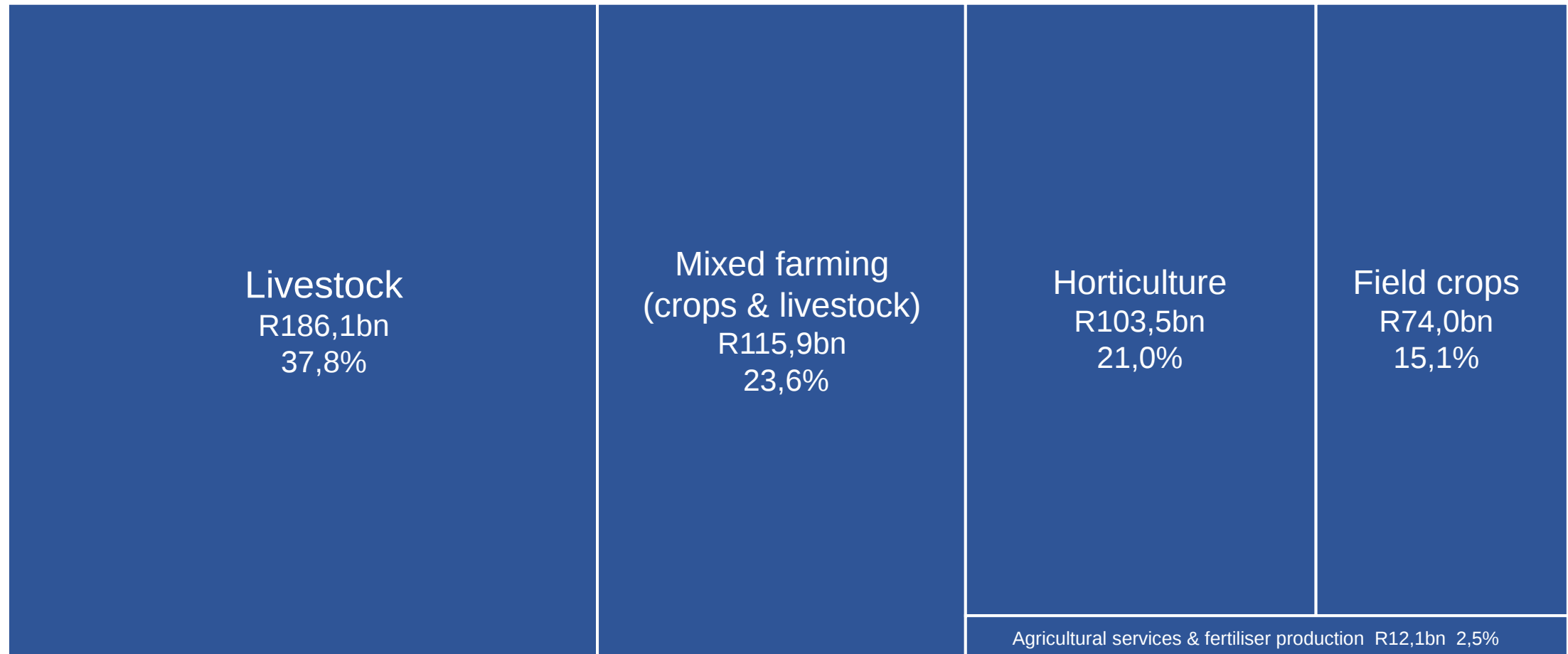
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Livestock generated the most income in 2023

Income by type of activity in the commercial agricultural industry, 2023 Total: R491,7 billion



Source: Table A



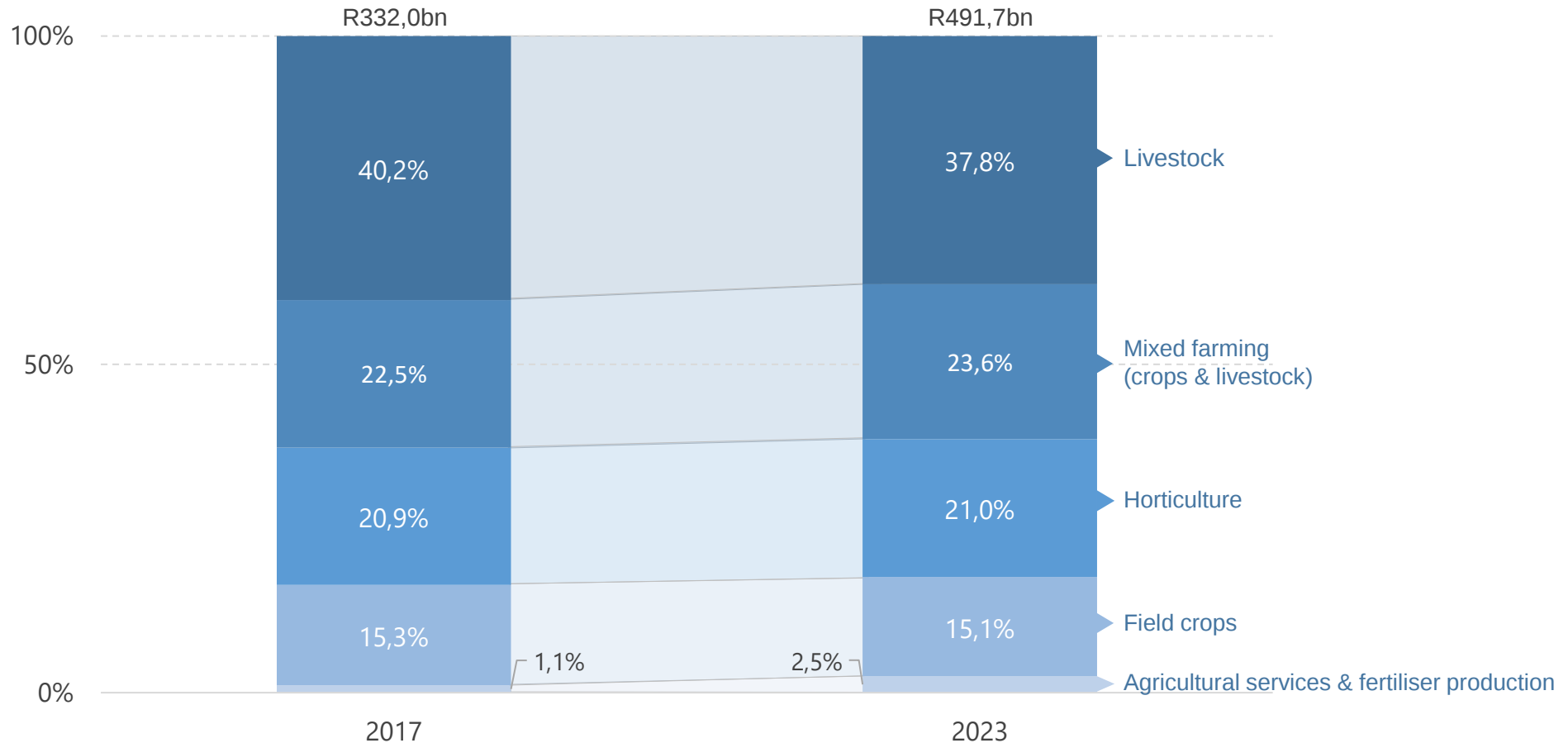
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Livestock and field crops lost percentage share in the 2017–2023 period

Contribution to total income in the commercial agricultural industry



Source: Table A



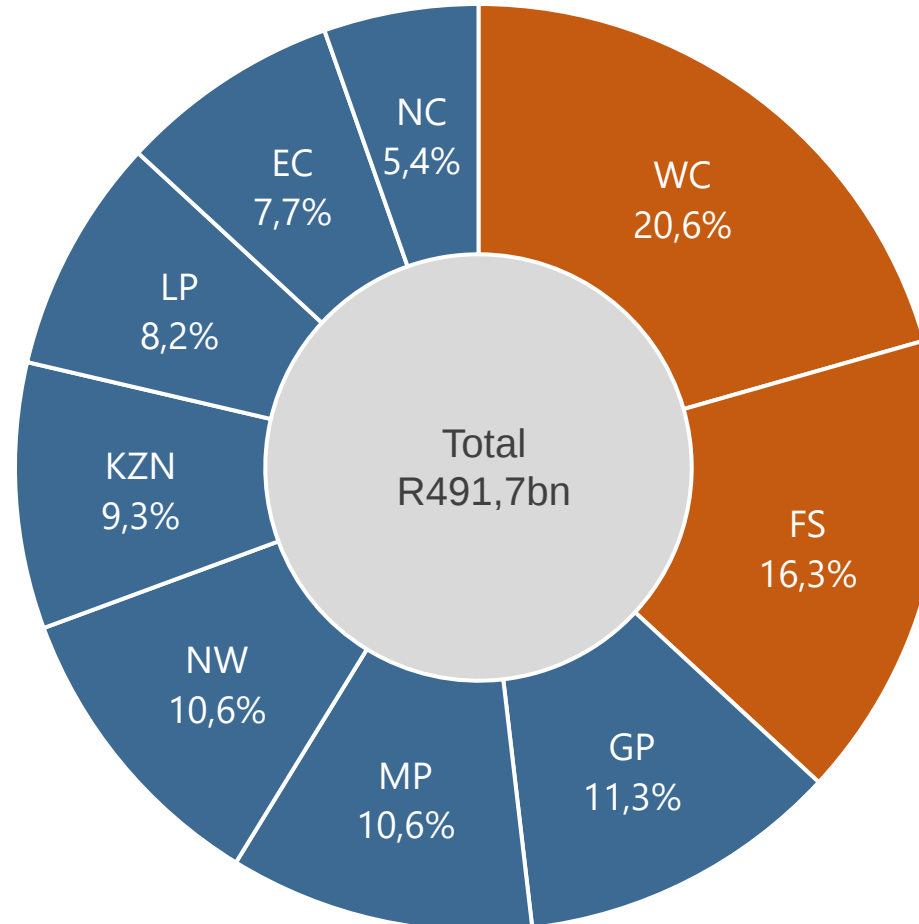
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WC and FS respectively accounted for **20,6%** and **16,3%** of total income in 2023

Provincial contribution to total income in the commercial agricultural industry



Source: Table 1.2

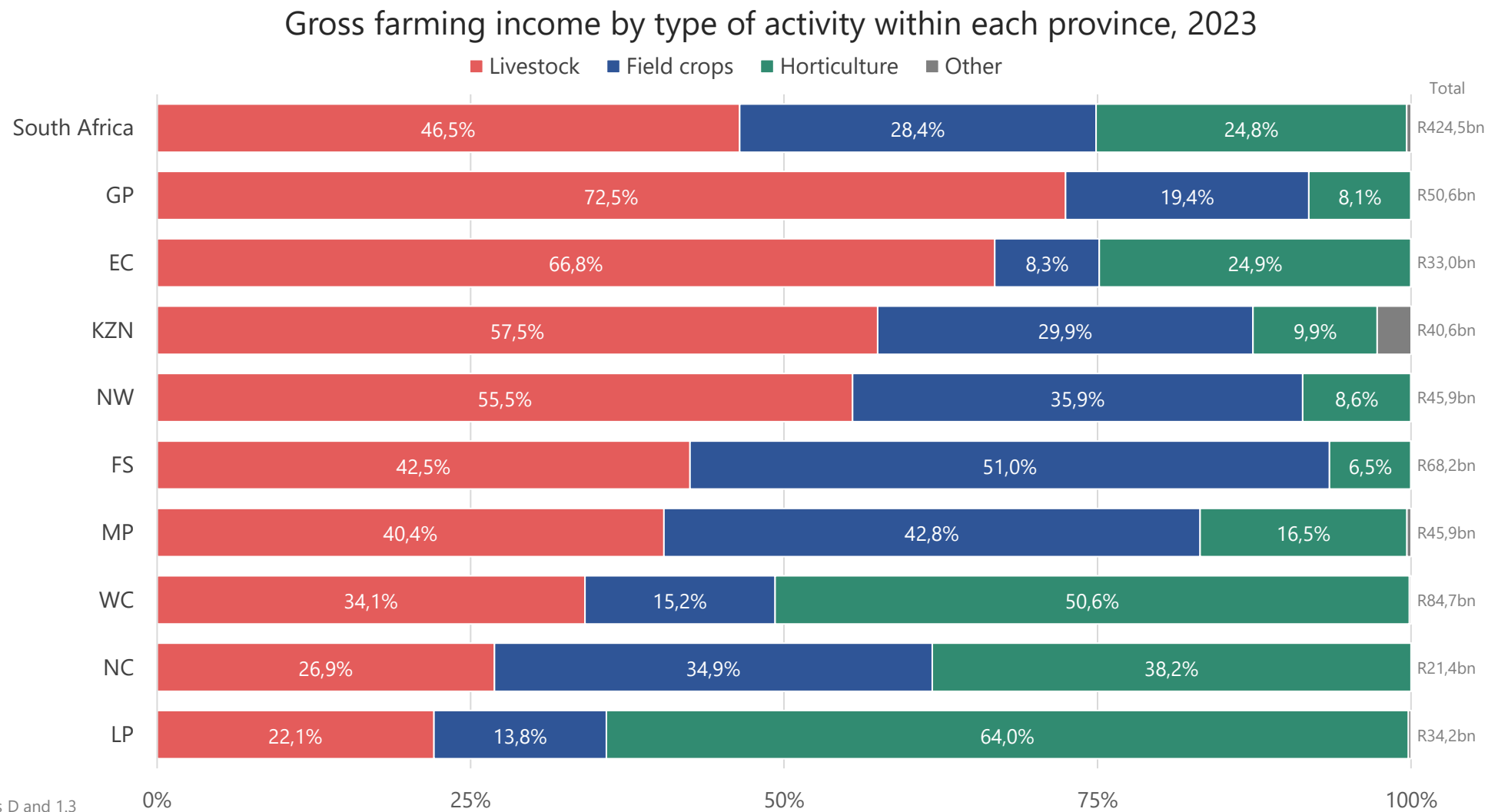


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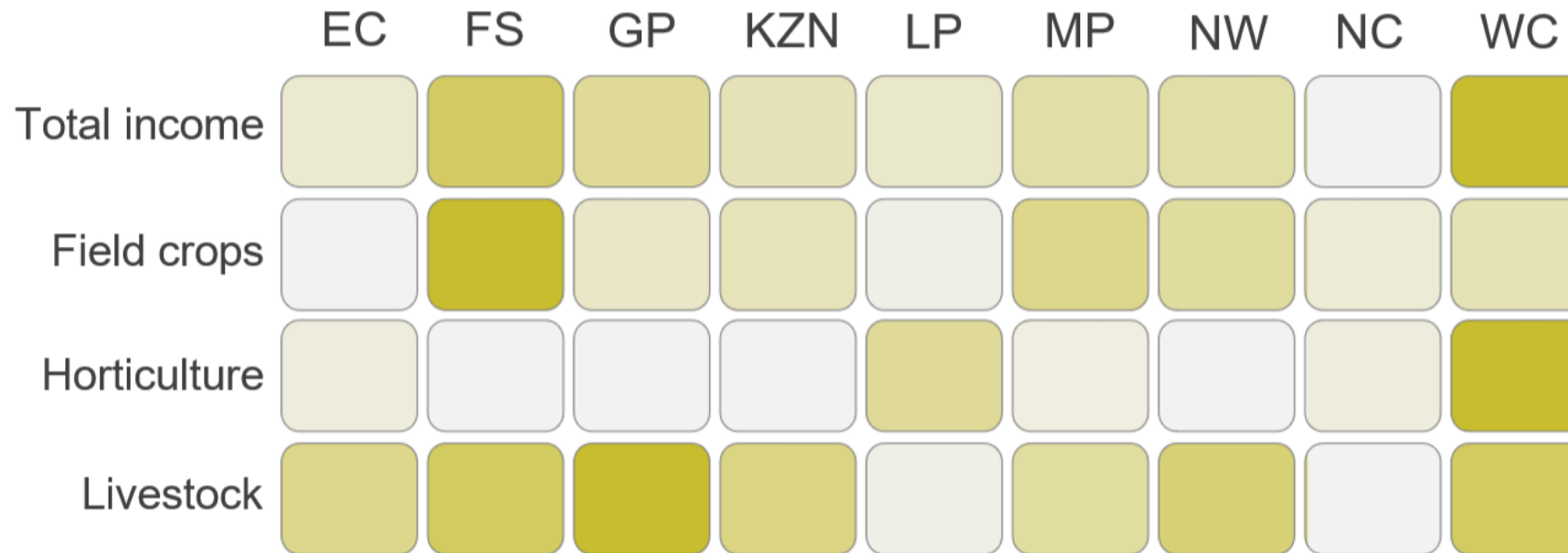
Livestock dominated commercial agriculture in Gauteng, accounting for 72,5% of gross farming income



Source: Tables D and 1.3

Free State generated the largest slice of national field crop income

National share of gross farming income across provinces, 2023. The darker the colour, the larger the share



Source: Table 1.3

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Employment



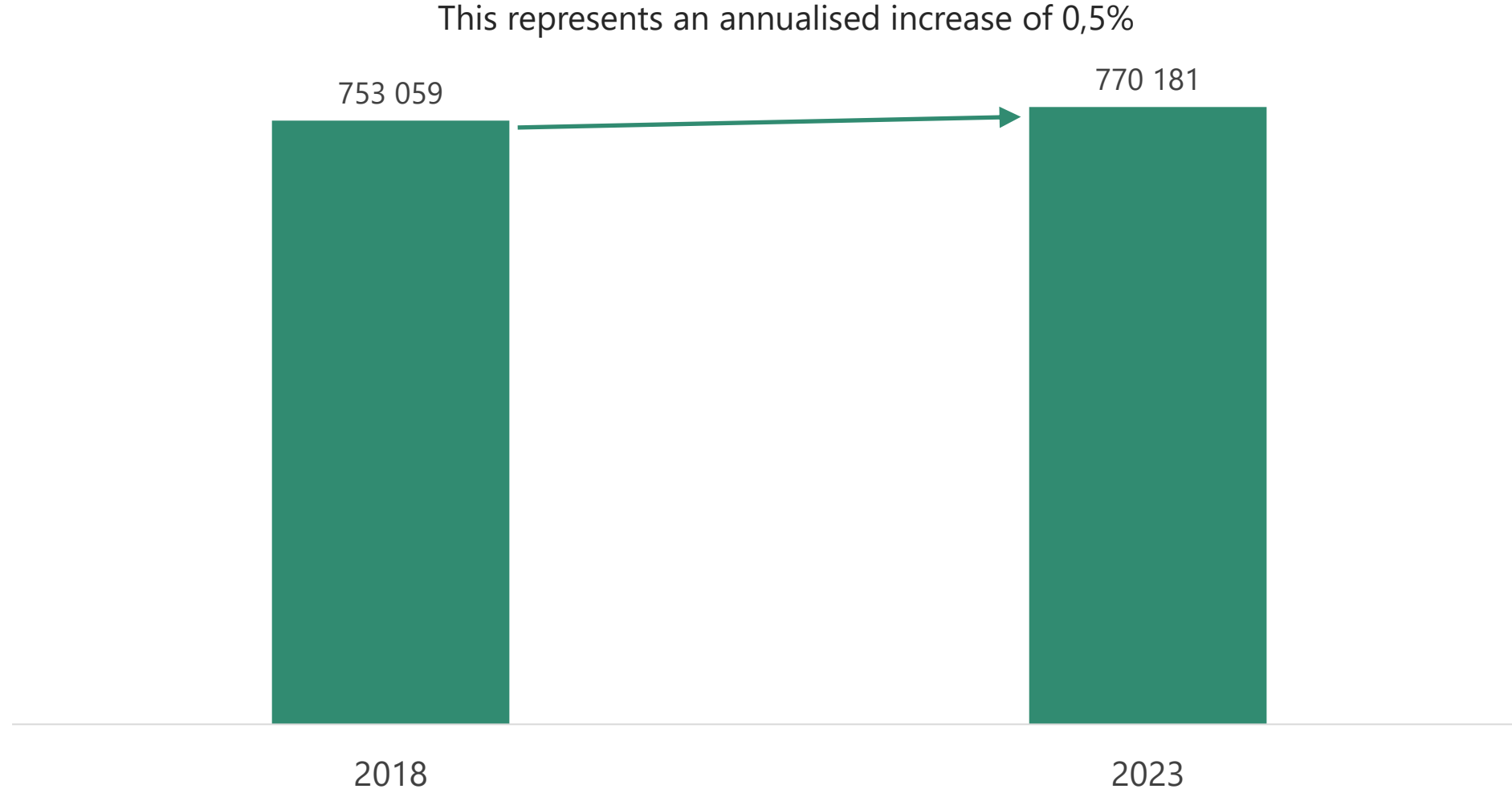
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The commercial agricultural workforce grew by **17 122** individuals in the 2018–2023 period



Number of employed persons as at 30 June 2018 and 30 June 2023 Source: Table B



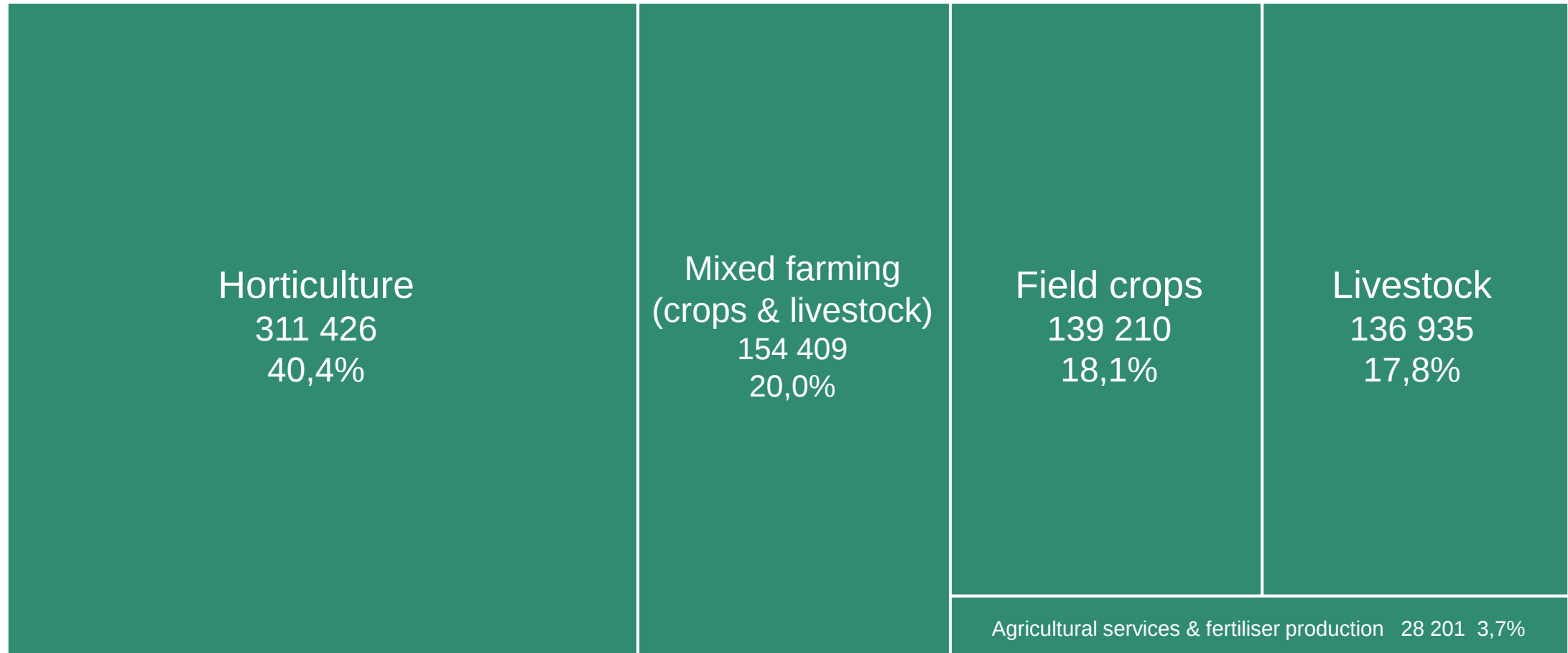
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Horticulture employed **40,4%** of the workforce in 2023

Number of employed persons by type of activity. Total: 770 181 individuals



Source: Table B

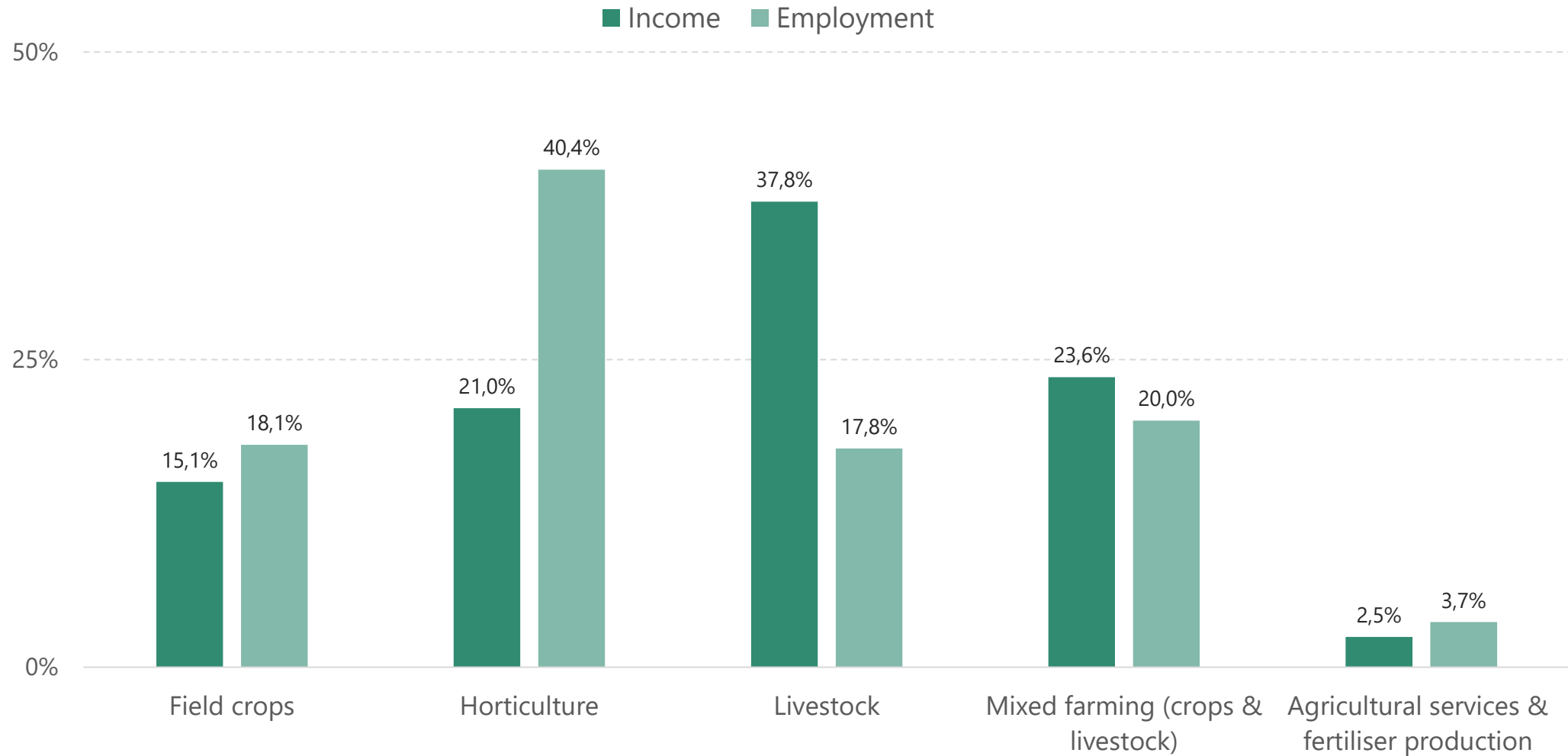


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Income and employment by activity



Source: Figure 1

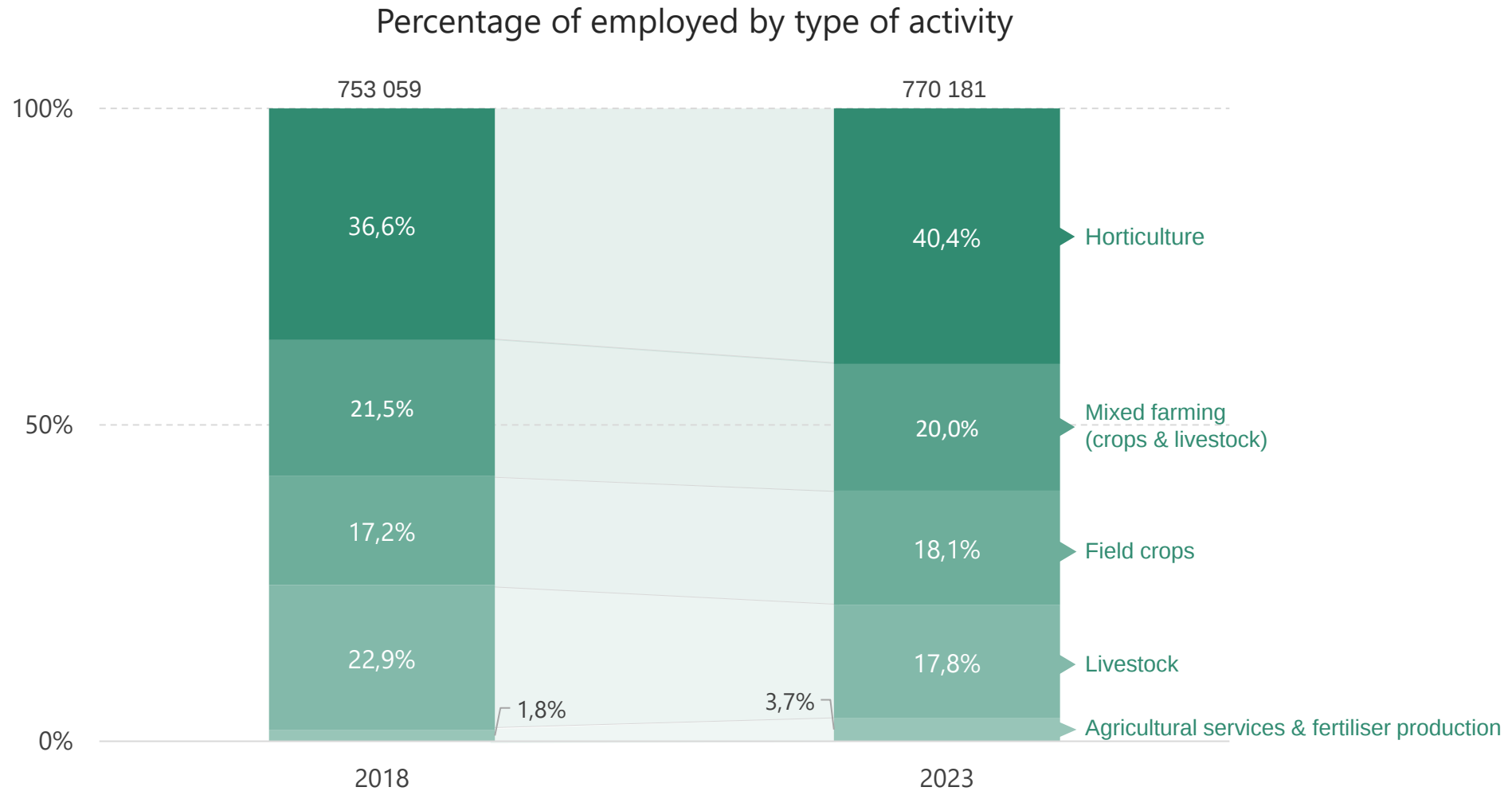


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Livestock and mixed farming lost percentage share in the 2018–2023 period



Source: Table B

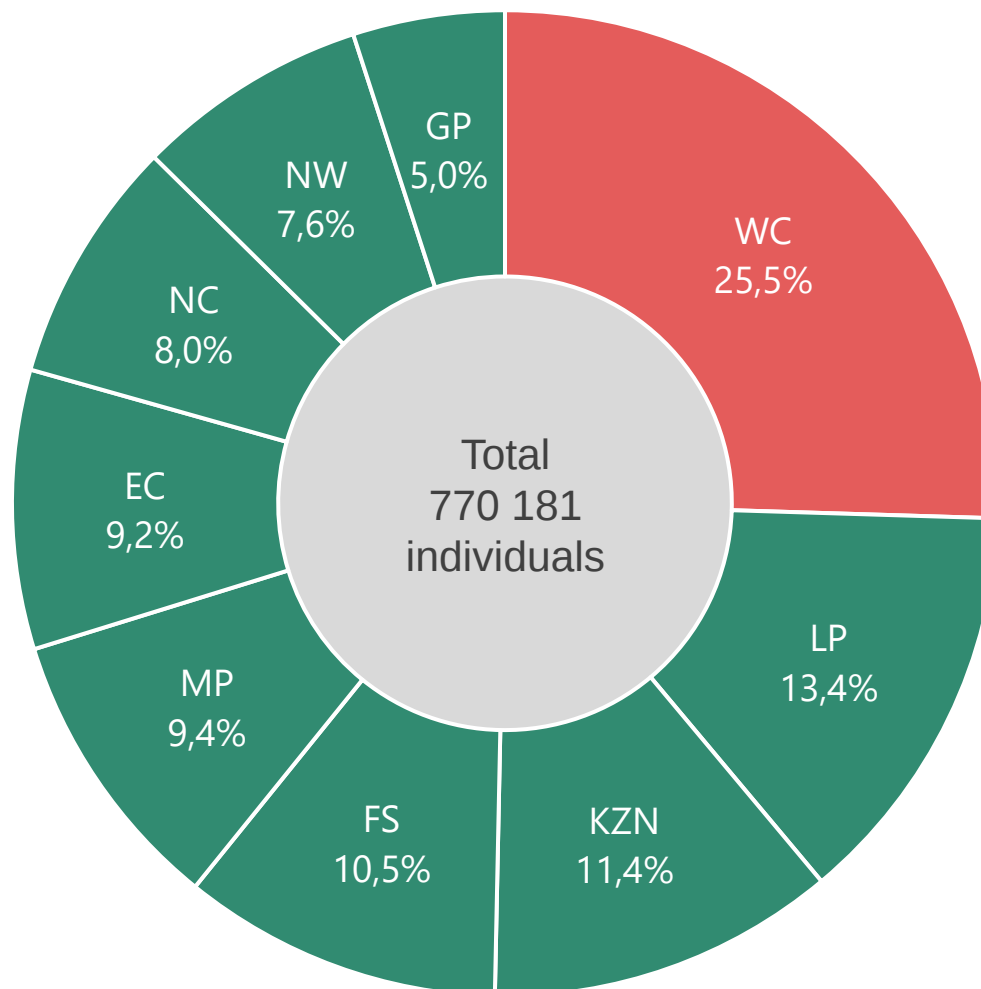


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Just over a **quarter** of the agricultural workforce were employed in Western Cape



Source: Table 1.2



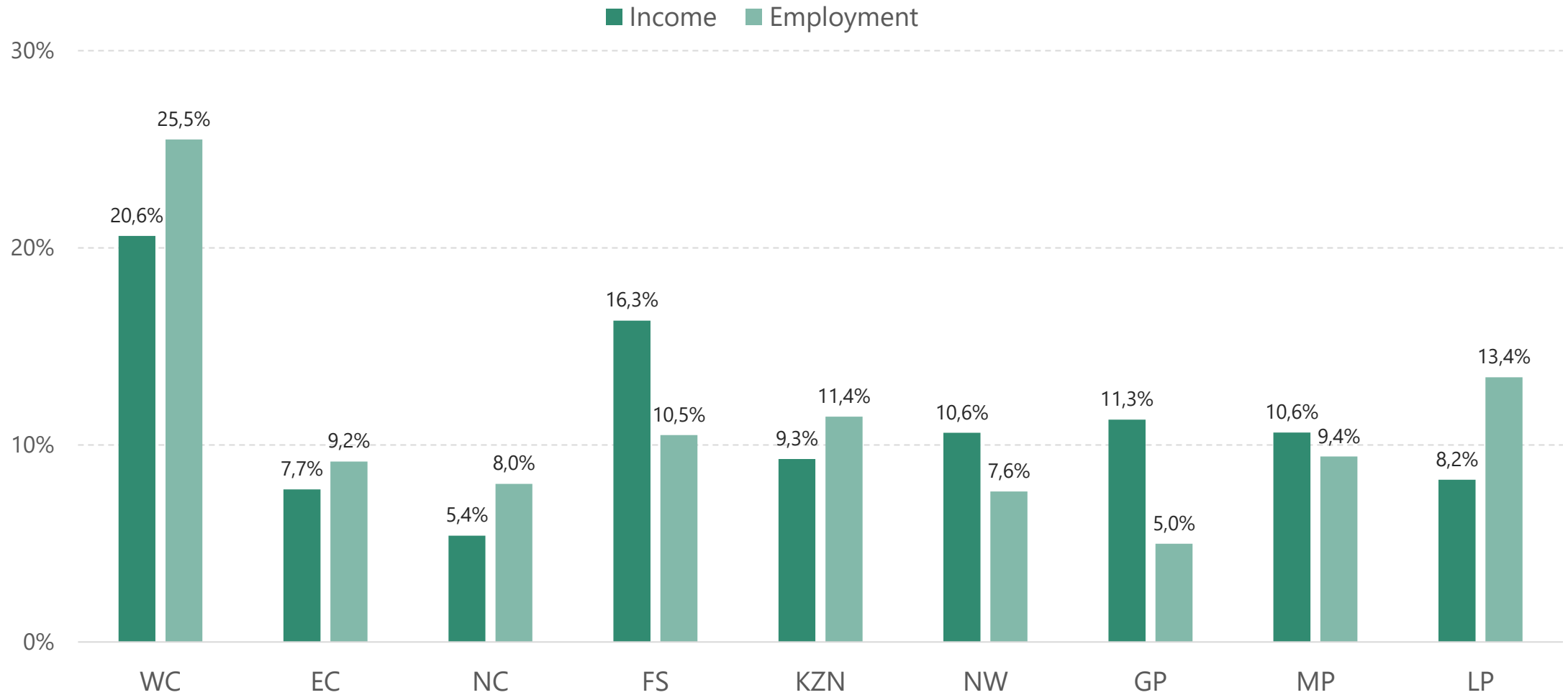
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Income and employment by province



Source: Figure 2

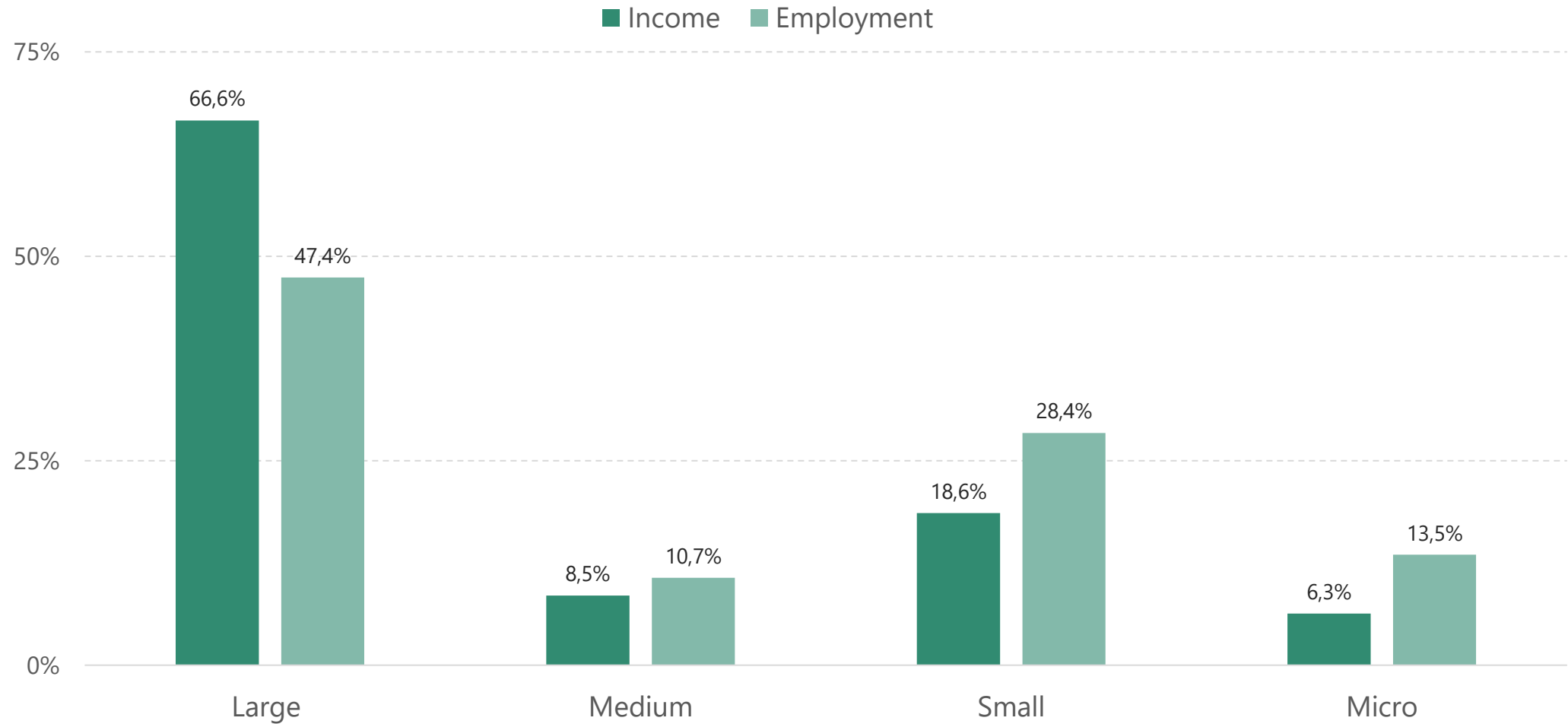


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Income and employment by enterprise size



Large: Turnover: > R35 000 000 **Medium:** R21 000 000 < Turnover ≤ R35 000 000 **Small:** R3 500 000 < Turnover ≤ R21 000 000 **Micro:** Turnover ≤ R3 500 000 Source: Table C



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Products



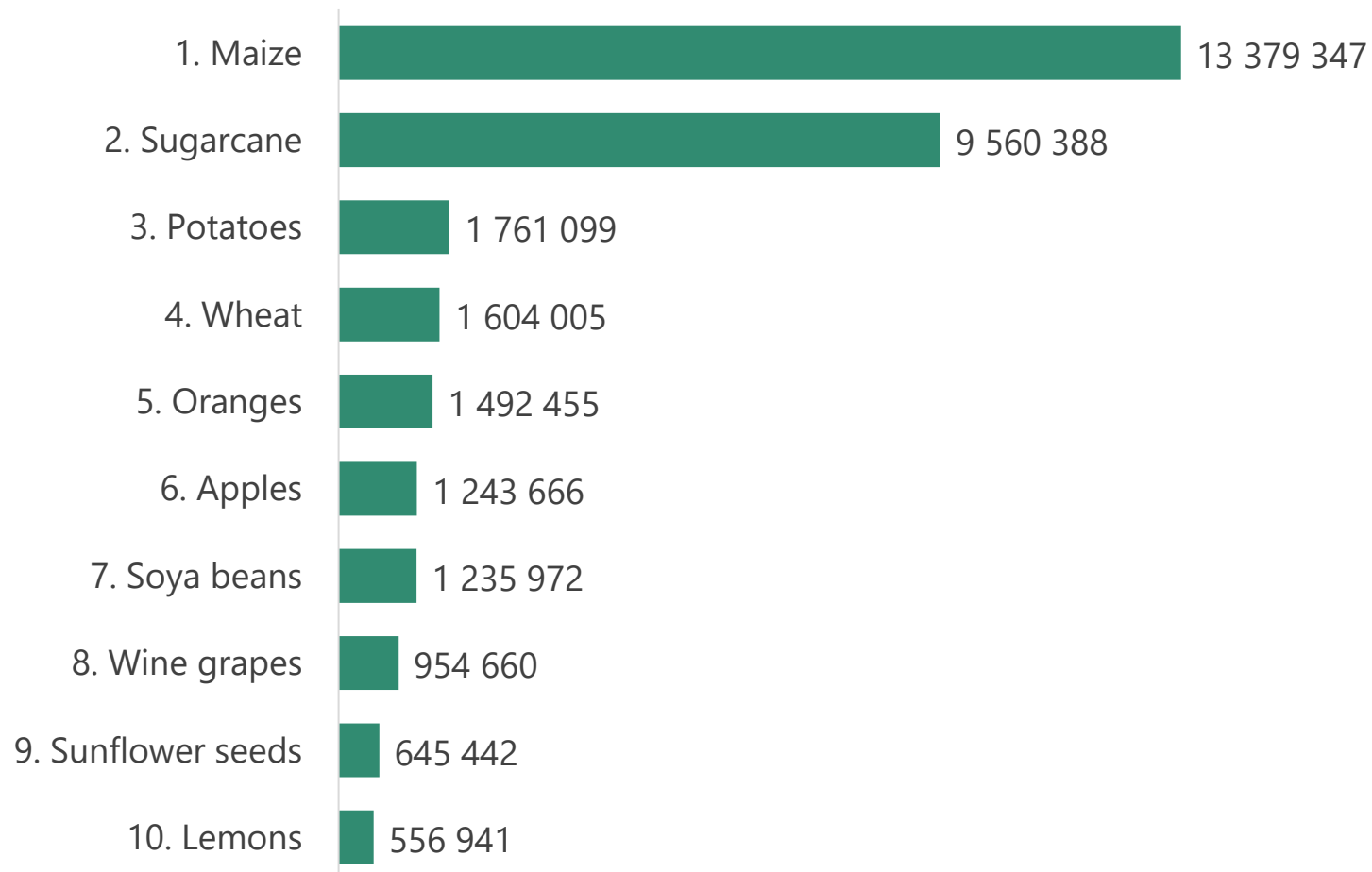
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Maize was the most produced product in 2023

Top 10 field crop and horticultural products. Production in metric tons



Source: Tables E to J



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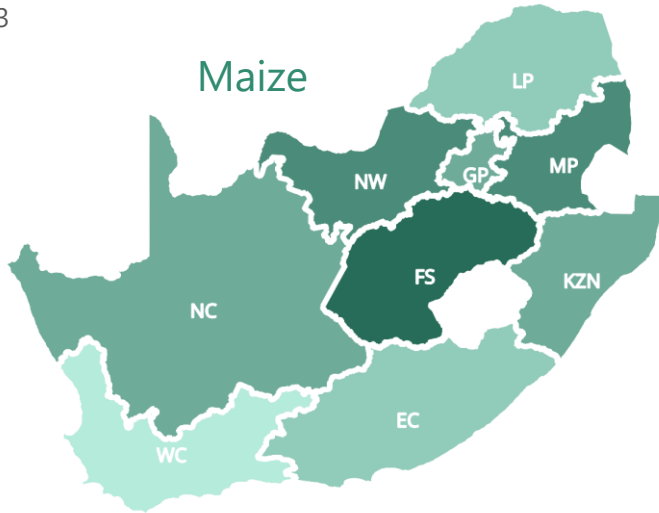
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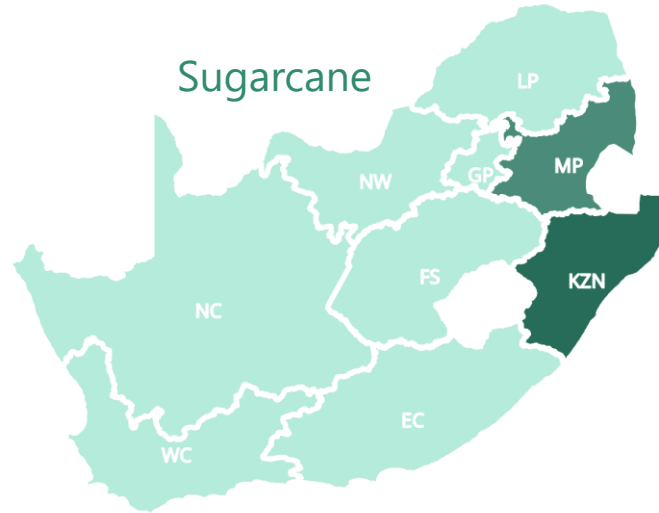
Where are the top field crop and horticultural products produced?

2023

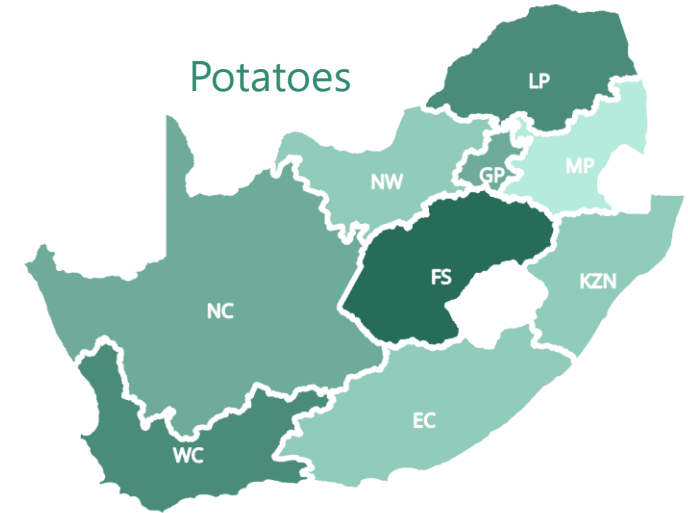
Maize



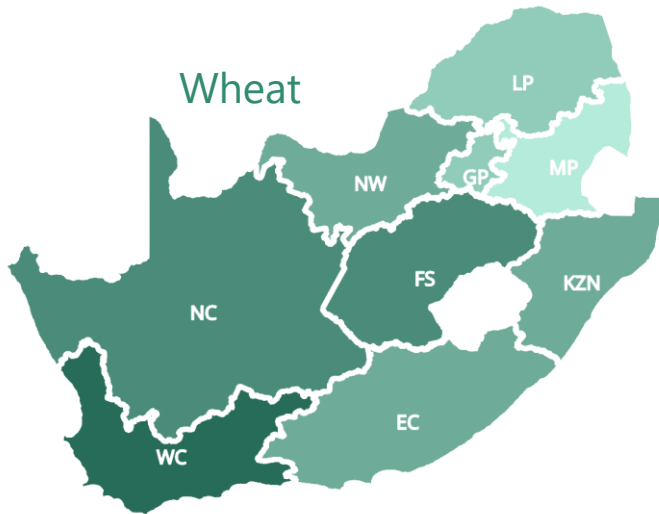
Sugarcane



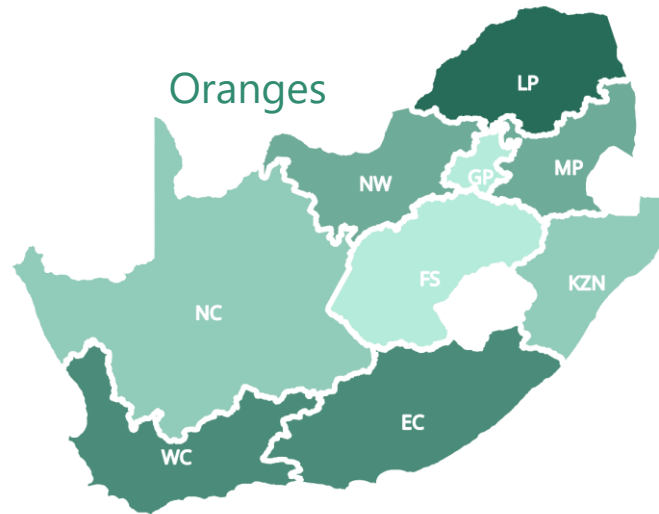
Potatoes



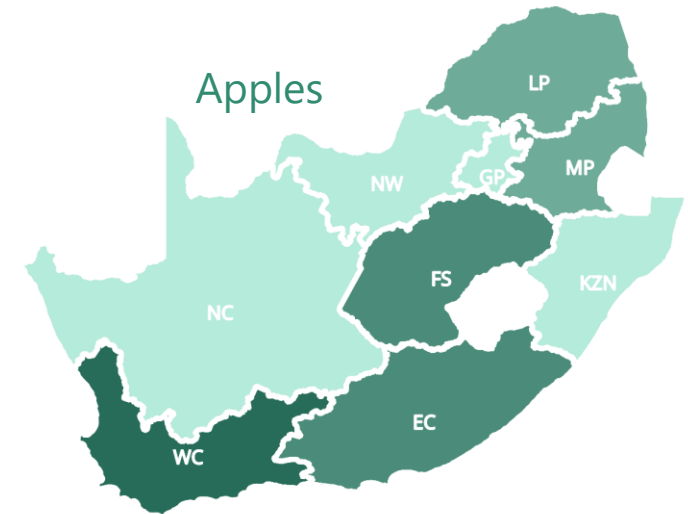
Wheat



Oranges



Apples



All major field crops experienced growth in the 2017–2023 period

Field crops Production in metric tons

Commodity	2017	2023	Change	Percentage change
Maize	10 788 317	13 379 347	▲	24,0%
Soya beans	842 267	1 235 972	▲	46,7%
Sunflower seeds	555 858	645 442	▲	16,1%
Wheat	1 011 411	1 604 005	▲	58,6%
Sugarcane	7 534 511	9 560 388	▲	26,9%

Source: Table E



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Potatoes, onions and tomatoes recorded decreases in the 2017–2023 period

Vegetables Production in metric tons

Commodity	2017	2023	Change	Percentage change
Potatoes	1 973 155	1 761 099	▼	-10,7%
Onions	602 568	495 509	▼	-17,8%
Tomatoes	357 150	349 528	▼	-2,1%
Cabbages	153 143	173 526	▲	13,3%

Source: Table F



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All major citrus fruits increased in the 2017–2023 period

Citrus fruits Production in metric tons

Commodity	2017	2023	Change	Percentage change
Oranges	1 372 238	1 492 455	▲	8,8%
Naartjies	201 618	434 290	▲	115,4%
Lemons	388 004	556 941	▲	43,5%

Source: Table G



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Bananas decreased in the 2017–2023 period

Subtropical fruits Production in metric tons

Commodity	2017	2023	Change	Percentage change
Bananas	219 573	185 819	▼	-15,4%
Avocados	132 098	136 577	▲	3,4%
Mangos	48 570	94 578	▲	94,7%

Source: Table 3.4



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All major deciduous fruits and viticulture registered growth in the 2017–2023 period

Deciduous fruits and viticulture



Production in metric tons

Commodity	2017	2023	Change	Percentage change
Apples	907 131	1 243 666	▲	37,1%
Pears	355 881	373 163	▲	4,9%
Table grapes	328 173	356 009	▲	8,5%
Wine grapes	783 263	954 660	▲	21,9%

Source: Table I



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Pecan nuts decreased by **33,4%** in the 2017–2023 period

Tree nuts Production in metric tons

Commodity	2017	2023	Change	Percentage change
Macadamia nuts	49 170	63 660	▲	29,5%
Pecan nuts	25 305	16 848	▼	-33,4%

Source: Table J



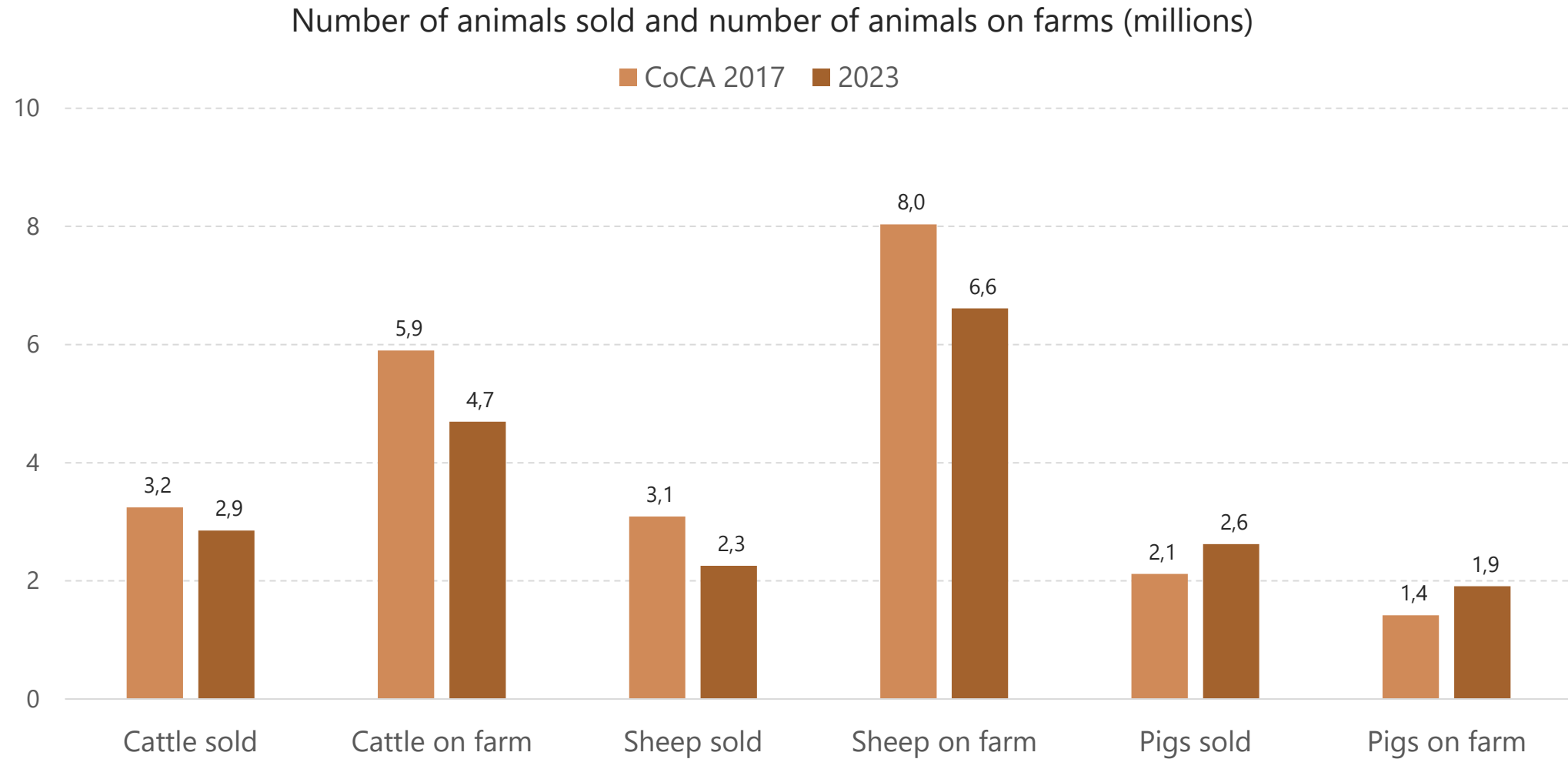
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The number of cattle and sheep on farms decreased, while pigs recorded a rise



Source: Table K



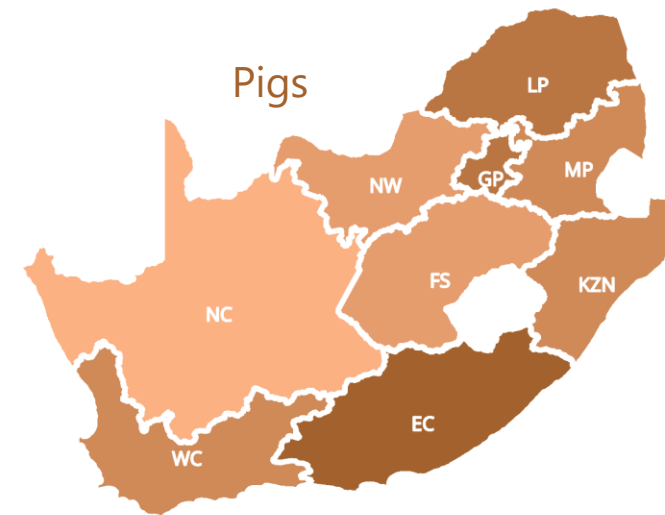
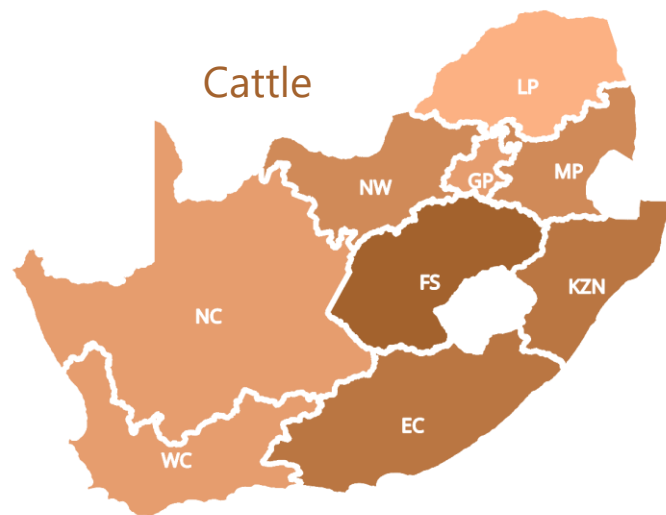
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Where are commercial cattle, sheep and pigs concentrated?

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Source: Table 4.3



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Overview



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Overview (2023)

- The industry generated R491,7 billion in income, a rise of 6,8% per annum compared with 2017
- The largest source of income was from livestock (i.e. farming of animals)
- Western Cape accounted for the largest share of both income and employment
- Free State was dominant in field crops
- Livestock dominated commercial agriculture in Gauteng, while horticulture was dominant in Limpopo
- Commercial agriculture employed 770 181 individuals in 2023, with 40,4% employed in horticulture
- Small, medium and micro enterprises accounted for a third of income and just over half of the workforce
- Maize, sugarcane and potatoes were the most produced products (in metric tons)
- The number of cattle and sheep on farms decreased between 2017 and 2023, while pigs recorded a rise



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Thank you!

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