

# Farmers must plant less maize

**SOLIDARITY:** 30% of SA farmers face bankruptcy

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MAIZE farmers have been ordered to produce less maize this planting season to avoid producing a surplus that has led to depressed market prices and placed 30% of the country's farmers on the verge of bankruptcy.

Civic organisation Solidarity recently announced that at least 10 800 maize farmers were facing financial ruin as they were sitting with a maize surplus they could neither export nor sell to recover their production cost.

Their failure will ruin many small town communities that rely on farming for their economy.

On Friday, Solidarity, Grain SA and several other agriculture organisations met in Pretoria to discuss ways to avert the crisis.

It was concluded that the farmers will from next year plant less maize.

"It was decided that instead of producing more maize, the farmers should produce less and buy what they would have produced," said Johan Kruger, president of the civic organisation Soli-

darity.

He added this would help to ensure that there was no maize surplus.

He said the situation had reached crisis point, "If the farmers fail the impact on the small town communities that depend on the farming activities for the economy and their survival would be severe, so it was important that the situation was dealt with quickly."

Dr Kobus Laubscher of Grain SA said the reality was that many farmers were struggling to recoup their production cost and even get funds for planting new crops.

"This has forced us to regulate how many hectares the farmers can farm because at this stage the situation is untenable."

"We have to contain the supply because if we allow for more production this will lead to further depressed prices and many farmers will be ruined," continued Laubscher.

He said their long-term plans for solving the crisis included expediting the export of maize.



Johan Mettler was tasked with turning the municipality around in March. We asked our Facebook friends if they had noticed a difference in their city. The response was overwhelming: from praise for Mettler to calls for residents to take pride in their city and clean up after themselves. Find a video of our interview with Mettler on [www.witness.co.za](http://www.witness.co.za). While you're online, why not join us on facebook at [www.facebook.com/witnessnewspaper](http://www.facebook.com/witnessnewspaper)? You can also follow us in twitter (@witnessonline).

