

AGRI-DATA REVOLUTION: SHAPING SOUTHERN AFRICA'S FRESH PRODUCE FUTURE SUMMIT 2026



Data-Driven Market Forecasting for South African Fresh Produce
*Empowering South Africa's fresh produce sector through Data,
Innovation and Insight.*

17th-18th March 2026 | Southern Sun | Sandton Johannesburg | South Africa

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INTRODUCTION

In an era defined by digital transformation, data has become the cornerstone of sustainable growth and innovation across all sectors – and agriculture is no exception.

The Fresh Produce Data Collection and Analysis for Market Forecasting Summit brings together visionary leaders, researchers, and agribusiness professionals who are shaping the future of Africa's agricultural economy through the intelligent use of data.

Africa's fresh produce industry stands at the intersection of opportunity and disruption. Climate volatility, market fluctuations, and global supply chain shifts are challenging traditional models of farming and distribution. Yet, within these challenges lies enormous potential – the power to harness data-driven insights for better forecasting, smarter decision-making, and enhanced productivity.

This two-day summit will serve as a dynamic knowledge exchange platform, where technology meets agronomy, and innovation meets practice. Participants will discover how big data, artificial intelligence, and predictive analytics can transform agricultural operations – from production planning to market access – empowering the sector to thrive sustainably in a rapidly evolving world.

CONFERENCE OBJECTIVES

The primary goal of this summit is to equip the agricultural community with actionable knowledge and practical tools to leverage data for forecasting, strategy, and sustainability.

Key objectives include:

- Building Data Competence:** Develop practical skills in collecting, analyzing, and interpreting fresh produce and agricultural data.
- Driving Smart Decision-Making:** Demonstrate how predictive analytics and data models can improve market forecasting, pricing, and risk management.
- Empowering Innovation:** Showcase technological solutions – from IoT sensors to AI-based platforms – that optimize efficiency across the agricultural value chain.
- Encouraging Collaboration:** Create networking opportunities among farmers, agribusiness executives, data scientists, policymakers, and academics.
- Fostering Sustainability:** Explore how data-driven agriculture can promote resilience against climate change and support food security in Southern Africa.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND

This summit is designed for professionals across the fresh produce ecosystem who are committed to transforming agriculture through data and technology.

Ideal participants include:

- Commercial Farmers and Agribusiness Executives seeking to improve production efficiency and profitability.
- Data Scientists, Analysts, and BI Specialists focused on agri-data analytics, forecasting, and decision support.
- Agricultural Economists and Market Analysts exploring trends and modeling tools for agricultural markets.
- Supply Chain and Logistics Professionals managing perishables, exports, and market flow.
- Government Policymakers and Researchers involved in agricultural development, sustainability, and innovation policy.
- AgriTech Entrepreneurs designing and deploying digital tools for the agri-food sector.

CONFERENCE OUTLINE

Day 1 - Data Collection & Analysis Fundamentals

Participants will dive into the building blocks of agricultural data – understanding market dynamics, learning to capture accurate field data, and applying analytical tools like Excel, Power BI, and AI models for market insights. Sessions include interactive demonstrations and discussions on precision agriculture, IoT integration, and farmer-focused technologies.

Day 2 - Forecasting, Decision-Making & Commercial Applications

The second day focuses on translating data into strategy. Experts will unpack forecasting models, risk management frameworks, and commercial applications of predictive analytics. The day will conclude with a mini-workshop on mastering market data interpretation and a CFO-led discussion on balancing profitability with resilience.

WHY ATTEND

- Gain Practical Data Skills** – Learn hands-on techniques to collect, clean, and analyze agricultural data for forecasting and decision-making.
- Network with Industry Leaders** – Engage with top professionals from agriculture, data science, academia, and business sectors.
- Discover Cutting-Edge Technologies** – Explore AI, IoT, and analytics tools shaping the future of food systems.
- Contribute to Sustainable Growth** – Understand how data can drive climate resilience, market stability, and food security.
- Enhance Market Competitiveness** – Use data insights to optimize production, reduce waste, and maximize returns.

CLOSING THOUGHT

The Fresh Produce Data Collection and Analysis for Market Forecasting Summit 2026 is more than an event – it's a movement toward a smarter, more connected, and resilient agricultural future.

Join us in Johannesburg to be part of this transformation, where innovation meets impact and data becomes the driving force of agricultural excellence.

Importance of
big data in the
agriculture
industry



MEET OUR SPEAKERS

Keynote and Featured Presenters | Fresh Produce Data Collection & Market Forecasting Summit 2026

We're proud to welcome industry experts, innovators, and thought leaders shaping the future of South African agriculture. These distinguished professionals represent the forefront of data-driven transformation — bringing together expertise from research, technology, agribusiness, and policy. Through their insights and experience, this summit will empower participants to harness the power of data for smarter, more sustainable, and more competitive agricultural practices.

DAY 1 – DATA COLLECTION & ANALYSIS FUNDAMENTALS

(Chair: Dr. Melissa van der Merwe – Senior Lecturer, Agricultural Economics, Stellenbosch University)		
08:30 – 09:00	Registration & Networking Breakfast	
09:00 – 09:30	Opening by Chair - Introduction to Speakers and Agenda Speaker: Dr. Melissa van der Merwe	
09:30 – 10:00	Understanding Fresh Produce Market Dynamics Speaker: Francois Knowles – CEO & Registrar, Agricultural Produce Agents Council (APAC)	
10:00 – 10:45	Harnessing Precision Agriculture and Data Analytics to Transform South Africa's Fresh Produce Value Chain Speaker: Dr. Sabelo Madonsela – Researcher, Precision Agriculture Research Group, CSIR	
10:45 – 11:30	Export Market Trends and Data-Driven Forecasting: Positioning South Africa's Fresh Produce Sector for Growth Speaker: Mr. Thabile Nkunjana - Senior Economist: Trade Research Unit Markets and Economic Research Division, National Agricultural Marketing Council	
11:30 – 11:45	COFFEE BREAK	
11:45 – 12:30	Data-Driven Agriculture and Market Forecasting: Unlocking Competitiveness and Sustainability Speaker: Alex Moir – Regional Consulting Leader, Deloitte Africa	
12:30 – 13:30	NETWORKING LUNCH	
13:30 – 14:30	Harnessing AI to Empower Smallholder Farmers: Lessons from the AI Farmer Platform Speakers: Francois Rossouw – CEO, Southern Africa Agricultural Initiative	
14:30 – 15:00	COFFEE BREAK	
15:00 – 15:30	One Year On: Reflections and Impact of the Fresh Produce Market Inquiry Findings Speaker: Mogau Aphane Principal Analyst at The Competition Commission South Africa	
15:30 – 16:00	Panel Discussion: Fresh Produce Market Outlook – Data for Smarter Decision-Making Speakers: Clive Garrett (ZZ2), Alex Moir (Deloitte), Francois Rossouw (SAAI), Thabile Nkunjana (Senior Economist at National Agricultural Marketing Council)	  
16:30 – 17:00	Chairperson's Wrap-Up Speaker: Dr. Melissa van der Merwe	

END OF DAY ONE

DAY 2 – FORECASTING, DECISION-MAKING & COMMERCIAL APPLICATIONS

(Chair: Dr. Melissa van der Merwe – Senior Lecturer, Agricultural Economics, Stellenbosch University)		
08:30 – 09:00	Registration & Networking Breakfast	
09:00 – 09:30	Bridging Farmers and Markets: The Role of Data & Forecasting in Market Agent Strategy Speaker: Justy Range - Chairperson, Technofresh	
09:30 – 10:00	Beyond the Horizon: Leveraging AI and GIS for Resilient, Data-Driven Insights Speaker: Kayleigh Weir, GIS Sales Executive at Swift Geospatial	
10:00 – 10:30	Advancing Agricultural Markets: Building Data-Driven Strategies for Growth Speaker: Zama Sangweni – Agricultural Economist, ABSA	
10:30 – 10:45	COFFEE BREAK	
10:45 – 11:15	Financing Fresh Produce with Data: Risk, Monitoring & Market Forecast Integration Speaker: Robert Matsila - Head: Agricultural Banking & Monitoring Support Land Bank	
11:15 – 11:45	Topic to be announced Speaker: Gabrielle Redelinghuys - Project Lead: Marketing Intelligence & Incubation Projects Villa Crop	
11:45 – 12:15	Building Resilience in Fresh Produce: Forecasting, Sustainability & Trust in the Data Era Speaker: Jolanda Andrag – COO, AgriSA	
12:15 – 13:15	NETWORKING LUNCH	
13:15 – 13:45	Mini Workshop: Mastering Fresh Produce Market Data - Analysis & Interpretation Speakers: Lindikaya Myeki – Senior Lecturer & Data Evangelist, NWU	
13:45 – 14:15	AI in Fresh Produce: From Predictive Harvest Planning to Buyer Matching Speaker: René McGregor – Customer Director, Insight Consulting	
14:15 – 14:45	Panel Discussion : Balancing Risk and Return: A CFO's View on Forecasting and Market Volatility Speakers: Dewald Brand – Founder & MD, Fresh-X; Zama Sangweni – ABSA	 
14:45 – 15:00	AFTERNOON BREAK	
15:00 – 15:30	Case Study: Deep Learning-Based Prediction & Forecasting of Tomato Prices Speaker: Dr. Emmanuel Ekene Okere – CPUT	
15:30 – 16:00	Importance of temperatures to provide in data-driven forecasting models Speaker: Erik Kiderlen - Consultant	

END OF DAY TWO



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