

## **Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing Sector, Q1 2025, Namibia**

### **1. Overview**

Namibia's Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing sector exhibited divergent trends across subsectors during the first quarter of 2025. The fisheries subsector posted moderate growth in output, maintaining stable export earnings, while the livestock industry experienced a decline in auction volumes, despite a notable increase in prices across all categories. In contrast, the agronomy subsector recorded a sharp contraction in production, mainly due to seasonal harvest patterns and lower yields of key crops. The horticulture subsector also saw a slight decline in export performance, driven by reduced volumes and shifting market demand. Meanwhile, the sector's trade balance deteriorated with a significant drop in export earnings and a sharp rise in imports particularly of staple cereals resulting in a trade deficit. These trends highlight the sector's ongoing vulnerability to climatic conditions, harvest cycles, and external market dynamics, despite resilience in certain segments such as fisheries and livestock pricing.

The Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing sector contributed 5.6% to Namibia's GDP in Q1 of 2025, with fishing and on-board fish processing and livestock farming as key contributors. Fisheries accounted for 3% of GDP, while livestock farming contributed 1.8%, and crop farming 0.5%. Forestry, though minimal, added 0.3%. See figure 1 below

The sector experienced a notable deterioration in its trade performance when comparing the first quarters of 2024 and 2025. In Q1 2024, the sector registered a trade surplus of approximately N\$368.6 million, with exports valued at N\$1.28 billion and imports at N\$909.1 million. By contrast, in Q1 2025, the sector reversed into a significant trade deficit of around N\$456 million, driven by a sharp decline in export earnings to N\$894.8 million a 30% drop year-on-year coupled with a substantial increase in imports to N\$1.35 billion, marking a 48.6% rise over the same period. See figure 2 below.

### **2. Analysis**

#### **2.1 Fisheries Products**

The total quota species landed during the first quarter of 2025 amounted to 125,419 metric tons, representing a 12.5% increase from the 111,484 metric tons recorded in the first quarter of 2024. Hake accounted for the largest share of landings with 72,181 metric tons, followed by Horse Mackerel with 48,944 metric tons, and monk in third place with 2,937 metric tons. Export earnings from fish, crustaceans, molluscs and other aquatic invertebrates were valued at N\$4.1 billion in the first quarter of 2025, maintaining the same value recorded in the first quarter of 2024. Spain remained the top export market during the period under review, accounting for 31.5% of total exports, with frozen hake fillets being the primary product exported. Zambia and the Democratic Republic of Congo were the second and third largest export destinations, accounting for 21.1% and 8.6%, respectively. The main products exported were Frozen Jack and Horse mackerel.

The import bill for fish, crustaceans, molluscs and other aquatic invertebrates amounted to N\$122.7 million during the first quarter of 2025, a decline when compared to N\$154.9 million recorded in the first quarter of 2024. South Africa accounted for majority of imports (49.1%), with hake being the main product imported.

The United States of America ranked the second-largest import source which accounted for 16.5% with sole being the main product imported. North Korea stood in third place accounting for 8%, with 'Other Cuttle fish (*Sepia officinalis*, Rossoa) & squid (*Ommastrephes*)' as the main imported product.

## 2.2 Livestock Auctions

The total number of animals sold at auctions during the period under review declined by 18.5%, falling to 89,428 from 109,784 recorded in the first quarter of 2024. Of the total, cattle accounted for 54,161 heads, while goats and sheep totaled 18,584 and 16,683, respectively.

Despite the drop in auction volumes, livestock prices increased across all categories. The average price for cattle rose by 30.5% to N\$34.45 per kilogram, followed by goats at N\$36.22 per kilogram, marking a 25.4% increase, while sheep prices averaged N\$32.74 per kilogram, reflecting a 14.8% rise when compared to the first quarter of 2024.

### 2.2.1 Cattle Marketing

Cattle marketing during the first quarter of 2025 declined sharply by 58%, with only 37,577 cattle marketed, when compared to 89,507 in the first quarter of 2024. This decline was primarily attributed to the severe drought conditions in 2024, which prompted farmers to increase cattle marketing at the time, significantly depleting their herds and leaving fewer market-ready animals in early 2025.

The impact was most pronounced in live exports, which plummeted by 76.8% from 57,562 cattle in the first quarter of 2024 to just 13,370 in the first quarter of 2025. Additionally, export-approved abattoirs also recorded a downturn, with throughput decreasing by 22%, further reflecting the strain on supply across the sector.

### 2.2.2 Goat and Sheep Marketing

Goat and sheep marketing also recorded notable declines during the first quarter of 2025, largely due to the limited availability of market-ready animals. Goat marketing decreased by 15.1%, with 20,758 goats marketed, compared to 24,442 in the first quarter of 2024. Live exports fell by 11.3%, with 20,684 goats exported, down from 23,311 in the first quarter of 2024.

Sheep marketing contracted significantly by 43%, with 112,819 sheep marketed, down from 196,975 in the first quarter of 2024. The decline was especially evident in live exports, which fell by 45%, from 153,713 in 2024 to 85,840 in 2025. Slaughter activities were similarly affected: export-approved abattoirs recorded a 54% decline, while local abattoirs saw a 22% drop in throughput, further indicating supply-side constraints within the small stock segment.

## 2.3 Agronomy Production

Agronomy production amounted to 1,578 tons, representing a 44.8% decrease from the 2,860 tons recorded during the same period in 2024 attributed to the harvest and marketing seasons. This significant reduction was

primarily driven by reduced outputs of white maize and pearl millet, which declined by 56.5% and 74.9%, respectively. White maize production dropped to 958 tons, down from 2,203 tons, while pearl millet production declined to 47 tons, compared to 187 tons. In contrast, wheat production demonstrated resilience, increasing to 573 tons, up from 471 tons recorded in the first quarter of 2024.

Export earnings for agronomy products in the fourth quarter of 2024 were derived entirely from wheat, which accounted for 100% of the total export earnings valued at N\$1.8 million, a significant increase when compared to the N\$52.8 thousand recorded in the first quarter of 2024. The increase in exports during the quarter under review resulted from re-export of wheat, which was imported for human consumption, but later was exported to Botswana.

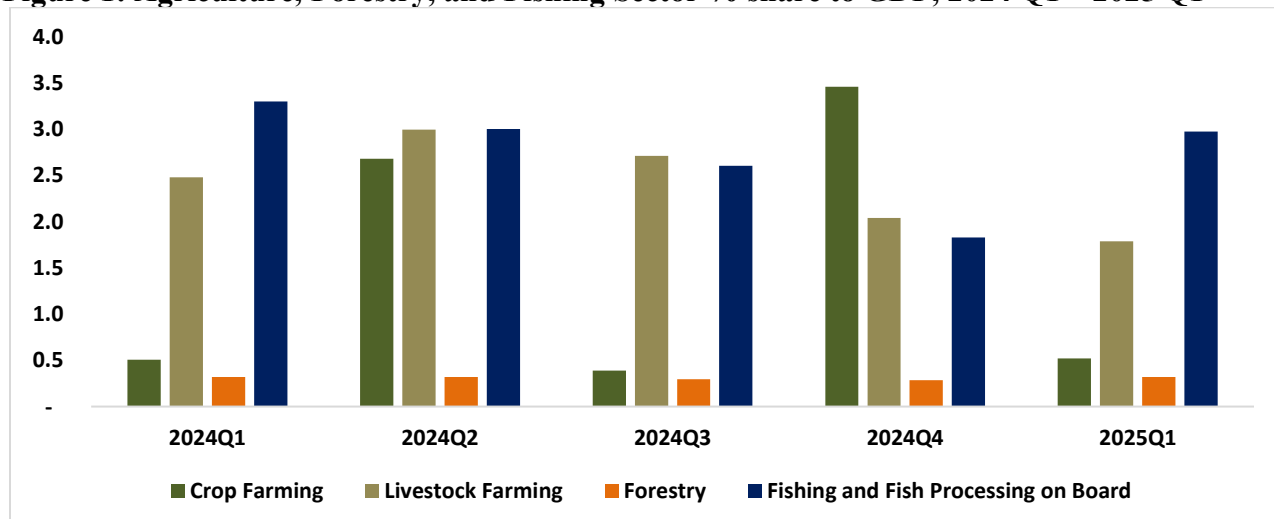
In terms of imports, Maize recorded the highest value during the first quarter of 2025 at N\$659.2 million, followed by Wheat at N\$293.6 million and Rice at N\$5.7 million. White maize was the main product sourced from South Africa (51.1%) and the United States of America (19.0%) while Wheat was mainly sourced from the Russian Federation (23.6%).

## 2.4 Trade of Selected Horticultural Products

Namibia exported horticultural products valued at N\$262.0 million when compared to N\$276.1 million recorded in the first quarter of 2024. Grapes were the top exported products contributing N\$188.0 million to export earnings, followed by dates with N\$68.5 million, and ‘mangos, guavas and mangosteens’ with N\$2.0 million. The United Kingdom was the main export destination for horticulture during the first quarter of 2025 accounting for 32.7%, followed by Netherlands (26.3%), and South Africa (15.8%).

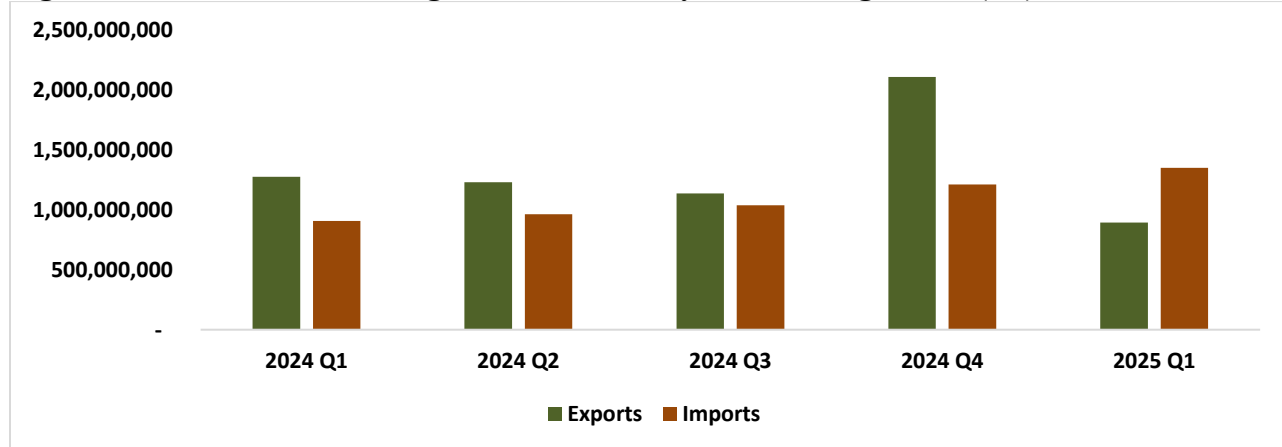
The import bill was valued at N\$346.4 million, an increase when compared to N\$305.1 million recorded in the first of 2024. Potatoes were the most imported product amounting to N\$76.3 million followed by Apples (N\$32.0 million), ‘Vegetable seeds, except beet seeds’ (N\$14.7 million), Tea leaves (N\$14.7 million) and Onions (N\$11.8 million).

**Figure 1: Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing Sector % share to GDP, 2024 Q1 – 2025 Q1**



Source: NSA & HEI Research

**Figure 2: Trade Statistics on Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing Sector (N\$), 2024 Q1 – 2025 Q1**



Source: NSA & HEI Research

## **Conclusion**

The performance of Namibia's Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing sector remains heavily influenced by climatic variability, shifting market conditions, and structural production constraints. While the fisheries subsector maintained stable output and export earnings during the first quarter of 2025, this was insufficient to offset the declines observed in livestock marketing, agribusiness trade, and crop production, all of which were significantly affected by the after-effects of the 2024 drought. Notably, the sharp decline in cattle marketing and live exports, coupled with reduced small stock throughput, signals persistent supply-side limitations that may hinder short-term recovery.

The sector's recovery will largely depend on the implementation of climate-resilient strategies and the adoption of adaptive agricultural practices. Rebuilding livestock numbers will require time due to herd depletion, while the agronomy and horticulture subsectors will need targeted interventions to stabilize production and boost export competitiveness.

To enhance overall performance, policy efforts should prioritize the improvement of agricultural input availability (seeds (for crops), fertilizers (to enhance soil fertility), pesticides and herbicides (for pest and weed control), animal feed and veterinary medicines, farming equipment and tools, irrigation systems, fuel and energy, packaging materials (especially in horticulture)), the expansion of irrigation infrastructure, and enhanced market access, particularly for smallholder farmers. Additionally, increased investment in agro-processing and regional trade facilitation will be crucial to reduce Namibia's dependence on imports and unlock greater value addition within domestic agricultural value chains.

