

## Mugabe's land plan cost country \$17bn â€“ economist

Zimbabwe lost nearly \$17bn in potential earnings in the wake of former President Robert Mugabe's land reform programme launched 18 years ago. That's the view of independent Harare-based economist John Robertson who said **the country lost out on earnings from timber, cotton, tobacco, wheat and other commercially-produced crops**. 'The \$16.9bn worth of production lost would only be the start. The [Financial Gazette](#) reports that Zimbabwe became a net importer from 1998 as most of the food-processing companies reduced output, then closed down when commercial farming suppliers went down,' he said. The report notes that in recent years, tobacco production, including by new small-scale black growers, has increased and is expected to reach 200m kilogrammes this year.