

Sunflower Crop Quality 2012/2013 – Summary of results

Sunflower, native to Central North America was domesticated before maize. Spanish explorers carried the seeds with them to Europe resulting in sunflower now being cultivated worldwide. Russian agronomists were responsible for the first agricultural hybrids. There are two types of sunflowers, oil types containing $\pm 40\%$ oil/fat and non-oil types with $\pm 30\%$ oil/fat. Oil types represent 80 – 95% of sunflower seed production worldwide.¹

Nutrition scientists are recommending that more attention be paid to our daily intake of complex plant foods like seeds, nuts and whole grain. Sunflower seeds are not only recommended for their low saturated, zero trans and high poly- and monounsaturated fat content, they also provide nutrients vital for health and maintenance of the body. Sunflower seeds provide protein, fibre, vitamins, minerals and phytochemicals.²

Eighty percent (121) of the 152 samples analysed for the purpose of this survey were graded as Grade FH1 and thirty one of the samples were downgraded to COSF (Class Other Sunflower Seed). Twenty one of the samples were downgraded as a result of the percentage of either the screenings or the collective deviations or a combination of both exceeding the maximum permissible deviations of 4% and 6% respectively. Eight of the samples were downgraded as a result of the percentage of either the foreign matter or a combination of the foreign matter and collective deviations exceeding the maximum permissible deviations of 4% and 6% respectively. Of the remaining two samples, one was downgraded due to the percentage damaged sunflower seeds exceeding 10% and the other as a result of the presence of stones.

The North West province (77 samples) reported the highest weighted average percentage screenings namely 2.50%, followed by the Free State's 58 samples with 2.02%. Gauteng (2 samples) reported the lowest average percentage screenings of 0.54%.

Graph 16: Average percentage screenings per province

