

SOUTH AFRICAN COMMERCIAL WHEAT QUALITY FOR THE 2005/2006 SEASON

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Introduction

The wheat production for the 2005/2006 season (1 886 400 tons) was 11 % better than the previous season (1 699 280 tons), but 7.9 % lower than the 5-year average of 2 035 069 tons (2000/2001 to 2004/2005 seasons).

The Western Cape province produced 645 000 tons and the Free State province followed with 570 000 tons. (Final estimate by the Crop Estimates Committee, CEC). These two provinces were responsible for 64 % of the total wheat produced.

The average yield in the Western Cape Province (winter rainfall area) was 2.15 tons per hectare. The Free State (summer rainfall area) was 1.5 tons per hectare. The summer rainfall areas (dry land cultivation) in the Eastern Cape gave on average 3.6 tons per hectare, Mpumalanga gave on average 5.0 tons per hectare and Gauteng gave on average 5.6 tons per hectare. KwaZulu-Natal gave 5.4, North West 5.35 and Limpopo Province gave 4.25 tons per hectare. The irrigation areas in the Northern Cape yielded on average the highest yield of 6.5 tons per hectare. (CEC)

The total production is not enough for domestic requirements, and South Africa has to import wheat to meet its domestic consumption of approximately 2.7 million tons this year.

South Africa has three major wheat-breeding programmes and one company that plants introduction cultivars from other countries. The wheat industry has set up a release criteria document with stringent quality evaluation norms. The South African breeders can only release a new cultivar or an introduction cultivar if it has better agronomical as well as better flour quality characteristics than the cultivars planted commercially in a specific area. Producers continuously try to improve the wheat yield and quality by selecting the best cultivars that can be

grown commercially in a specific area. Grading standards are also set high to ensure adequate quality control.

The Southern African Grain Laboratory (SAGL), receives samples from all the production areas, and determines the quality of the annual wheat crop. The results are then published in this report and are also made available on the website www.sagl.co.za.

The SAGL has ISO 17025 accreditation and is also used as the reference laboratory for grain quality analyses in Southern Africa.

Samples, representing the production of each region, are fully graded and thousand kernel mass is done. Small samples are milled on the quadromat mill, after which a mixogram analysis is done.

Cultivar identification is done on these samples and seed sales figures by the commercial grain silo owners are obtained.

Composite samples are made up per class and grade for each production region and milled on the Bühler mill. Rheological tests, such as a mixogram, farinogram, alveogram, extensogram and 100-gram baking test, are then performed.

Quality of imported wheat (1 Oct 2004 - 30 Sept 2005)

At the request of the wheat industry, the SAGL is also monitoring the quality of all wheat imported into South Africa through South African harbours. The same analyses which are done on the local crop are also done on the imported wheat. The last twelve pages of this report contain summaries of imported wheat from specific countries during the 2004/2005 season compared to a summary of the local crop quality for the same 2004/2005 season. Summaries of the quality of the local wheat are also provided for the 2003/2004 and 2005/2006 seasons.