

## **South African Winter Cereal Production**

Wheat is by far the biggest winter cereal crop planted in South Africa. Other winter crops are barley, canola and sweet lupines. Summer field crops are better suited for the South African climatic conditions. Maize being the largest of the different crops, followed by wheat, then sunflower seed, soya-beans, barley, sorghum, dry beans, groundnuts, canola and sweet lupines. The annual South African wheat crop is about one quarter of the annual maize crop.

South Africa (made up of nine provinces) is divided into 36 crop production regions with wheat planted in about 32 of these regions. These production regions are described on pages 16 to 43 (on the top of the left page) giving the specific intake silo names for each region.

The three main wheat producing provinces are Free State (summer rainfall), Western Cape (winter rainfall) and the Northern Cape (irrigation). A fourth province worth mentioning is the North-West (mainly irrigation). See map on page 46.

The Free State province produced 810 000 tons and the Western Cape province followed with 712 500 tons. (Sixth estimate by the Crop Estimates Committee, CEC). These two provinces were responsible for 70 % of the total wheat produced.

The yield ranged from 6.2 tons per hectare in the Northern Cape (irrigation area) to 2.3 tons per hectare for the Free State (summer rainfall area). Other areas with high yields were Mpumalanga with 5.5 tons per hectare, Gauteng with 5.4 tons per hectare, North West with 5.0 tons per hectare and Limpopo and KwaZulu-Natal with each 4.5 tons per hectare dryland. All these “other” areas also produce irrigation wheat. The Western Cape area (2.5 tons per hectare) and Eastern Cape (3.5 tons per hectare) are dependant on winter rainfall. (CEC)

The total production is not enough for domestic requirements and South Africa has to import wheat to meet its domestic consumption of approximately 2.8 million tons every year.

South Africa has four major wheat-breeding programs. 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.

## **Sampling procedure for the annual quality survey**

During the harvest season, a sample of each delivery of wheat is taken according to the prescribed Wheat regulation. A representative sample needs to be drawn for grading purposes before the wheat is taken in at the silo. Of each of these grading samples, about 200 grams is thrown into a 100 kg bin according to grade and class at each silo. The 100 kg bin is divided and a 5 kg sample is send to the SAGL for the annual quality survey.

The same method is followed where wheat is delivered directly from the producer to the miller.

After receiving these representative wheat crop samples from all over the country, the SAGL select 480 samples representing the wheat production of wheat for that specific region/province.

South Africa is the only wheat producing country known-of that produces this kind of comprehensive quality information on their national wheat crop and also have it available to the public.