

South African Winter Cereal Production

Wheat is by far the biggest winter cereal crop planted in South Africa. Other winter crops are barley for malting purposes and canola. Summer field crops are better suited for the South African climatic conditions. Maize has the largest crop size of the different crops, followed by wheat, then sunflower seed, soya-beans, sorghum, barley, groundnuts, dry beans and canola.

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 23 to 54 (in the header of the left page) giving the specific intake silo names for each region.

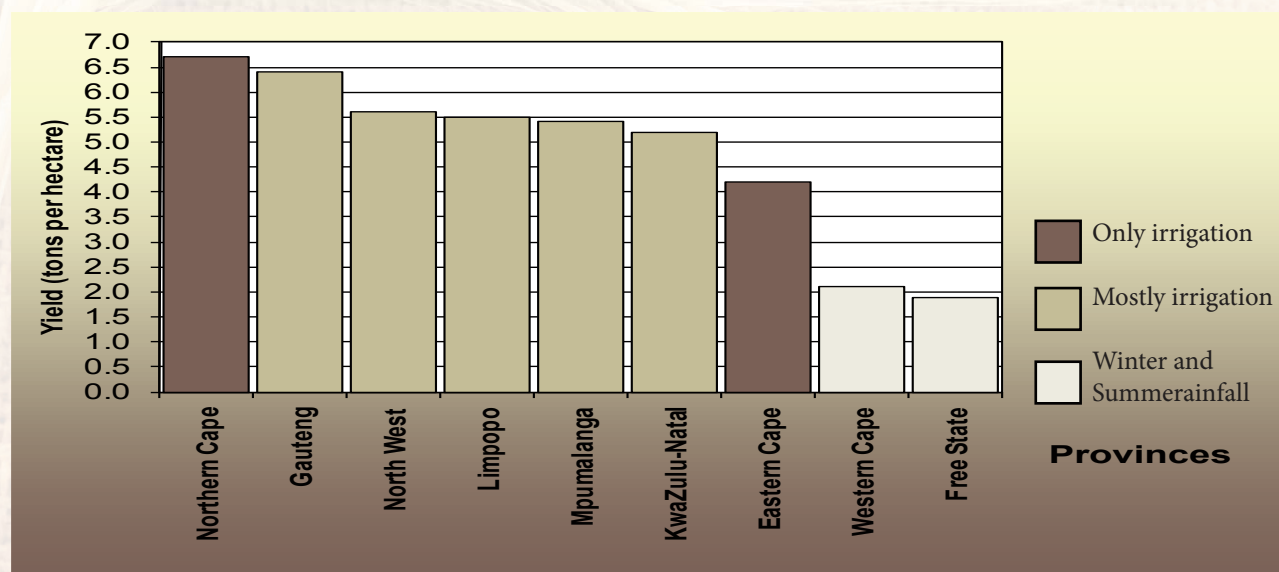
The three main wheat producing provinces are Western Cape (winter rainfall), Free State (summer rainfall) and the Northern Cape (irrigation). A fourth province worth mentioning is the North-West (mainly irrigation). The local production is not sufficient for domestic requirements and South Africa has to import wheat to meet its domestic consumption.

The Western Cape province produced 556 500 tons and the Free State province followed with 377 400 tons. (Seventh estimate by the Crop Estimates Committee, CEC). These two provinces were responsible for 64 % of the total wheat produced. The Northern Cape produced 254 600 tons and North West 123 200 tons.

The yield in the main production areas ranged from 6.7 tons per hectare in the Northern Cape (irrigation area), 1.9 tons per hectare in the Free State and 2.1 tons per hectare for the Western Cape. Gauteng gave a yield of 6.4 tons per hectare, followed by North West with 5.6 tons per hectare, Limpopo 5.5 tons per hectare and Mpumalanga with 5.4 tons per hectare. KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape yielded 5.2 and 4.2 tons per hectare respectively. See graph on page 13.

South Africa has three major wheat-breeding programs. 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 strive to improve the wheat yield and quality by selecting the best cultivars for commercial production in a specific area. Grading standards are also set high to ensure adequate quality control.

**Average yield per province
(Irrigation versus summer and winter rainfall areas)**



(Based on figures obtained from the CEC)