

SOUTH AFRICAN COMMERCIAL WHEAT QUALITY 2004/2005 CROP

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Introduction

The wheat production during 2004/2005 (1 699 280 tons) was 10 % better than the previous season (1 540 000 tons), but 17 % lower than the 5-year average of 2 040 213 tons (1999/2000 to 2003/2004).

The Free State province produced 525 000 tons and the Western Cape province followed with 516 200 tons. (Final estimation of the Crop Estimates Committee, CEC). These two provinces accounted for 61 % of the total wheat produced.

The average yield in the Free State province (summer rainfall area) as well as in the Western Cape (winter rainfall area) was 1.5 tons per hectare. The summer rainfall areas (dry land cultivation) in the Eastern Cape gave on average 3.4 tons per hectare, Mpumalanga gave on average 5.5 tons per hectare and Gauteng gave on average 5.6 tons per hectare. The irrigation areas gave on average a yield of 5.5 tons per hectare.

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

South Africa has three major wheat-breeding programmes and one company in South Africa 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 quality characteristics than the cultivars planted most commercially in that area. The producers continuously try to better the wheat

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

The SAGL has ISO 17025 accreditation and is 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 figures of seed sold by the commercial grain silo owners are gathered.

Composite samples are made up per grade per production region and milled on the Bühler mill. A mixogram, farinogram, alveogram, extensogram and 100-gram baking test are then performed.

Quality of imported wheat (2003/2004)

At the request of the wheat industry, the SAGL is also monitoring the quality of all wheat imported to South Africa through South African harbours. The same analyses done on the local crop are done on the imported wheat. The last ten pages of this report give summaries of imported wheat from specific countries during the 2003/2004 delivery season compared with a summary of the local crop quality of the 2003/2004 season.