

## **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, sorghum, barley, groundnuts, dry beans, 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 44 (on the top 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). See map on page 48.

The Western Cape province produced 812 500 tons and the Free State province followed with 516 000 tons. (Final estimate by the Crop Estimates Committee, CEC). These two provinces were responsible for 72 % of the total wheat produced.

The yield in the main production areas ranged from 6.2 tons per hectare in the Northern Cape (irrigation area), 2.4 tons per hectare in the Free State to 2.5 tons per hectare for the Western Cape. Gauteng gave a yield of 6.0 tons per hectare, Limpopo with 5.3 tons per hectare followed by North West, Mpumalanga, KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape with respectively 5.2, 5.1, 4.8 and 4.0 tons per hectare.

The local production is not enough for domestic requirements and South Africa has to import wheat to meet its domestic consumption of approximately 2.9 million tons every year.

South Africa has three major wheat-breeding programs. The wheat industry has during the beginning of 2008 “relaxed” some specifications in the release criteria document containing the 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 sent to the SAGL for the annual quality survey.

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.