

Sunflower seed production is very suitable for South African climatic conditions. Sunflower plants are drought tolerant and thus a crucial risk diversification crop going forward. The deep root system of a sunflower plant enables the plant to perform better than other crops during dry seasons. Planting sunflowers is also advantageous when rainfall occurs late in the season, due to the late planting window relative to that of maize.

The area utilised for sunflower production increased by 5% to 555 700 ha, compared to the 529 000 ha of the previous season. The national yield average increased by almost 6% from to 1.19 t/ha in the previous season to 1.26 t/ha this season.

Please see Table 2 for an overview of sunflower production under dry land conditions versus irrigation in the 2024/25 season, compared to the 2023/24 season. Graphs 2 to 4 provide national figures with regards to hectares planted, tonnage produced and yields obtained over the last 11 seasons and Graphs 5 to 10 similar figures for the major sunflower producing provinces, namely the Free State and North West as well as Limpopo.

Table 2: Sunflower production overview over two seasons							
Province	Type of production	2024/25			2023/24		
		Hectares planted, ha	Production, tons	Yield, t/ha	Hectares planted, ha	Production, tons	Yield, t/ha
Western Cape	Dryland	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Irrigation	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Total	-	-	-	-	-	-
Northern Cape	Dryland	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Irrigation	1 000	2 300	2.30	2 000	4 600	2.30
	Total	1 000	2 300	2.30	2 000	4 600	2.30
Free State	Dryland	262 500	367 025	1.40	250 000	341 250	1.37
	Irrigation	2 000	8 200	4.10	5 000	12 750	2.55
	Total	264 500	375 225	1.42	255 000	354 000	1.39
Eastern Cape	Dryland	700	1 400	2.00	700	1 400	2.00
	Irrigation	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Total	700	1 400	2.00	700	1 400	2.00
KwaZulu-Natal	Dryland	1 000	2 000	2.00	300	600	2.00
	Irrigation	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Total	1 000	2 000	2.00	300	600	2.00
Mpumalanga	Dryland	2 500	3 625	1.45	3 500	4 900	1.40
	Irrigation	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Total	2 500	3 625	1.45	3 500	4 900	1.40
Limpopo	Dryland	88 600	87 480	0.99	89 000	61 200	0.69
	Irrigation	1 400	2 520	1.80	1 000	1 800	1.80
	Total	90 000	90 000	1.00	90 000	63 000	0.70
Gauteng	Dryland	985	1 177	1.19	2 500	3 000	1.20
	Irrigation	15	23	-	-	-	-
	Total	1 000	1 200	1.20	2 500	3 000	1.20
North West	Dryland	193 900	221 280	1.14	172 000	193 500	1.13
	Irrigation	1 100	2 970	2.70	3 000	7 000	2.33
	Total	195 000	224 250	1.15	175 000	200 500	1.15
RSA	Dryland	550 185	683 987	1.24	518 000	605 850	1.17
	Irrigation	5 515	16 013	2.90	11 000	26 150	2.38
	Total	555 700	700 000	1.26	529 000	632 000	1.19

Figures provided by the CEC.