

In addition to the quality information, production figures (obtained from the Crop Estimates Committee (CEC)) relating to hectares planted, tons produced and yields obtained on a national as well as provincial basis, over an eleven season period, are provided in this report. SAGIS (South African Grain Information Service) supply and demand information is provided in table and graph format. Import and export figures over several seasons are also included.

Data on sorghum imported for domestic use during the period March 2019 to February 2020 is included in the report and compared to the quality of the local crop during the 2018/19 production season. To assist with quality comparisons between local and imported sorghum, the same scope of analysis is used for both sets of samples.

The national sorghum grading regulations as published in the Government Gazette of 8 January 2016 are provided as the last section of the report.

Production

Sorghum is a tropical grass grown primarily in semi-arid regions of the world. Sorghum can grow in areas too dry for maize and is deemed to be the fifth most important grain crop grown in the world (after maize, wheat, rice and barley).

World sorghum production for the 2019/20 season to date, stands at 58.5 million tons with the United States being the largest contributor (8.7 million tons). Please see Table 1a for the world sorghum trade (import and export figures) as well as production and consumption figures in Table 1b.

The local area utilised for sorghum production increased by 75%, compared to the 28 800 hectares of the 2017/18 season. The 50 500 hectares planted this season, is the largest area planted since the 2014/15 season when 70 500 hectares were planted.

Table 1a: World Sorghum Trade						
October/September Trade Year, Thousand Metric Tons						
	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20 Feb	2019/20 Mar
Exports						
Argentina	772	457	329	196	200	200
Australia	717	542	449	91	50	40
China	23	34	43	49	40	40
Ethiopia	75	75	75	75	75	75
India	74	24	123	53	50	50
Nigeria	50	100	100	100	100	100
Ukraine	119	164	123	93	100	100
Others	133	311	306	196	102	99
Subtotal	1 963	1 707	1 548	853	717	704
United States	7 918	6 031	4 839	2 479	3 000	3 400
World Total	9 881	7 738	6 387	3 332	3 717	4 104
Imports						
Chile	134	54	73	46	100	100
China	8 284	5 209	4 436	652	900	1 300
Colombia	64	0	56	0	50	50
European Union	119	194	486	666	250	200
Japan	649	561	594	452	500	500
Kenya	54	146	141	109	150	150
Mexico	661	548	98	596	700	700
South Africa	83	82	27	59	50	50
South Sudan	19	36	148	26	150	150
Sudan	200	120	150	160	200	200
Others	596	364	513	509	439	439
Subtotal	10 863	7 314	6 722	3 275	3 489	3 839
Unaccounted	- 1 080	380	- 386	56	227	264
United States	98	44	51	1	1	1
World Total	9 881	7 738	6 387	3 332	3 717	4 104

**Table 1b: World Sorghum Production and Consumption
Local Marketing Years, Thousand Metric Tons**

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20 Feb	2019/20 Mar
Production						
Argentina	3 375	3 400	3 000	2 500	2 500	2 500
Australia	802	557	1 023	780	871	871
Brazil	1 032	1 865	2 136	2 177	2 100	2 100
Burkina	1 436	1 663	1 366	1 930	1 800	1 800
Cameroon	1 217	1 339	1 352	1 200	1 200	1 200
Chad	835	991	946	988	950	950
China	2 203	2 235	2 465	3 450	3 600	3 600
Ethiopia	4 766	4 752	5 170	5 150	5 200	5 200
India	674	632	660	737	820	820
Mali	4 238	4 568	4 803	3 475	4 500	4 400
Mexico	1 527	1 394	1 424	1 470	1 300	1 300
Niger	5 587	4 638	4 545	4 700	4 500	4 500
Nigeria	1 918	1 808	1 945	2 100	1 900	1 900
Sudan	7 005	7 556	6 939	6 800	6 900	6 900
Tanzania	2 744	6 466	3 743	4 953	4 000	4 000
Other	7 981	7 232	7 571	7 845	6 744	6 744
Subtotal	47 340	51 096	49 088	50 255	48 885	48 785
United States	15 158	12 199	9 192	9 271	8 673	8 673
World Total	62 498	63 295	58 280	59 526	57 558	57 458
Total Consumption						
Argentina	2 900	2 900	3 200	2 400	2 300	2 400
Brazil	1 150	1 700	2 100	2 200	2 100	2 100
Burkina	1 465	1 640	1 400	1 800	1 800	1 800
Cameroon	1 232	1 369	1 367	1 225	1 225	1 225
Chad	850	950	1 000	1 000	1 000	1 000
China	10 500	7 400	6 900	4 100	4 400	4 700
Ethiopia	4 700	4 700	5 000	5 100	5 100	2 100
European Union	800	790	970	1 520	1 070	1 020
India	4 600	4 500	4 600	3 550	4 400	4 300
Mali	1 500	1 400	1 450	1 500	1 400	1 400
Mexico	6 300	5 300	4 700	5 100	5 250	5 250
Niger	2 000	2 000	1 850	2 100	2 050	2 050
Nigeria	6 905	7 350	6 950	6 750	6 800	6 800
South Sudan	830	760	800	685	850	850
Sudan	3 100	5 950	4 400	4 900	4 450	4 450
Others	8 445	7 574	8 462	8 827	8 014	8 014
Subtotal	56 947	56 646	54 775	52 575	52 484	52 752
United States	6 130	6 283	4 119	6 189	6 223	5 969
World Total	63 077	62 929	58 894	58 764	58 707	58 721

Notes:

World totals for consumption reflect total utilisation, including food, seed, industrial, feed and waste, as well as differences in local marketing year imports and exports.

Consumption statistics for regions and individual countries reflect food, seed, industrial, feed and waste only.

Source: United States Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Service (USDA-FAS), Grain: World Markets and Trade report, March 2020.

According to The Bureau for Food and Agricultural Policy (BFAP) Baseline, Agricultural Outlook 2019 – 2028, when looking at the outlook for field crops, specifically summer grains and oilseeds, the smallest yield improvement is evident for sorghum, which is in line with past trends. Failure of yield growth to keep up with alternative crops such as yellow maize, can be ascribed as one of the reasons for consistent decline in area in the past.

Please see Table 2 for an overview of sorghum production under dry land conditions versus irrigation in the 2018/19 season, compared to the 2017/18 season. Graphs 2 to 4 provide national figures with regards to hectares planted, tons produced and yields obtained over the last 11 seasons. Graphs 5 to 10 on page 6 provide similar figures for the major sorghum producing provinces this season, namely Limpopo, Mpumalanga and the Free State.

Table 2: Sorghum production overview over two seasons							
Province	Type of production	2018/19			2017/18		
		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	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Total	-	-	-	-	-	-
Free State	Dryland	8 000	23 600	2.95	6 000	23 600	3.93
	Irrigation	-	-	-	300	1 600	5.33
	Total	8 000	23 600	2.95	6 300	25 200	4.00
Eastern Cape	Dryland	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Irrigation	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Total	-	-	-	-	-	-
KwaZulu-Natal	Dryland	500	1 500	3.00	500	2 200	4.40
	Irrigation	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Total	500	1 500	3.00	500	2 200	4.40
Mpumalanga	Dryland	7 500	36 000	4.80	7 500	40 500	5.40
	Irrigation	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Total	7 500	36 000	4.80	7 500	40 500	5.40
Limpopo	Dryland	24 650	44 625	1.81	5 000	15 500	3.10
	Irrigation	350	1 500	4.29	-	-	-
	Total	25 000	46 125	1.85	5 000	15 500	3.10
Gauteng	Dryland	1 000	3 200	3.20	1 500	4 950	3.30
	Irrigation	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Total	1 000	3 200	3.20	1 500	4 950	3.30
North West	Dryland	8 300	15 725	1.89	7 700	25 050	3.25
	Irrigation	200	850	4.25	300	1 600	5.33
	Total	8 500	16 575	1.95	8 000	26 650	3.33
RSA	Dryland	49 950	124 650	2.50	28 200	111 800	3.96
	Irrigation	550	2 350	4.27	600	3 200	5.33
	Total	50 500	127 000	2.51	28 800	115 000	3.99

Figures provided by the CEC.