

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