

RSA Production Regions

The RSA is divided into 9 provinces as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1: RSA Provinces map



Provincial map with gratitude to SiQ.

The 9 provinces are divided into 36 grain production regions.

The regions are distributed as follows:

- Region 1: Namakwaland
- Regions 2 to 4: Swartland
- Regions 5 and 6: Rûens
- Regions 7 and 8: Eastern Cape
- Region 9: Karoo
- Region 10: Griqualand West
- Region 11: Vaalharts
- Regions 12 to 20: North West
- Regions 21 to 28: Free State
- Regions 29 to 33: Mpumalanga
- Region 34: Gauteng
- Region 35: Limpopo
- Region 36: KwaZulu-Natal

Please see the Crop Production Regions map on page 30.

The production regions from which wheat samples were received for the crop quality survey of the 2023/24 production season, are named and described on pages 31 to 34. All the silo/intake stands as well as the type of storage structure, situated in a particular region, are provided.

The wheat production regions in South Africa is divided into three major production regions:

Winter Rainfall Region (Western Cape)

The Western Cape Province has a Mediterranean climate, characterised by cool, wet winters and hot dry summers. More than 80% of the rainfall occurs in winter between April and September, making the Western Cape a predominantly winter rainfall area. Arable land in this area covers approximately 1.5 million hectares, with winter cereals (wheat, barley, canola and oats) the major crops cultivated. This season, the Western Cape accounted for more than half of the wheat produced in South Africa. The Swartland (on the West Coast) and the Rûens (Southern Cape) are the main geographic regions of the winter rainfall area.

These two separate wheat farming regions are divided into sub-regions according to soil and climatic characteristics. The Swartland region is divided into four sub-regions: High Rainfall, Middle Swartland, Koringberg and Sandveld. The Rûens region is divided into three sub regions namely the Western Rûens, Southern Rûens and Eastern Rûens.

The Rûens generally receives higher rainfall than the Swartland, but some areas of the Swartland have better, deeper soils. Wheat is generally planted from the second half of April until the middle of June and harvested mainly during November.

Summer Rainfall Region (Free State)

The summer rainfall area (predominantly the Free State Province) is a major dryland wheat production region of South Africa. Significant variation in precipitation, soil types and average temperature occurs from east to west. The Free State is therefore typically divided into four distinct dryland wheat production regions, namely: the South Western Free State, North Western Free State, Central Free State and Eastern Free State.

Rainfall, particularly the distribution thereof through the growing season, is important for successful wheat production in the summer rainfall areas. Planting dates vary from early to late according to region and commences in May and continues until July. Harvesting takes place from late November/early December to January.

Irrigation Areas (Northern Cape, North West, Mpumalanga, Gauteng, Limpopo and KwaZulu-Natal)

The irrigation wheat production area of South Africa can be broadly categorized into four main geographic regions: the Cooler Central irrigation region in the Northern Cape, the Warmer Northern irrigation region in the North West, Limpopo and Gauteng provinces, the Highveld region in Mpumalanga and the Free State and lastly, the KwaZulu-Natal region.

Planting commences as early as the second half of May and continues until July and even the beginning of August, depending on the region. Harvesting takes place from the end of October to December also depending on the specific region.

Production area information were obtained from the ARC-Small Grain's National Small Grain Cultivar Evaluation Programme reports.

