

Since wheat is a self-pollinating crop, meaning that grain produced has the same genetic composition as the parent, grain can be harvested and replanted as seed, which results in less seed being sold. In South Africa, approximately 70% of wheat is planted with farm saved seed. As a result, the investment in the development of new cultivars is only covered by a small portion of the market. A lack of return on investment therefore prevents new seed companies and new cultivars from entering the market. This situation is however not unique to South Africa. To address this issue, various End Point Royalty systems were investigated and the outcome was a proposal to establish a statutory levy for breeding and technology, in addition to the industry levy that has been implemented for many years.

After meetings and consultations with stakeholders and various experts, the South African Cultivar & Technology Agency NPC (SACTA) was established in June 2016. SACTA has been mandated by role-players in the different industries to administer the breeding and technology levy and make payments to the seed companies from funds collected by means of the levies. The payments are made annually and are based on the calculated market share of each seed company. It is envisaged that this system will eventually be implemented for all self-pollinating crops.

Wheat grades

The latest bread wheat grading regulations were published in the Government Gazette No. 42862, dated 29 November 2019. The regulations are detailed in Government Notice NO. R. 1547 of 29 November 2019. According to these regulations the classes of wheat are Bread Wheat and Other Wheat. The grades for Bread Wheat are Super Grade, Grade 1, Grade 2 and Grade 3. No grades are determined for Class Other Wheat.

The 322 representative crop samples of the 2024/25 season received were graded as follows: 21% was graded Super Grade, 18% was graded Grade 1, 13% was graded Grade 2, 18% was graded Grade 3 and 30% Class Other Wheat (COW). Please refer to Graphs 18 to 21 for the percentage of wheat crop quality survey samples graded per Class and grade over the last four seasons.

Of the 96 samples received that were downgraded to COW, 13 samples (14%) had protein content values below 9.5% (12% mb), 5 samples (5%) had hectolitre mass values below 74 kg/hl, 2 samples had falling number values below 220 seconds and 32 samples (33%) had screening levels higher than 3%.

The deviations that caused the highest percentages of samples to be downgraded to COW was other grain and unthreshed ears with 40% (38 samples) and combined deviations with 38% (36 samples).

70% of the samples downgraded to COW originated from the Western Cape, 16% from the Free State and 14% from the irrigation areas. The main reason for the downgrades in the Western Cape was, as in previous seasons, Other grain and unthreshed ears exceeding the maximum limit of 1%.

35% of wheat crop quality survey samples originating in the Free State were graded Super Grade. 42% of the wheat crop samples from the irrigation areas and 4% of wheat crop samples from the Western Cape Province graded Super Grade.