

Since wheat is a self-pollinating crop, meaning that grain produced has the same genetic composition as the parent, seed can be harvested and replanted, which results in less seed being sold. In South Africa, approximately 70% of wheat is planted with farm saved seed. The investment in the development of new cultivars is as a result only covered by a small portion of the market. A lack of return on investment therefore prevent new seed companies and new cultivars from entering the market. This situation is however not unique to South Africa. In order 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 statutory 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 recommended by role-players in the different industries as the body to administer the breeding and technology levy and will make payments to the seed companies from funds collected by means of the levies. The payments will be according to actual performance, calculated each year based on the market share achieved. 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 previous version of the grading regulations, as detailed in Government Notice NO. R. 64 of 29 January 2016, made provision for five grades of Bread Wheat, namely Grade 1, Grade 2, Grade 3, Grade 4 and Utility Grade.

The 250 representative crop samples received of the 2020/21 season were graded as follows: 28% was graded Super Grade, 14% was graded Grade 1, 12% was graded Grade 2, 12% was graded Grade 3 and 34% Class Other Wheat (COW).

Of the 85 samples received that were downgraded to COW, 9% had a protein content lower than 9.5%, 13% had falling number values below 220 seconds, 11% had hectolitre mass values below 76 kg/hl, 35% had screenings levels higher than 3%, 40% had other grain and unthreshed ears levels higher than 1%, 12% had insect damaged kernels levels higher than 2%, 24% had total damaged kernels levels higher than 2%, 36% had combined/collective deviation levels exceeding 5% and 19% had field fungi levels higher than 2%. Single samples reported sprouted kernel and storage fungi percentages exceeding the maximum permissible deviation or the presence of poisonous seeds, undesirable odours and live insects. Most samples that were downgraded had more than one grading parameter below the minimum value required and/or higher than the maximum permissible deviation.

57% of the downgraded samples originated from the Western Cape, 28% from the Free State and 15% from the irrigation areas.

40% of wheat samples originating in the Free State were graded Super Grade. 60% of the wheat samples from the irrigation areas and 7% of wheat samples from the Western Cape Province graded Super Grade.

