

# South Africa can expect bigger summer grains and oilseeds crop

South Africa's 2019/20 fourth summer crop production estimates data recently released by the Crop Estimates Committee (CEC) did not introduce major adjustments from the previous estimates.



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## Maize production estimate

Essentially, the maize production estimate was lifted by 2% from last month to 15,6 million tonnes (6,5 million tonnes are yellow maize, with 9,1 million tonnes being white maize). The current maize harvest is up 38% from the 2018/19 harvest and is the second-largest harvest on record.

With the crop having already matured and at the harvesting stage, we doubt there will be notable adjustments in output levels in the upcoming reviews for this season. This is the case not only for maize, but all summer crops.

## Sunflower seed and soya bean production estimate

Sunflower seed is another major oilseed that saw its production forecast lifted by 5% from last month to 765 960 tons, due to relatively higher yields in regions of the Free State and North West. This crop is now 13% higher than the 2018/19 harvest.

Meanwhile, the soya bean production estimate was left unchanged at 1,3 million tons, which is up 10% year-on-year. The increase in this season's summer crop harvest is mainly supported by an expansion in area planted in the case of maize and favourable weather conditions which led to improvements in yields.

Worth noting is that the soya bean and sunflower seed harvest have progressed notably, with 79 and 36% of the expected crop having been delivered to commercial silos in the week of 22 May 2020.

In the case of maize, the harvest process is still at the initial stages, which is later than usual. This is partly due to the late start of the 2019/20 maize production season on the back of dry conditions when farmers commenced planting.

This too is clear from the maize producer deliveries data for the first three weeks of the 2020/21 marketing year (corresponds with the 2019/20 production season), which are down by 20% compared to the corresponding period last year – around 623,833 tonnes were delivered in the week of 22 May 2020.

## **South Africa to remain a net exporter of maize**

In the case of maize, the data essentially means that South Africa would remain a net exporter of at least 2,7 million tonnes in the 2020/21 marketing year, which started in May 2020 and ends in 2021.

This is at a time when Southern and East African maize import needs could outpace those of the previous year due to poor harvests on the back of drought and locust invasion.

South Africa could also export maize beyond the African continent to other markets such as Japan, Taiwan, Vietnam and South Korea, which were not prominent in the 2019/20 marketing year. This, however, could be possible provided there are minimal disruptions in the supply chains amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

Source: [\*Wandile Sihlobo/Agbiz\*](#)