

Types of Production Units

Field Crops

The grain industry consists of eight major crop groupings grown globally. These crop groupings represent the majority of food production and include maize, wheat, sunflower, sorghum, soya beans, dry beans, canola, barley, groundnuts, cotton, sugar cane and a number of smaller more diverse crops referred to as speciality crops.

Due to the fact that the grain industry contributes to both biofuel production, as well as food production directly and indirectly (as a supplier of feed to livestock and poultry, it plays a central role in the agricultural sector.

Syngenta (2016) reported that the demand for grain has increased almost 90% since 1980 and that each year 2.4 billion tons of grain is consumed annually through food, fuel and feed. The four main contributing crops include soybean and maize (feed), and rice and wheat (food). In South Africa, half of the maize produced is used for animal feed, of which 70% is for poultry (Goldblatt, 2012). Furthermore, any significant rise in the demand for meat results in a similar rise in the demand for grain because one kilogram of beef requires seven kilograms grain to produce, one kilogram of pork requires four kilograms of grain and a kilogram of poultry requires two kilograms of grain (Syngenta, 2016). It is thus evident that agriculture is mainly demand driven and the grain industry specifically will continue to play a vital role in the global economy. The challenge will be to meet the growing demand by means of increased production.

In South Africa, depending on the region, production can be divided into summer and winter rainfall crops. Summer crops, as captured by the Crop Estimates Committee (CEC), include white and yellow maize, sunflower, soybeans, groundnuts, sorghum and dry beans, while winter crops include wheat, malting barley and canola (CEC, 2021). An overview of the production of the different crops in South Africa is given in Table 3. It displays the hectares planted and crop estimates for all the major crops in South Africa. From this table it is evident that maize is by far the most produced crop followed by wheat, soybeans and sunflower seed.

Table 3: Production of different crops in South Africa (CEC, 2021)

Crop	2021		2020	
	Area planted	Crop estimate	Area planted	Crop estimate
	Ha	Tons	Ha	Tons
White maize	1 691 900	8 608 815	1 616 300	8 547 500
Yellow maize	1 063 500	7 625 450	994 500	6 752 500
Sunflower seed	447 800	677 240	500 300	788 500
Soybeans	827 100	1 890 450	705 000	1 245 500
Groundnuts	38 500	59 950	37500	50 080

Sorghum	49 200	213 645	42 500	158 000
Dry beans	47 390	57 672	50 150	64 800
Wheat	523 500	2 117 435	509 800	2 120 000
Malting barley	94 730	339 800	141 690	588 000
Canola	100 000	190 000	74 120	165 200

Note: CEC Estimates are for the calendar year, e.g., production season 2020/21.

Horticulture

- Horticulture covers a set of different crops including:
- Deciduous fruit
- Dried fruit
- Viticulture (Including wine-, table and -raising grapes)
- Subtropical fruit
- Citrus fruit
- Vegetables

Animal Products

- Livestock
- Poultry
- Dairy
- Wool
- Mohair