



# GIEWS Country Brief

## The Kingdom of Eswatini

Reference Date: 12-February-2025

### FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- **Conducive weather conditions underpin favourable 2025 cereal production prospects**
- **Maize import requirements expected to rise moderately in 2024/25**
- **Maize meal prices hit record highs in late 2024**
- **Drought and high prices of staple foods worsen food insecurity in 2025**

### Conducive weather conditions underpin favourable 2025 cereal production prospects

Harvesting of the 2025 cereal crops, primarily maize, is expected to start in April. After a slow start of seasonal rains that resulted in plantings activities beginning later than normal at the end of November, rainfall conditions thereafter have been generally favourable for cereal crops, with cumulative rainfall amounts near average through January 2025 and a relatively even temporal distribution since December. As a result, vegetation conditions in cropland areas, based on remote sensing data, remain near the average. Weather forecasts for February to April 2025 suggest a continuation of near-average rainfall amounts, supporting expectations for average to above-average maize yields in 2025.

The government is continuing to support farmers' access to agricultural inputs, including tractor services, through its Input Subsidy Programme during the 2024/25 cropping season. Over the longer term, the government is also investing in several irrigation schemes to bolster the resilience of the agriculture sector against extreme weather events and to support productivity gains.

### Maize import requirements expected to rise moderately in 2024/25

The El Niño-induced drought in 2024 is estimated to have caused a 25 percent decline in maize production compared to the five-year average, driven large by yield reductions. As a result, maize imports are expected to be above average in the 2024/25 marketing year (May/April). Currently, the monthly import rate in 2024/25 is slightly higher than in the previous marketing year.

The country is entirely reliant on imports to satisfy wheat consumption needs and imports in 2024/25 are anticipated to increase moderately, partly due to lower wholesale prices in South Africa, the country's main source of cereals, compared to white maize, the other key food staple. The import rate of wheat

### Eswatini

Crop Calendar

(\*major foodcrop)



Lean period



Sowing

Growing

Harvesting

### Eswatini

#### Cereal Production

	2019-2023	2023	2024	change
	average		estimate	2024/2023
	000 tonnes			percent
Maize	99	85	75	-12.0
Rice (paddy)	1	1	1	0.0
Sorghum	1	0	1	242.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>-11.4</b>

Note: Percentage change calculated from unrounded data.

in 2024/25 is about one third higher than in 2023/24.

## Maize meal prices hit record highs in late 2024

Prices of maize meal peaked at a record high in November 2024, reflecting trends in South Africa, where the 2024 drought sharply curbed the domestic harvest and drove up wholesale prices. By December 2024, prices dipped slightly but were still 12 percent higher year on year.

In contrast, the national average retail price of wheat flour was lower year-on-year in December 2024, reflecting a downward price trend in South Africa.

## Drought and high prices of staple foods worsen food insecurity in 2025

The latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) analysis estimated that 304 000 people are facing acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 [Crisis] and above) between October 2024 and March 2025. This number is about 7 percent more than the assessed food-insecure population in 2023/24.

The deterioration in acute food insecurity is attributed to the impact of the El Niño-induced drought on local food production, which caused income losses and constrained households' food supply from own production. Additionally, high maize prices are further constraining households' economic access to food.

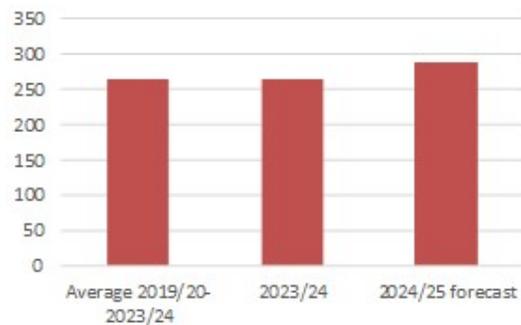
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This brief was prepared using the following data/tools:  
FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance Sheet (CCBS) <https://www.fao.org/giews/data-tools/en/>.  
FAO/GIEWS Food Price Monitoring and Analysis (FPMA) Tool <https://fpma.fao.org/>.  
FAO/GIEWS Earth Observation for Crop Monitoring <https://www.fao.org/giews/earthobservation/>.  
Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) <https://www.ipcinfo.org/>.

## Eswatini

### Cereals Imports

000 tonnes



Notes: Includes rice in milled terms. Split years refer to individual crop marketing years (for rice, calendar year of second year shown).

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### Retail prices of maize meal

Lilangeni per kg

