



GIEWS Country Brief South Africa

Reference Date: 17-May-2021

FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- Production of cereals in 2021 expected to reach near-record high, owing to excellent weather conditions and large plantings
- Export quantities of maize forecast at above-average level in 2021/22 marketing year, underpinned by ample supplies
- Prices of maize decline moderately in first months of 2021, reflecting favourable supply outlook
- Food insecurity worsened by effects of COVID-19 pandemic

Near-record cereal output expected in 2021

Harvesting of the 2021 maize crop is underway and expected to conclude at the end of June. The area planted with maize is estimated at an above-average level of 2.75 million hectares, primarily reflecting the positive effects of remunerative prices and conducive weather during the planting period in the last quarter of 2020. Maize yields are also expected to be well above the average, owing to almost ideal weather conditions during the cropping season. As a result, the 2021 maize production from both commercial and non-commercial sectors is forecast at 16.7 million tonnes, about 25 percent above the five-year average and less than 1 million tonnes below the record output of 2017.

Planting of the 2021 winter wheat crop is expected to begin at the end of May and early indications point to a small expansion in the area sown, owing to the prevailing high crop prices. By contrast, barley sowings are forecast to fall sharply in 2021, as the large output in 2020 combined with a slump in demand for the grain, due to bans on alcohol sales during the COVID-19 pandemic, has led to an oversupply that is foreseen to curb incentives to plant.

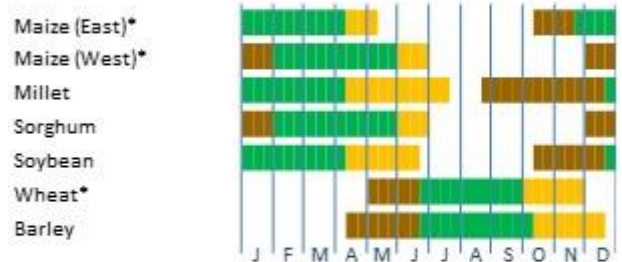
Large maize export quantity forecast in 2021/22

Exports of maize are forecast at an above-average level of 3 million tonnes in the 2021/22 marketing year (May/April). This outlook is underpinned by a favourable supply situation following the 2020 bumper output and the expected near-record harvest in 2021. Additionally, high international maize prices, which helped to push up the export parity price above domestic April 2021, has provided further incentives to export.

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Crop Calendar

(*major foodcrop)



lean period

Sowing
Growing
Harvesting

Source: FAO/GIEWS.

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Cereal Production

	2016-2020 average	2020	2021 forecast	change 2021/2020
	000 tonnes			percent
Maize	13 329	15 966	16 700	4.6
Wheat	1 794	2 120	2 000	-5.7
Barley	403	588	520	-11.6
Others	182	224	251	12.0
Total	15 707	18 898	19 471	3.0

Note: percentage change calculated from unrounded data.

Source: FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance Sheet.

The bulk of maize exports are expected to be delivered to countries outside of Southern Africa, as neighbouring countries are also anticipated to gather large harvests in 2021, reducing their import needs. National stocks are expected to be maintained at an above-average level of around 3 million tonnes in 2021/22.

Prices of maize declined on supply pressure

Wholesale prices of maize grain decreased moderately between January and April 2021, driven primarily by favourable domestic supply conditions. The downward pressure more than outweighed the effects of the high prices on the international market and a weakening of the national currency that normally contribute to price increases.

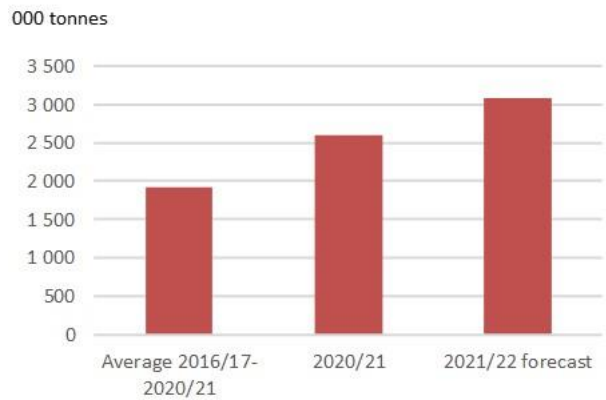
Widespread job losses worsen food insecurity

Although the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic had minimal impacts on the agriculture and food sectors, households' food security conditions worsened due to the lockdown measures that caused widespread income losses and consequently, decreased households' ability to access sufficient quantities of nutritious foods. According to data from Statistics South Africa, nearly 600 000 jobs were lost in 2020. Estimates from the first and latest IPC analysis for the country, indicated that 11.8 million people faced high levels of acute food insecurity between January and March 2021.

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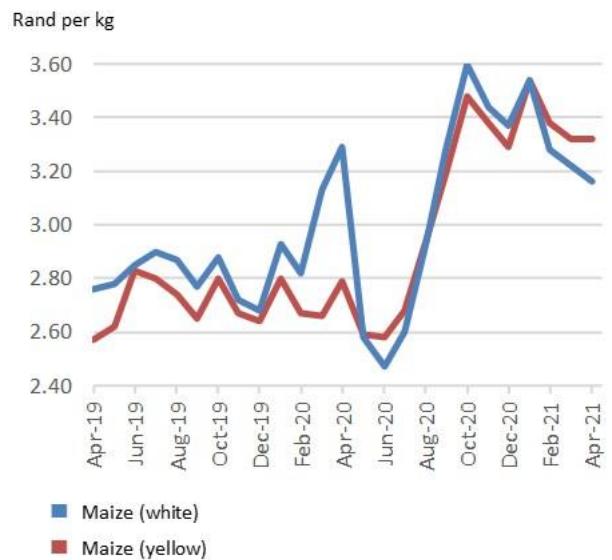
Cereals Exports



Note: Includes rice in milled terms. Split year refers to individual crop marketing years (for rice, calendar year of second year shown).
Source: FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance Sheets.

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Wholesale prices of maize in Randfontein



Source: FAO/GIEWS Food Price Monitoring and Analysis Tool.