

RECORD KWAZULU-NATAL SOYBEAN CROP

One of the biggest soybean yields in the history in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) was recorded in the 2008/2009 season, reaching a record of 75, 600 tons produced from 27 000 ha averaging 2.7 tons/ha. Dryland production was 19 710 ha (73%) and production under irrigation was 7 290 ha (27%).

In 2007/08, 44 000 tons was produced on 17 500 ha with an average of 2.51 tons/ha. The 2008/09 season, therefore, showed a yield increase of 31, 600 tons and an increase in land under soybeans of 9, 500 ha compared to the previous year. The only two seasons in which production was higher were 1997/98 and 1998/99 when 62 070 tons and 63 200 tons soybeans were produced from 28 320 and 31 000 ha, respectively. However, only 2.19 and 2.04 tons/ha in 1997/98 and 1998/99, respectively, were harvested.

In fact, soybean production had the biggest yield in the history of South Africa with a production of 509 295 tons from 237 750 ha. This is 80,6%, or 227 295 tons, more than the previous season's yield of 282 000 tons and 117,4%, or 275 079 tons more than the average yield of 234 216 tons over the past 10 years.

Since 200/01, land, yield and yield/ha have steadily increased in KZN (Figures 1, 2 and 3). Although conditions were particularly optimum for soybean production in 2008/09, the benefits of planting soybeans in rotation with maize, together with a better cash flow, have all contributed to these increased yields/ha.

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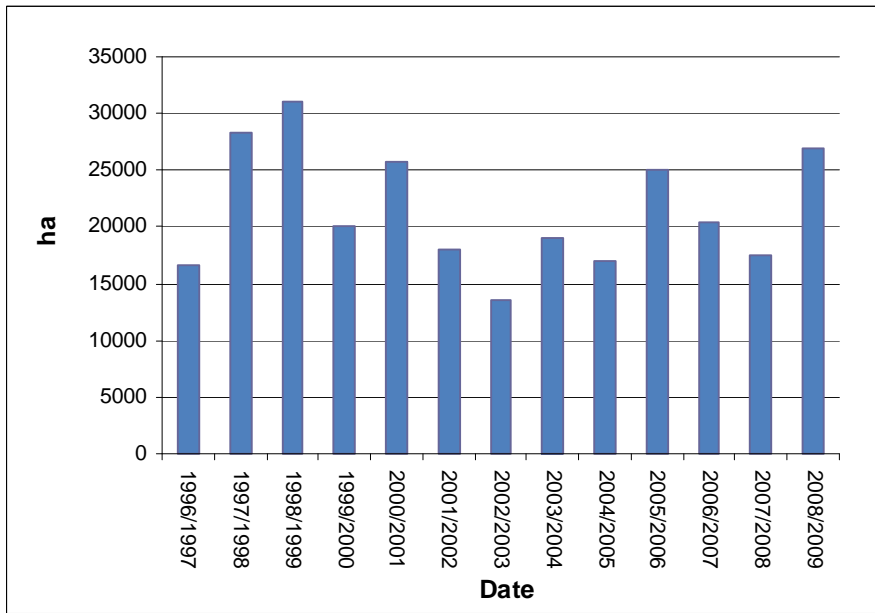


Figure 1. Hectares under soybean production in KwaZulu-Natal (1996/97–2008/09).

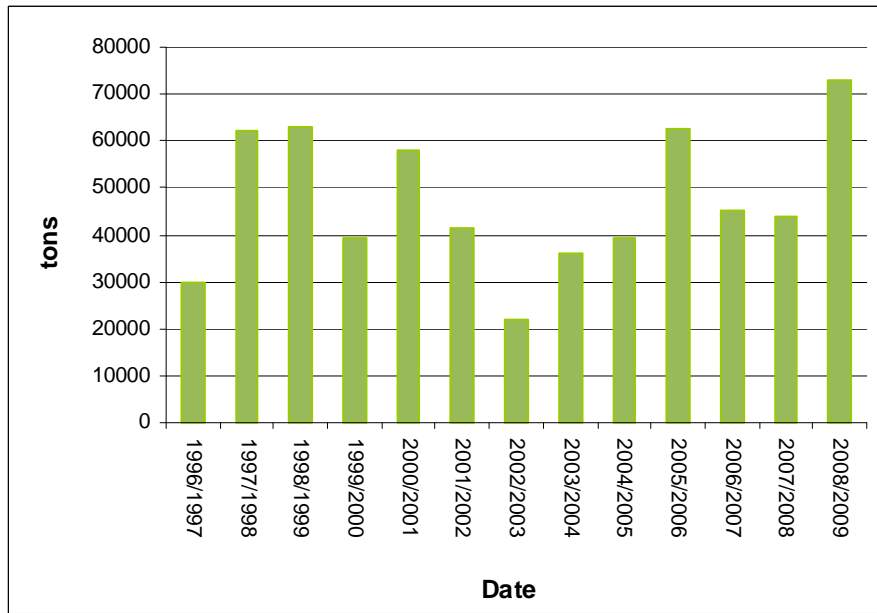


Figure 2. Soybean production (tons) in KwaZulu-Natal (1996/97-2008/09).

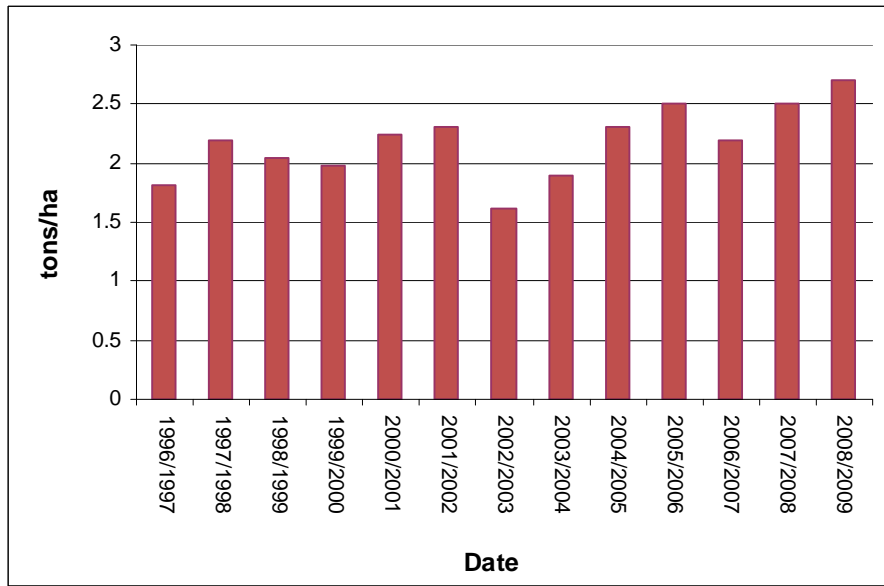


Figure 3. Soybean production (tons/ha) in KwaZulu-Natal (1996/97–2008/09).