

CROP ESTIMATES

Farmers plant more soya and less white maize

South African farmers have increased their soya bean and dry bean plantings by 23,3% and 14,7% respectively, according to the Crop Estimates Committee's preliminary forecast of area planted to different grains.

Farmers increased the area planted to soya beans from 502 900ha to about 620 300ha and those of dry beans to 64 000ha from 55 820ha, said the committee.

"The demand for soya beans has increased markedly, as 1,5 million tons of pressing capacity

came online over the past two years," Corné Louw, a senior economist for inputs at Grain SA, told *Farmer's Weekly*.

"South Africa is still an importer of soya oil cake and the idea is to replace it with local production."

The area planted to white maize is likely to be 4,1% smaller at 1,487 million hectares, while the land planted to yellow maize rose 2,8% to 1,168 million hectares, according to the forecast.

White maize is mainly consumed as a staple food in South Africa



It is likely that farmers planted 4,1% less white maize, but increased the area planted to yellow maize by 2,8%, according to the Crop Estimates Committee.

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while the yellow variety is used for animal feed.

"We expect an average to above-average maize harvest this year," said Louw. "There's enough maize and we expect a surplus of two million tons that could be exported."

The demand for white maize was stagnant as consumers became wealthier and preferred higher protein levels in their diets, he said.

This was why farmers were planting more land to yellow maize. – Jaco Visser