Local oilseed production slowly catching up with consumption

This season’s sunflower seed and soya bean plantings increased considerably in the summer rainfall areas, as low maize prices and better oilseed prices motivated farmers to switch crops.

Sunflower and soya bean plantings, as well as yield per hectare, are set to increase even further over the next 10 years. However, South Africa is expected to remain a major importer of soya bean oilcake and sunflower oil, as it’s set to keep exporting raw oilseed products and importing processed ones.

All this is according to the Bureau for Food and Agricultural Policy’s (BFAP) Baseline 2011 report, compiled under the leadership of Dr Ferdinand Meyer of the University of Pretoria.

According to the report, the local area planted to sunflower seed increased by 61% to 642 000 hectares and soya beans by 34% to 418 000 hectares in 2010/11. In the winter rainfall area canola plantings declined slightly to 332 000 hectares.

However, after the sharp increase in sunflower plantings, production is expected to decline to 590 000 tonnes in 2012 and then to fluctuate between 580 000 and 650 000 tonnes over the baseline period (2011 to 2020).

Sunflower seed yields were projected to increase from 1.22 to 1.53 tonnes per hectare by 2020, for a total crop of close to 1 million tonnes by the end of the baseline period.

Meanwhile, the domestic use of sunflower seed is forecast to increase 975 000 tonnes by the end of the baseline period, causing South Africa to import less sunflower seed over the next decade and to become self-sufficient by 2020.

However, South Africa will remain a net importer of sunflower and other vegetable oils, albeit on a declining scale. The domestic consumption of sunflower oil is projected to increase by 1.3% per year over the baseline period to a total of 419 000 tonnes in 2020. Of this, South Africa will have to import roughly 42 000 tonnes.

The average 2011 sunflower seed SAFEX price is estimated to increase to R4.072/litre. It will decline slightly to R3.984/litre in 2012 before gradually increasing over the rest of the baseline period,” said the report.

Soya bean plantings are expected to increase by 5.7% per year, towards a total acreage of 656 000 hectares in 2020.

Meanwhile, soya bean yields are likely to increase from 1.62 to 2.62 tonnes per hectare in 2011 to 2020. Better yields and bigger plantings will result in a total domestic production of approximately 1.7 million tonnes in 2020, according to the report.

Domestic consumption of soya beans is projected to increase by almost 300% over the next decade, but despite the rapid increase, it is projected that South Africa would remain an exporter of soya beans into premium export markets, mainly in Asia.

However, South Africa is likely to remain a large net importer of soya bean oilcake with consumption increasing by 4.3% per year to 1.7 million tonnes by 2020.

Meanwhile, locally produced soya bean oilcake production is forecast to increase to 893 000 tonnes by the end of the baseline period. This is a significant increase compared to the 148 000 tonnes produced locally in 2010.

The soya bean SAFEX price is set to decline from an average of R3.353/litre in 2011 to R3.176/litre in 2012 due to the lower international prices.

However, the report says the growth in domestic use of soya beans is projected to pick up steam from 2013, which will provide support for the local soya bean price. – Denene Erasmus

FARM ATTACKS

‘Drunken mastermind’ behind bars

KZN police have arrested the alleged mastermind behind the attempted robbery of Richmond farming brothers Craig and Eban Marwick.

SAPS KZN spokesperson Superintendent Vincent Mdunge said the arrest was an “ultimate victory” for the police.

The suspect has been on the run for a long time, said Mdunge. “Our officers have finally caught up with him and it’s a tremendous breakthrough.”

Police had put a R50 000 price tag on the man’s head, as he is wanted in connection with more than 20 crimes, including murder, attempted murder, and business and home robberies.

He had been hiding out since the botched farm robbery on 3 July at a hideout near Mandeni, where he was arrested following a tip-off. “He was arrested on a different case and was then linked to other cases,” said Mdunge. “He appeared in the Nyoni magistrate’s court and the officers will finalise their own investigation regarding the other cases.” He added that the suspect is being held in jail.

In the attempted robbery of the Marwicks, the family had received a timeous tip-off and managed to mobilise support from the police and local security company on the night of the attack. When the seven-member gang attempted to enter the property, a gun battle broke out and five gang members were shot dead. Two escaped, one of whom was later shot by police, and the other arrested. The men were heavily armed, and it is thought they were looking for firearms on the premises.

The alleged mastermind did not accompany the rest of the gang on the night of the attack. “He became too drunk and ill that evening,” said Mdunge.

Craig Marwick said the suspect is not known to the family. – Rynis Joubert