

SA soya bean harvest reaches one-million-ton mark

South Africa's soya bean harvest for 2014/2015 is estimated at more than one million tons, despite the drought in the summer-grain production regions. This is the first time that the one-million-ton mark has been exceeded by the crop, and it bodes well for the soya bean industry, according to Andries Theron, vice-president at Grain SA.

Speaking at the recent soya bean symposium in Bothaville, Theron said the number of hectares planted to soya had risen from 134 000ha in the 2000/2001 production season to 687 300ha in the 2014/2015 season.

"The increased number of hectares planted to soya beans meant that we, for the first time in 40 years, produced more of the crop locally than we needed to import," he said.

The SA Protein Research Foundation's goal to double the 2014/2015 production by 2020 was doable, given the sharp increase in hectares

planted, according to him. The expansion needed to be supported by producer training and development, as well as cultivar development supported by producer participation in trials and research.

"Although our local soya bean industry is a small player globally, we engage the world's leading producers and experts to ensure long-term sustainability and profitability," he said.

According to the Bureau for Food and Agricultural Policy Baseline, local soya bean oilcake consumption was 1,2 million tons. Imports were just over one million tons during the 2014/2015 season. Only 2% of the 1 005 548t processed during the 2014/2015 season was for human consumption. The demand for full-fat soya increased by 11,6% and by 37% for oilcake, compared with the previous season.

– Annelie Coleman

• Source: SA Soya Bean Quality Report 2013/2014