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## **Report Name:** Grain and Feed Update

**Country:** South Africa - Republic of

**Post:** Pretoria

**Report Category:** Grain and Feed

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### **Report Highlights:**

South Africa's corn production outlook for marketing year 2025/26 remains positive, supported by favorable La Niña weather conditions that brought normal to above-normal rainfall during the planting period. Following a strong harvest in the previous season, the third largest on record, the domestic market is experiencing oversupply conditions, resulting in significantly lower corn prices. Exports are expected to rise on the back of robust production, while imports are not anticipated due to ample domestic supply. Domestic consumption is projected to show only marginal growth amid ongoing economic headwinds, and ending stocks are expected to remain sufficient to meet commercial utilization requirements.

## **Executive Summary**

- **Production:** South Africa's corn production for marketing year (MY) 2025/26 (May 2026 to April 2027)<sup>1</sup> is forecast to remain strong, underpinned by favorable La Niña weather patterns that brought normal to above-normal rainfall during the October-December planting window. However, planted area is expected to remain steady, as bearish local corn prices are discouraging significant acreage expansion.
- **Consumption:** Domestic corn consumption is projected to register only modest growth in MY 2024/25 and MY 2025/26, as South Africa continues to face sluggish economic growth and persistently high unemployment, keeping per capita consumption relatively stable.
- **Trade:** South Africa's corn exports for MY 2025/26 are forecast to remain significant, driven by ample commercial production and elevated ending stocks. The Foreign Agricultural Service office in Pretoria (FAS/Pretoria) has revised its MY 2024/25 corn export estimate upward to 1.8 million metric tons (MMT), due to increased regional demand, particularly from Zimbabwe. No corn imports by South Africa are anticipated in MY 2025/26, given expectations of heightened production and sufficient domestic supply.
- **Stocks:** Ending stock are forecast to provide sufficient coverage of commercial utilization in MY 2025/26, following a significant recovery in MY 2024/25 from the unusually low levels of the previous season.

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<sup>1</sup> The MY's used in the text refers to the USDA marketing years in the Production, Supply and Distribution (PS&D) tables, and do not necessarily correspond with the marketing years used by the South African grain industry.

# CORN

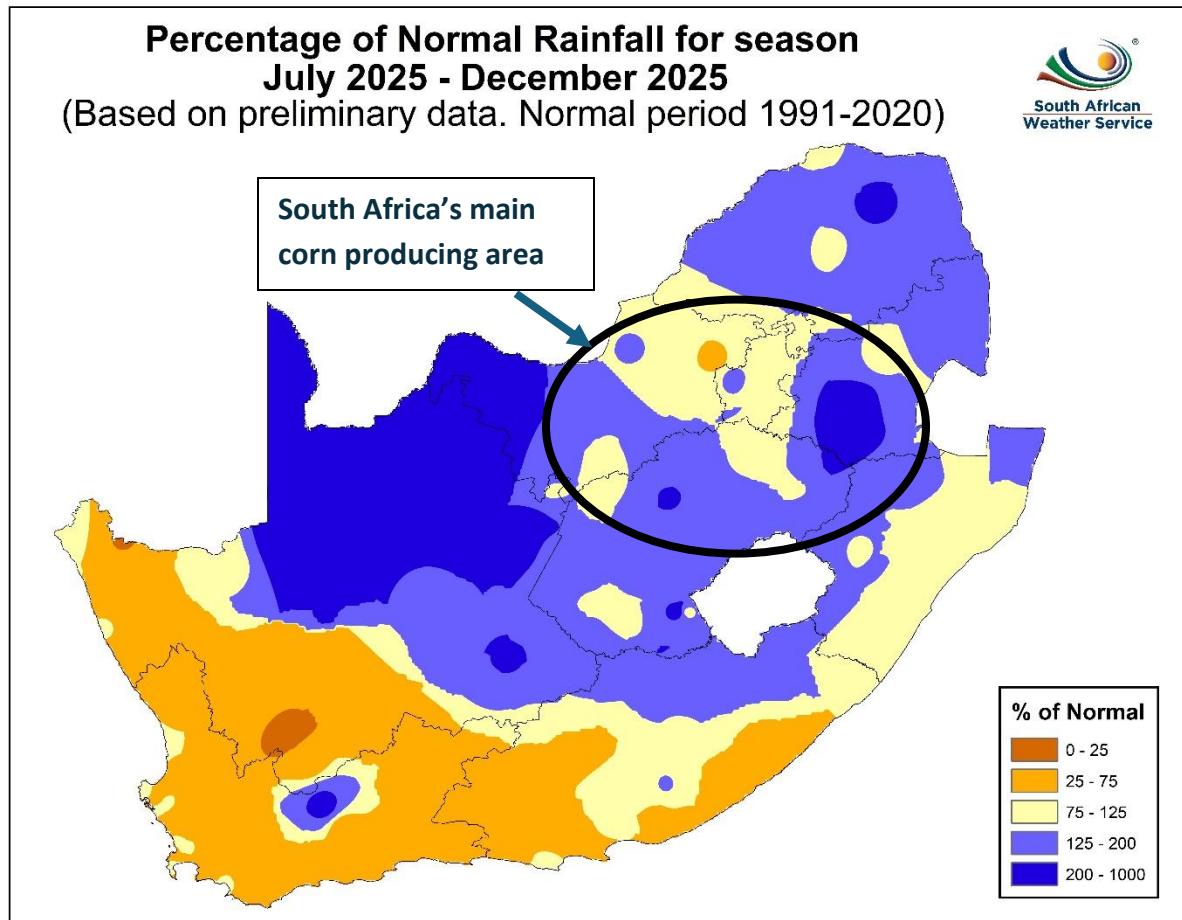
**Table 1: Corn Production, Supply and Distribution**

Corn Market Year Begins South Africa	2023/2024		2024/2025		2025/2026	
	May 2024		May 2025		May 2026	
	USDA Official	New Post	USDA Official	New Post	USDA Official	New Post
<b>Area Harvested</b> (1000 HA)	2983	2983	2955	2955	3000	2970
<b>Beginning Stocks</b> (1000 MT)	2405	2405	654	654	1914	2021
<b>Production</b> (1000 MT)	13425	13425	17060	17057	16500	16000
<b>MY Imports</b> (1000 MT)	937	937	100	110	0	0
<b>TY Imports</b> (1000 MT)	254	254	794	794	100	100
<b>TY Imp. from U.S.</b> (1000 MT)	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Supply</b> (1000 MT)	16767	16767	17814	17821	18414	18021
<b>MY Exports</b> (1000 MT)	2273	2273	1900	1800	2200	2200
<b>TY Exports</b> (1000 MT)	2464	2464	1994	1994	2100	2100
<b>Feed and Residual</b> (1000 MT)	7040	7040	7000	7000	7100	7100
<b>FSI Consumption</b> (1000 MT)	6800	6800	7000	7000	7100	7100
<b>Total Consumption</b> (1000 MT)	13840	13840	14000	14000	14200	14200
<b>Ending Stocks</b> (1000 MT)	654	654	1914	2021	2014	1621
<b>Total Distribution</b> (1000 MT)	16767	16767	17814	17821	18414	18021
<b>Yield</b> (MT/HA)	4.5	4.5	5.8	5.8	5.5	5.4
(1000 HA) ,(1000 MT) ,(MT/HA)						
MY = Marketing Year, begins with the month listed at the top of each column						
TY = Trade Year, which for Corn begins in October for all countries. TY 2025/2026 = October 2025 - September 2026						
OFFICIAL DATA CAN BE ACCESSED AT: <a href="https://psdonline.fas.usda.gov/AdvancedQuery">PSD Online Advanced Query</a>						

## Production

FAS/Pretoria maintains its estimate for South Africa's total corn production (including subsistence production) in MY 2025/26 at 16 MMT. Most major corn-producing regions received normal to above-normal rainfall from October through December, driven by La Niña weather conditions, which supported favorable conditions for rain-fed corn plantings (see Map 1). In addition, following a wet 2024/25 summer season, dam levels remain high, ensuring adequate water supplies for irrigated crops.

**Map 1: Percentage of Normal Rainfall for the 2025-Planting Season**

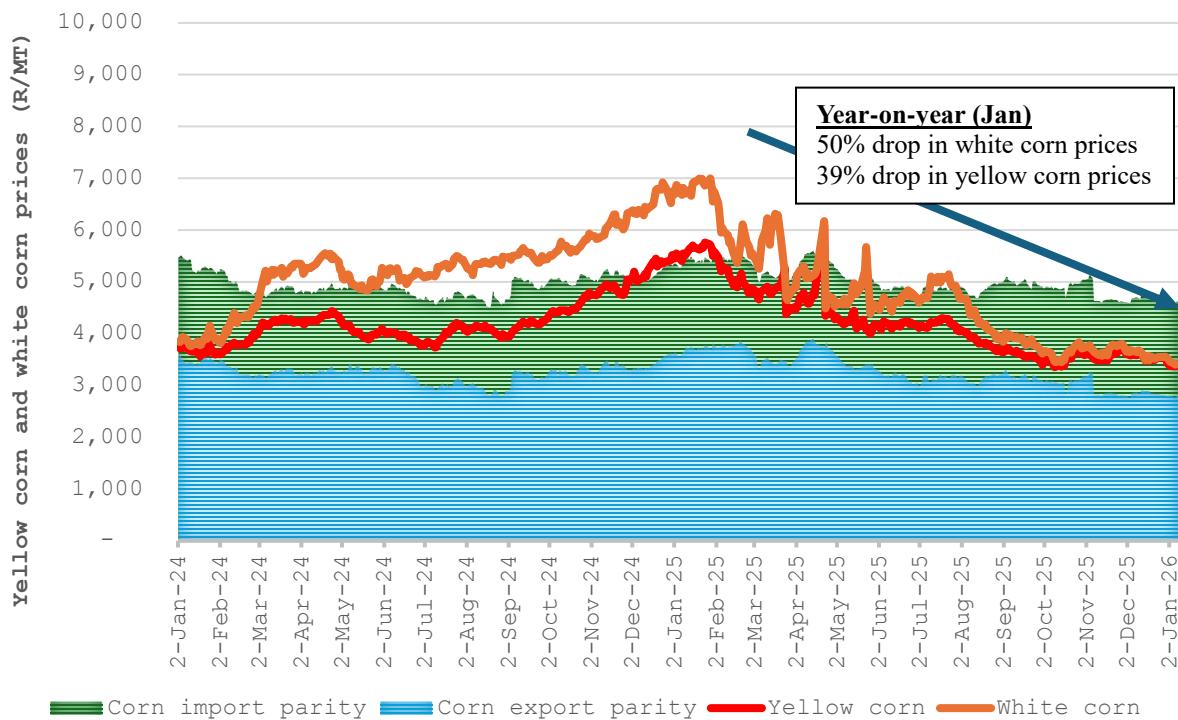


**Source:** The [South African Weather Services](#)

However, increased rainfall has generated concerns of water damage, poor root development, pesticide application, and a shortage of heat units, all of which could impact yields. Isolated hail damage has been reported in parts of the eastern production areas. Though it is still early in the season, weather conditions in February and March 2026, particularly during the grain-filling stage, will be critical for yield outcomes. The South African Weather Service forecasts a weak La Niña persisting into mid- and late summer, which is expected to support corn production prospects. As a result, the outlook for corn yields remains promising.

This positive production outlook, combined with a strong domestic corn harvest in MY 2024/25 and a firmer local currency, has contributed to lower domestic corn prices. Year-on-Year, white corn and yellow corn prices have declined by 50 percent and 39 percent, respectively (see Figure 1). This price drop suggests an oversupply in the domestic market, while the rand's 14 percent appreciation against the U.S. dollar has reduced South Africa's export competitiveness.

**Figure 1: Local Corn Prices since January 2024**



**Source:** FAS/Pretoria using data from [GrainSA](#)

The South African Department of Agriculture's Crop Estimates Committee (CEC) will release preliminary area planted estimates for MY 2025/26 on January 27, 2026. This data will clarify the impact of wetter early-season conditions and lower prices on planting decisions.

FAS/Pretoria estimates corn area planted to remain steady at 3 million hectares (Mha) in MY 2025/26, as bearish local corn prices have discouraged any significant expansion.

Table 2 provides a breakdown of commercial and subsistence white and yellow corn production for MY 2023/24 (actual), MY 2024/25 (estimate), and MY 2025/26 (forecast).

**Table 2: Area Planted, Yield, and Production of Commercial and Subsistence Corn in South Africa**

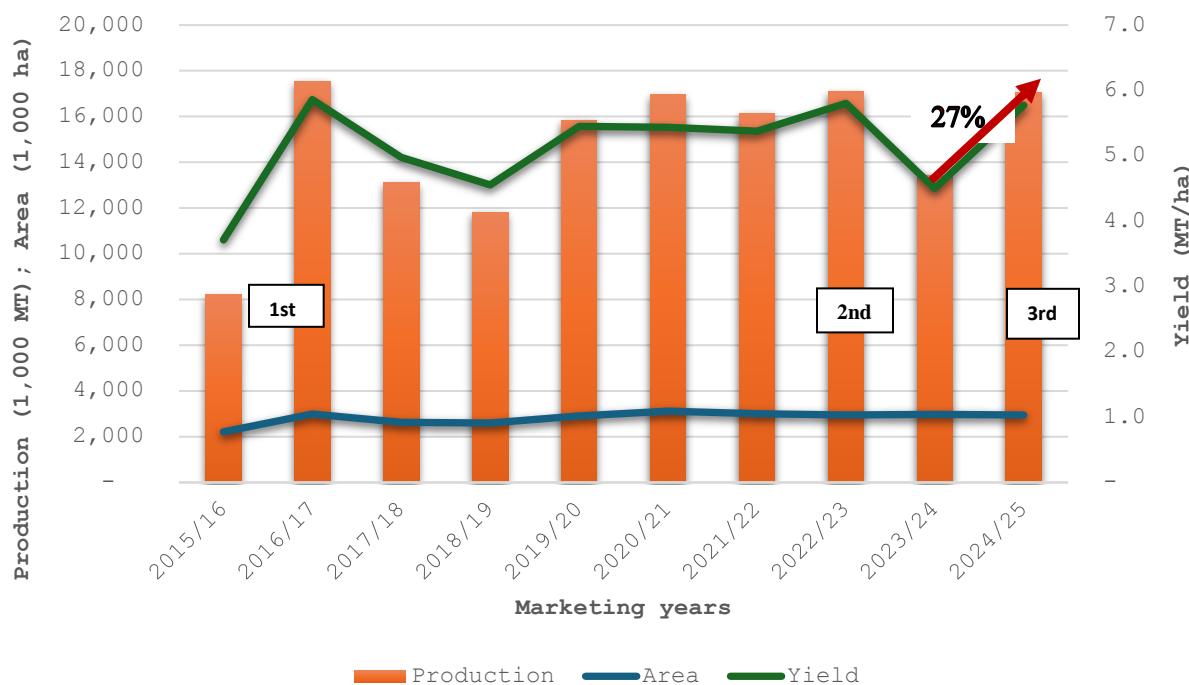
	2023/24 (actual)			2024/25 (estimate)			2025/26 (forecast)		
	Area (1,000ha)	Yield (MT/ Ha)	Prod. (1,000MT)	Area (1,000ha)	Yield (MT/ Ha)	Prod. (1,000MT)	Area (1,000ha)	Yield (MT/ Ha)	Prod. (1,000MT)
<b>Commercial Production</b>									
White	1,555	3.9	6,055	1,600	5.2	8,378	1,520	4.9	7,530
Yellow	1,081	6.2	6,795	997	8.1	8,057	1,100	7.1	7,850
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>2,636</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>12,850</b>	<b>2,597</b>	<b>6.3</b>	<b>16,436</b>	<b>2,620</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>15,380</b>
<b>Subsistence Production</b>									
White	268	1.5	408	275	1.6	439	270	1.6	440
Yellow	79	2.1	167	83	2.2	182	80	2.3	180
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>347</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>575</b>	<b>358</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>621</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>620</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,983</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>13,425</b>	<b>2,955</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>17,057</b>	<b>2,970</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>16,000</b>

**Source:** FAS/Pretoria estimates and data from the Crop Estimates Committee

The CEC released its final summer field crop production estimates for MY 2024/25 on November 27, 2025 ([Crop Estimates](#)). South Africa produced its third-largest corn crop on record at 17.1 MMT — 16.4 MMT from commercial producers and 621,500 MT from subsistence producers (see Figure 2). This represents a 27 percent rebound from the drought-impacted crop of the previous season and marks only the third time South Africa has exceeded 17 MMT in corn production.

The CEC estimates the national average yield at 5.8 metric tons per hectare (MT/ha), up 28 percent from the previous year's 4.5 MT/ha. The Free State (42 percent), Mpumalanga (27 percent), and North West (10 percent) provinces accounted for 80 percent of total production. The white corn crop is estimated at 8.8 MMT, while yellow corn reached a record 8.2 MMT - 2.3 MMT and 1.3 MMT higher, respectively, than in MY 2023/24.

**Figure 2: Area Planted, Production and Yields of Corn in South Africa over the Past 10 Years**



**Source:** FAS/Pretoria estimates and data from the [SAGIS, Crop Estimates Committee](#)

## Consumption

FAS/Pretoria maintains its forecast for South Africa's total corn consumption at 14 MMT for MY 2024/25, consistent with the latest data from the South Africa Grain Information Service (SAGIS) (see Table 3). The record-high yellow corn crop in MY 2024/25 is expected to reduce the use of white corn in animal feed rations compared to the previous FAS/Pretoria estimate.

Overall, only marginal growth in total corn consumption is projected for both MY 2024/25 and MY 2025/26, as South Africa continues to experience sluggish economic growth and persistently high unemployment. As a result, per capita corn consumption remains relatively stable, with limited increases expected given prevailing economic conditions.

Table 3 provides a breakdown of South Africa's white and yellow corn consumption for MY 2023/24 (actual), MY 2024/25 (estimate), and MY 2025/26 (forecast). The data includes commercial use, on-farm consumption, and utilization by the subsistence sector.

**Table 3: Consumption of Corn in South Africa**

Corn Consumption	White	Yellow	Total	White	Yellow	Total	White	Yellow	Total
MY	2023/24			2024/25 (estimate)			2025/26 (forecast)		
									(1,000 MT)
<b>Food, Seed &amp; Industrial (FSI)</b>	5,932	868	<b>6,800</b>	6,300	700	<b>7,000</b>	6,400	700	<b>7,100</b>
<b>Feed &amp; Residual</b>	100	6,940	<b>7,040</b>	300	6,700	<b>7,000</b>	600	6,500	<b>7,100</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,032</b>	<b>7,808</b>	<b>13,840</b>	<b>6,600</b>	<b>7,400</b>	<b>14,000</b>	<b>5,900</b>	<b>6,700</b>	<b>14,200</b>

**Source:** FAS/Pretoria calculations using data from the [SAGIS](#)

## Trade

### Exports

FAS/Pretoria projects South Africa's corn exports to reach 2.2 MMT in MY 2025/26, driven by an anticipated commercial crop exceeding 15.0 MMT and elevated ending stocks of more than 2 MMT.

FAS/Pretoria has revised its estimate for South Africa's corn exports in MY 2024/25 upward to 1.8 MMT, reflecting abundant domestic supply and increased regional demand, particularly from Zimbabwe. In the first eight months of MY 2024/25, South Africa exported 1.3 MMT of corn (see Table 4). Zimbabwe lifted a temporary corn import ban in October 2025, a measure originally implemented to support local farmers by prioritizing domestic procurement.

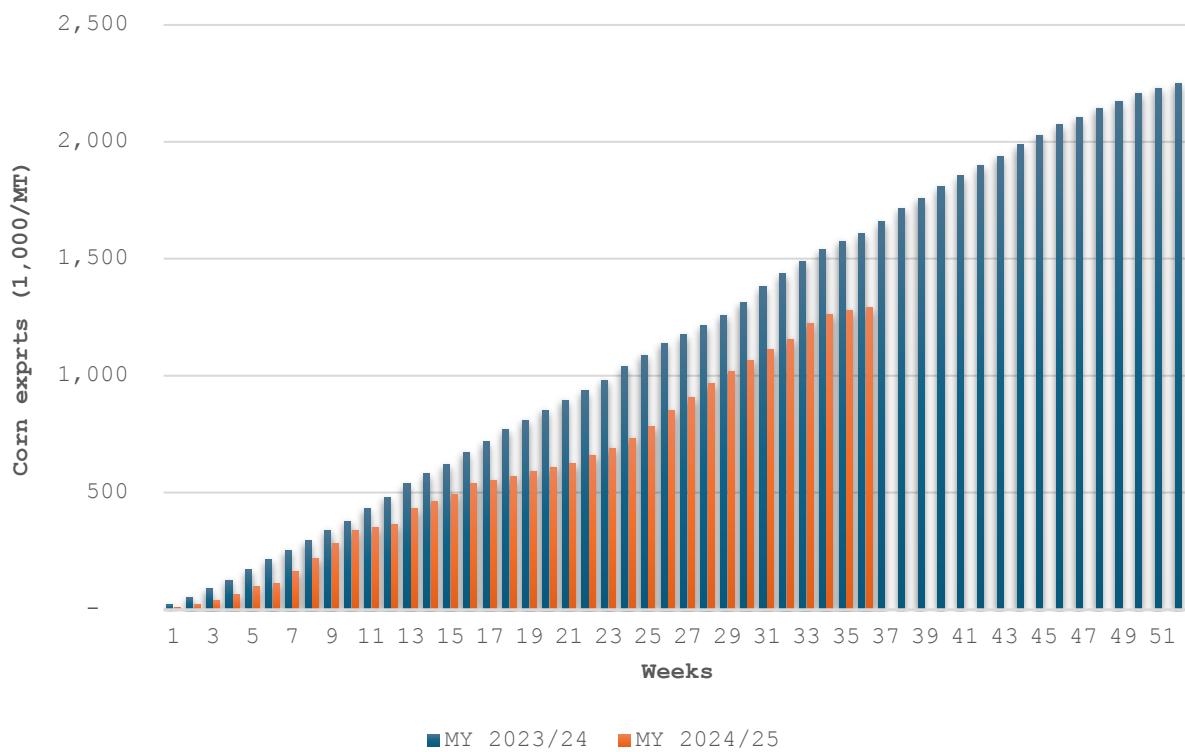
Although Zimbabwe's corn production more than doubled in the 2024/25 season, import requirements persist to meet local demand (see GAIN report [Zimbabwe Grain and Feed Annual](#)). Following the removal of the import ban, South Africa's corn exports to Zimbabwe increased, and total exports are now only 20 percent lower than during the same period in MY 2023/24 (see Figure 3). However, corn exports remain concentrated in neighboring markets, as the relatively stronger rand continues to limit South Africa's competitiveness in global markets.

**Table 4: South Africa's Exports of Corn in MY 2023/24 and MY 2024/25**

Countries	MY 2023/24			MY 2024/25			Total
	White corn	Yellow corn	Total	Countries	White corn	Yellow corn	
	(1,000 MT)				(1,000 MT)		
<b><u>Export Destinations</u></b>							
Zimbabwe	841	443	1,284	Zimbabwe	254	176	430
Botswana	195	105	300	Botswana	135	38	173
Namibia	207	59	266	Mozambique	64	60	124
Mozambique	103	72	175	Vietnam	-	109	109
Eswatini	60	91	151	Namibia	68	35	103
Lesotho	86	6	92	Eswatini	22	78	100
Saudi Arabia	0	4	4	Lesotho	67	1	68
Zambia	0	1	1	Venezuela	66	-	66
				Taiwan	-	50	50
				South Korea	-	48	48
				Mauritius	-	16	16
				Sri Lanka	-	2	2
				Madagascar	-	1	1
<b>Total Exports</b>	<b>1,492</b>	<b>781</b>	<b>2,273</b>	<b>Total Exports</b>	<b>676</b>	<b>614</b>	<b>1,290</b>

Source: FAS/Pretoria using data from the [SAGIS](#)

**Figure 3: Comparing Progressive Corn Exports for MY 2024/25 and MY 2023/24**



**Source:** FAS/Pretoria using data from the [SAGIS](#)

### Imports

FAS/Pretoria does not anticipate any corn imports for South Africa in MY 2025/26, given expectations for increased production and sufficient domestic supply. For MY 2024/25, corn imports are projected to decline to 110,000 MT, a sharp reduction from the seven-year high level of almost 940,000 MT recorded in MY 2023/24 (see Table 5). With domestic corn prices trading below import parity because of the MY 2024/25 bumper crop, imports are expected to cease.

**Table 5: South Africa's Imports of Corn in MY 2023/24 and MY 2024/25**

Countries	MY 2023/24			MY 2024/25		
	White corn	Yellow corn	Total	White corn	Yellow corn	Total
(May 1, 2024 – Apr 30, 2025)      (May 1, 2025 – January 2, 2026)						
Argentina	-	705	705	-	110	-
United States	118	8	126	-	-	-
Brazil	-	106	106	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL IMPORTS</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>819</b>	<b>937</b>	-	<b>110</b>	<b>110</b>

Source: FAS/Pretoria using data from the [SAGIS](#)

## Stocks

Year-end stocks are forecast at 1.6 MMT in MY 2025/26, sufficient to cover approximately one-and-a-half months of commercial utilization. In MY 2024/25, stocks are expected to recover significantly from the decade-low levels recorded in MY 2023/24, growing by more than 200 percent to reach 2.0 MMT. This recovery is driven by higher domestic production and reduced export volumes. Stockholding is primarily managed by producer-owned agribusinesses (formerly cooperatives), traders, and processors, with minimal government intervention. The South African government does not maintain strategic corn reserves nor impose regulatory requirements for minimum stock levels.

## Attachments:

No Attachments