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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
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**Press Release 18 June 2007**

**CROP ESTIMATE – MAIZE AREA PLANTED: IRRIGATION vs. DRYLAND**  
**(2006/07 SEASON)**

Following various enquiries, the Crop Estimates Committee (CEC) would like to clarify its position regarding the April 2007 estimate of the area planted to maize under irrigation. As is known, the CEC adjusted the estimated irrigated area of maize for the 2006/07 production season from 170  000 ha to 210  000 ha, but did not increase the expected maize production figure.

The modus operandi of the CEC is to forecast the production based on an estimate of the planted area multiplied by the expected yield/ton. To assist in this calculation, irrigated areas and dryland areas are estimated separately and appropriate yields are attached to each. In the final calculation a combined average yield is applied to the total area planted to give the production.

In February 2007, the CEC estimated the area of maize under irrigation based on various subjective information sources, which could have included some form of bias. However, as the production season progressed more objective (measured) data became available to the CEC, and it was able to estimate a more accurate figure of the area under irrigation by making use of independent and unbiased data derived from satellite imagery. This was reflected in the increase in area under irrigation from 170 000 ha to 210 000 ha in April 2007.

The correction to the irrigated area did not affect the final production figure because the total area under maize was not increased as, by ratio, these irrigated fields were previously considered to be dryland. Therefore, although the irrigated area increased, the average yield for the total crop did not increase as the CEC lowered the yields of maize planted on dryland to compensate for the dry conditions.

The CEC is continuously striving to obtain more accurate inputs through research and the use of modern technology. These improvements to the estimation system will ensure that the estimates for irrigated and dryland areas will become much more accurate in future.

#### The area for commercial maize under dryland and irrigation for the 2006/07 production season is as follows:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Province | Area planted – 2006/07 | | | | |
|  | Dryland | Irrigation | Total | Dryland | Irrigation |
|  | Ha | | | % | |
| Western Cape | 0 | 2 000 | 2 000 | 0,0 | 100,0 |
| Northern Cape | 450 | 48 350 | 48 800 | 0,9 | 99,1 |
| Free State | 974 000 | 46 000 | 1 020 000 | 95,5 | 4,5 |
| Eastern Cape | 8 000 | 8 000 | 16 000 | 50,0 | 50,0 |
| KwaZulu-Natal | 48 500 | 25 500 | 74 000 | 65,5 | 34,5 |
| Mpumalanga | 451 000 | 19 000 | 470 000 | 96,0 | 4,0 |
| Limpopo | 33 500 | 22 500 | 56 000 | 59,8 | 40,2 |
| Gauteng | 87 500 | 7 500 | 95 000 | 92,1 | 7,9 |
| North West | 738 850 | 31 150 | 770 000 | 96,0 | 4,0 |
| Total | 2 341 800 | 210 000 | 2 551 800 | 91,8 | 8,2 |

The CEC would like to apologise for any inconvenience this adjustment might have caused.

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