



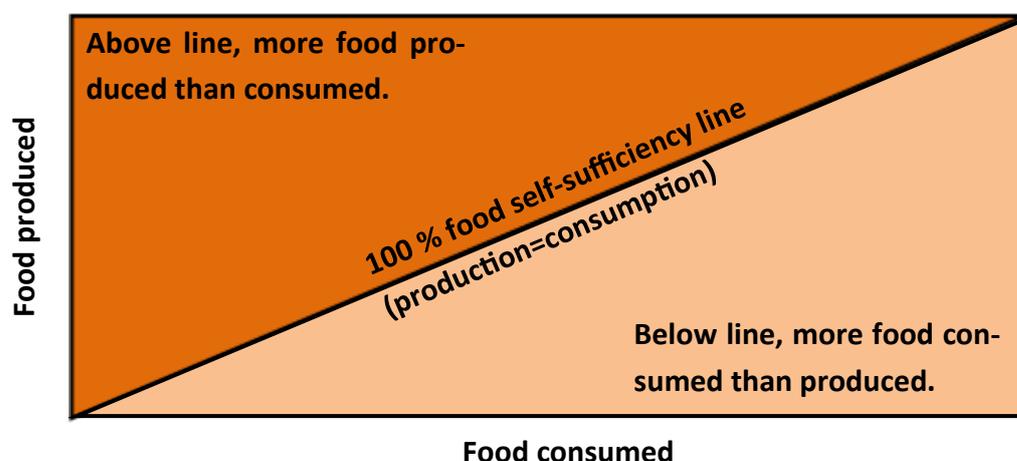
# SELF-SUFFICIENCY INDEX

Directorate: Statistics & Economic Analysis

This is a bi-annual information leaflet by the Directorate: Statistics and Economic Analysis. The aim of the publication is to inform decision makers on the extent to which South Africa is food secure. The production of sufficient volumes of agricultural commodities forms an important part of food security in South Africa. Thus, selected commodities has been identified that will be addressed in this volume, namely maize and wheat. Future issues will focus on other commodities like oilseeds (sunflower seed and soybeans), as well as red meat.

## What is a Self-sufficiency Index?

The concept of food self-sufficiency is generally taken to mean the extent to which a country can satisfy its food needs from its own domestic production. This understanding is illustrated in the diagram below, whereas the diagonal line indicates 100% food self-sufficiency, i.e. where food production is equal to food consumption.

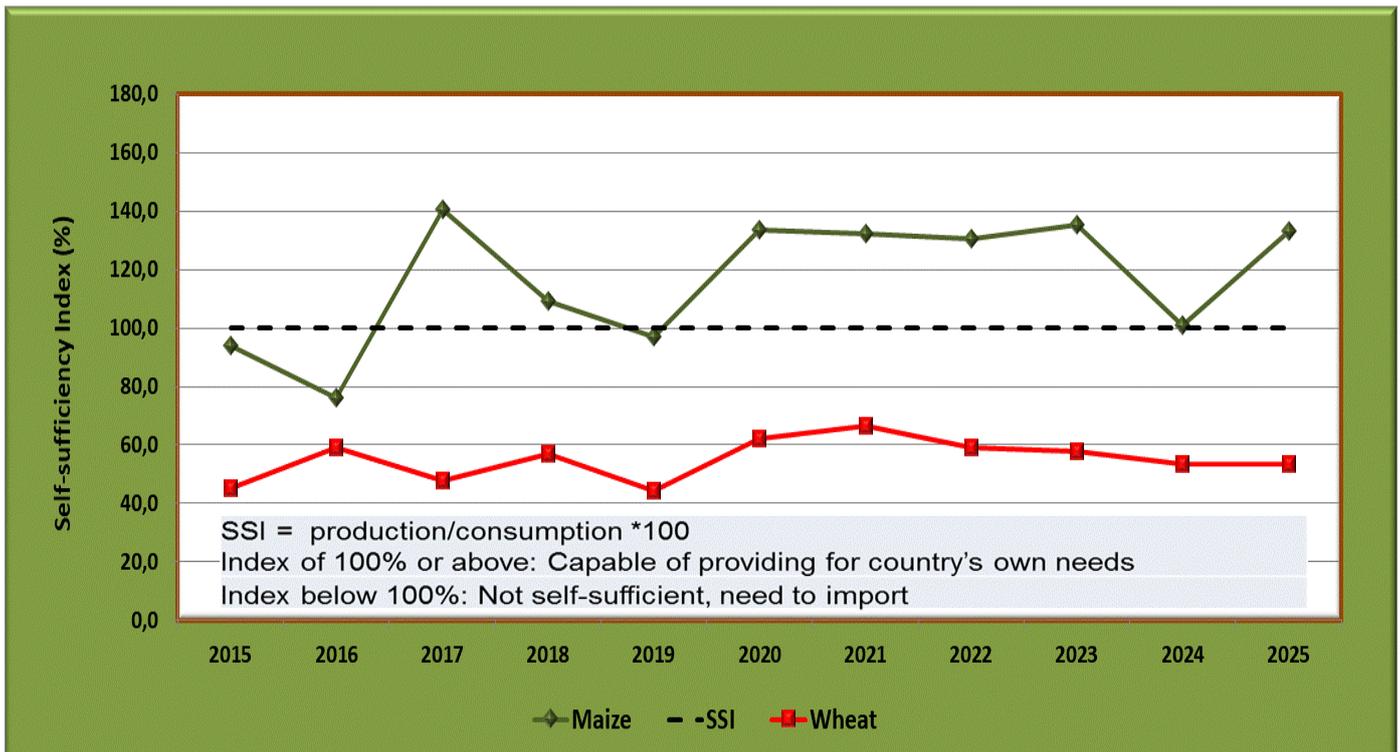


The key point is that if a country is food self-sufficient, it produces an amount of food that is equal to or greater than the amount of food that it consumes. The self-sufficiency index (SSI), expresses food production as a ratio of consumption.

## Maize and Wheat:

South Africa has the capacity to be self-sufficient in most agricultural products. In most years, South Africa produces a surplus over the domestic consumption of the main staple crop, maize; historical exceptions to this have largely been the result of droughts. However, South Africa does rely on imports for some significant agricultural products, including wheat. Approximately forty to fifty percent of the country's wheat requirement is imported.

### SSI of maize & wheat, 2015 - 2025



### Maize :

As South Africa is producing sufficient quantities of maize to satisfy local consumption, thus resulting in a positive SSI (SSI>100). The average 10-year index value (2015 to 2024) of maize is 114,9. The surplus of maize (white) is usually exported to neighbouring SADC countries.

The index value of maize for 2025 is 133,1, which is significantly more (32,0%) than the index value of 2024 (100,8). This increase can mainly be attributed to the larger commercial maize crop of 2025, which is 29,6% more at 16,650 million tons, as compared to the smaller crop of 2024 of 12,850 million tons. The 2025 maize crop is South Africa's second largest crop on record, since the 16,820 million tons crop in 2017. The larger maize crop contributes to a higher production figure as compared to the consumption of maize, resulting in a higher SSI value for 2025. Weather patterns with good late-season rainfall in 2025 supported stronger maize yields compared with the drought-hit 2024 season, contributing to significantly higher production overall.

Generally, South Africa have been in an environment of moderating food price inflation. However, it is probably fair to say that in the second half of 2025, we saw a mild uptick, mainly underpinned by higher meat prices due to the Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) outbreak. In fact, South Africa's consumer food price inflation stabilised at 4,4% in December 2025, unchanged from November. However, on an annual basis, South Africa ended 2025 with an average food price inflation rate of 3,9%, down from 4,0% the previous year. For much of 2025, the primary drivers of the deceleration in food price inflation from higher mid-year levels were fruit and nuts, vegetables, meat, sugar, confectionery, and desserts. The ample supplies, combined with the base effects, contributed to the easing of price inflation for these products.

It is also important to note that South Africa started 2026 with these fundamentals still underpinning the environment in which we operate. For example, grain prices are down by over 30% from a year ago due to large supplies. South Africa had an abundant harvest, with the 2025 summer grains and oilseed harvest estimated at 20,4 million tons representing an increase of 31,7% year-on-year. The exports of staple grains, such as maize, have been much slower than we anticipated. South Africa's maize export forecast is 2,4 million tons for the marketing year that ends in April 2026. However, so far, South Africa has exported only about 1,7 million tons of maize.

The 2026 season also looks encouraging. Favourable rainfall have been received since the start of the season. The farmers have also planted quite a sizable area. For example, South Africa's 2026 revised area plantings for summer grains and oilseeds are 4,6 million hectares, up 4,2% from the previous season. Assuming a decent harvest is realised, it will build on the ample stocks of the previous season, thus keeping grain and oilseed prices under pressure.

## Wheat:

Wheat is the second most important grain commodity consumed in South Africa after maize. The annual per capita consumption of maize is the highest at 68kg/person, followed by wheat (47kg/person) and rice (16kg/person). South Africa consumes approximately 2,4 billion loafs of bread per annum or 38 loafs of bread per person per year.

South Africa is regarded as a net importer of wheat as local production is not sufficient to satisfy local consumption, resulting in a negative SSI ( $SSI < 100$ ). The average 10-year index value (2015 to 2024) of wheat is 55,3.

The index value of wheat for 2025 is 53,5, which is slightly less than the index value of 2024 (53,6). This decrease can mainly be attributed to the smaller wheat crop, estimated at 1,897 million tons for 2025 as compared to the 1,930 million tons of 2024. The main contributor to the decrease in wheat production was the lower yields that realised in especially the Western and Northern Cape, as well as the Limpopo provinces. The 2025 wheat crop is the smallest since the 2019 wheat crop of 1,535 million tons. The smaller wheat crop contributes to a lower production figure as compared to the consumption of wheat, resulting in a lower SSI value for 2025.

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