



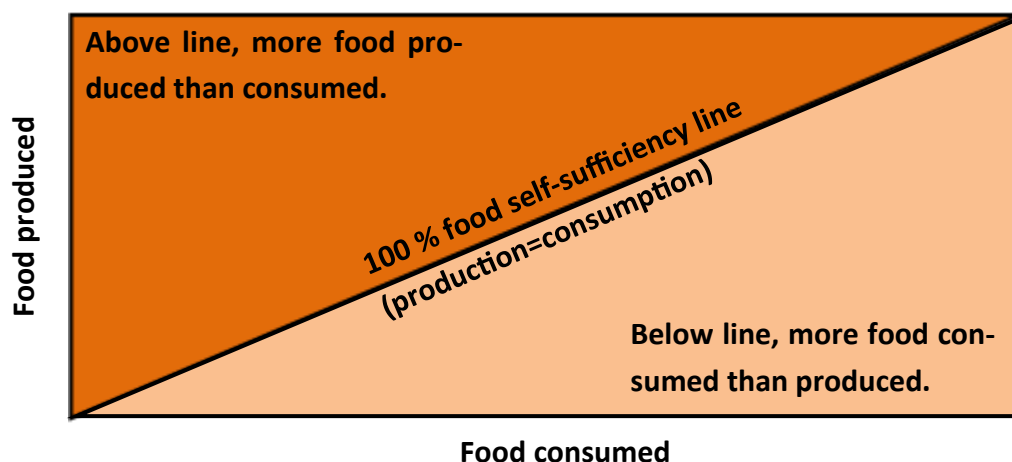
SELF-SUFFICIENCY INDEX

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.

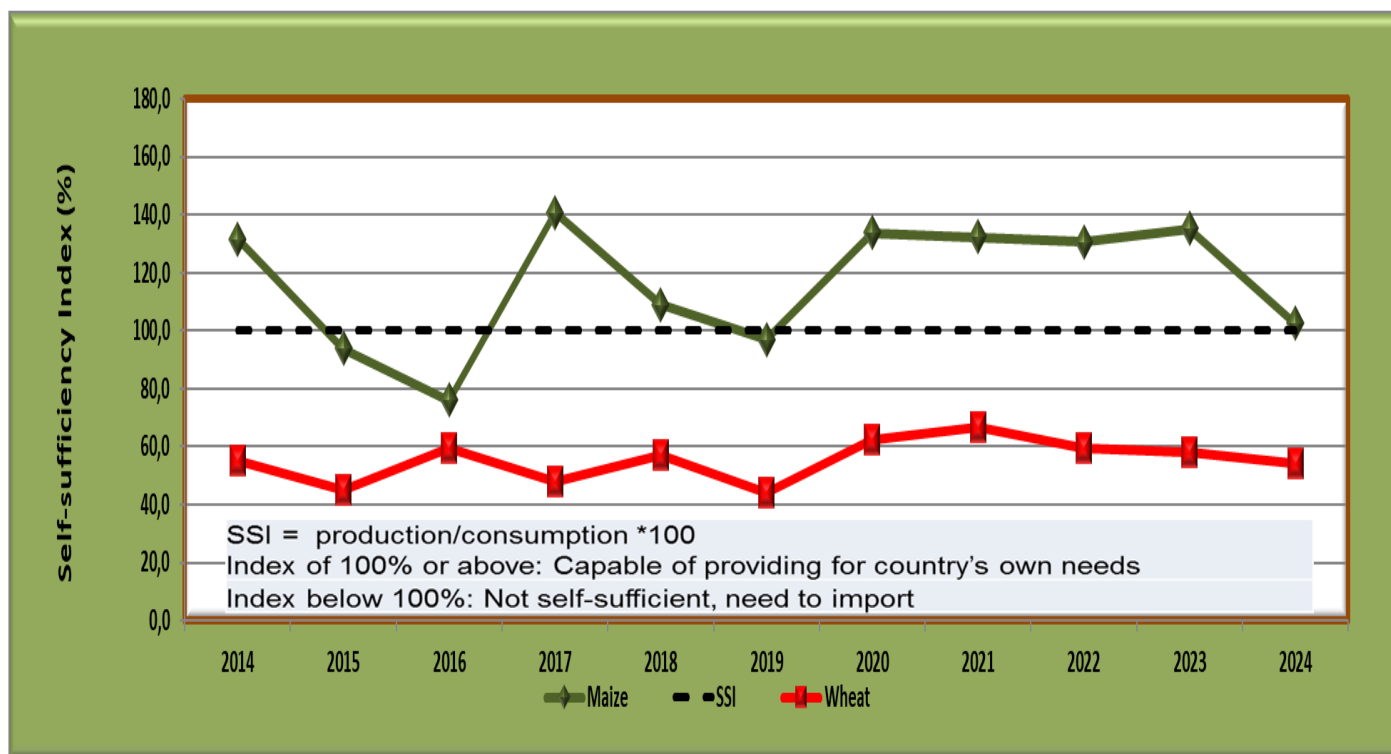


The key point is that if a country is food self-sufficient, it produces an amount of food that is equal to or greater than the amount of food that it consumes. The self-sufficiency index (SSI), expresses food production as a ratio of consumption.

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, 2014 - 2024



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 (2014 to 2023) of maize is 118. The surplus of maize (white) is usually exported to neighbouring SADC countries.

The index value of maize for 2024 is 102, which is significantly less (24,4%) than the index value of 2023 (135). This decrease can mainly be attributed to the smaller commercial maize crop of 2024, which is 21,8% less at 12,850 million tons, as compared to the larger crop of 2023 of 16,430 million tons. The 2024 maize crop is South Africa's smallest crop on record, since the 11,275 million ton crop in 2019. The smaller maize crop contributes to a lower production figure as compared to the consumption of maize, resulting in a lower SSI value for 2024. An El Niño induced mid-summer drought in 2024 coupled with excessive heat across South Africa during the crucial vegetative and flowering stages for maize reduced the yield potential of the crop.

South Africa ended 2024 with lower consumer food price inflation. After slowing to 1,6% in November 2024, the lowest level since October 2010, South Africa's consumer food price inflation slightly nudged to 1,7% in December. The products that contributed to the slight increase in December 2024 were "oils & fats", "fruit", "vegetables", and "sugar, sweets, and dessert". Still, the price increase in all these products was mild. The price inflation of other food products was roughly unchanged from the moderate levels we saw in November. The 2024 food price inflation averaged 4,1%, down from 11,0% in 2023.

The broad story of the second half of 2024, when food product price inflation moderated notably, was the base effects and the recovery in supplies of various products. For example, in the second half of 2023, vegetable prices were elevated because of supply constraints due to load-shedding-related disruptions in some fields. Moreover, the avian influenza outbreak constrained egg supplies, exacerbating price risks. This was also the case with meat. In 2024, these challenges had eased, and the supply improved. For this reason, both vegetables and meat were deflated in November 2024 and remained low in December 2024. Also worth noting is that grain prices faced upward pressure in 2023 following India's rice export ban. In 2024, India resumed rice exports and prices slowed generally. The generally lower wheat prices also added to the moderation of grain-related product prices.

For the first half of 2025, it is expected that grain-related products remain the upside risk to consumer inflation following a surge in white maize prices in the latter part of 2024 because of the poor crop harvest due to the drought. The strong demand from Southern Africa presented additional upside pressure on prices. From the second half of 2025, prices should moderate as grain supplies recover because of favourable La Niña rains.

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 70kg/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 (2014 to 2023) of wheat is 56.

The index value of wheat for 2024 is 54, which is less (6,9%) than the index value of 2023 (58). This decrease can mainly be attributed to the smaller wheat crop, estimated at 1,925 million tons for 2024 as compared to the 2,050 million tons of 2023. The main contributors to the decrease in wheat production was the smaller area planted, as well as the lower yields that realised in especially the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal provinces. The 2024 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 2024.

For more information contact: Directorate Statistics & Economic Analysis (SEA) at MardaS@dalrrd.gov.za or 012 319 8033.