MONTHLY MARKET INFORMATION REPORT: VEGETABLES

Review period: April 2015 to April 2016

Issue: 2016/05

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INTRODUCTION

This report is a review of selected vegetable sales at the Cape Town Fresh Produce Market, the largest fresh produce market in the Western Cape.

The review will be issued on a monthly basis and will cover trend analysis relating to prices (Rand per ton) and volumes (tons) of the selected vegetables sold on the market, considered to be of importance due to the area under production or marketed volumes, however the combination of selected vegetables might change over time due to relevance.

OVERVIEW OF THE NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL MARKETING INFORMATION SYSTEM (AMIS), OFFERED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES (DAFF)

The Agricultural Marketing Information Systems (AMIS) is a database interface offered by the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF).

The main purpose of the Agricultural Marketing Information System (AMIS) is to provide reliable & updated information to farmers. In order to assist farmers to plan activities relating to production and marketing in a much informed manner.

Agricultural market information is provided for horticulture, field crops, livestock and industrial products, and includes the following categories:

- marketing prices,
- grading and standard information,
- annual price trends, and
- marketing news (pertaining to the application procedures for import and export permits).

Click on the following website link to access the DAFF AMIS web application, or alternatively go to the web address: http://webapps.daff.gov.za/amis. Cell phone user can send an sms to *120*4040#

Please note that prices are updated at 12h00 a.m on a daily basis.
1. PRICE AND VOLUME TREND ANALYSIS

1.1 Potatoes

![Figure 1: Potatoes sales on the Cape Town Fresh Produce Market](image)

REVIEW OF THE NATIONAL POTATOES MARKET: APRIL 2016

Although record stock levels have been achieved during 2015, adverse weather conditions has had a negative effect and lowered stock levels as from September 2016. This has pushed average prices upward which have become more evident on the market as from October/November 2016, when lower yields spilled over onto market floors. Since January to April 2016, 17% y/y lesser bags were available nationally which translates into 5.67 million bags compared to the same period in the previous year. The aforementioned ultimately pushed average market prices up by 93% y/y (Potatoes SA, 2016).

In addition, other factors also impacted on higher prices includes increases in labour cost, energy cost as well as the depreciating local currency which fundamentally impact on the cost of input cost such as fertiliser, etc. which are mainly imported and quoted in international currency (Die Burger, 27 April 2016).

Information of 50,000 hectares has been confirmed for planting within the 2016 production season nationally at the end of April 2016, which equates to 90% of the estimated planting for the current season if compared to the approximately 54,000 hectares planted in the previous season of 2015.

In the past few months, production output were mainly derived from drought-stricken areas (i.e. Limpopo, Gauteng, North West, South-West Free State & Mpumalanga) of which the marketing lasted up until April 2016. Consequently, stock levels were on a declining trend until other production regions such as KZN, Sandveld and Eastern Free State began to market more produce and ultimately improved stock levels which pressurised market prices to lower levels (Potatoes SA, 2016). Although it should be considered that the latter production areas are without a doubt also of great concern, as yields are also anticipated to be negatively impacted and thus lesser than the 2015 production (Potatoes SA, 2016).

WESTERN CAPE POTATOES MARKET DEVELOPMENTS: APRIL 2016

On a monthly basis, volumes marketed recovered by 26% m/m or 1499 tons and increased the availability of potatoes on the market floor. However, the aforementioned pressurised average market prices downward by -18% m/m or R1014 per ton.

On an annual basis the volumes marketed were lesser by 27% y/y or 2287 tons compared to the same period in the previous year. Average market prices were considerably higher and increased by 94% y/y or R2299 per ton, compared to the same period in the previous year when potatoes reached R2454 per ton.

- 1 bag of potatoes equals 10 kilogram
- Source: Potatoes SA, Technofresh & Die Burger (2016)
1.2 Tomatoes

Figure 2: Tomatoes sales on the Cape Town Fresh Produce Market

Tomatoes volumes marketed during April 2016 were lesser by 8% m/m or 214 tons if compared to the previous month. Average prices however did not respond adversely, as it moved in a sideways trend or a horizontal price movement, which occurs when supply and demand are almost equal and price movement remains relatively unchanged from the previous period as it was the situation during April 2016 (Investopedia, 2016).

On an annual basis, the volumes marketed improved by 4% y/y or 79 tons, whereas average prices decreased by 7% y/y or R428 per ton.

Tuta absoluta is reported to be still of great concern in the tomato production market. Prevention and effective management thereof is of importance to combat the effects thereof on tomatoes production as well as other host crops (SA Fruit & Vegetables, April 2016).

WHAT IS TUTA ABSOLUTA AND THE EFFECTS THEREOF? (Extraction from DAFF Media Advisory, 2015)

“A new tomato pest called “Tuta absoluta or Tomato Leaf Miner (TLM)” has been prominent in the news since 2006 as it emerged in Europe where it caused serious damage to host crops. The pest originates from South America and has successfully invaded parts of the EU, North Africa and some west and east African countries. The pest was detected in Sudan in 2010 and the invasion has subsequently crossed the Sahara desert, being found in Kenya in 2014. The most recent records are from Tanzania (unconfirmed) in August 2014. There are no records of this pest occurring in South Africa. The main concern is that it can cause serious yield losses of 50 to 100% and it can rapidly develop resistance to pesticides.

Tomato plants are the main host but other plants in the family Solanaceae, such as eggplant, peppers, potatoes and several weeds, are also attacked. The larvae (worms) of this minute moth pest tunnel inside leaves and may also enter the fruit. This damage causes leaves to dry up and die and fruit such as tomatoes to become unmarketable. The pest spreads on seedlings as well as fruit. Considering its rate of spread in Africa, this pest may be detected in South Africa in less than a year’s time. Prevention, early detection and rapid response will entail a coordinated approach between DAFF, Provincial Departments of Agriculture (PDAs) and industry to ensure growers are protected as much as possible from this pest.

The National Plant Protection Organisation of South Africa (NPPOZA) within DAFF is already developing an early warnings system (EWS) for this pest in collaboration with the Tomato Producers Organisation, PDAs, Potato South Africa and the Potato Certification Scheme. This is in line with the South African Emergency Plant Pest Response Plan (SAEPPRP). Considering the high volumes of tomato production in the northern parts of our country, this pest must be taken seriously, since tomatoes are a staple crop for small scale farmers, and contribute immensely to job creation and economic growth and most importantly, are a main ingredient in at least one food source for the majority of South Africans every day (either fresh or processed).”

Source: DAFF, 2015
1.3 Onions

Figure 3: Onion sales on the Cape Town Fresh Produce Market

In April 2016, the volumes marketed were lower by 30% m/m or 772 tons compared to the previous month. This further pushed average prices upward by 23% m/m or by R1044 per ton, obtaining R5573 per ton during April 2016.

If assessed on an annual basis, marketed volumes decreased by 19% y/y or 424 tons, and reached 1787 tons. The lower stock levels resulted in higher average prices which traded higher by 75% y/y or R2377 per ton, compared to the same period in the previous year.

1.4 Butternut Squash

Figure 4: Butternut sales on the Cape Town Fresh Produce Market

Butternut squash volumes marketed during April 2016, declined by 8% m/m or 72 tons, as only 805 tons were sold. Given the lesser stock available during April 2016, monthly average prices continued on a decreasing trend as from the previous two month and further decreased by an additional 19% m/m or R581 per ton, obtaining R2470 per ton.

On an annual basis, supplies marketed were lesser by 9% or 79 tons, whilst the average market prices realised improved by 32% y/y or R597 per ton compared to the same period in the previous year.
1.5 Carrots

Figure 5: Carrots sales on the Cape Town Fresh Product Market

Carrot supplies to the market during April 2016, declined by 10% m/m or 58 tons compared to the previous month’s sales level of 601 tons. Whilst the average price per ton, further increased by 26% m/m or R1199 per ton and obtained R5815 per ton.

On an annual basis, volumes improved by 1% whilst the average price obtained during April 2016 amounted to R5815 per ton continued, which is 65% y/y higher or R2289 per ton compared to the same period in the previous year.

1.6 Pumpkin

Figure 6: Pumpkin sales on the Cape Town Fresh Produce Market

Pumpkin volumes supplied to the market during April 2016, amounted to 449 tons which translates into an 8% m/m change compared to the sales in the previous month. Average market prices however responded adversely, as it experience downward pressure and declined by 13% m/m or R283 per ton, thus reaching R449 per ton during the current month.

On an annual basis, the volumes marketed increased by 2% y/y whilst average prices increased by 26% y/y or R389 per ton, compared to the same period last year.
Gem Squash volumes decreased by 12% m/m or 57 tons, compared to the previous monthly sales on the Cape Town municipal market. The relative shortage in supplies resulted in a 24% m/m or R2419 per ton increase compared to the previous month.

On an annual basis, volumes sold were 7% y/y or 30 tons lesser compared to the same period in the previous year. Whilst average prices achieved improved levels and obtained R2419 per ton, of which translates to 61% y/y or R914 per ton.

Pepper sales decreased by 18% m/m or 97 tons compared to the previous month. Whilst higher prices declined by 16% m/m or R1951 per ton, obtaining R10 386 per ton during the month of April 2016.

On an annual basis, the quantity sold on the market decreased by 19% y/y or 99 tons to 435 tons, whilst the average price per ton escalated to 42% or R 3067 per ton more than the average price obtained per ton for the same period in the previous year.
1.9 Cabbage

Figure 9: Cabbage sales on the Cape Town Fresh Produce Market

Cabbage volumes marketed during April 2016, remain more or less unchanged. Whilst the monthly average price decreased by 1% m/m or R26 to an amount of R4324 per ton.

On an annual basis, volumes marketed were lesser by 13% y/y or 52 tons, whilst the average prices obtained during April 2016 has escalated upwards by 88% y/y ~ translating to R2018 more per ton of cabbage sold in April, compared to the same period in the previous year.

1.10 Lettuce

Figure 10: Lettuce sales on the Cape Town Fresh Produce Market

Lettuce volumes declined by a further 22% m/m or 78 tons and obtained 268 tons during the month of April 2016. Given the lesser stock levels since February 2016, the monthly average price continued on a downward trend and further decreased by 22% m/m or R1258 per ton to an amount of R4467 per ton.

On an annual basis, volumes sold on the municipal market declined by 14% y/y or 43 tons whilst the average price obtained escalated by 42% y/y or R1317 per ton.
1.11 Sweet Potatoes

Figure 11: Sweet potatoes sales on the Cape Town Fresh Produce Market

Sweet potatoes sales on the Cape Town fresh produce municipal market decreased by 2% m/m or 6 tons, compared to the previous month when it reached 264 tons. The average price obtained during April 2016, moderately recovered as it started to decrease as volumes improved since the inception of the year. Monthly average price decreased by 10% m/m or R574 per ton.

Quantities sold escalated upward by 26% y/y or 53 tons and pressurised average prices upward by 87% y/y or R2494 per ton, resulting in the average price obtained during April 2016 to be R5375 per ton.

1.12 English Cucumber

Figure 12: English Cucumber sales on the Cape Town Fresh Produce Market

Cucumber sales declined by 9% m/m or 19 tons during April 2016 sales on the municipal market compared to the previous month when 206 tons were sold. Regardless of lower stock levels available on the market, average prices declined by 29% m/m or R5023 per ton and obtained R 12161 per ton compared to last month.

On an annual basis, volumes supplied to the market were lesser by 14% y/y or 30 tons for the same period last year. The aforementioned together with other factors, pushed average prices upward by 30 % or R2839 per ton compared to the same period in the previous year.
## TREND ANALYSIS OF NICHE VEGETABLES TRADED ON THE CAPE TOWN FRESH PRODUCE MARKET:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRODUCE NAME: (in order of the highest to lowest volumes sold during this month)</th>
<th>AVERAGE TONS TRADED FOR APRIL 2016: (tons)</th>
<th>CHANGE IN THE AVERAGE TONS TRADED FOR APRIL 2016: (m/m)</th>
<th>AVERAGE PRICE OBTAINED FOR APRIL 2016: (Rand per ton)</th>
<th>CHANGE IN THE AVERAGE PRICE MARKETED FOR APRIL 2016: (m/m)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13. Cauliflower</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>R6 339</td>
<td>-37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Baby Marrow</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>R6 564</td>
<td>-56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Green beans</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>R7 930</td>
<td>-23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Broccoli</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>R10 962</td>
<td>-44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Brinjals/Eggplant</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>R6 167</td>
<td>-36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Sweetcorn</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>-50%</td>
<td>R11 158</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Beetroot</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>R7 933</td>
<td>-8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Leeks</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>R4 427</td>
<td>-3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Spinach</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>R10 272</td>
<td>-13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Spring Onion</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>-6%</td>
<td>R6 953</td>
<td>-10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Patty Pans</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>161%</td>
<td>R9 100</td>
<td>-24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Marrow</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>-15%</td>
<td>R1 725</td>
<td>-11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Mushrooms</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>-18%</td>
<td>R52 916</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Hubbard Squash</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>R846</td>
<td>-40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Radish</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>-32%</td>
<td>R8 533</td>
<td>-56%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.1 STATUS OF ORIENTAL FRUIT FLY IN SOUTH AFRICA AND MITIGATION/CONTROL MEASURES: AN EXTRACTION FROM DAFF MEDIA RELEASE, 25 APRIL 2016

The Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) released a media statement regarding the status of the Oriental fruit fly (Bactrocera dorsalis) within each province South Africa as well as the associated control measures for mitigation in affected areas.

“The Oriental fruit fly is an exotic fruit fly native to Asia, previously described by Africa as the Invader fruit fly (Bactrocera invadens). Prevalence thereof has been recorded in at least 65 countries, of which most are Africa’s sub-Saharan countries.” Crop hosts include the following: mangoes, guavas, citrus, avocados, bananas, coffee, papaya, passion fruit, pears, apricots, peaches, cherries, apples, peppers and tomatoes.

The pest can result in food insecurity and job losses as a result of crop losses and possible hampering of qualifying conditions relating to market access restrictions. As farming communities are combatting the mitigation and control thereof, it is reported that it would ultimately result in high production and post-harvest costs, if not effectively controlled.

The status of the pest in South Africa as of October 2015 is depicted in the below table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROVINCE</th>
<th>DISTRICT</th>
<th>STATUS AND ACTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Limpopo</td>
<td>Vhembe District Municipality</td>
<td>Present, and subject to official control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mopani District Municipality</td>
<td>Present, and subject to official control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sekhukhune District Municipality</td>
<td>Present, only in some areas where host crop(s) are grown, and subject to official control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Capricorn District Municipality</td>
<td>Present, only in some areas where host crop(s) are grown, and subject to official control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Waterberg District Municipality</td>
<td>Present, only in some areas where host crop(s) are grown, and subject to official control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mpumalanga</td>
<td>Ehlanzeni District Municipality</td>
<td>Present, and subject to official control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>Ngaka Modiri District Municipality</td>
<td>Present, only in some areas and subject to official control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bojanala Platinum District Municipality</td>
<td>Present at low prevalence, seasonal in some areas and subject to official control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dr Kenneth Kaunda District Municipality</td>
<td>Present at low prevalence, seasonal in some areas and subject to official control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gauteng</td>
<td>City of Tshwane Municipality</td>
<td>Present seasonally in some areas and subject to official control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KwaZulu-Natal</td>
<td>iLembe District Municipality</td>
<td>Present at low prevalence, seasonal in some areas and subject to official control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Harry Gwala District Municipality</td>
<td>Present at low prevalence, seasonal in some areas and subject to official control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ugu District Municipality</td>
<td>Present at low prevalence, seasonal in some areas and subject to official control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>uMkhanyakude District Municipality</td>
<td>Present only in some areas and subject to official control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipality</td>
<td>Status</td>
<td>Note</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uthungulu District</td>
<td>Present at low prevalence, seasonal in some areas and subject to official control</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Cape</td>
<td>Absent. Pest eradicated from the Sarah Baartman District Municipality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Cape</td>
<td>Absent, pest eradicated from the Frances Baard District municipality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Cape</td>
<td>Absent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free State</td>
<td>Absent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DAFF, 2016

**Below is an extracted regarding the mitigation/control measures, from the DAFF media release for information purposes:**

“This pest can be controlled by practicing effective orchard/field sanitation, chemical control and control of the removal of host material from quarantine (infested) areas to non-quarantine (non-infested) areas. Orchard sanitation is the collection of all fallen and rotten fruit/fruiting vegetables, burying them in a pit or trench and covering with half a 3 metre of soil, or placing them into a black refuse bag, closing it and exposing it to the sun.

In terms of chemical control, Male Annihilation (MAT) blocks and protein bait stations such as M3s or protein bait sprays can be applied. As part of the official control mechanism, community members and farmers are reminded not to remove fruit from quarantine areas to non-quarantine areas without first receiving a removal permit which should be applied and obtainable from the DAFF in terms of the Control Measures R.110 of the Agricultural Pests Act,1983 (Act No. 36 of 1983). They are also advised to clear away (bag or bury) unwanted fruit in home gardens and on farms and apply chemical control.

International travellers are advised to avoid illegal importation of agricultural commodities into South Africa because this may lead to the introduction of new pests and diseases which are expensive and difficult to manage.

Please do not remove the fruit-fly trapping buckets placed along roadsides, in production areas and other public areas. Their presence is essential to the national exotic fruit fly surveillance programme. People in all provinces producing the host crops of this pest are advised to stay alert and practice the stipulated preventative control measures”.

Extraction from DAFF Media Statement, 25 April 2016.

**For further information contact:**
Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF)
Plant Health Directorate: Early Warning Systems
Mr. Jan Hendrik Venter
Email: janHendrikv@daff.gov.za , Tel: 012 319 6384

Click [here](#) to view the Trapping Guidelines for surveillance of Bactrocera invadens in fruit production areas, for further reference on control measures.

Also visit the DAFF website [here](#), for more details on this matter.
2.2 NATIONAL MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES WARN AGAINST BUSINESSES SUSPECTED OF “ARTIFICIAL” PROFITEERING OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS WHICH ARE IN SHORT SUPPLY AS A RESULT OF DROUGHT

The Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Senzeni Zokwana warned that businesses whom are suspected of “artificial” profiteering from staple agricultural products such as bread that are in short supply due to the effects of the drought, through the inflating of prices. He further indicated that such businesses would face the “full arm of law” through the competition authorities (Fin24, 2016).

It is reported that the Minister, indicated that the required formula’s should be tabled and agreed on in order to ensure that business throughout the agricultural value-chain do not collude and misuse the drought as a yardstick to profiteer out of the situation even before agricultural product are short in supply through the application of enormous price increases (Fin24, 2016). The Minister further added that the reporting of “alleged cases” to the Competition Commission cannot be ruled out.

On the other hand, the South African Reserve Bank (SARB) warned that continued upward pressure on food prices due to the realisation of lower yields and other contributing factors are posing additional risk on inflation, which peaked at 6.3% in March 2016 compared to 7% in February 2016 which is the highest in nearly seven years (Nedbank & SARS, 2016).

Nedbank recently indicated inflation is expected to “soften” or decline further in April 2016, although it is estimated to reach above the 6% upper target range for a few months. The biggest threat to the inflation outlook remains the impact of the drought on food prices, which is anticipated to be more noticeable as from the third quarter onwards when the effects of the drought and the depreciating rand results in upward pressure in prices (Nedbank & SARS, 2016). Consequently, inflation is expected to be above 7% at the end of 2016, which is far-above, the 3-6% target range aspired by the South African Revenue Service (Nedbank & SARS, 2016).

Sources: Fin24, SARS & Nedbank, 2016.

2.3 WEATHER UPDATE: DAFF NAC ADVISORY ON THE 2015/16 SUMMER SEASON FOR APRIL 2016

The Western Cape Province received normal to above-normal rainfall in the Overberg and parts of Eden. On the other hand, the Cape Winelands and Central Karoo received above-normal rainfall in certain areas, whereas other areas received below-normal rainfall.

Monthly mean temperatures were on average 1 to 2°C lower than the long term means. Except for the southern coastal parts experiencing normal agricultural production conditions the rest of the province has to cope with below-normal dry conditions. Although the province received some rainfall, thus far it has been extremely dry in areas which should have received some rain by now. The average level of dams within the Province has decreased compared to the same period in the previous year (i.e. 30% in 2016 compared to 45% in 2015).

Source: DAFF NAC, 2016

A comprehensive list of strategies can be found in the monthly NAC Advisory. It can be accessed from the following websites: www.daff.gov.za and www.agis.agric.za.

Request weather warning notifications from the Western Cape Department of Agriculture: Sustainable Resource Management, Disaster Risk Management

Forward an email to Mrs. Zaibu Arai to ZaibuA@elsenburg.com or alternatively call (021) 808 5368.

- Click here to view the most recent update (latest update on 19 April 2016) on the dam levels within the Western Cape Province or alternatively visit the Elsenburg Website at www.elsenburg.com.
2.4 High volumes of small and baby potatoes does NOT indicate Genetic Modification (GM), says Potatoes SA

Potatoes South Africa has issued a statement on 06 May 2016, in response to mounting concerns from consumers against Genetically Modified (GM) crops.

Potatoes SA reiterated that “NO potato tuber produced in South Africa is genetically modified.” This comes after a popular agricultural radio talk show on 06 May 2016; in which a listener shared the “misconception” in that it is believed that the current high volumes of small and baby potatoes are an indication of genetic modification within potatoes production (Potatoes SA, 2016).

Mr Ernst Yzel, the chairperson of Potatoes South Africa, responded to the concern regarding GM potatoes production and said the following:

“Genetically modified potatoes have been a controversial point of discussion the world over. Although, GM potatoes have been released more than 15 years ago in other countries, large processors of potatoes have persistently refused to use GM varieties. To the best of our knowledge, GM potatoes are not commercially grown anywhere in the world. The Agricultural Research Council applied for release of a very old cultivar, namely Spunta, than has been genetically modified to have resistance against the potato tuber moth. Although the potato tuber moth is regarded as the most important potato pest in South Africa, the yield of Spunta is much lower that the cultivars that are grown commercially. It therefore does not economically make sense to grow the genetically modified Spunta. The possible release of GM Spunta was discussed at the Potato Industry Forum, which represents all role players in the potato value chain. The conclusion of the discussion at the time was that it does not make sense to release GM Spunta” (Potatoes SA, 2016).

He further acknowledges that end-consumers may question why there are so many baby and small potatoes available during the current production season. However, the drought and the uncommon high temperatures of the past summer played a fundamental role as it should be kept in mind that potato plants perform best at temperatures between 18°C to 24°C and thus if temperatures rise above 30°C potato plants underperform especially more so if temperatures reach between 35°C and 40°C (Potatoes SA, 2016).

The below depicts how the drought impacted on the cultivation of potato plants as well as the yield and quality delivered to markets in the past months:

“A characteristic of potatoes is that they do not require unusual high volumes of water (650 mm throughout the growing season), however if the plants suffer from a shortage of water for even a few days, it manifests in lower yields with smaller tubers. Water efficiency must therefore be managed very well since potato tubers consist of between 75% - 80% water. At very high temperatures potato plants react through lower photosynthesis with the result that less solids and starches are formed in the tubers which is another factor why harvests are yielding high percentages small and baby potatoes.”

Thus, consumers were therefore encouraged to “safely buy and enjoy potatoes on the shelves!”

Further enquiries can be directed to Dr Fienie Niederwieser, Potatoes SA: Manager Research & Development, Potatoes South Africa at fieNie@potatoes.co.za or 012-349 1906.

Source: Potatoes SA, 2016
2.5 MONTHLY FUEL PRICE ADJUSTMENT HAVE BEEN EFFECTIVE AS FROM WEDNESDAY, 04 MAY 2016

The Department of Energy indicated that the strengthening in Rand against the US dollar (i.e. United States of America dollar, which is the currency in which international crude oil is traded – OPEC, 2016). On average the Rand strengthen from R 14.65 to R15.47, from 01 April 2016 to 28 April 2016 and subsequently resulted in in the monthly fuel price adjustments (DOE, 2016).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product description</th>
<th>Numeric adjustment applicable to the Coastal parts in South Africa (cents per litre)</th>
<th>Price adjustment description</th>
<th>Average price applicable to the Coastal parts in South Africa (cents per litre)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Petrol 93 ULP</td>
<td>12.00c</td>
<td>cents per litre increase in retail price</td>
<td>1206.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petrol 95 ULP &amp; LRP</td>
<td>12.00c</td>
<td>cents per litre increase in retail price</td>
<td>1 226.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diesel 0.05% Sulphur</td>
<td>1.00c</td>
<td>cents per litre decrease in wholesale price</td>
<td>1052.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diesel 0.005% Sulphur</td>
<td>2.00c</td>
<td>cents per litre decrease in wholesale price</td>
<td>1057.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illuminating Paraffin (Wholesale)</td>
<td>7.00c</td>
<td>cents per litre decrease in wholesale price</td>
<td>601.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illuminating Paraffin (SMNRP)</td>
<td>9.00c</td>
<td>cents per litre decrease in the Single Maximum National Retail price (SMNRP)</td>
<td>839.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum Retail Price for LPGAS</td>
<td>5.00c</td>
<td>cents per kilogram decrease in the maximum retail price</td>
<td>385.69 (refinery gate)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Department of Energy, 29 April 2016
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The following institutions and organisations are hereby acknowledged:

Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries: www.daff.gov.za
Department of Energy: www.energy.gov.za
Die Burger/ Netwerk24: www.netwerk24.com
Fin24: www.fin24.com
Investopedia: www.investopedia.com
Nedbank: www.nedbank.co.za
Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC): www.opec.org
Potatoes South Africa (SA): www.potatoes.co.za
South African Vegetables and Fruit: March/April 2016 issue; http://www.mediacomcc.co.za/
Techno Fresh CRM: www.technofresh.co.za

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