

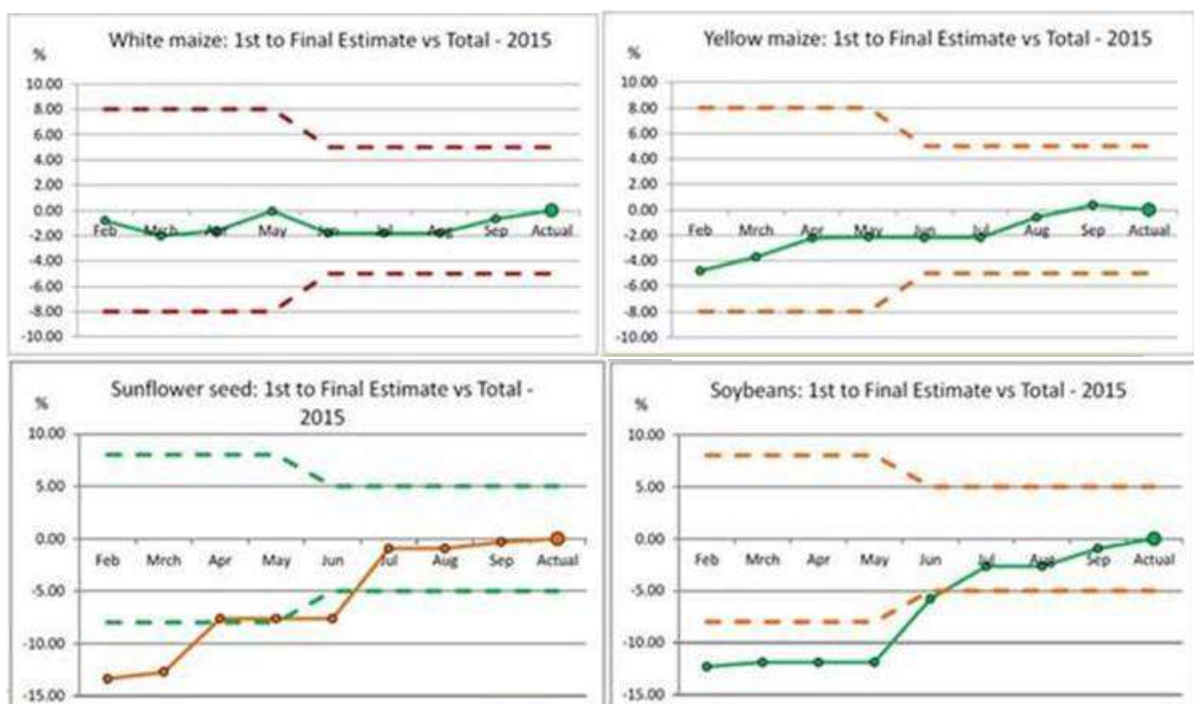
10 March 2016

## South African Crop Estimates on target

The Crop Estimates Liaison Committee announced the final production figures of commercial summer crops for 2015 on 11 February 2016. The 2015 maize crop (9,9 mill. tons) was the lowest in South Africa since 2007 (7,125 mill. tons). A soybean crop in excess of 1 million tons (1,060 mill. tons) was estimated for 2015 – the highest ever. The WM/YM ratio changed to 54/45 in 2015, from 57/42 in 2014.

An improvement in crop estimates is evident over the past 15 years, due to the fact that more scientific data is available. The Crop Estimates Committee (CEC) has made immense progress with various parameters and high resolution imagery, while aerial and earth observation data enable deductions to be 90% objective. Technology to estimate yield is not currently used, but the SA Space Agency has access to a learning algorithm that is 80 to 90% accurate. However, the greatest consideration for the CEC is efficiency vs. cost.

The CEC is remarkably accurate in its estimates, especially for maize and the oilseeds where estimates are well within the variance of 8% initially and 5% later in the season. CEC was well within the 5% deviation target with their maize estimates, right from the first estimate in February 2015. This exceptional achievement needs to be recognized by the grain and industry. The six graphs below show the high accuracy of the 2015 estimates for maize, sunflower, soya beans, sorghum and groundnuts.





Agbiz Grain is organising a national one-day CELC seminar on Technologies for Quantitative Crop Estimates and Condition Reporting in Agriculture under the title **Monitoring Food Security Threats from Space**. Some of the latest technologies used by the Crop Estimates Consortium will be showcased and it will be demonstrated how they are integrated to produce quantitative crop estimation systems that are accurate, cost effective timely and reliable.

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