SUMMERGRAIN PRODUCTION CONDITIONS REPORT

GSA GRAIN | GRAAN

GEOTERRA IMAGE



11 NOVEMBER 2026

This report will be updated every two weeks

Gewas toestand
Crop Condition

Klimaat
Climate

Vergelyk
Compare

Opbrengs potensiaal
Production potential

Gewas opkoms
Greenup

Kaarte
Maps

Verslae
Report

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DEFINITIONS

- **Soil Water Index (SWI):**

This represents an overview of the soil water percentage throughout the growing season. It compares three periods: the current season, the previous season, and the 5-year average. This average serves as a baseline, indicating typical soil water conditions.

- **Green Leaf Indicator (GLI):**

Values over the growing season that illustrate crop growth patterns.

- **Crop conditions**

Crop conditions describe the overall health and yield potential of crops, based on rainfall, soil moisture, and environmental stress factors.

All the 2026/27 season data is from 1 July 2026 to 11 November 2026.

INTENTIONS TO PLANT FOR THE 2026/27 PRODUCTION SEASON (CEC)

CROP	**Intentions 2027 Ha as mid Oct 2026**	Area planted 2026 Ha	Ninth estimate 2026 Tons as on 27 Oct 2026	Change %
	(A)	(B)	(C)	(A) ÷ (B)
Commercial:				
White maize	**1 370 200**	1 674 700	9 777 340	-18,18%
Yellow maize	**1 017 000**	1 049 500	7 914 050	-3,10%
Total Maize	**2 387 200**	2 724 200	17 691 390	-12,37%
Sunflower seed	**824 600**	570 100	874 805	44,64%
Soybeans	**1 205 300**	1 212 700	3 010 175	-0,61%
Groundnuts	**43 280**	44 650	65 620	-3,07%
Sorghum	**39 500**	40 000	123 325	-1,25%
Dry beans	**35 770**	38 520	80 695	-7,14%
TOTAL	**4 535 650**	4 630 170	21 846 010	-2,04%

Note: Estimate is for calendar year, e.g. production season 2026/27 = 2027

Scan the QR code above or click on the link below for the full report

CEC_2026-10-27.pdf

*Source: CEC. The **Final Production forecast** will be released on the 26th of November 2026*

Crop Estimates Committee
Oesskattingskomitee

SUMMARY

Crop Conditions

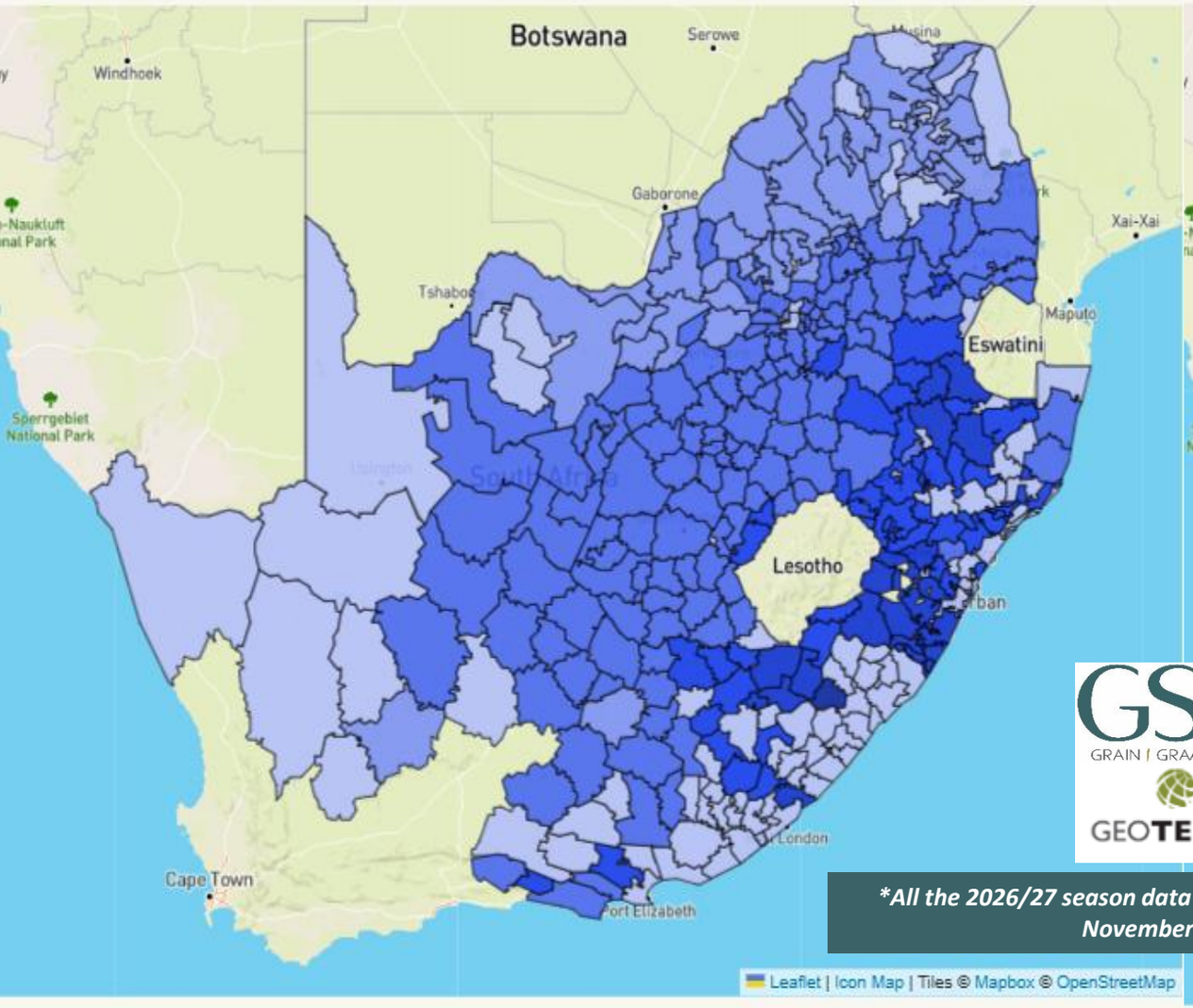
Production conditions across the summer grain regions have improved since late October, although regional differences remain. At the end of October, planting progress was constrained by widespread dry conditions and inadequate soil moisture across the Eastern Free State, Eastern Highveld, Limpopo and North West Province. Since then, favourable rainfall in the eastern production areas has improved soil moisture levels, supporting crop emergence, crop growth and continued planting activities. As a result, production prospects in the Eastern Highveld and Eastern Free State have improved markedly, with maize planting nearing completion in some areas and soybean planting progressing well.

In contrast, parts of the North West Province, Northwest Free State and Limpopo continue to experience moisture constraints due to limited and uneven rainfall, coupled with persistently high temperatures (heatwaves). Although crop establishment has generally been favourable where rainfall was received, many producers remain reliant on additional rainfall to support further planting and early crop development. Localised challenges, including hail damage, weed pressure, and rodent activity, have also been reported. Overall, production conditions are considerably more favourable than they were at the end of October. Still, rainfall over the coming weeks will remain critical for sustaining planting momentum, improving crop establishment and maximising yield potential, particularly in the drier western production regions. Soil moisture conditions will remain an important factor to monitor as the season progresses.

Follow-up rainfall remains critical across all production regions, as most regions are experiencing heatwaves due to the strengthening El Niño conditions. According to GEOGLAM and SAWS, there is a greater than 96% probability that the current El Niño will intensify into a very strong event through January 2027 and persist until at least April 2027, increasing the risk of hotter and drier-than-normal conditions across Southern Africa.

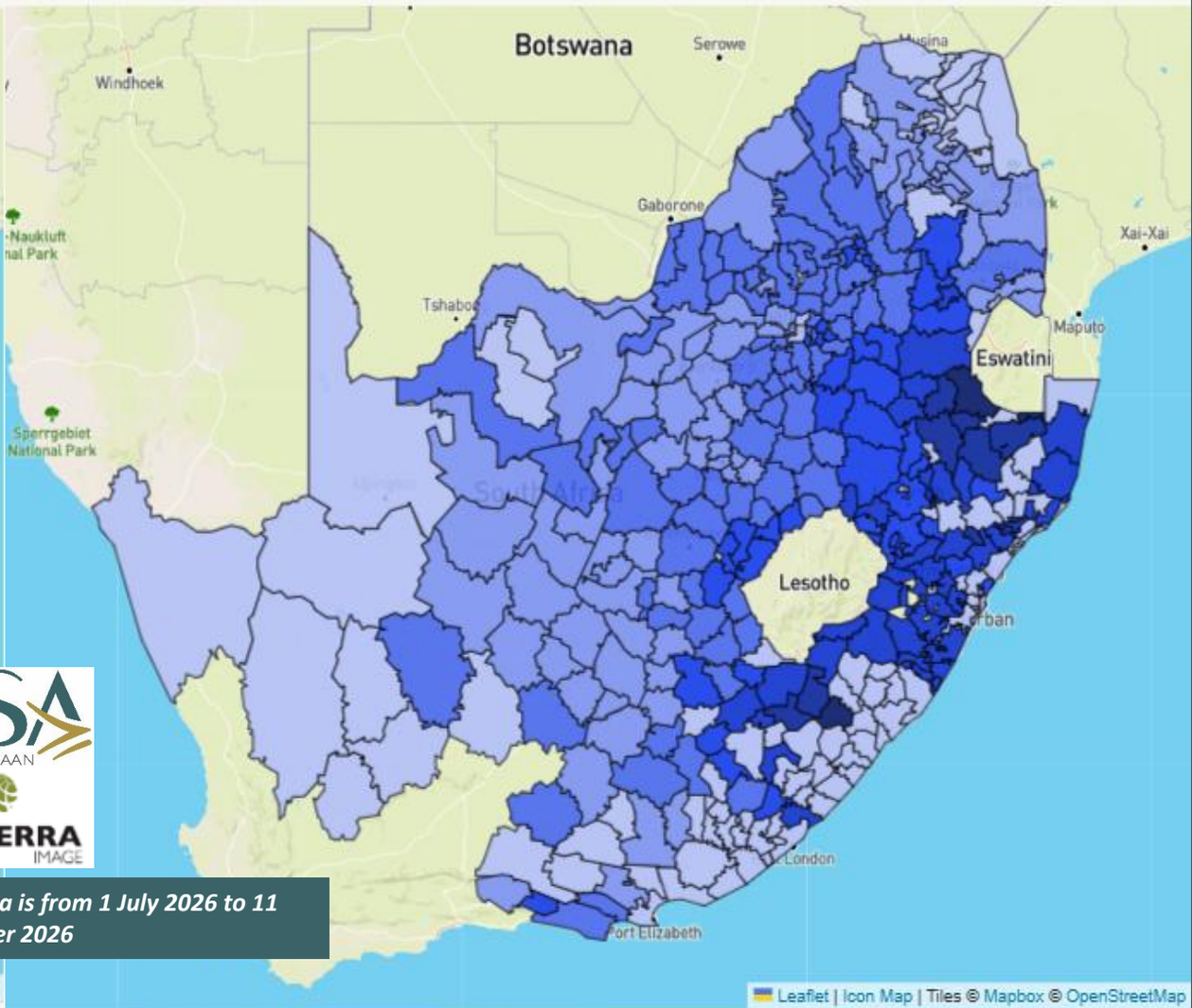
RAINFALL

Totale Reënval/Total Rainfall



0-50 mm | 50-100 mm | 100-200 mm | 200-300 mm | 300-400 mm | 400-600 mm | 600-800 mm | >800 mm

Reënval vir die afgelope 30 dae/Rainfall for the past 30 days

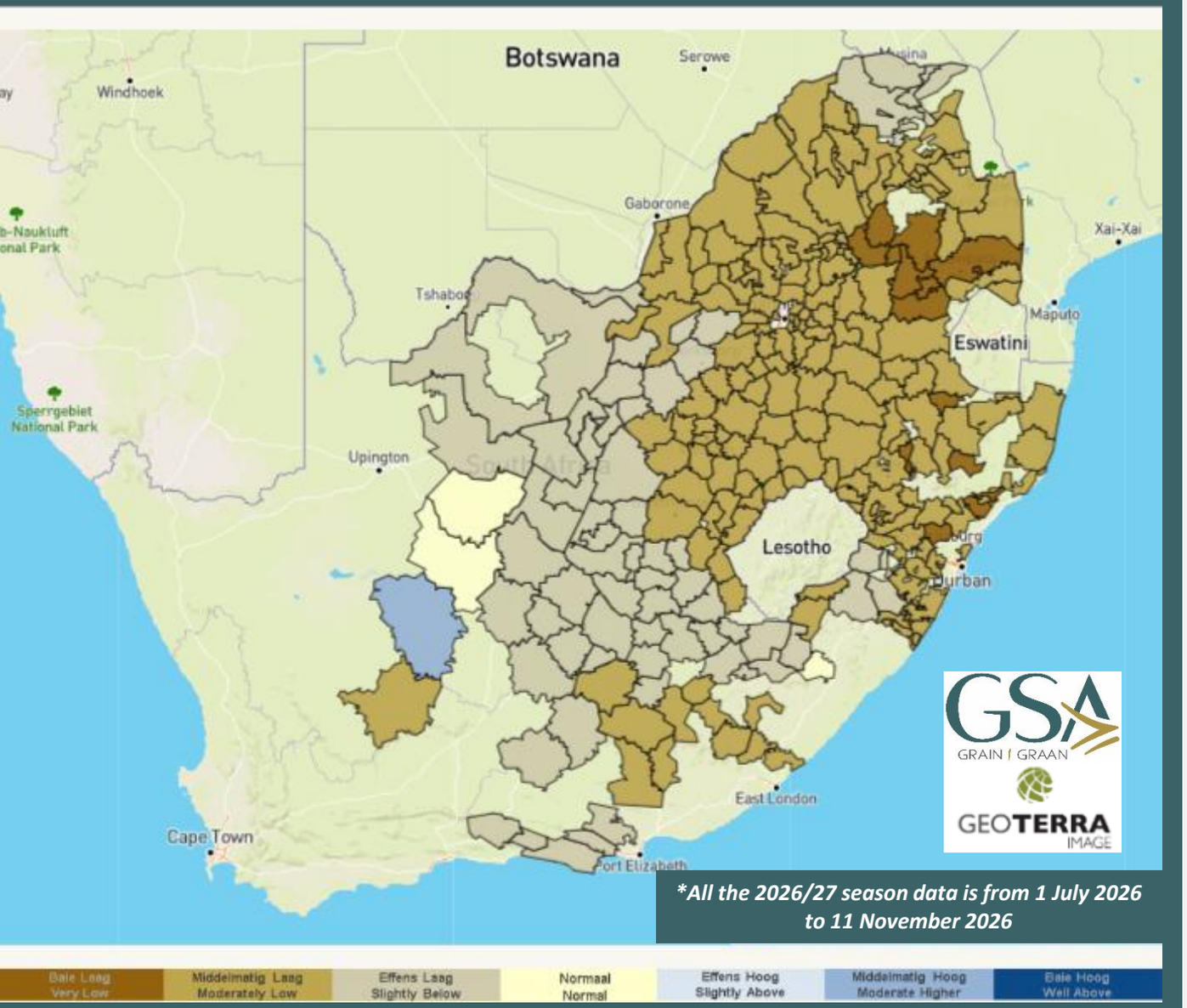


0-10 mm | 10-25 mm | 25-50 mm | 50-75 mm | 75-125 mm | 125-175 mm | 175-250 mm | >250 mm

GSA GRAIN / GRAAN
GEOTERRA IMAGE

**All the 2026/27 season data is from 1 July 2026 to 11 November 2026*

Totale Reënval/Total Rainfall



Rainfall patterns over the past few weeks have continued to influence crop conditions across the summer rainfall regions, with normal rainfall recorded across much of the west and central production areas. The map shows the average rainfall received in October.

Free State:

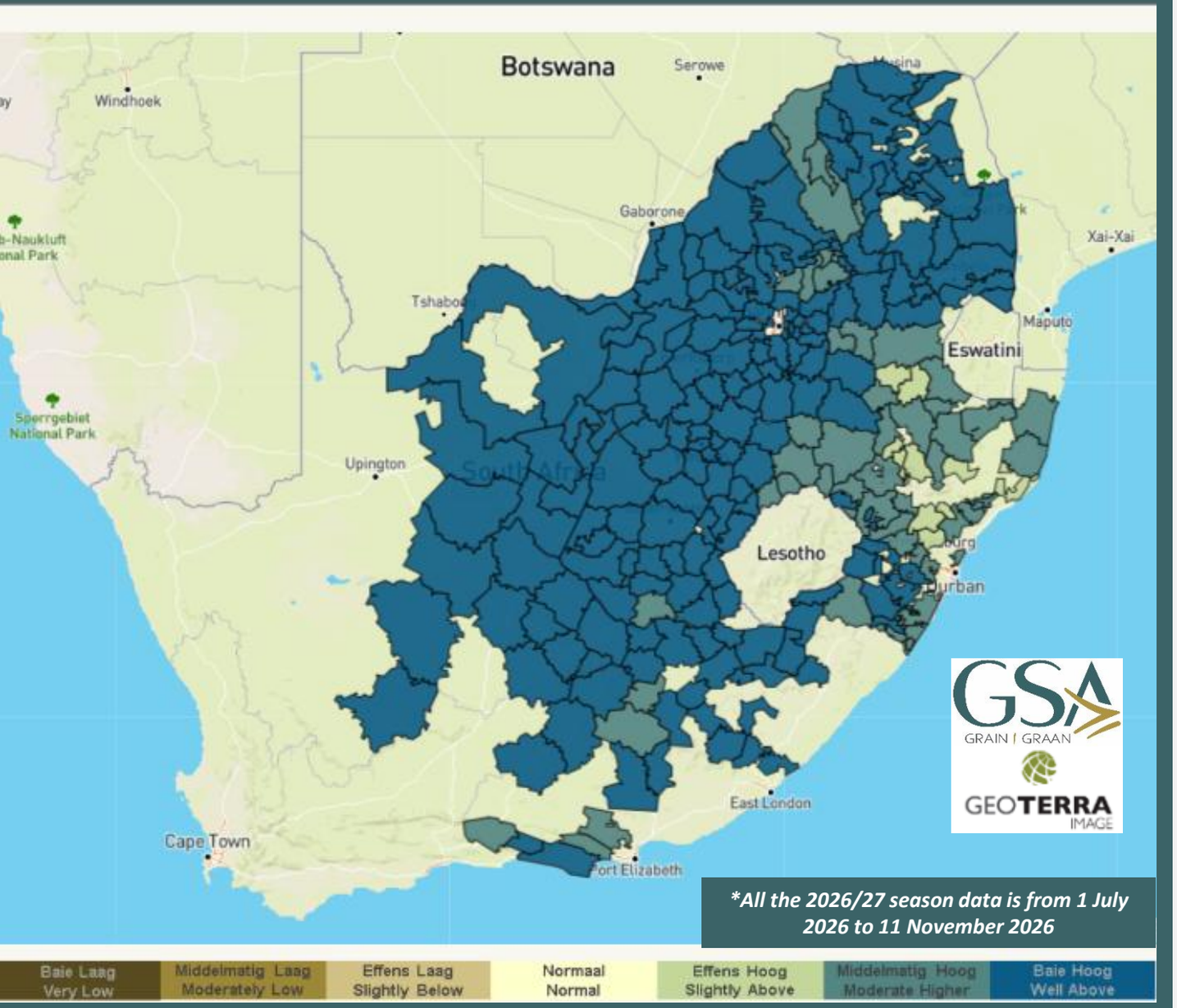
- **Northwest Free State:** Rainfall remained largely limited, with only isolated areas receiving moderate rainfall. Dry conditions continue to dominate the western production areas, resulting in planting delays and increasing concern among producers who require meaningful rainfall to continue field operations.
- **Eastern Free State:** The region has received moderate to favourable rainfall over the past two weeks, although distribution varied across the region. Some areas also experienced hail events accompanying the rainfall.

Limpopo: Rainfall across the province was limited and highly localised. Many areas remain dry, despite some isolated rainfall received in the past two weeks.

Eastern Highveld: The region received favourable and widespread rainfall, especially in KZN, resulting in a substantial improvement in growing conditions across most production areas. Although localised hail accompanied some rainfall events, the overall rainfall received has supported crop growth.

North West Province: The region received limited to moderate rainfall, although distribution varied considerably between areas. While recent rainfall provided some relief, many producers continue to require additional rainfall to sustain planting activities and support crop development.

Maandelikse Grondvog Indeks / Monhley Soil Water Index



The soil moisture index compares current moisture levels with both the previous season and the 5-year average. Although the heatwaves are depleting soil moisture reserves, moisture conditions remain moderately high to higher than the 5-year average.

Free State

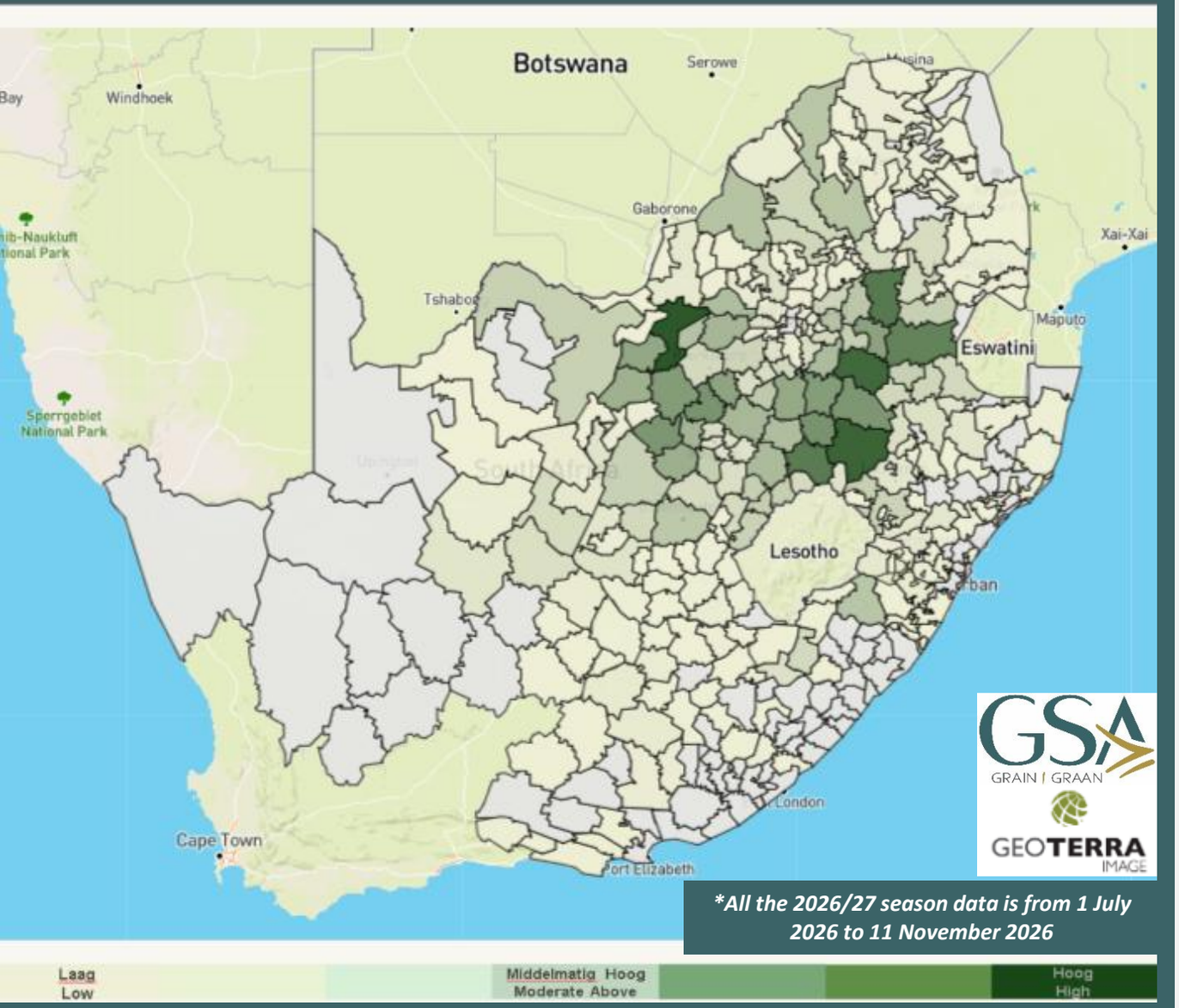
- **Northwest Free State:** Soil moisture levels remain below optimal across much of the region. While isolated rainfall events have provided some relief, soil water reserves are generally insufficient to support uninterrupted planting and crop establishment. Ongoing heatwave conditions are further reducing available soil moisture through increased evapotranspiration.
- **Eastern Free State:** Recent rainfall has improved soil moisture conditions across the region. Soil water reserves are generally adequate to support planting activities, crop establishment and early vegetative growth.

Limpopo: Soil moisture conditions remain variable and are generally below optimal levels for dryland production. The uneven distribution of rainfall has resulted in differing moisture levels across the region.

Eastern Highveld: Soil moisture conditions have improved and are currently at favourable levels throughout most of the region. Water infiltration has been good, resulting in adequate soil moisture reserves to support crop development. In some areas, fields are temporarily too wet for machinery operations, especially in KZN.

North West: Soil moisture levels have improved marginally following recent rainfall but remain below optimal in many areas. High temperatures and ongoing heatwave conditions continue to place pressure on available soil water reserves.

Gewasopkoms per Distrik / Crop Greenup per District



The Green Leaf Index (GLI) reflects crop growth and development throughout the season, with conditions across most summer rainfall regions significantly above the 5-year average. Green-up remains moderately above the 5-year average, with the eastern parts of the country showing higher green-up.

Free State: The GLI index is moderately above the 5-year average.

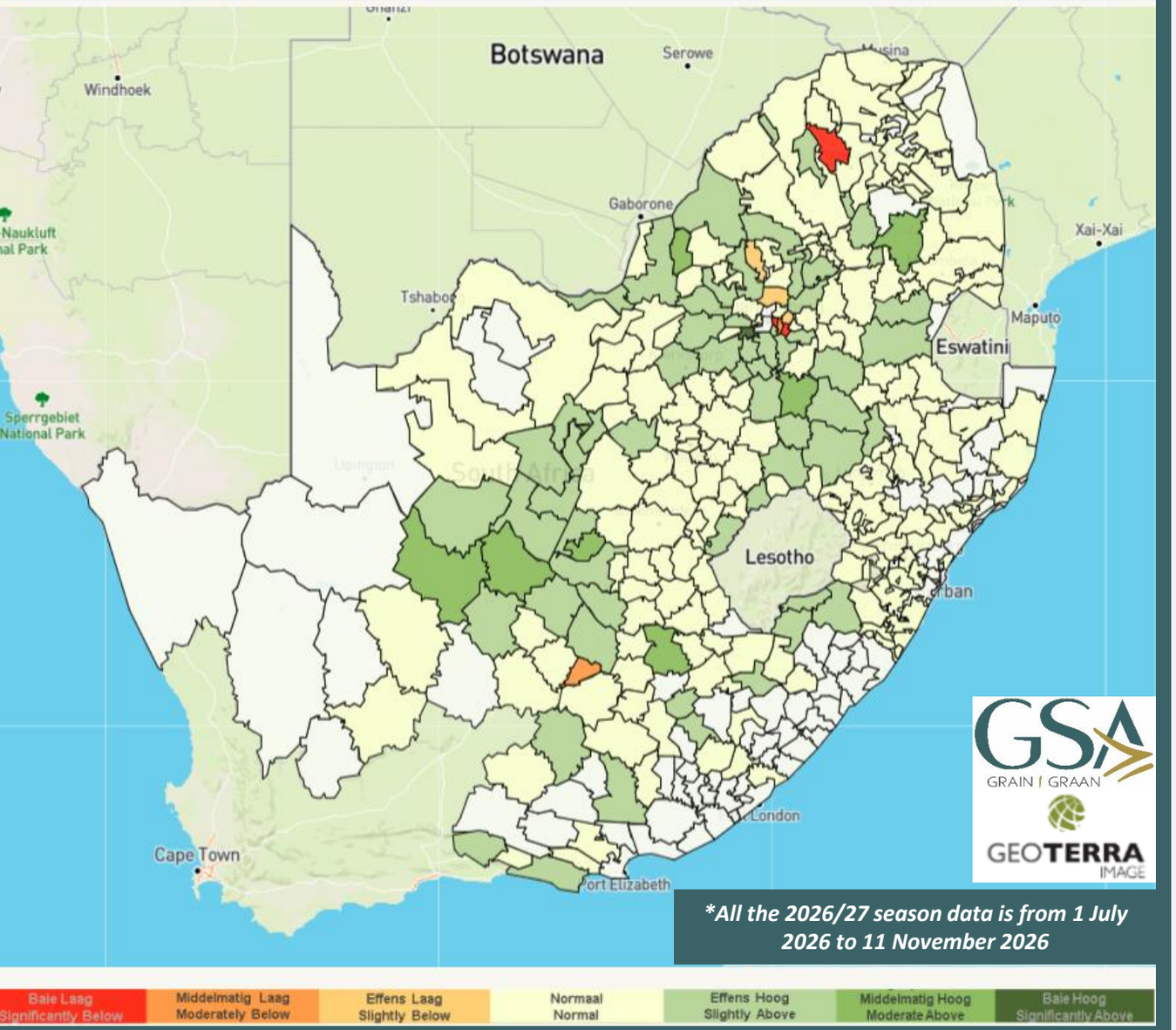
- **Northwest Free State:** Crop emergence has been variable across the region, reflecting the uneven distribution of rainfall. Fields that have received moisture are showing reasonable establishment, while those in drier areas are emerging more slowly and are increasingly vulnerable to moisture stress.
- **Eastern Free State**: Improved moisture conditions have supported good crop emergence and establishment. Most newly planted fields are developing well, although hail damage may have affected stand establishment in localised areas, particularly in soybean fields.

Limpopo: Crop establishment under irrigation continues to progress well. However, dryland emergence remains limited as many producers are still awaiting sufficient soil moisture before proceeding with planting activities.

Eastern Highveld: Crop emergence and early growth are generally favourable. Maize is displaying strong establishment across different planting dates, while soybean development is progressing well under the improved moisture conditions. Recent rainfall has contributed to enhanced crop vigour and overall field conditions.

North West: Maize emergence has generally been favourable where planting has taken place, and most established fields have emerged successfully. Sunflower emergence has been somewhat slower, although crop development remains good.

Gewas Toestand / Crop Condition



The Green Leaf Index (GLI) reflects crop growth and development throughout the season, with conditions across most summer rainfall regions significantly above the 5-year average.

Free State:

- **Northwest Free State:** Conditions remain challenging. Planting activities have slowed or stopped in some areas due to inadequate rainfall and high temperatures. Heat stress is placing pressure on recently emerged crops, and favourable rainfall during the coming weeks will be essential to improve planting progress and production prospects.
- **Eastern Free State:** Conditions have improved following the recent rainfall. While hail damage remains a concern in certain locations, the overall outlook for planting progress and early crop development is positive, with adequate moisture supporting favourable production prospects.

Limpopo: High temperatures continue to dominate the region, restricting dryland planting opportunities. Producers are focusing on weed management and field preparation while waiting for improved rainfall conditions. Consequently, production conditions remain mixed, with irrigated production performing better than dryland production.

Eastern Highveld: Production conditions have improved compared to the preceding dry period last month. Maize planting is nearing completion across much of the region, with producers increasingly shifting their attention towards soybean planting. While localised hail damage and some cutworm pest pressure have been reported, overall production conditions remain favourable due to the improvement in soil moisture.

North West: Production conditions remain challenging due to persistent heat stress and uneven rainfall distribution. Weed pressure has increased following recent rainfall events, while pest concerns about rodent activity have been reported in some areas. Although planting progress has continued where rainfall was received, additional moisture will be necessary to sustain crop growth and support further planting operations.

USEFUL INFORMATION ON CUTWORMS AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

- Reports of cutworm damage were received from parts of the summer grain production region, with some producers having to replant affected soybean fields. Cutworm activity typically increases during spring as temperatures rise, particularly in conservation agriculture systems where crop residues provide shelter. Moist soil conditions can also encourage larvae to move closer to the soil surface, increasing the risk of seedling damage.
- Effective cultural control measures include maintaining good weed control, managing crop residues and, where practical, conducting tillage well ahead of planting to expose larvae to predators and environmental stress.
- Where infestations are severe, insecticide applications may be considered. Applications are generally most effective when soils are moist, and treatments are made late in the afternoon when larvae become active near the soil surface. Producers should continue monitoring fields after treatment to assess control levels and identify any surviving larvae. It is important to note that Bt maize does not provide control of cutworms.

With dry conditions persisting across many production regions, regular scouting remains critical as localised cutworm infestations can cause significant stand losses and may necessitate replanting.

USEFUL INFORMATION ON CUTWORMS AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

The answer to EFFECTIVE CUTWORM CONTROL is timely weed management

Published: 1 September 2024



***Prof Johnnie van den Berg**, IPM programme, Unit for Environmental Sciences and Management, North-West University*



***Prof Hannalene du Plessis**, IPM programme, Unit for Environmental Sciences and Management, North-West University*

Cutworm has become one of the most important pests of maize in South Africa over the past four years. During the previous maize planting season, cutworm larvae destroyed thousands of hectares of maize seedlings, necessitating repeated applications of insecticides, followed by replanting of seed in many cases.

Since cutworm is a sporadic pest, it is difficult to predict if it will be economically important in a specific region or field. It is therefore imperative to understand cutworm biology and to scout fields for its presence and damage to seedlings.

Cutworm biology

Cutworm larvae have a very wide host plant range and the presence of weeds on crop fields ensures their survival during the off-season. Moths lay eggs on the bare soil and leaves of weeds and volunteer maize plants that may occur within fields. Small larvae emerge from the eggs after about a week. They hide under and feed on leaves of weeds or crops, on and near the soil surface. Large larvae burrow into the soil and emerge only at night.

Cutworm management: Are producers getting it right?

Published: 8 May 2023



***Hiresh Ramanand**, stewardship coordinator, CropLife South Africa*

There are several *Agrotis* cutworm species (Lepidoptera: Noctuidae) present in South Africa, namely black cutworm (*Agrotis ipsilon*), grey cutworm (*Agrotis subalba*), brown cutworm (*Agrotis longidentifera*), spiny cutworm (*Agrotis spinifera*) and the common cutworm (*Agrotis segetum*). The common cutworm is the most prominent and economically important species present in South Africa. The larvae (**Photo 1**) are dirty-grey or brown in colour with a smooth, waxy appearance.

Economic impact of CUTWORM DAMAGE to maize and soybean

Published: 4 August 2025



***Prof Hannalene du Plessis**, North-West University*



***Prof Johnnie van den Berg**, North-West University*



***Zunel van Eeden**, North-West University*

The increased pest status of the common cutworm, *Agrotis segetum* (Lepidoptera: Noctuidae), has been a concern for grain producers over the past four cropping seasons. Although the reasons for the increased importance of this pest are not clear, it is most likely due to a combination of factors. These include changing climate and rainfall patterns, the adoption of herbicide-tolerant crops, and the implementation of reduced tillage practices that resulted in more suitable environments for this pest to survive and multiply.

Cutworms are an early-season pest of maize and soybean. The larvae sever seedlings just above or below the soil surface, after which seedlings wilt and die. If infestations are severe, significant stand losses may be experienced soon after seedling emergence, often necessitating costly pesticide applications and even replanting.

Survey on economic impact of cutworms

A survey was conducted during 2024 to assess the economic impact of this pest and to determine whether certain agronomic practices may be associated with the increased pest status of cutworms. A total of 65 producers participated, all of whom were

Please click on the images to read the full articles. If you require further information, please feel free to contact any of the authors or **Mike Ellis** at Mike@grainsa.co.za .

THANK YOU!

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