



Perspektief | Perspective

Nuusbrief | Newsletter

12/04/2013 WEEK 15 - 2013

[KLIK HIER VIR DIE AFRIKAANSE WEERGAWE](#)

[CLICK HERE FOR THE ENGLISH VERSION](#)

In this issue...

- [Beware of grain theft](#)
- [Gerbil cycles are changing drastically](#)
- [Crop Estimates Questionnaires for April could still be on their way](#)
- [Government provides assistance with army worms](#)
- [Control of army worms](#)
- [Fertiliser price expectations for May this year](#)
- [Fuel prices for May 2013](#)

Beware of grain theft

Jannie de Villiers (Chief Executive Officer: Grain SA)

»It recently became known that syndicates are involved in the theft of grain on farms. Producers should therefore be aware of and on the lookout for theft of grain directly from farms, especially during harvest time.

These syndicates mainly strike where contractors are used to transport grain. The use of false number plates and forged driver's licences are at the order of the day.

There have even been incidents where producers' own harvesters that were left in the fields over night, was used to harvest grain and then poured into a vehicle before driving off with the loot. The same also happens where full wagons have been left over night.

[Back to Top](#)

Gerbil cycles are changing drastically

Frikkie Kirsten (LNR-NIPB, Pretoria)

»In the past, gerbil outbreaks in the summer rainfall region was cyclical in nature, with a high density of population that normally didn't last longer than two consecutive planting seasons.

For the past five to six years though, this pattern has changed drastically with an increase in gerbil populations as well as an unprecedented increase in the damage during and shortly after planting. The reasons for the high gerbil populations are not self-evident. One possible reason could be the warm, wet spring seasons leading to an extension of the breeding season as well as an increase in the possible food sources. Another possible reason is the increase in minimum tillage and no-till, which favours gerbil populations by increasing hiding places and food supplies for the gerbils.

Unfortunately there's currently no real winning formula for the sustainable control of gerbils, but the winter months, before harvest, when the gerbils are at their most vulnerable, does provide a favourable opportunity to give a serious blow to current gerbil colonies in fields, headlands and contour banks. This can be done with tunnel application of registered bait or fumigation pills. For tunnel applications care must be taken to place bait or fumigation pills as deep as possible in active gerbil holes and then the hole must be treated down. This process must be repeated for at least three consecutive days and a second application must be done six or seven days after the first treatment.

[Back to Top](#)

Crop Estimates Questionnaires for April could still be on their way

Rona Beukes (Crop Estimates Committee)

»Although the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries has already posted out their Crop Estimates Questionnaires for April 2013 to a random sample of producers, it may still take a while before producers receive their questionnaires and/or timeously reply to the department. A possible reason for this can be the post office strike which has negatively affected postal deliveries across the country.

As a precautionary measure and to assist in the department receiving the questionnaires before the next Crop Estimates Committee Meeting scheduled for 25 April 2013, the department thought it wise to request producers to rather submit their completed questionnaires for the month of April via the following channels:

Per fax to (012) 319-8035/1; or per email to RonaB@daff.gov.za.

Please keep in mind that producers' information plays a vital role in the determination of the crop estimate. We therefore trust that producers will assist the department in the execution of this important task.

Our sincere gratitude for your reliable participation and support.

[Back to Top](#)

Government provides assistance with army worms

Petru Fourie (economist: Industry Services, Grain SA)

»Even though army worms have not yet been declared as a recognised agricultural pest (mainly because it only occurs once every 10 years), the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) has in the meantime been contacted by organised agriculture to in fact have it declared as a recognised pest in South Africa.

Grain SA carried the seriousness of the issue into the workshop on the revision of the Act on Pests and Plagues and further discussions will be held between Grain SA and the directorate within the DAFF (Plant Protection and Disaster Management) to have army worms added to the National pests of concern list as well as to update the list with for instance gerbils and other problem pests.

With the second plague of Africa army worms that broke out, the government announced that they will intervene and help producers to fight it. The DAFF provides the poison and spray pumps, but will only supply it to producers once training has been given. If producers experience problems with army worms, they can contact John Tladi's office, who is in charge of pests and migrating plagues, at (012) 309-5743.

[Back to Top](#)

Control of army worms

Margaret Kieser (ARC)

»If the larvae (worms) are observed at an early stage of development (less than 15mm in length), they can easily be controlled with insecticides. A number of insecticides are registered to apply against armyworm infestations in rangeland veld (NDA Guide for the control of plant pests). We would probably suggest either Decis EC 2.5g/litre (applied at 250ml/ha) or Cypermethrin 20 EC (applied at 150ml/ha) as these products are readily available and are mixed into water and sprayed from a backpack sprayer. However, as large armyworm outbreaks often cover many hundred of hectares, even these products will be expensive to spray over large areas. Any larvae larger than 2cm are nearing the stage of pupation, and spraying may not be effective.

A more environmentally friendly method of control is for the producer to plough a deep trench 'ahead' of the direction that the larvae are moving. The larvae will fall into this and not be able to climb out, and a light dusting of Cypermethrin can be applied to the bottom of the trench, or the trench can be covered up again.

There is however a particular problem that must be highlighted. If African Armyworm are identified in kikuyu pastures, producers are to immediately remove any livestock from those pastures. Research undertaken in KZN has shown that when the armyworm larvae feed on the kikuyu grass, the grass gives off a poison, which if eaten by the livestock could cause deaths. Livestock should also not be returned to the kikuyu pastures until 30-40 days have passed. Symptoms in cattle may appear 10 days after grazing on armyworm infested kikuyu, and these could be difficulty in swallowing, strings of saliva hanging from the mouth, extreme thirst, and bloating. If these symptoms are observed, producers are to immediately call in the local vet. For more information contact Margaret Kieser at the ARC by 012 356 9818

[Back to Top](#)

Fertiliser price expectations for May this year

Corné Louw (senior economist: Industry Services, Grain SA)

»The price expectations for fertiliser for May 2013 are as follows:

Ammonia

- Market expectations are stable to downward in the short term.

Urea

- Market expectations are downward in the short term.

Phosphates

- The demand for phosphates is strong, especially from Brazil and India. Market expectations in the short term are stable to upward - the USA market still has to kick in.

Potassium chloride

- Market expectations are stable in the short term.

International trends in fertiliser prices can be used with relative accuracy to predict changes in local fertiliser prices. From March 2013 to 4 April 2013 international fertiliser prices was seen to change as follows (**Table 1**):

Table 1: Average international fertiliser prices (dollar value).

Fertiliser	March 2013	4 April 2013	% change
	dollar/ton	dollar/ton	%
Ammonia (Middle East)	553	548	-0,9%
Urea (46) (Eastern Europe)	415	398	-4,1%
DAP (USA Gulf)	469	469	0,0%
Potassium chloride (CIS)	413	415	+0,5%
R/\$ exchange rate	9,17	9,16	-0,1%

Table 2 shows the international fertiliser price movements in rand terms. From this table it can be seen that the international price of urea declined in the past week, while the prices of the other raw materials almost moved sideward. Should this trend continue for the rest of April, it can be expected that the prices of most of the local fertiliser products can move sideward, while a decline in the price of urea can be expected.

Table 2: Average international fertiliser prices (rand value).

Fertiliser	March 2013	4 April 2013	% change
	rand/ton	rand/ton	%
Ammonia (Middle East)	5 069	5 015	-1,1%
Urea (46) (Eastern Europe)	3 809	3 641	-4,4%
DAP (USA Gulf)	4 307	4 291	-0,4%
Potassium chloride (CIS)	3 789	3 801	-0,3%

Historical fertiliser price statistics

Tables 3 and 4 indicate the movement of international fertiliser prices in dollar and rand terms over a period of a year.

Table 3: Average international fertiliser prices (dollar value).

Fertiliser	March 2012	March 2013	% change
	dollar/ton	dollar/ton	%
Ammonia (Middle East)	364	553	+51,9%
Urea (46) (Eastern Europe)	444	415	-6,5%
DAP (USA Gulf)	501	469	-6,4%
Potassium chloride (CIS)	473	413	-12,7%
R/\$ exchange rate	7,595	9,175	+20,8%

Table 4: Average international fertiliser prices (rand value).

Fertiliser	March 2012	March 2013	% change
	rand/ton	rand/ton	%
Ammonia (Middle East)	2 765	5 069	+83,3%
Urea (46) (Eastern Europe)	3 375	3 809	+12,9%
DAP (USA Gulf)	3 807	4 307	+13,1%
Potassium chloride (CIS)	3 594	3 789	+5,4%

Table 5 shows what happened with local fertiliser prices over a year period. Except for the price of LAN, local price changes correlated well with international price changes over a year period. The trend for LAN was however expected, because LAN competes directly with urea in the local market.

Table 5: Average local fertiliser prices.

Fertiliser	April 2012	April 2013	% change
	rand/ton	rand/ton	%
LAN (28)	4 379	5 518	+26,0%
Urea (46)	5 647	6 456	+14,3%
MAP	6 676	7 456	+11,7%
Potassium chloride	6 574	7 041	+7,1%

[Back to Top](#)

Fuel prices for May 2013

Petru Fourie (economist: Industry Services, Grain SA)

»According to the most recent information from the Central Energy Fund, the petrol price can **DECLINE** on 1 May 2013 with 49 cents per litre and the diesel price with 35 cents per litre.

This expected decline is mainly due to the price of oil declining from an average of \$109,40 per barrel in March, to an average of \$107,43 per barrel in April to date. During the same period, the rand weakened with 0,2%, which hampered a bigger decline in the fuel price.

[Back to Top](#)

GRAAN SA • GRAIN SA

Posbus 74087 • PO Box 74087

Lynnwood Ridge 0040



+27 (012) 807-6023



www.grainsa.co.za



+27 (012) 807-3166



philip@grainsa.co.za

Subskripsie-navrae/Subscription enquiries: philip@grainsa.co.za