

POTATOES

'SA potato price has shown resilience'

In 2018, per capita consumption of potatoes in South Africa exceeded 40kg/person, according to Dr André Jooste, CEO of Potatoes SA (PSA). By comparison, in 2000 South Africans consumed only 25kg/person.

This increase could, among others, be ascribed to the success of PSA's marketing strategy, which aimed to promote consumption of potatoes among South African consumers.

"In 2017, the total volume of potatoes traded on markets was 1% higher and prices 21% higher than in 2016. In 2018, volumes were 2% higher and prices 7% higher than in 2017. This resilience of the price of potatoes is largely explained by [consumers'] increased appetite for potatoes," he said.

Although there was severe drought damage to crops in the eastern Free State region

during January, the region still realised an above-average crop, according to Jooste. The western Free State and the Northern Cape regions, which held the largest market share during the winter months from May until August also realised record crops.

It meant that three major production regions were mainly responsible for the record volumes of potatoes sold on markets during the second and third quarters.

During Limpopo's main marketing period, prices improved significantly due to severe heat damage, which resulted in smaller yields. Because Limpopo had a 75% market share in October and November, any impact as a result of climatic conditions during these regions' growing season had a significant effect on the national markets.

A total of 53 000ha were planted to potatoes this year and a harvest of 2,52 million tons of potatoes was expected, he said. – *Annelie Coleman*

BELOW:
 The consumption of potatoes in South Africa has shown a steady increase in recent years.
 ADOBE STOCK

