

# Go with the grain

## How grains and pulses stay consistently relevant to South African shoppers

**W**heat and maize remain staple products for South African consumers. Given their versatility this is unsurprising, and they, along with other grains and pulses, continue to find their way into millions of shopping baskets across the country. Innovative and exciting products drive renewed interest in these categories, while tried and tested favourites remain the basis for most sales.

The multiplicity of options alone keeps these categories relevant. From dried and canned pulses such as peas, beans, lentils, and chickpeas, traditional maize favourites, instant maize porridges in a variety of flavours, a massive range of grain-based cereals, rough-milled grains, speciality flours,

heat and eat rice pouches, traditional and new-school maize meal options, and basic bread to artisanal bread loaves, the choices for consumers are endless.

### Quality and sustainability

When one looks at the range of products covered by grains and pulses, the significance of grains and pulses to consumers cannot be underestimated – for those eating more plant-based food, for vegans and vegetarians, as accompaniments to meat, fish and poultry, as staple favourites, for consumers looking for budget-friendly stomach filling nutrition, and for basic subsistence for those who are not food secure.

### Understanding the categories

**Grains.** Grains include wheat, rice, oats, oatmeal, rye, corn, barley, millet, quinoa and popcorn. Products made from grains include bread, pasta, noodles, samp, breakfast cereals, couscous and tortillas.

**Pulses.** A pulse is a dried edible seed from a legume plant. They include all varieties of lentils, chickpeas and split peas, baked beans, kidney beans, soy beans, haricot beans and mung beans. Products made from pulses include dhal, tofu, hummus, lentil soup and falafel.



From Producer to the World™



# Sustainable Food Production and Procurement



Beans



Lentils



Peas



Chickpeas



Popcorn

Good Food. Good Health. Good Life

[www.agtfoods.co.za](http://www.agtfoods.co.za) / 011 762 5261 / [sales.za@agtfoods.com](mailto:sales.za@agtfoods.com)





For all of us, at the heart of it all is the question of quality, without neglecting the importance of sustainability. Just how do we ensure a steady supply of high-quality grains and pulses? And why is that so important for retailers and wholesalers? Through a combination of technology, research and development, and improved land management practices, these two critical concerns are being supported by local and international players.

**Quality control**

From seed to crop to final product, quality should be a top priority. Assuring quality requires buy-in from seed suppliers and farmers right through the milling, packing, and production pipeline, and all the way to food retailers and wholesalers. A failure at any stage to safeguard the quality of a product will result in a negative effect on consumer trust, potentially impacting everything from a brand's standing with shoppers to the good reputation of the seller.

As a retailer or wholesaler, corporate retail group, franchise or formal independent, it is up to your team to do your due diligence on your supply chain, and to constantly monitor your products for quality and food safety standards. Word of mouth and the speed and power of social media mean that taking your eye off this particular ball could have disastrous consequences for retailers and manufacturers – and when it comes to private label, the retailer will take the rap from consumers.



Nativa is a hybrid carrot variety from Sakata that is an excellent choice when it comes to summer production. Nativa is vigorous, has resistance against powdery mildew and alternaria, making it a perfect choice for areas where these diseases are known to cause problems. <https://sakata.co.za/vegetable-seed/>



Sakata Rhapsody, a hybrid salad tomato, thriving at Eikenhof Agri-park has an exceptional disease resistance with the promise of high yields, top-notch fruit quality and a longer shelf life. Whether grown in open fields or under shade nets, Rhapsody proves its adaptability.



The Red Rookie hybrid cabbage is a variety that has proven its worth over many years. It has a beautiful, deep purple-red colour – both internally and externally. It can be grown for baby cabbage but, left in the field, it can grow up to a 1,5 to 2,5kg head. It is excellent due to its reliability, versatility and adaptability to various climatic conditions, with a very long shelf life. <https://sakata.co.za/vegetable-seed/>

At the seed level, companies such as Sakata are taking quality control very seriously. Sarah Schulze, Logistics and QA Manager at Sakata Seed Southern Africa, explains the vital role of seed quality testing in agriculture. She says, "Seed quality testing is done to ensure that the germination potential of the seed lot is good enough for sale. It plays a key role in the output of a seed lot – you can't sow a poor-quality seed lot

and expect miracles, even with the best farming or harvesting practices in the world. The quality of the seed they use is extremely important to our customers."

It's for this reason that Sakata's Seed Quality Laboratory in South Africa recently became ISTA accredited. This International Seed Testing Association accreditation allows them to issue Orange International Certificates (OICs) for seed lots, which aids in exports into Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries, among others.





# Soya Health Benefits

- **Substitute for meat**
- **Rich source of protein**
- **Improves heart health**
- **Improves digestion**
- **Healthy Weight Management**

# MASHESHA



Vegan

100%

**Mashesha Soya Mince – Chili, Beef  
& Chicken Flavors Now Available!**



[www.irwingsoya.co.za](http://www.irwingsoya.co.za)



ISTA accreditation is an international gold standard when it comes to guaranteeing seed quality.

Schulze says, "South Africa is governed by the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development's (DALRRD) published and gazetted Plant Improvement Act (PIA) regulations. Table 4 of PIA ensures that minimum germination and physical purity standards are in place to protect farmers. ISTA rules are used in South Africa by DALRRD and most registered seed companies, including Sakata, to ensure quality is tested in a standardised and accurate way."

She adds, "Sakata also utilises stringent internal standards to dictate the quality of seed we supply as we believe in our seed's quality and reliability."

At a product level, agencies such as Leaf Services work to ensure that quality follows through. The Pretoria-based company was established in 2015 with the goal of providing "cost-effective and innovative inspection, grading, and sampling for official quality assurance services to businesses across South Africa that are producing a variety of grains, oilseeds and grain products intended for sale."

A DALRRD assignee, Leaf Services undertakes inspection, grading, and sampling quality control services for a range of products, including grains such as maize, rice, sorghum, soya beans, wheat, dry beans and pulses, and a variety of maize, wheat and grain products.

This quality assurance partnership works to help producers enhance their contribution to the national priorities of sustainable food security, while also ensuring a top-quality product.



AGT Foods Africa believe in making the most of everything nature provides, with nothing going to waste. The stalks from popcorn are repurposed into birdfeeders, supporting local wildlife. AGT are committed to sustainable farming and production methods by ensuring every part of their crops are used, promoting a healthier planet. <https://agtfoods.co.za/>

### Can you climate-proof a crop?

Biotechnology is already impacting crop farming, and that impact is set to grow. As the negative effects of climate change and disease wreak havoc on global crops, the need to future-proof these crops has become undeniable. With research and investment ramping up, agriscience is stepping into the limelight.



Wendy Sronic, Corteva Agriscience

Wendy Sronic, writing for Corteva Agriscience on biotechnology in agriculture, says ...

“ We are at a critical inflection point for gene editing. Social acceptance of the technology is on the rise, regulatory policies are emerging and clarifying, and both large and small companies are using the technology in their product pipelines. All at a time when there's a growing focus on the urgent need to climate-proof crops and feed a growing world population on less land. ”

Locally, Grain SA reported on the formation of the Wheat Breeding Platform (WBP) as far back as 2014. The aim of the WBP has always been the national priorities of sustainability and food security. The initiative is coordinated by Grain SA, but, says the group, "Numerous role-players are involved, including industry, breeding companies,



# Instant Sorghum & Maize Porridge

## MASHESHA

Health Benefits

- Rich source of protein
- Helps improve bone health
- Improves digestion
- Stabilize Blood Sugar Levels
- Healthy Weight Management



vanilla flavour

strawberry flavour

banana flavour

100% Natural – Chemical Free  
Processed – Balanced Diet

 **IRWING**  
Reg. 2002/004395/23 615 CC

[www.irwingsoya.co.za](http://www.irwingsoya.co.za)





researchers and government. The WBP incorporates experts from both the public and private sector to assist local breeding efforts for improved yield. The WBP is working to strengthen local breeding efforts through research aimed at providing access to improved genetics and higher-yielding, locally adapted germplasm. Funding from the Department of Science and Innovation and the SA Winter Cereal Industry Trust (SAWCIT) provided opportunities for an increased and more efficient use of resources through aligning national and regional activities and pooling financial resources.”

Stewardship of the land is another buzzword gaining traction. Iowa-based farmer Bill Belzer has spent many years at Corteva Agriscience. He says ...



Bill Belzer,  
Corteva Agriscience

“ For decades, agricultural innovations have driven increases in productivity, efficiency and quality of the crops and livestock that farmers grow. Along with those increases, farmer commitments to stewardship of those technologies, land and water resources, crops and animals, and their communities have also grown. ”

In South Africa, the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development recognises the important role of agriculture in economic development and its vital contribution to food security and poverty reduction.



<https://agtfoods.co.za/>

“ Sorghum and cowpea as well as many indigenous cereals and pulses tend to grow well in arid and semi-arid areas where other crops fail. ”

### Be a bean (and pulses) champion

Pulses are a vital component of a sustainable and secure food basket. On 20 December 2013, the 68th session of the UN General Assembly passed an adopted resolution declaring 2016 the International Year of the Pulse. In 2018, the United Nations General Assembly declared February 10 as World Pulses Day to emphasise the importance of pulses to mitigate food challenges, improve soil health, and ultimately improve human health.

Sudeep Singh Rawat wrote in the Business Standard that, “The aim is to spread awareness about the use of pulses in daily diets and explore different types of dishes made up of pulses which are the main ingredient. In many countries, pulses are a staple food which are consumed as a part of their daily diet. World Pulses Day is an opportunity to highlight the challenges of food systems and to figure out potential solutions like increasing pulse production and enhancing nutritional quality.”

There are many reasons to champion these not-so-humble powerhouses. Pulses, including dried beans, chickpeas and lentils, are nutrient-rich sources of protein and amino acids. They’re also good for the environment (they increase soil fertility rather than depleting the ground of nutrients) and are relatively easy to grow locally.

In fact, many indigenous cereals and pulses such as sorghum and cowpea tend to grow well in arid and semi-arid areas where other crops fail, according to researchers at the University of Pretoria.

Grain SA says, “The growing of dry beans should be strongly considered as an option for both small and large growers, given the high value of the crop compared with other dry-land and irrigated crop options at the current prevailing Safex futures prices. It can be used as a useful crop within a planned rotation system.”





# UPLIFT KOMBUCHA

## THE DRINK OF THE FUTURE



THE BEST WAY TO UPLIFT  
YOUR IN-STORE BASKET

CONTACT US

Francois@drinkuplift.co.za







## The future of South African agriculture seems bright

The major players in local agriculture are at the forefront of the drive to achieve sustainability and food security. And there's no mistaking the mammoth task ahead of these farmers and producers. Giving them a platform on which they can stand are aspects that include ...

- Investment into research and development.
- A growing acceptance of the need for aggressive and agile biotechnologies and smart solutions.
- Buy-in from national government and multinationals such as Sakata and Corteva.
- Vital support of local retailers and wholesalers.

'Proudly South African' is not simply a catchy phrase – it's a mentality that has, more often than not, seen us through the toughest times. It's fair to say that remaining proudly South African is the only way forward – supporting the local economy and grains and pulses that are locally-grown, locally produced and locally manufactured.

## Harnessing the power of Brassicas!

AGT Foods Africa is diving into the world of Brassicas, the unsung heroes of soil health and crop vitality! From soil regeneration to pest management, brassicas are truly nature's multitaskers, playing a crucial role in agricultural ecosystems.



### Soil regenerators

**Biofumigants:** Brassicas like mustard and radish release natural compounds when their tissues break down, suppressing soil-borne pests and diseases.

**Deep root systems:** Taproots of brassicas penetrate deep into the soil, breaking up compaction and improve drainage for healthier root growth.

**Nutrient cyclers:** As brassicas decompose, they release valuable nutrients, enriching the soil and promote nutrient availability for subsequent crops.

### Crop rotation champions

**Disease breaks:** Rotating with brassicas interrupts pest and disease cycles, reducing reliance on chemical pesticides and promoting long-term soil health.

**Weed suppressors:** Dense canopy and allelopathic effects of brassicas outcompete weeds, naturally suppressing their growth and minimising herbicide use.

**Nutrient boosters:** By enhancing soil fertility and structure, brassicas set the stage for improved yields and healthier crops in future rotations.

### Biodiversity builders

**Pollinator magnets:** Brassica flowers attract beneficial insects like bees and butterflies, supporting pollination and boosting crop yields.

**Microbial allies:** Root exudates of brassicas feed beneficial soil microbes, fostering a diverse and resilient soil microbiome. <https://agtfoods.co.za/>

## HMR and Ready-to-Eat: Adding pulses adds value

As a cost-effective alternative source of protein, pulses and legumes can be included with confidence in home meal replacement (HMR) and ready-to-eat offerings, as well as in deli dishes and other convenience offerings. A concerted effort to promote these products through marketing, advertising, and experiential shopping activations

will stimulate interest as more consumers recognise the benefits. Cash-strapped shoppers are looking for ways to ease the financial burden of feeding themselves and their families nutritious, filling foods; younger consumers appreciate a shopping experience that is fun and engaging; and customers who are short on time and motivation are attracted to easy and convenient solutions that answer their needs.





don't just touch,  
**sani-touch**<sup>®</sup>

# There's a Saniwipe<sup>®</sup> Option for Everyone

Ever wondered where your Saniwipe<sup>®</sup> ends up? Our trolley wipes are recycled and transformed into 'plastic planks' that are used to build benches, tables, jungle gyms, birdhouses, and many other things!

By using Saniwipes<sup>®</sup>, you're not only keeping your surroundings clean and safe, but you're also supporting a circular economy and creating job opportunities. Let's make a difference for our planet - together!

## Saniwipes<sup>®</sup> 1000

Order Code: MDTW1000R  
Large refillable bucket.

- Mainly used on trolleys and shopping baskets.
- Fits in a stand.

## Saniwipes<sup>®</sup> 500

Order Code: MDBAPW  
Mini bucket for low volume use.

- Remove dirt and microorganisms from small surfaces like desks and shopping trolleys.
- Fits in a wall bracket.

## Saniwipes<sup>®</sup> 2200

Order Code: MDTW2000B  
Largest refillable bucket.

- Mainly used on trolleys and shopping baskets.
- Fits in a stand.



from  
this



100%  
RECYCLABLE

to  
this

**Did you know**  
Saniwipes are 100% recyclable and re-purposed into useful items such as such as bird feeders, benches and jungle gyms.

## Join us!

And be a part of a sustainable way to care for customers and the environment. We will show you how.  
[sanitouch@sanitouch.co.za](mailto:sanitouch@sanitouch.co.za)





## Plant-based diets continue to thrive

ProVeg International recently noted that over 60% of the food set to be served at the Paris Olympics (26 July-11 August 2024) will, for the first time, be plant-based. Acclaimed chefs Akrame Benallal, Alexandre Mazzia, and Vincent Gillot are in charge of feeding over 10 000 athletes and associated teams at the games and in the Olympic Village.



Alexandre Mazzia



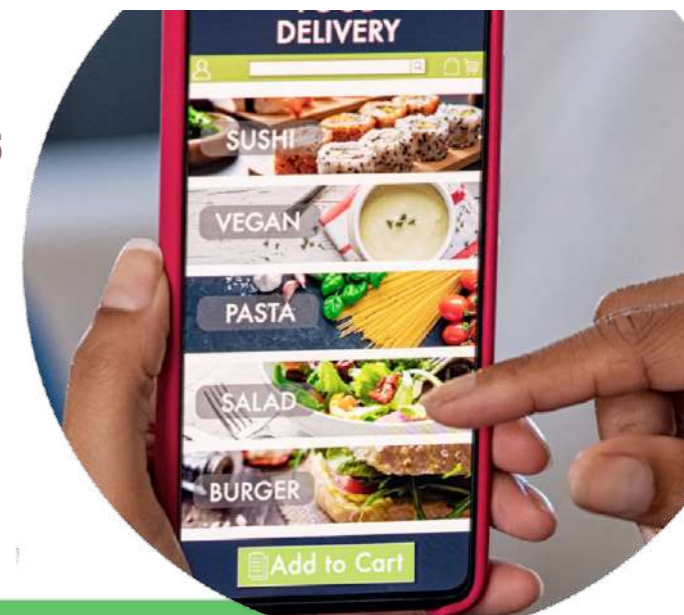
Akrame Benallal

The plant-based approach is aimed at reducing the event’s carbon footprint and promoting health. While the science behind plant-based diets for top athletes is new and there’s a lot left to be studied, for tennis great Novak Djokovic, F1 legend Lewis Hamilton, and professional road cyclists Michael Storer and Michale Woods, the benefits of a plant-based diet are impossible to ignore.

Regular consumers are also noting the positive impact of a plant-based or flexitarian diet. From a happier gut to less inflammation, fewer food intolerances, and an overall improved sense of well-being, plant-based diets do seem to have a lot to offer. Additionally, they’re better for the environment for the most part.

## The 2023 ProVeg review of the plant-based offerings at South Africa’s top fast-food franchises

Fast-food chains across the globe are jumping on the decision to include more plant-based options on their menus. South Africa is no stranger to this, with a variety of Quick Service Restaurants (QSRs) targeting vegan, vegetarian, and flexitarian consumers. As a food awareness organisation, ProVeg South Africa sought to assess the plant-based fast-food landscape by means of an annual Plant-Based Fast-Food Ranking. The 2023 ranking is the second version of the ranking. The purpose of the annual ranking is to encourage consumers and QSRs alike to choose and supply more plant-based options, as well as to provide QSRs with insights into how to better perform in the plant-based industry.



2023		
Rank	Restaurant	Score
1	Kauai	18.88
2	Simply Asia	17.32
3	Panarottis	13.62
4	Nando’s	10.22
5	Burger King	9.31
6	Spur	9.14

2022		
Rank	Restaurant	Score
1	Kauai	10.50
2	Spur	8.50
3	Panarottis	8.00
4	Burger King	7.00
5	Simply Asia	7.00
6	Steers	5.25

Click here to download the full ProVeg review

There are also humane and ethical considerations at play, as well as cultural and religious preferences. To top it all , the price of animal-based proteins continues to rise. Together, these factors are driving a steady move to a more plant-based way of life for many consumers.

South African meat-alternative producers celebrated this year when the Johannesburg High Court overturned the South African government’s ban on plant-based meat alternatives. The ruling allows ‘meaty’ names like sausage, burger, and steak to be used on meat-alternative products.

This is a win for producers and consumers alike and is making life easier for retailers and wholesalers who had entered the plant-based market and were tasked with finding increasingly creative ways to name their products.

One of the keys to plant-based food is convenience. Offering a good range of plant-based replacements for meat products and ingredients is as important as having a variety of plant-based ready-to-eat, heat and eat, and HMR options available. The versatility of grains and pulses make them ideal solutions for HMR and your deli counter.





# ENJOY HAPPY MOMENTS WITH HENRO

Henro believes that happiness is meant to be shared and the products will help consumers create happy moments with family and friends, big or small.

What are you waiting for, grab a box of your favourite Henro cookies and start creating your Happy Moments!



[wecare@biscopius.co.za](mailto:wecare@biscopius.co.za)

[www.biscopius.co.za](http://www.biscopius.co.za)

(+27) 12 804 5440







### This tiny grain is becoming a staple in healthy diets

Dehusked millet is simply the grain with the outer hull removed, making it easier to cook and digest. This superfood is drought-resistant and thrives in less fertile soil. An ancient grain, it has been a staple in many cultures for thousands of years. Packed with nutrients, it makes a fantastic addition to your meals.

**Nutrient-rich:** It's loaded with vitamins, minerals & antioxidants.

**Gluten-free:** Perfect for those with gluten sensitivities.

**Versatile:** Use it in salads, soups, porridges, or even as a rice substitute. <https://agtfoods.co.za/>

### Ancient grains in modern times

The ancient grains of millet and sorghum – which have been collected from wild grasses and consumed by humans for thousands of years – are making a comeback as consumers discover their nutritional and health benefits. Indigenous to Africa, millet and sorghum are adaptable to varied soils and climate conditions (rainfall and temperature). For these reasons, environmental justice NGO Biowatch, which works with smallholder farmers, other civil society organisations and government, is encouraging smallholder farmers to grow, harvest, process, eat and share these ancient grains that were once part of Africa's food security.



### Be inspired

Look to international countries such as Denmark, Netherlands, Germany, the US and UK, as well as Singapore and UAE. From investing in plant-based meat alternatives to publishing a nationwide action plan for plant-based foods, these countries have recognised the importance of sustainable and plant-based food solutions and are putting their money where it counts.

Investigating import deals and investing in local suppliers and start-ups is a good place to start when it comes to boosting your plant-based, vegan and vegetarian inventory.

### The challenges and potential of grains and pulses

Price increases on grains and pulses continue to present challenges to manufacturers, retailers, wholesalers and consumers. According to Business Tech (Seth Thorne, 31 May 2024), rice (10kgs)

saw a 35% increase from May 2022 to May 2023, while sugar beans (5kg) increased 34% in the same period. Rice was impacted by adverse (drier) weather conditions from El Niño in Southeast Asia and floods in southern Brazil. Cake flour (10kgs) increased by 2%, while maize (30kg) reduced by 7% in the period under review.



Neha Ghai, Grocery Doppio

According to Neha Ghai, Director of Research, Grocery Doppio, solutions for retailers and wholesalers to mitigate the effects of inflation include category optimisation (streamlining your current range, introducing new categories) and dynamic pricing to reflect changing market conditions as they occur.

Offering more value, promotional pricing, promotional offers, bulk discounts, product alternatives and private label alternatives are also effective in countering inflation. Other strategies include reducing margins or holding margins steady, improving the shopping experience and always putting your customers first. **SR**

#### Sources:

[www.business-standard.com/world-news/world-pulses](http://www.business-standard.com/world-news/world-pulses)  
<https://biowatch.org.za/bring-back-our-ancient-grains/>  
[www.grocerydoppio.com/articles/grocers-guide](http://www.grocerydoppio.com/articles/grocers-guide)



**GET YOUR TASTE BUDS  
MOVING  
WITH OUR**

**NEW!**



**DISCO'S**



**The biscuit that brings a party to your palate.**

[www.biscopius.co.za](http://www.biscopius.co.za)

(+27) 12 804 5440

[wecare@biscopius.co.za](mailto:wecare@biscopius.co.za)

