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Tunisia

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Grain Crop Update 2010

Report Categories:

Agricultural Situation

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Report Highlights:

Tunisia cereal production for 2009/2010 is estimated at 1.1 million MT, about 56 percent lower than cereal production in the 2008/2009 campaign. The GOT has announced that it is planning to import about 2 million MT of grain in MY 2010. The U.S. wheat, barley and corn exports made a recent comeback in the Tunisia market as result of increased local demand and lack of export supplies from Black Sea countries, the main grain exporter to the Tunisian market in recent years. Shipments of U.S. corn, totaling 143,500 MT so far in 2010, have boosted U.S. market share in the Tunisian market to almost 40 percent.

Cereal Production in 2009/2010 Season

Official government estimates published on August 30 show that grain harvest (wheat and barley) of the 2009/2010 campaign was estimated at 1.1 million MT, about 56 percent lower than the 2.5 million MT grain productions in the previous year. Although grain planted area in the 2009/10 season was close to the area planted last year, lower yields (particularly in the northern region) resulted in a significant decline in total grain production this year.

The table below shows the breakdown by crop of Tunisia's grain quantities collected from the 2010 harvest compared with quantities collected in 2009.

Crop	Quantity Collected 1,000 MT 2009	Quantity Collected 1,000 MT 2010	% Change
Soft Wheat	647	390	-39.7%
Durum Wheat	185	90	-51.3%
Barley	374	38	-89.8%
Total	1,206	518	-57%

It must be noted that the quantity collected by the state run 'Office des Cereales' is the most reliable indicator of total grain production estimate in Tunisia, which is officially made by the Tunisian Ministry of Agriculture. Depending of the year, the quantity collected accounts for 50 to 60 percent of the quantity produced.

Trade

In order to deal with the anticipated shortage of grain supplies resulting from this year's small harvest, the Tunisia government plans to import about 2 million MT of grain (mostly wheat) in MY 2010 to meet pressing domestic needs. In recent months, U.S. exports of wheat, barley and corn exports have made a noticeable come-back in the Tunisia market as result of increased local demand and a lack of supplies from Tunisia's main exporters, the Black Sea countries.

Three shipments of U.S. durum and soft wheat were bought during August and September 2010 by Tunisia. Several shipments of U.S. corn, totaling 143,500 MT so far in 2010, have boosted U.S. market share in the corn market to almost 40 percent, compared to a total of 51,000 MT exported in the entire 2009. In addition, a shipment of 20,000 tons of U.S. barley was contracted in early September following increased local demand for feed barley due to deteriorating pasture conditions. In the mean time, the GOT has renewed the implementation of a set of farm support measures, including subsidizing planting seeds, in-kind assistance to small farmers and interest-free loans rescheduling, to deal with the impact of drought conditions on the Tunisian farmers.

