GREEN FACTS

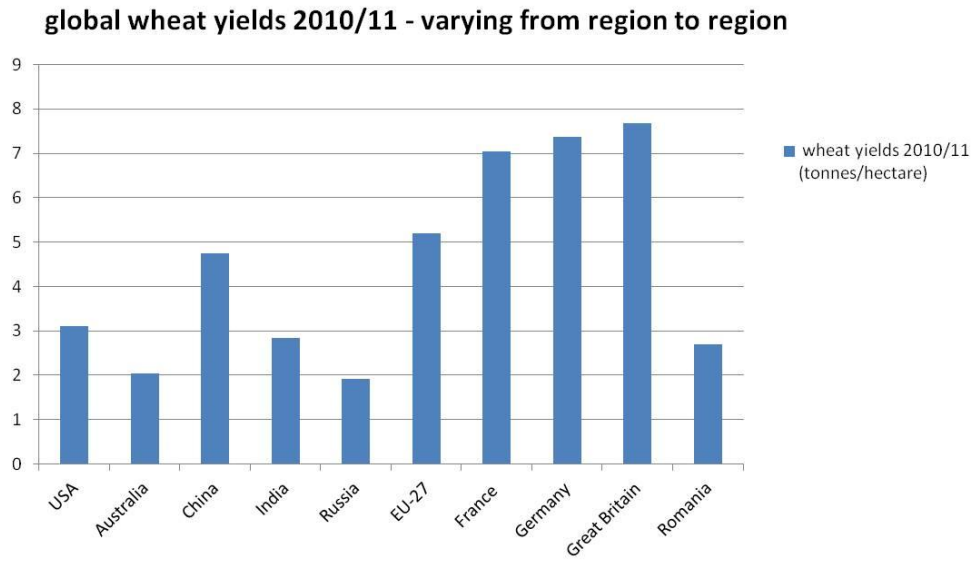
INFOSERVICE
22 August 2012

High grain yields in spite of weather capers

Slightly below five year average – 43.8 million tonnes of grain in Germany in 2012

On a global scale, about 25 percent of the arable land are used to grow wheat, making this crop the number one in terms of acreage worldwide. Following corn, it is number two of all grain crops with regard to the weight of grain harvested globally – with an average of more than 650 million tonnes per year. Wheat is also one of the most important staple foods worldwide. In some countries, people spend about 60 percent of their income for wheat alone.

Amongst others, the EU, China, North America, Russia and Australia are important producers. Due to a variety of reasons, however, yields vary to a large degree between different regions.



Productivity of wheat growing has been increased by less than one percent in recent years, whereas wheat demand has been rising twice as fast. To better bridge that gap, scientific research increasingly looks at wheat varieties which feature outstanding agronomic performance. Beyond merely increasing yields, an efficient nutrient use (nitrogen and phosphorus), tolerance against abiotic stress factors (drought, heat), resistance against fungal diseases and quality (protein content, falling numbers) are targets when looking at new varieties. The idea is to bridge the gap between production and demand by supplying higher quality. Particularly on favourable production sites as can be found in Central Europe, increasing productivity must remain an important objective, and the land available for production may not be further diminished.

Due to very low temperatures without a protective layer of snow in February and a lack of precipitation during spring months, the average wheat yield just reached 7.2 tonnes per hectare and hence was slightly below the annual average in Germany in 2012. However, this still makes wheat yields in this region of Central Europe almost best in class on a global scale.

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