

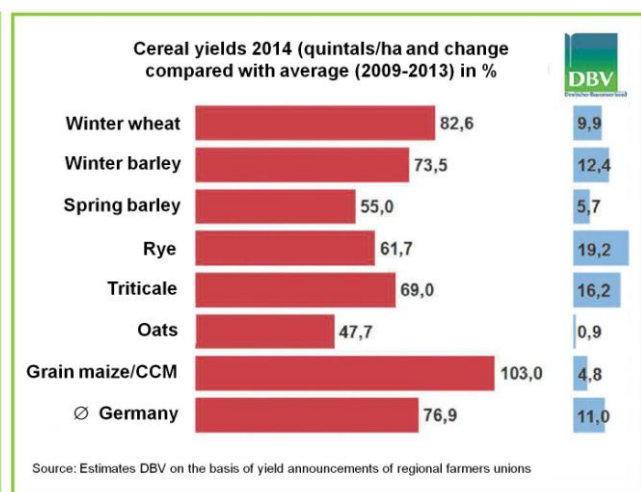
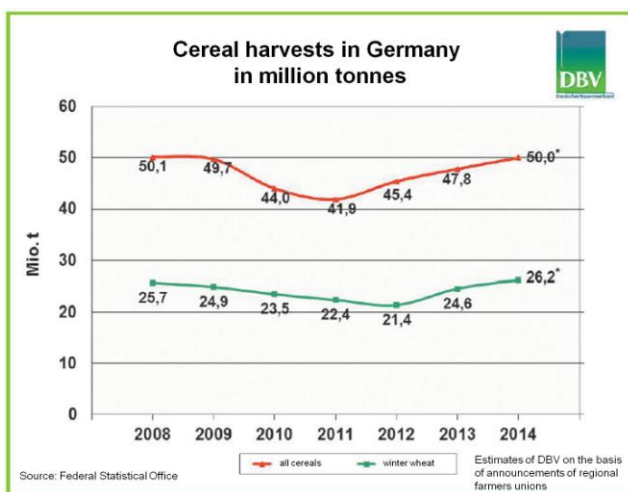
“Champions’ Yields” for Farmers in Germany

Agricultural ‘prime locations’ indispensable backbone of global food security

About 50 million tonnes of cereals were harvested in Germany in 2014. That is a top result which almost equals the record harvest of 2008. In light of the difficult, i.e. unstable, weather conditions throughout the year, some people would not have expected such a good result.

Initially, a mild winter allowed for an early seeding of spring cultures and a good start for the young cereal crops. The following weeks, however, brought about other conditions than those farmers had been hoping for: High spring temperatures and little rainfall got to the crops. It was only in May that large parts of Germany received sufficient rain, thus improving growing conditions for cereals in these regions. In other regions, however, these rainfalls stayed away. Shortly before the time for harvest had come, crops were able to take up lots of sun and energy. But again, during harvest many farmers looked out of their windows with big worries, as torrential rains and hail storms made harvesting almost like ‘option trading’ in many regions. Crops with late harvest dates such as winter wheat often had to be cut and brought in with a higher moisture contents than farmers had expected. For those farmers concerned, there are financial losses due to the cost-intensive grain drying that is needed in order to store the grain without degradation. In addition, baking characteristics of bread making cereals are negatively affected in cases when the harvest is delayed due to adverse weather conditions.

Germany, however, still is one of the prime locations for cereals, as can be seen when looking at the yield increases per hectare. When compared to the average of the years 2009-2013, increases were achieved in all grain crops. In conclusion, it becomes particularly obvious in years with adverse weather conditions throughout the growing season that farmers work efficiently and sustainably with their soils and resources. That is also highlighted in a recent study published by scientist from Bonn University in the Science magazine. The objective of the study was to identify and analyse the key factors which will be of utmost importance for achieving food security for a growing world population in the coming decades. Many agricultural countries were evaluated with regard to their production potentials. The authors came to the conclusion that, in Germany, about 80 to 90% of the potential of cultivated soils are used. Against that background, latest yield increases are the more astounding.



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