

Mielie shortage in Zimbabwe

ZIMBABWE'S maize harvest is expected to fall by 26% to a million tons this year after nearly half of the crop was written off because of a prolonged dry spell, an assessment report from the agriculture minister showed on Friday.

The southern African country, once a regional bread basket, has struggled to feed itself since 2000

when President Robert Mugabe embarked on the seizure of white-owned commercial farms, ostensibly to resettle landless blacks.

Zimbabwe's annual maize consumption is 1.8 million tons. The report said the country had built up 400 000 tons in maize reserves. Another 400 000 tons would have to be imported. — *Reuters*