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**NAMIBIAN
AGRONOMIC BOARD**

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MARKET INTELLIGENCE REPORT

SORGHUM



Issue 1 of 2026

1. INTRODUCTION

Sorghum (*Sorghum bicolor* L. Moench) is one of the world's most significant cereal crops, widely valued for its versatility, drought tolerance, and adaptability to semi-arid environments (Bakari *et al.*, 2023). Globally, it serves as an essential source of food, livestock feed, and industrial raw material, particularly in regions vulnerable to erratic rainfall patterns (Wanga *et al.*, 2023). In southern Africa, sorghum plays a crucial role in promoting food and nutritional security, especially among smallholder farming communities that depend heavily on resilient crop systems (Wanga *et al.*, 2023).

In Namibia, sorghum is predominantly cultivated by subsistence and emerging farmers in the northern regions under rainfed conditions (Wanga, Shimelis, & Mengistu, 2022). Although the crop is well-suited to the country's climate, domestic production remains comparatively low (NAB, 2023), with annual output averaging only 4,941 tons (FAO, 2025). Consequently, Namibia continues to rely on imported sorghum and related products to meet national demand (FAO, 2025). The local sorghum value chain faces several constraints, including the lack of a structured formal market, limited value addition, and a lack of reliable commercial off-takers. These challenges undermine the crop's commercial viability. At the same time, the country imports large quantities of sorghum-based products, such as instant porridge, highlighting a clear disconnect between local production and processing capacity (NAB, 2023).

In light of these challenges, this market intelligence report aims to identify existing gaps and explore potential opportunities within the sorghum value chain. The insights generated will support the development of targeted strategies that strengthen local processing capacity, enhance market access, and promote import substitution. Ultimately, these interventions aim to unlock the full economic potential of sorghum and contribute to a more competitive and resilient agricultural sector in Namibia.

2. GLOBAL OVERVIEW

This section covers the global production, consumption, export and import of sorghum over the five years from 2019 to 2023.

2.1 PRODUCTION

According to FAO (2025), global sorghum production averaged 58.1 million tons per year over the past five years (2019 – 2023). Production peaked in 2021 at 60.9 million tons, harvested from 41.3 million hectares. In 2022, the harvested area expanded to 47.7 million ha, yet production declined to 57.7 million tons, resulting in an average yield of 1.41 tons per hectare, the lowest recorded in the five years. This downward trend in 2023, with production slightly decreasing to 57.3 million tons (**Figure 1**), points to sustained production challenges. The decline is likely associated with factors such as increasing climatic variability and declining soil fertility, among other agronomic pressures.

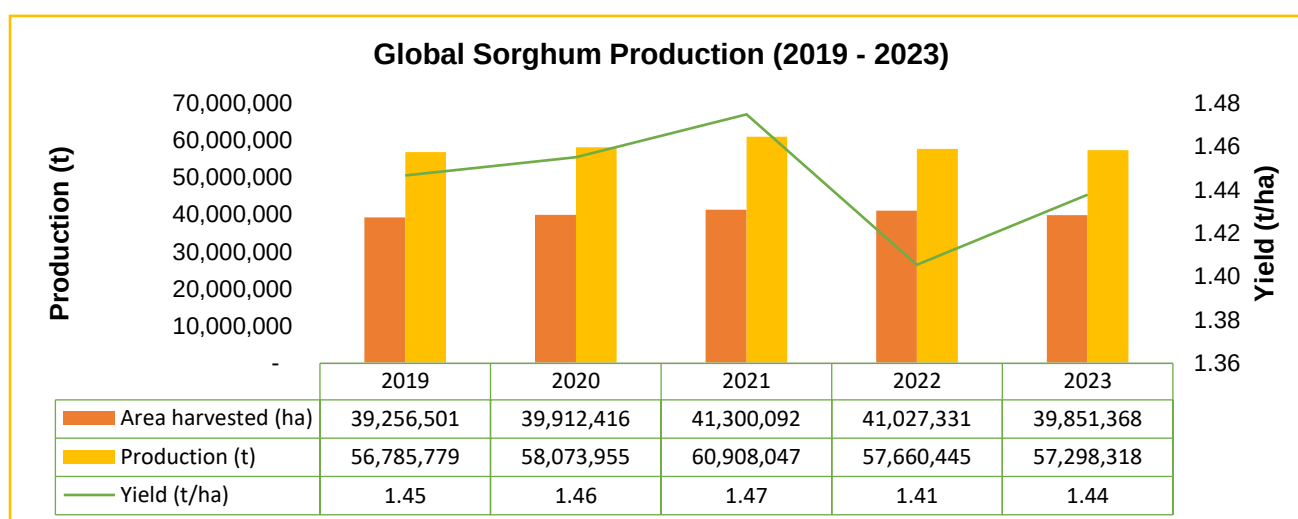


Figure 1: Global sorghum production trends (2019 - 2023)

Source: FAO, 2025

Figure 2 indicates that the United States led global sorghum production with 8.1 million tons (14.2%). Nigeria followed with 6.4 million tons (11.2%), whereas Ethiopia recorded the lowest among the top five producing countries at 4.0 million tons (7%).

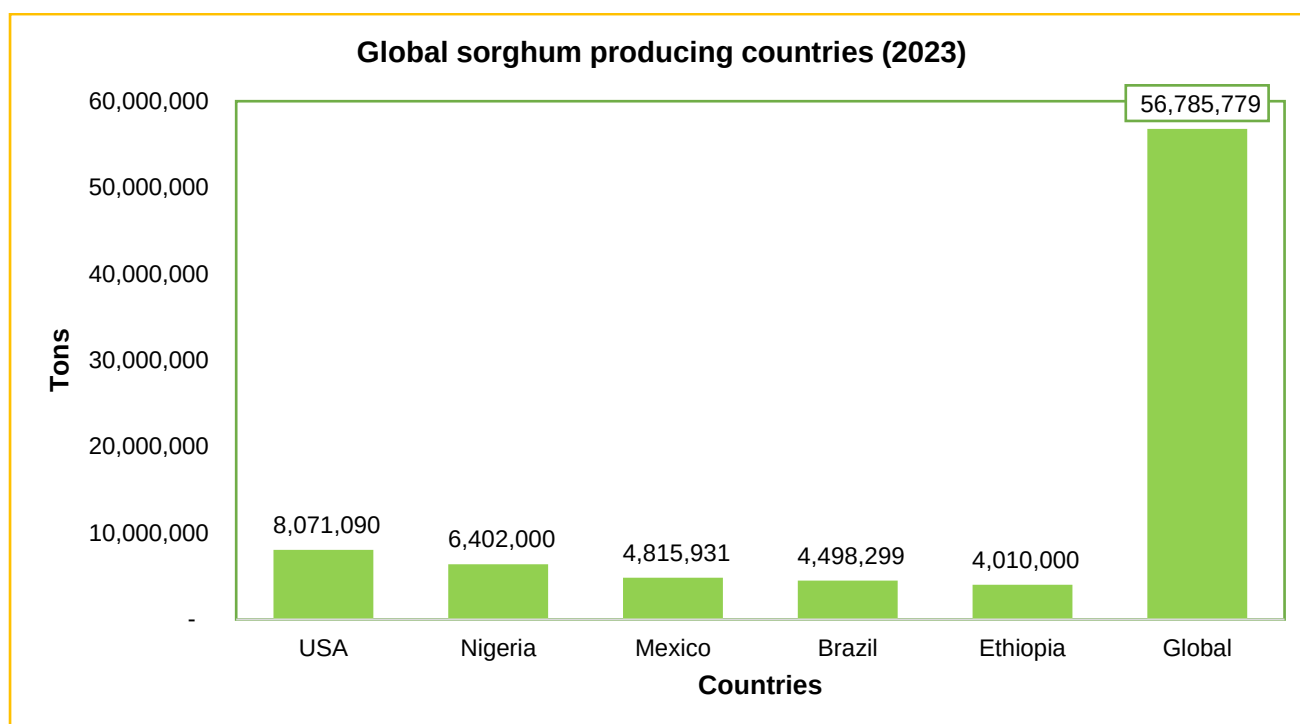


Figure 2: Top 5 global sorghum-producing countries in 2023

Source: FAO, 2025

As illustrated in **Figure 3**, Africa dominated global sorghum production in 2023 with a 45% share, followed by the Americas (35%) and Asia (13%). Oceania and Europe contributed only 4% and 2%, respectively, making them the smallest producing continents.

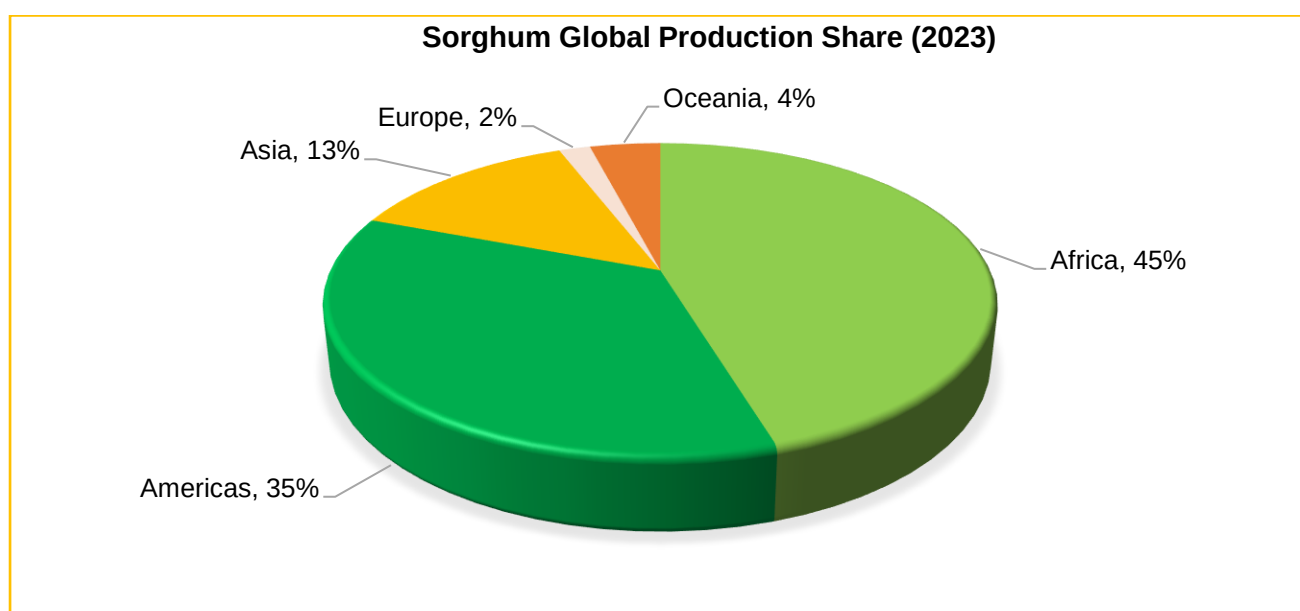


Figure 3: Global Production share by continent, 2023

Source: FAO, 2025

2.2 TRADE (IMPORTS AND EXPORTS)

IMPORTS

Global sorghum imports have fluctuated over the past five years (2019–2023). Particularly, import volumes increased in 2021 and 2022, with 11.2 million tons and 11.7 million tons imported at values of N\$3.6 billion and N\$4.5 billion, respectively. In 2023, a lower import value (N\$2.4 billion) was recorded, indicating a likely increase in global sorghum production (**Figure 4**).

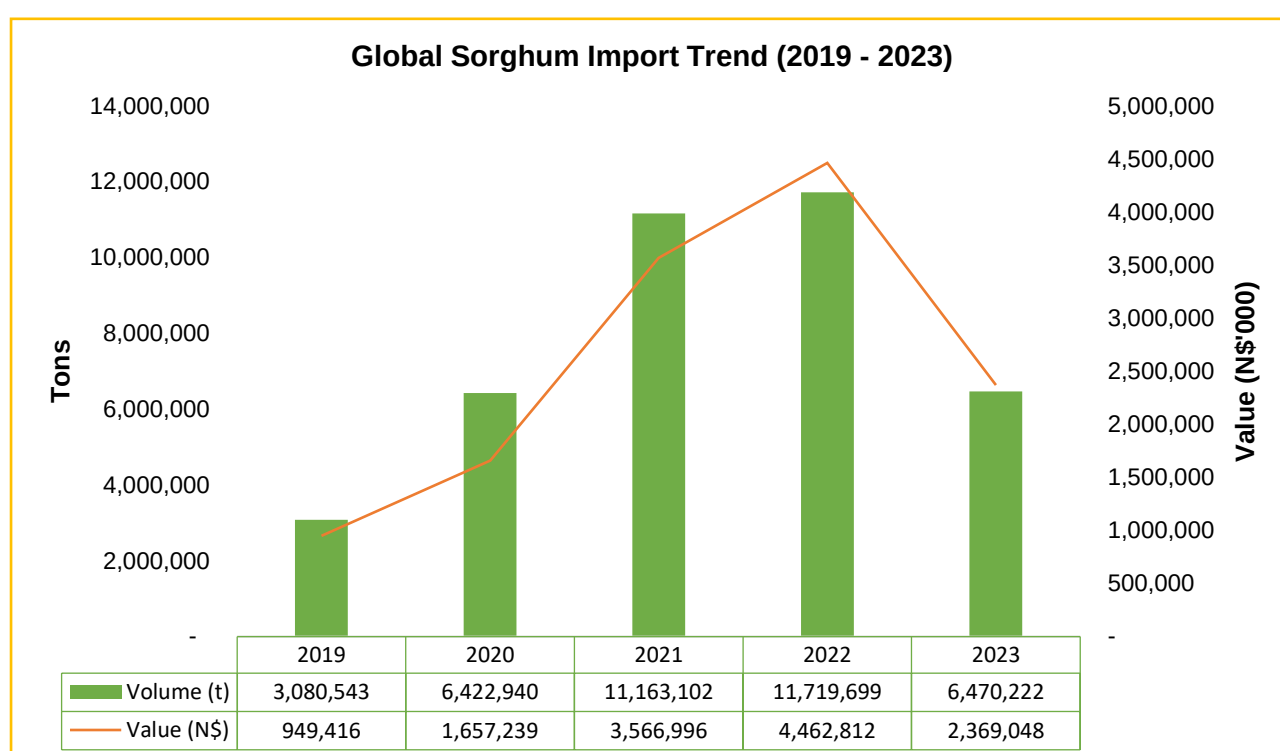


Figure 4: Global Sorghum import trend from 2019 to 2023

Source: ITC, 2025

In 2023, China was the world's largest sorghum importer, with import values reaching approximately N\$32.3 billion. Japan followed as the second-largest importer at N\$1.45 billion, while Mexico ranked third with imports valued at N\$1.03 billion. Among the top 10 importing countries, Italy recorded the lowest import value at N\$315,000 (**Figure 5**).

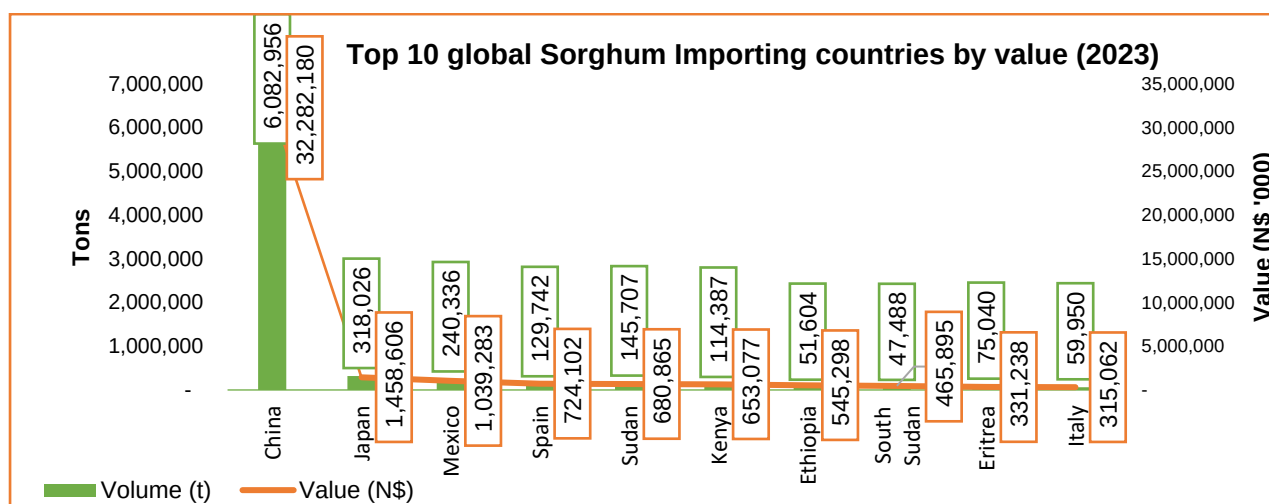


Figure 5: Top 10 Global Sorghum-importing countries by volume and value (2023)

Source: ITC, 2025

EXPORTS

Over the period under review, global sorghum exports showed an overall upward trend, averaging 8.3 million tons valued at N\$39.1 billion. Export volumes peaked at 10.9 million tons in 2021 and 10.5 million tons in 2022, with corresponding export values of N\$47.4 billion and N\$59 billion, respectively (**Figure 6**).

Although export volume declined slightly in 2022 compared to 2021, the total export value increased significantly (**Figure 6**). This divergence may be attributed to rising international sorghum prices, exchange rate movements, or a combination of both factors.

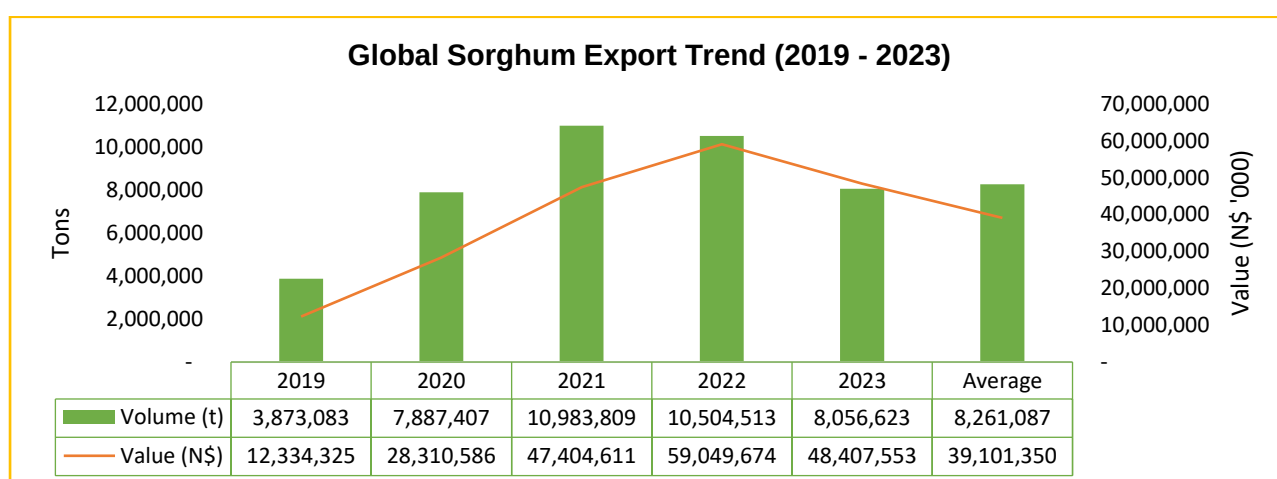


Figure 6: Global Sorghum import trend (2019 – 2023)

Source: ITC, 2025

The United States remained the world's largest exporter of sorghum in 2023, with exports valued at N\$24.3 billion. Australia ranked second at N\$7.6 billion, followed by Argentina in third place with exports valued at N\$3.7 billion (**Figure 7**). Although China is the world's largest importer of sorghum (Figure 5), it also appears among the top ten exporters. However, it recorded the lowest export value, at N\$101 million (**Figure 7**).

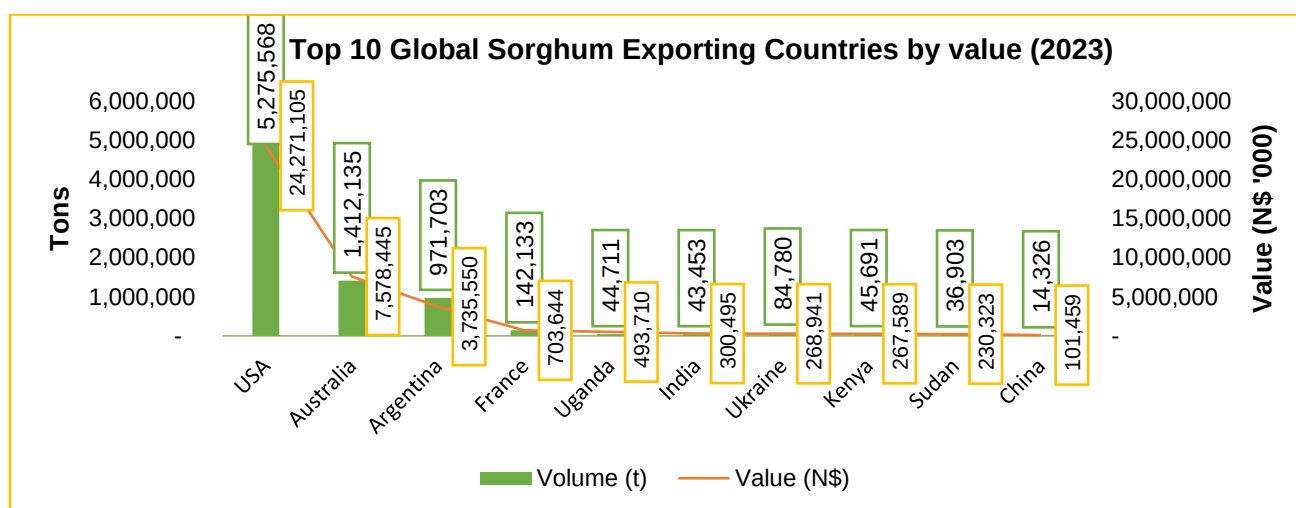


Figure 7: Top 10 Global Sorghum exporting countries by volume and value (2023)

Source: ITC, 2025

2.3 CONSUMPTION

As shown in **Figure 8**, global sorghum consumption has fluctuated over the past five years from 2019/20 to 2023/24, averaging 59.7 million tons. China remained the largest consumer, with an average of 10.2 million tons, representing 17.1% of global consumption. Nigeria also demonstrated strong consumption levels, averaging 6.6 million tons, reflecting sustained domestic demand driven by food and industrial uses.

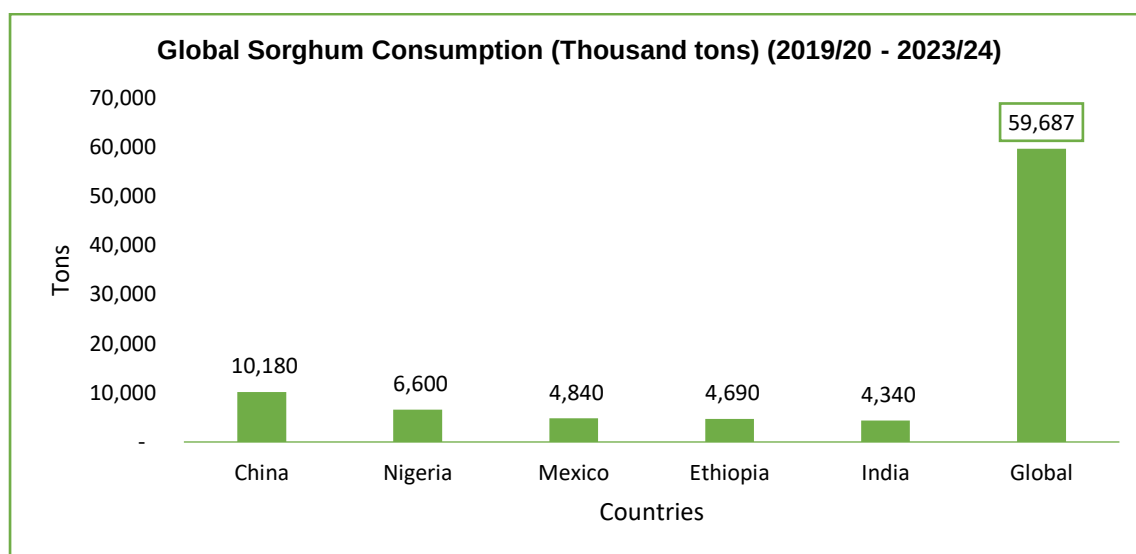


Figure 8: Global sorghum consumption trend for the 2019/20 to 2023/24 Financial year.

Source: USDA-FAS, 2024

2.4 FARM GATE PRICES

As Figure 9 shows, sorghum farm gate prices per ton rose steadily from N\$6,124.98 in 2019 to N\$6,801.84 in 2023, driven by strong global demand, particularly from China, where demand for sorghum in livestock feed and the brewing industry has remained robust (USDA-FAS, 2024).

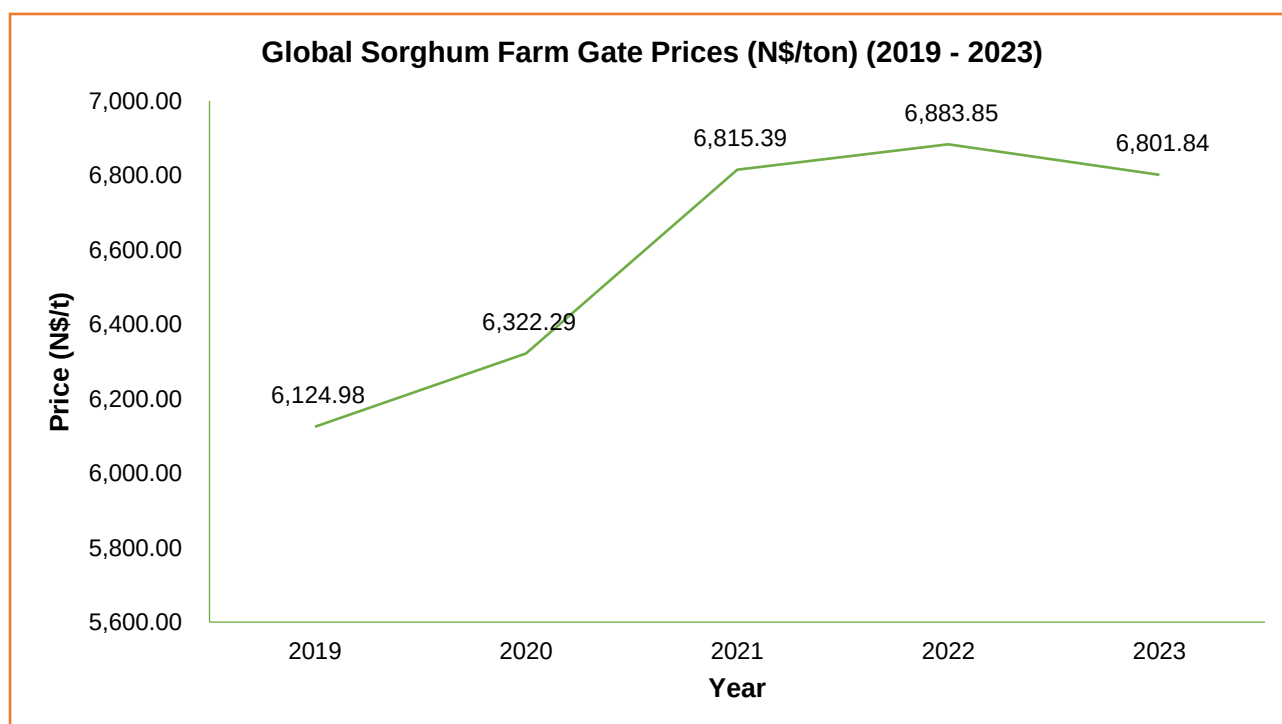


Figure 9: Global Sorghum Farm Gate Prices (N\$/t) from 2019 to 2023.

Source: FAO, 2025

3. AFRICA PERSPECTIVE

This section explores sorghum production, along with market dynamics, including imports and exports across African countries.

3.1 PRODUCTION

Sorghum production in Africa averaged 27,2 million tons over the past years (2012 – 2023). Production peaked in 2022 at 29.2 million tons due to a change in area harvested and favourable weather conditions, before declining in 2023 by 3.7 million tons (**Figure 10**).

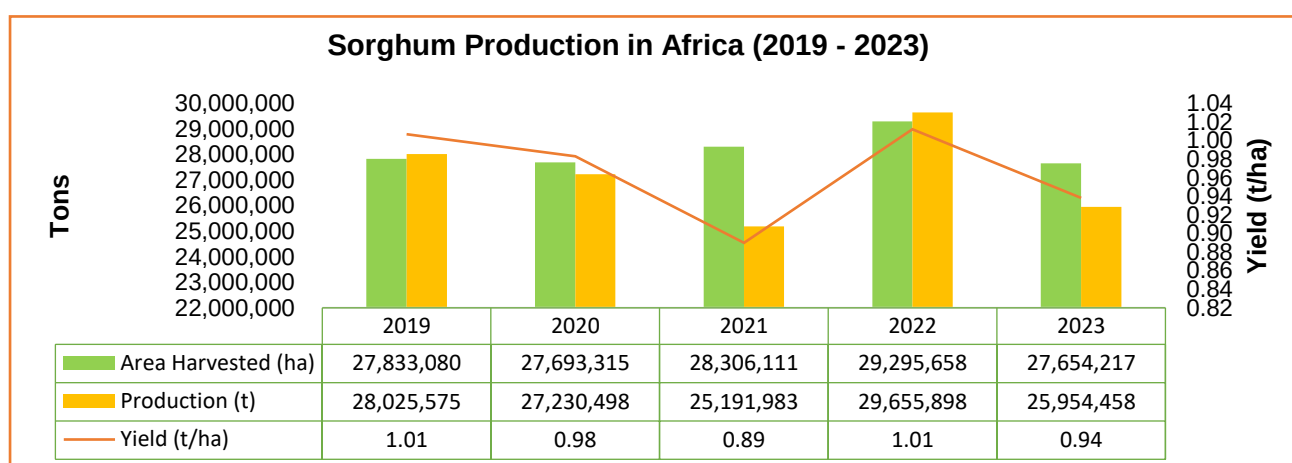


Figure 10: Sorghum Production in Africa from 2019 to 2023

Source: FAO, 2025

Major producers such as Nigeria (6.4 million tons), Ethiopia (4 million tons), and Sudan (3 million tons) continued to dominate regional output, accounting for a significant share of the total production (**Figure 11**).

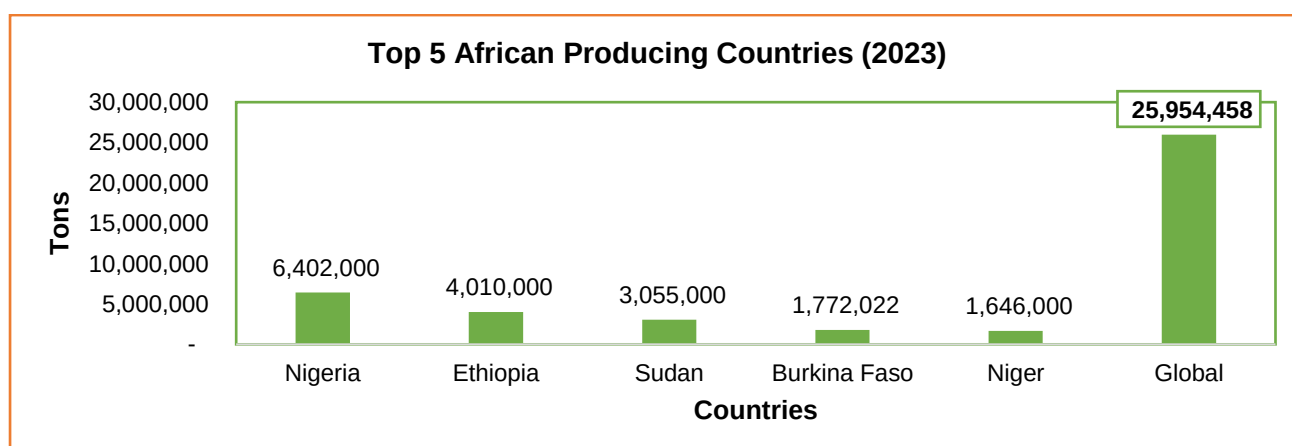


Figure 11: Top 5 Sorghum-Producing African Countries in 2023

Source: FAO, 2025

3.2 TRADE (IMPORTS AND EXPORTS)

IMPORTS

A stable increase in sorghum import value was observed in Africa from 2019 to 2023, averaging N\$3.8 billion over the period (**Figure 12**).

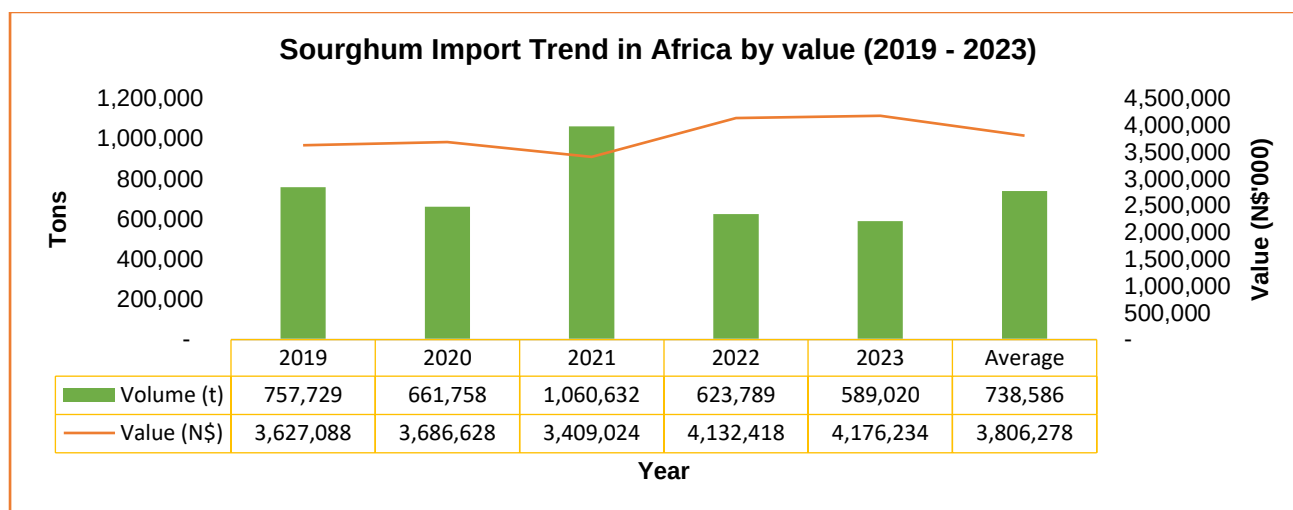


Figure 12: Sorghum Import Trends in Africa from 2019 to 2023.

Source: ITC, 2025

Kenya (N\$838 million) was recorded as the largest importer of sorghum in Africa, followed by Sudan with imports valued at N\$622.9 million. Djibouti recorded the lowest import value, at N\$104.5 million (**Figure 13**).

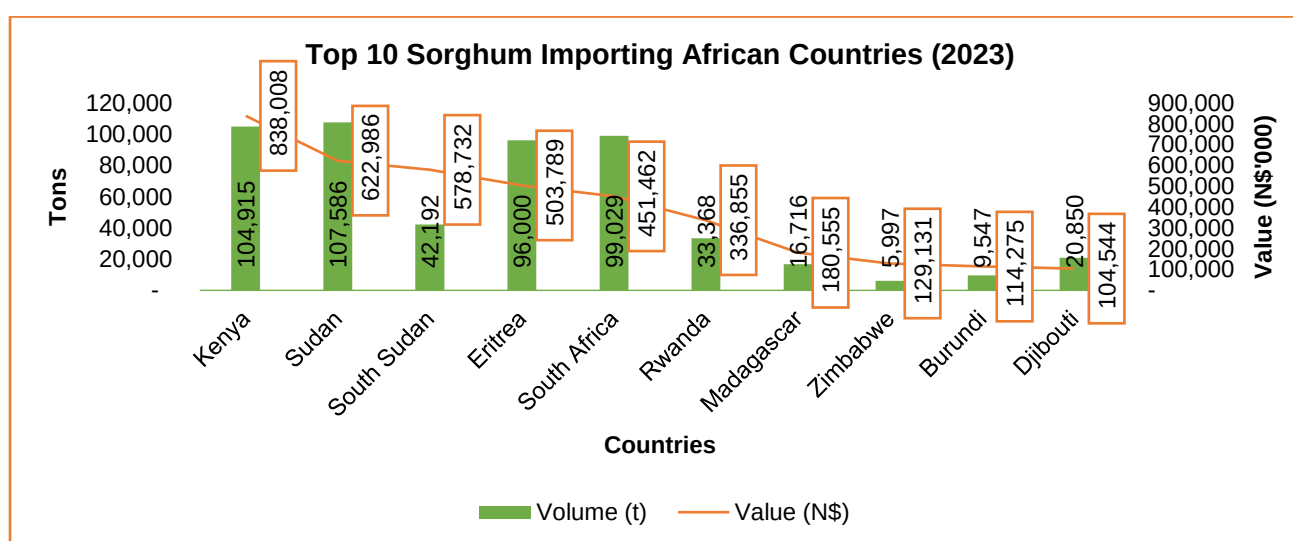


Figure 13: Top 10 Sorghum Importing Countries in Africa by value in 2023

Source: ITC, 2025

EXPORTS

Africa's sorghum export value peaked in 2019 at N\$1.57 billion, in line with the highest export volumes of 254,312 tons recorded during the review period. The export value declined in 2021 to N\$979 million, reflecting reduced export volumes and market disruptions.

Despite continued pressure on volumes thereafter, export value recovered strongly, increasing to N\$1.42 billion in 2022 and further to N\$1.53 billion in 2023. This suggests improved international prices, stronger demand, or a shift toward higher-value sorghum exports (**Figure 14**).

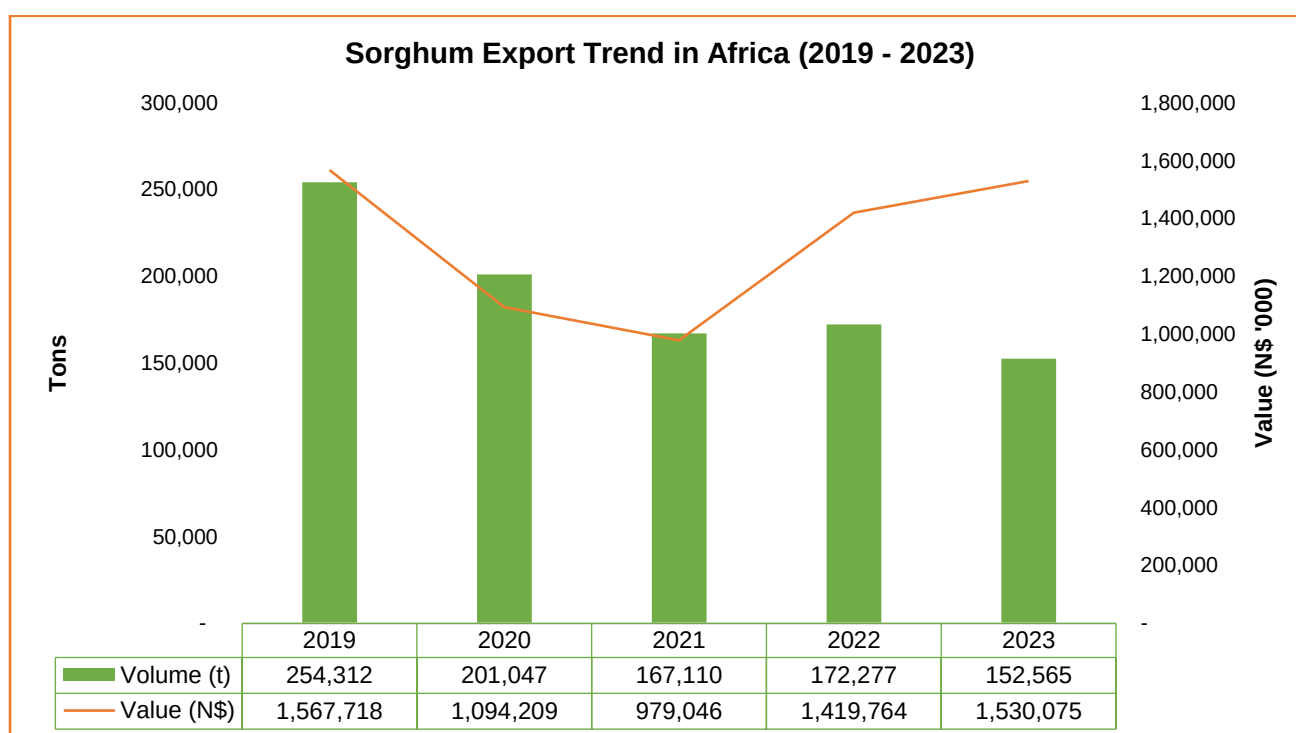


Figure 14: Sorghum Export Trend in Africa from 2019 to 2023

Source: ITC, 2025

Uganda leads Africa in sorghum exports, with 65,715 tons valued at N\$881.7 million, reflecting strong production and established markets. Kenya ranks second with 28,500 tons (N\$215.2 million), showing stable market access despite lower volume.

Sudan (6,139 tons, N\$41.7 million) and Nigeria (4,339 tons, N\$36.8 million) are mid-range exporters. Zambia (1,010 tons, N\$11.7 million) and Zimbabwe (1,633 tons, N\$7.9 million), along with Botswana and Ghana (under 600 tons, <N\$4 million), show limited export activity (**Figure 15**).

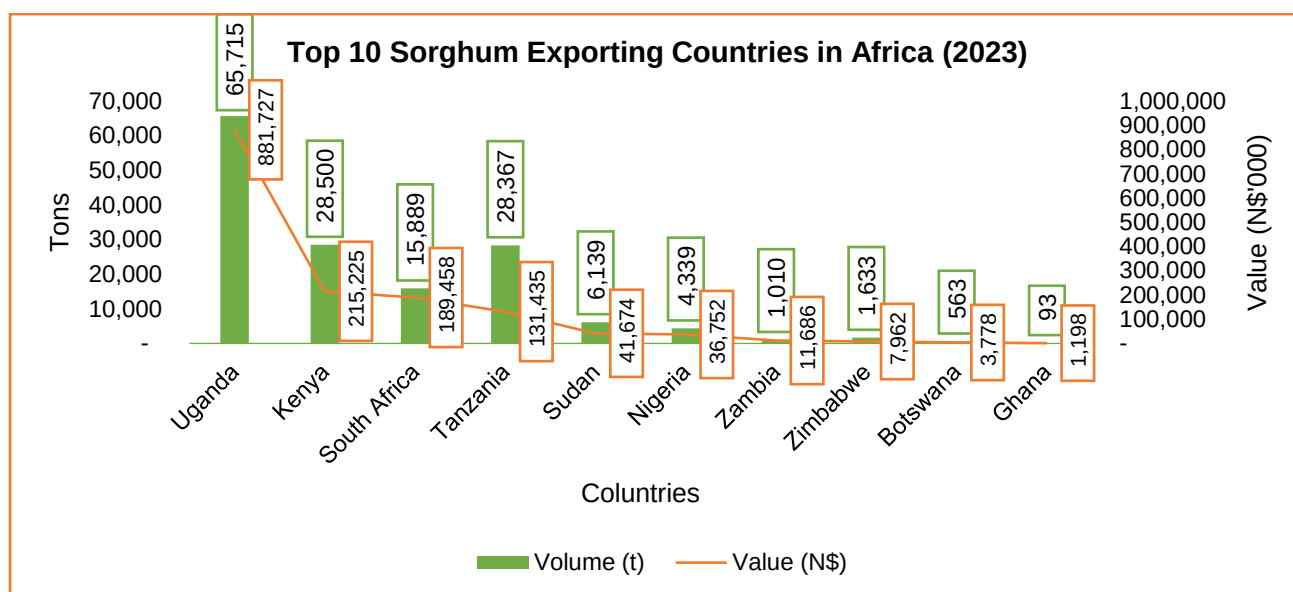


Figure 15: Top 10 sorghum-importing countries by volume and value, 2023

Source: ITC, 2025

3.3 CONSUMPTION

Sorghum consumption in Africa has shown a gradual increase over the past five years, from 2019/20 to 2023/24. The largest consumers are Nigeria (6.6 million tons), Sudan (4.6 million tons), and Ethiopia (4.3 million tons), accounting for a significant share of the continent's total sorghum use (Figure 16).

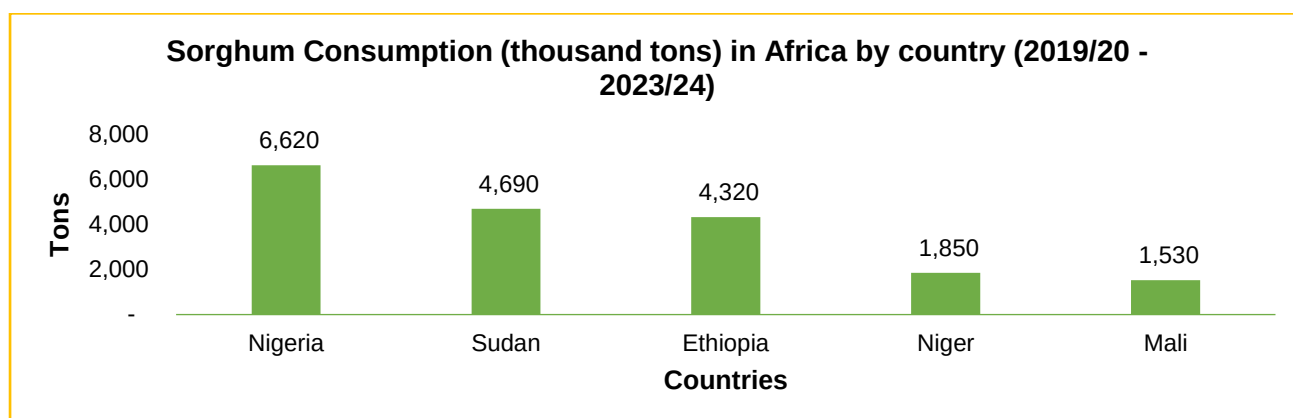


Figure 16: Sorghum consumption in Africa by country (2019/20 - 2023/24)

Source: USDA-FAS, 2024

3.4 FARM GATE PRICES

Between 2019 and 2023, African sorghum prices generally increased, rising from N\$6,942.52 per ton in 2019 to a peak of N\$7,467.97 in 2022. A slight decrease occurred in 2020 due to COVID-19 disruptions, and prices moderated in 2023 to N\$7,187.74 per ton, reflecting market stabilisation and improved supply (**Figure 17**).

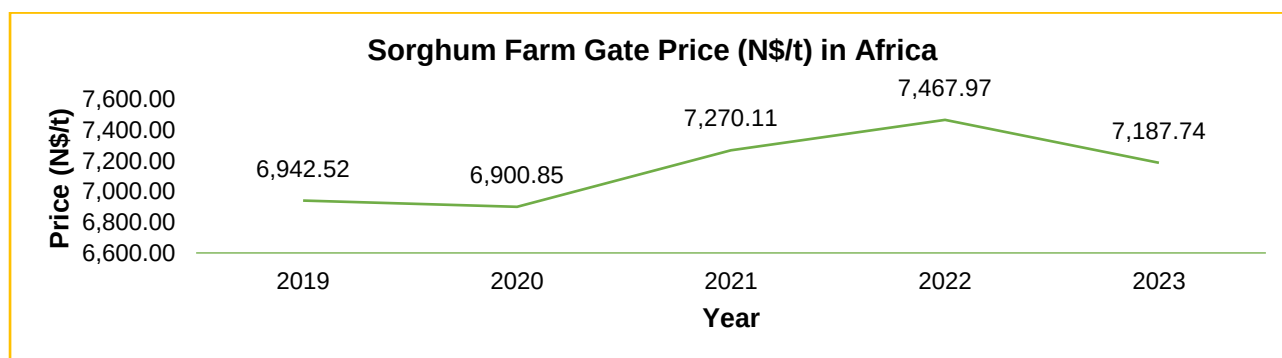


Figure 17: Average sorghum farm gate prices (N\$/t) in Africa. (Conversion date: 09/12/2025)

Source: FAO, 2025.

4. SOUTHERN AFRICA PERSPECTIVE

4.1 PRODUCTION

Over the past five years (2019–2023), sorghum production in the Southern Africa region averaged approximately 1.4 million tonnes. Production increased significantly in 2021, recording a 51% rise compared to the previous year. However, this was followed by a sharp decline of 47.2% in 2022, reflecting substantial year-to-year variability in sorghum output within the region.

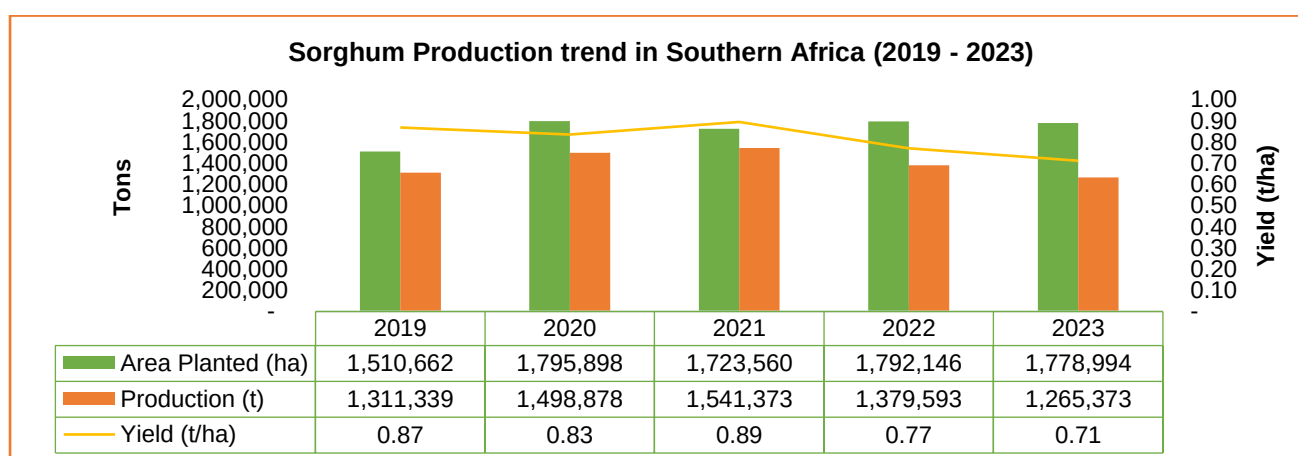


Figure 18: Sorghum Production in Southern Africa from 2019 to 2023.

Source: FAO, 2025

Tanzania remains the largest sorghum producer in Southern Africa, with production estimated at 737,819 tons, accounting for a substantial share of regional output. Mozambique follows at a distant second with 139,554 tons, while Malawi ranks third with approximately 117,000 tons.

Although Botswana records the lowest production volumes among reporting Southern African countries, its contribution remains strategically important, particularly in supporting regional supply diversification and niche market participation, despite its relatively small output.

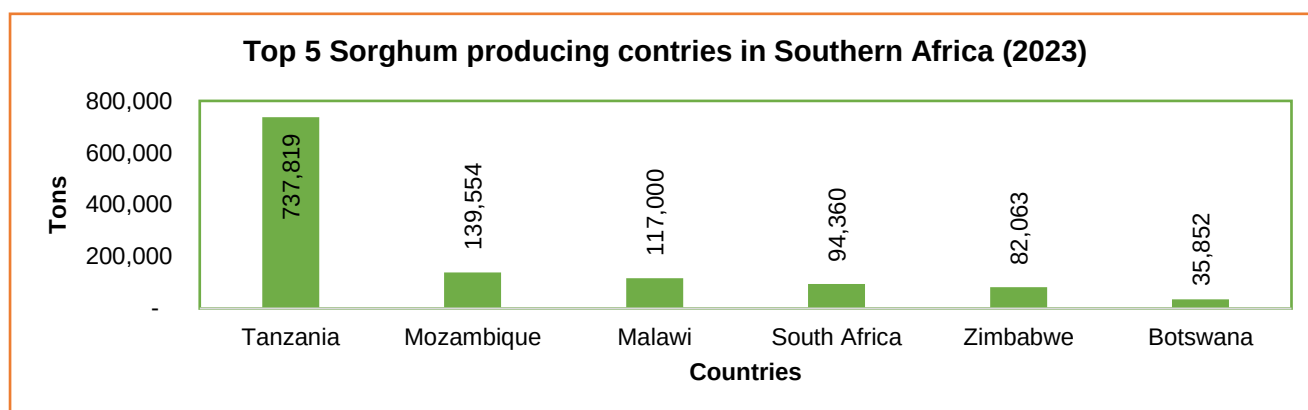


Figure 17: Top 5 Sorghum-Producing Countries in Southern Africa, 2023

Source: FAO, 2025

4.2 TRADE (IMPORTS AND EXPORTS)

IMPORTS

Sorghum imports in Southern Africa peaked in 2021, valued at approximately N\$377.5 million. While import volumes were highest in that year, higher import values were recorded in other years, indicating increased prices despite lower volumes (**Figure 19**).

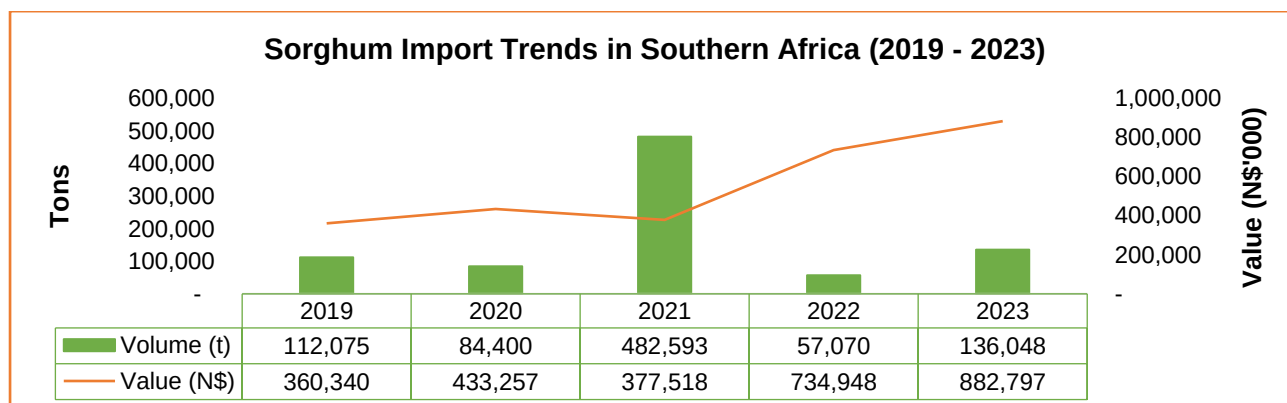


Figure 19: Sorghum import trend in Southern Africa (2019 - 2023)

Source: ITC, 2025

Between 2019 and 2023, South Africa was the leading sorghum importer in Southern Africa, with imports totalling 99,029 tons, valued at approximately N\$451.5 million. Madagascar followed with imports valued at N\$180.6 million, while Zimbabwe ranked third with an import value of N\$129.1 million (Figure 20).

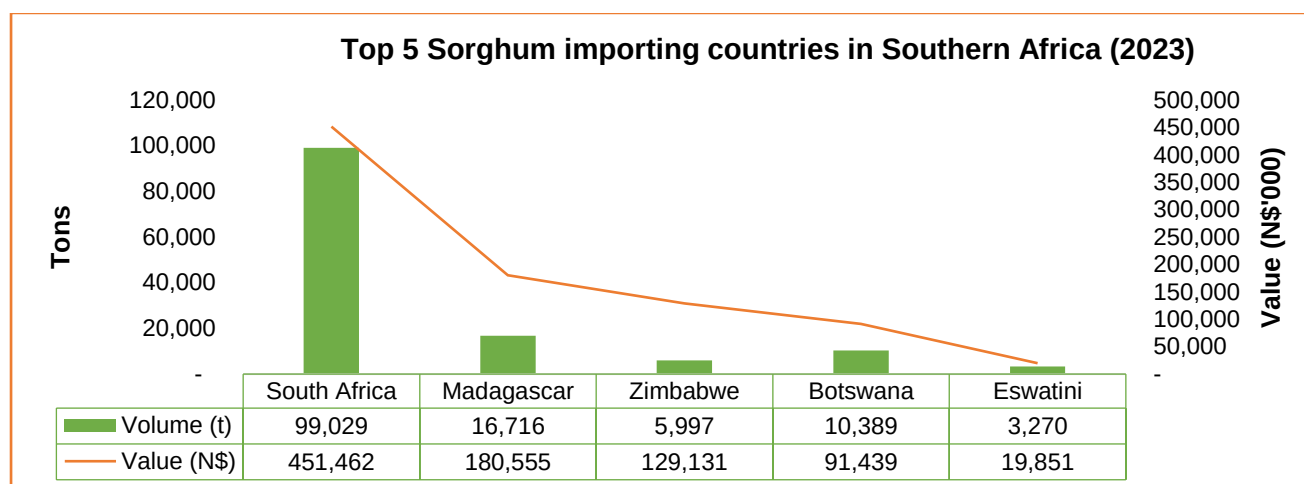


Figure 20: Top 5 sorghum-importing countries in Southern Africa by volume and value, 2023

Source: ITC, 2025

EXPORT

Sorghum export values in Southern Africa increased consistently throughout the period, rising from N\$60.9 million in 2019 to N\$344.9 million in 2023. The continued growth in export values, despite the decline in export volumes in 2023, suggests higher export prices and improved market conditions, reflecting stronger demand and favourable pricing dynamics in regional and international markets (Figure 21).

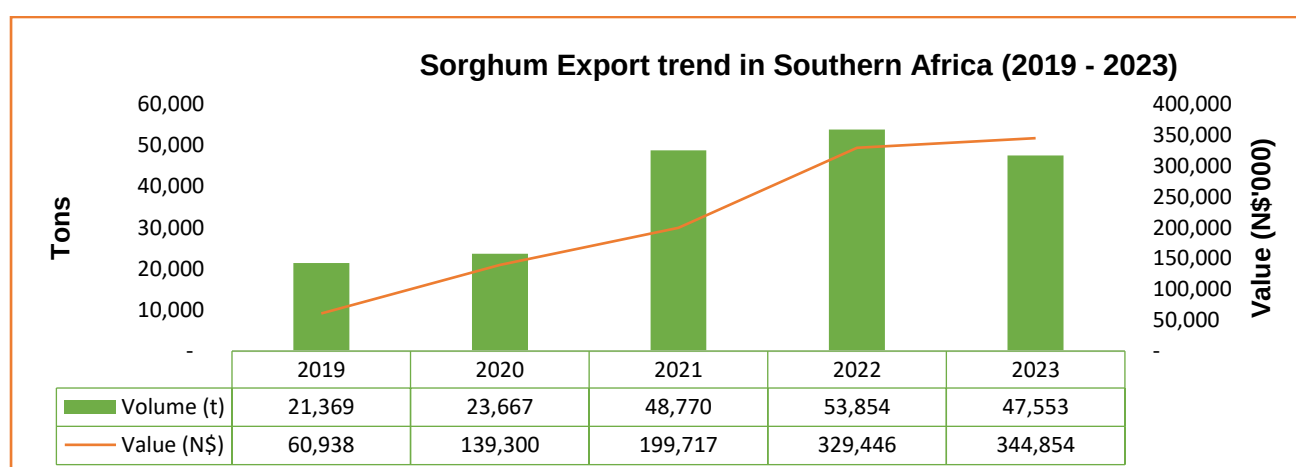


Figure 21: Sorghum export trend in Southern Africa (2019 - 2023)

Source: ITC, 2025

As shown in **Figure 22**, Tanzania records the highest sorghum export volumes in Southern Africa at 28,367 tons. However, South Africa leads in export value, generating N\$189,458 from 15,889 tons, highlighting a significant value-to-volume difference likely influenced by currency exchange dynamics and market pricing.

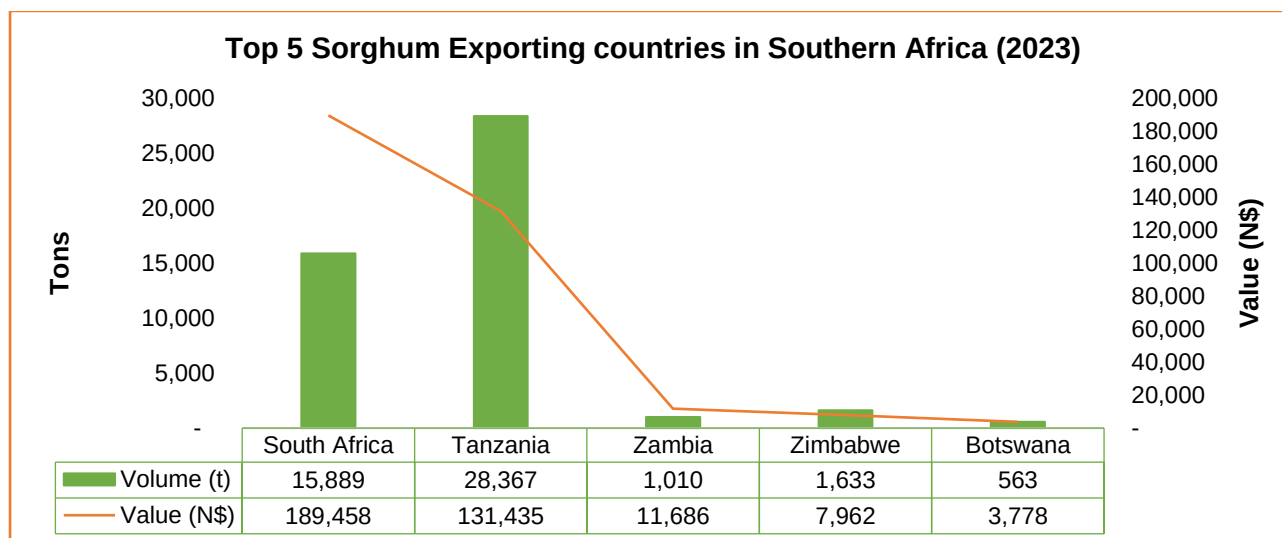


Figure 22: Top 5 Sorghum Exporting countries in Southern Africa by value, 2023

Source: ITC, 2025

4.3 CONSUMPTION

Between 2019 and 2023, sorghum consumption in Southern Africa averaged 1.53 million tons, calculated using the formula: **Consumption = Production + Imports – Exports**. Consumption peaked in 2021 at 1.98 million tons, driven by high production and a surge in imports, while the lowest consumption occurred in 2023 at 1.35 million tons, reflecting reduced production and moderate import levels (**Table 1**).

Table 1: Sorghum consumption in Southern Africa from 2019 to 2023

	Years					Average (t)
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
Production	1,311,339	1,498,878	1,541,373	1,379,593	1,265,373	1,399,311
Import	112,075	84,400	482,593	57,070	136,048	174,437
Export	21,369	23,667	48,770	53,854	47,553	39,043
Consumption	1,402,045	1,559,611	1,975,196	1,382,809	1,353,868	1,534,706

4.4 FARM GATE PRICES

As depicted in **Figure 23**, sorghum prices in the Southern Africa region fluctuated moderately between 2019 and 2023. Prices began at N\$5,297.20 per tonne in 2019, dropped sharply to N\$4,482.50 per tonne in 2020, then recovered to N\$4,984.88 per tonne in 2021. A slight decline to N\$4,869.59 per tonne occurred in 2022, followed by an increase to N\$5,220.56 per tonne in 2023, reflecting supply adjustments and evolving market conditions.

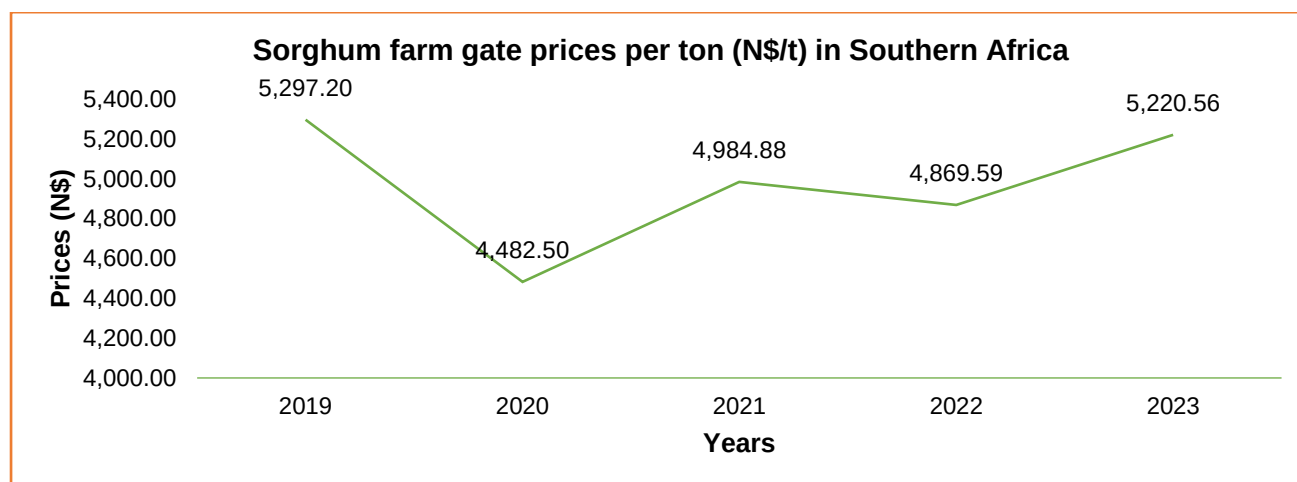


Figure 23: Average sorghum farm gate prices (N\$/t) in Southern Africa from 2019 to 2023.

(Conversion date: 09/12/2025)

Source: FAO, 2025.

5. DOMESTIC PERSPECTIVE

5.1 PRODUCTION

Domestic sorghum production increased between 2019 and 2021 due to expanded harvested area and improved yields, peaking at 8,216 tons in 2021. However, despite continued growth in the area harvested in 2022 and 2023, production declined sharply as yields fell, reaching only 0.08 t/ha in 2023. This indicates that declining productivity, rather than land availability, was the main constraint to sorghum output.

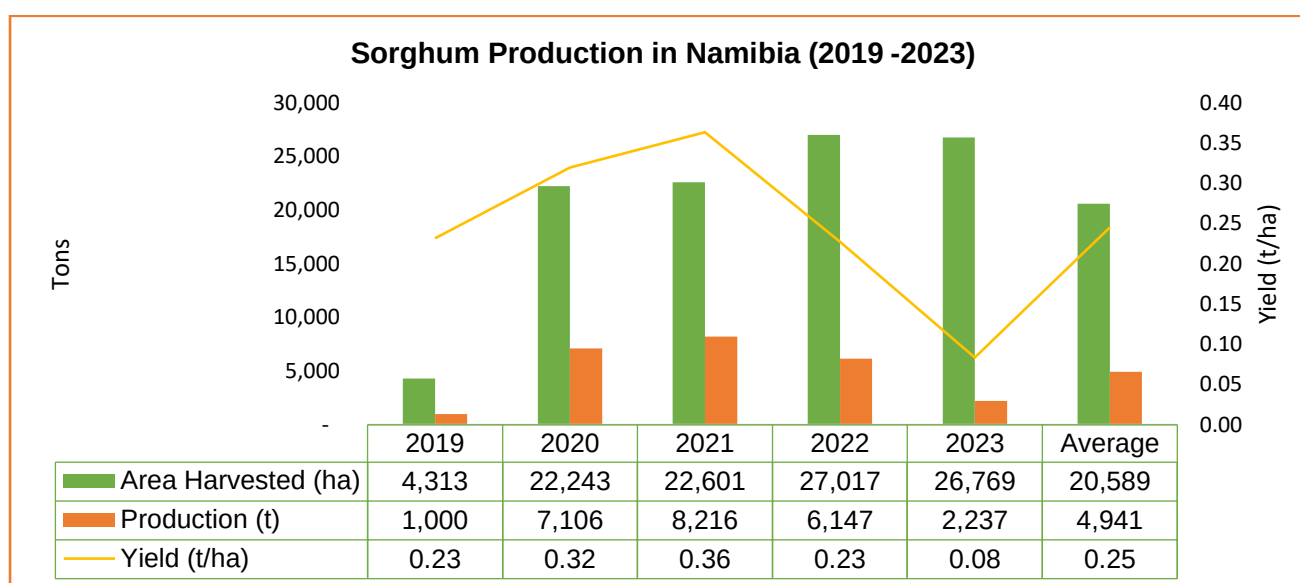


Figure 24: Sorghum production in Namibia from 2019 to 2023

Source: FAO,2025

5.2 TRADE (IMPORTS AND EXPORTS)

IMPORTS:

Namibia remains structurally dependent on sorghum imports from neighbouring countries such as South Africa, Angola, Zambia, Botswana, and Zimbabwe (ITC, 2025). Over the five years, sorghum imports showed significant fluctuations, reflecting changes in domestic production, demand, and external shocks such as climate variability and market disruptions. In 2022, imports amounted to 386 tons valued at N\$4.6 million, representing the highest import value recorded during the period. This increase may be attributed to higher global prices and unfavourable currency exchange rates (**Figure 25**).

In contrast, 2019 recorded the highest import volume of 503 tons, valued at N\$4.3 million, indicating strong reliance on imports at the time. A sharp decline was observed in 2020, when only 174 tons were imported, largely due to COVID-19–related trade disruptions. Imports moderately recovered in 2021, reaching 250 tons valued at N\$2.1 million, suggesting a gradual increase in domestic demand and partial market stabilisation (**Figure 25**).

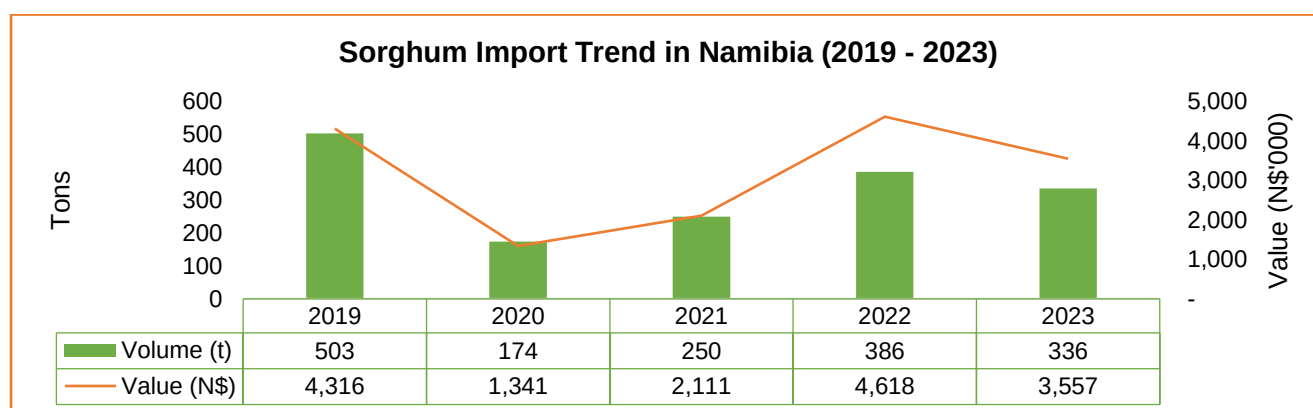


Figure 25: Sorghum import trend in Namibia, 2019 – 2023

Source: ITC, 2025

EXPORT:

Sorghum exports from Namibia to Angola remain minimal, largely constrained by low domestic production (ITC, 2025). In 2022, exports increased to 19 tons, valued at N\$82,000, reflecting a slight improvement in export activity. This follows a subdued performance in 2021, when only 5 tons were exported, with a total value of N\$44,000. Overall, the limited export volumes underscore Namibia's position as a net importer of sorghum, with domestic supply primarily meeting local consumption requirements rather than export markets (**Figure 26**).

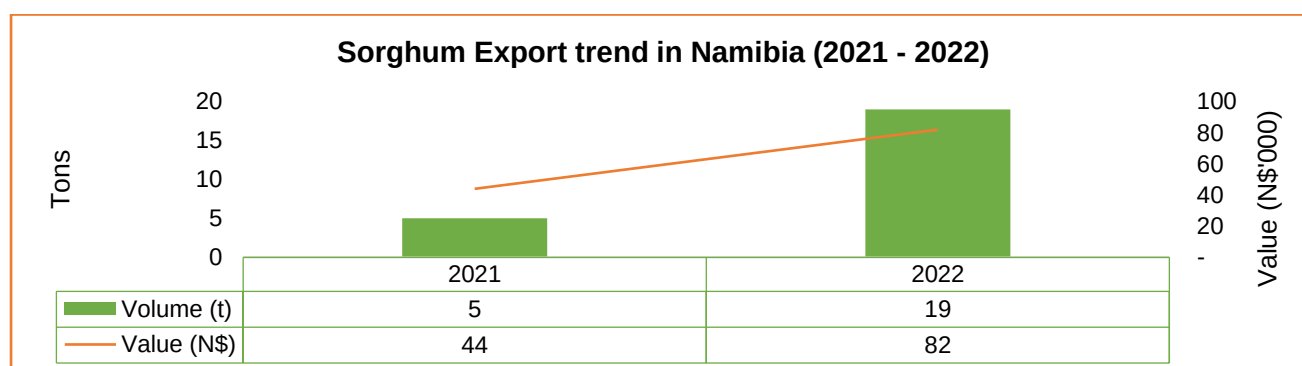


Figure 26: Sorghum export trend in Namibia, 2021 - 2022

Source: ITC, 2025

5.3 CONSUMPTION

As shown in **Table 2**, sorghum consumption in Namibia fluctuated significantly from 2019 to 2023, largely driven by changes in domestic production. Consumption increased sharply in 2020 and 2021, peaking at 8,461 tons in 2021, before declining to 6,514 tons in 2022. A substantial drop was recorded in 2023, when consumption fell to 2,573 tons, reflecting reduced local production. On average, sorghum consumption over the five years stood at approximately 5,259 tons, highlighting the crop's continued importance in Namibia's food system, while also underscoring the sector's vulnerability to production fluctuations and climatic variability.

Table 2: Sorghum consumption in Namibia from 2019 to 2023.

	Years					Average (t)
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
Production	1,000	7,106	8,216	6,147	2,237	4,941
Import	503	174	250	386	336	330
Export			5	19		12
Consumption	1,503	7,280	8,461	6,514	2,573	5,259

5.4 FARM GATE PRICES

As depicted in **Figure 27**, local sorghum farm gate prices in Namibia fluctuated between 2019 and 2023. Prices declined from N\$4,125/t in 2019 to N\$3,610/t in 2020, before peaking at N\$4,191/t in 2021. Prices remained relatively high in 2022 and then fell to N\$3,513/t in 2023, reflecting changes in domestic supply and market conditions.

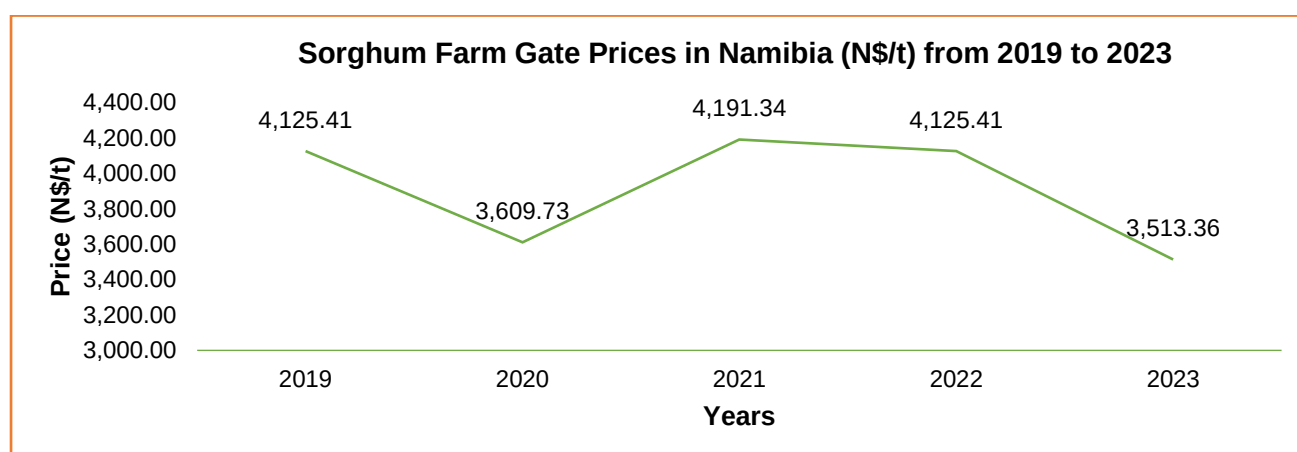


Figure 27: Average sorghum farm gate prices (N\$/t) in Namibia, 2019 - 2023. Conversion date: 11/12/2025

Source: FAO, 2025

KEY POTENTIALS TO UNLOCK GROWTH IN SORGHUM GRAIN PRODUCTION AND MARKET

- ✓ Namibia's dependence on sorghum imports presents a clear opportunity to boost local production. Therefore, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Water, and Land Reform (MAFWLR) and Namibian Agronomic Board (NAB) should support farmers through subsidised improved varieties, input subsidies, production development schemes, and structured market access to encourage increased local production and processing.
- ✓ MAFWLR and NAB should facilitate the development and dissemination of high-yielding, drought-resilient sorghum to stabilise local production.
- ✓ Sorghum's value chain is underdeveloped, with gaps in processing, storage, and marketing. Coordinated investments in mechanisation and logistics by MAFWLR and NAB can improve commercial viability and market access.
- ✓ Partnerships with local and international institutions, including the International Crops Research Institute for Semi-Arid Tropical (ICRISAT) and International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), can advance improved varieties, agronomic practices, and post-harvest solutions, strengthening competitiveness.

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PUBLISHED BY:

Namibian Agronomic Board

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