

From Innovation to Self-Sufficiency: How TAAT's SAVE Wheat Variety is Transforming Zimbabwe

Achievements at a Glance

- **640,000 Metric Tonnes of Wheat Produced (2025)**
A historic 59-year production record
- **30% Above National Self-Sufficiency Target**
- **468,000 tonnes harvested from 90,186 hectares in 2023**
- **Up to 7 Tonnes per Hectare** achieved with the SAVE wheat variety
- **128,000 Hectares Targeted for Production** under Zimbabwe's 2026 wheat expansion plan
- **40% Yield Increase** recorded by smallholder irrigation schemes using TAAT-supported technologies
- **US\$300 Million Saved Annually** through reduced wheat imports
- **Regional Export Opportunities Created** with surplus wheat available for neighbouring countries

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Zimbabwe has emerged as one of only two African countries to achieve wheat self-sufficiency, thanks in part to the adoption of SAVE, a climate-smart wheat variety developed through the African Development Bank's Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation (TAAT) programme and its predecessor, SARD-SC.

Developed by the TAAT Wheat Compact, led by ICARDA in partnership with Zimbabwe's Department of Research, Education and Specialist Services (DRESS), SAVE is a high-yielding, heat-, drought-, and rust-tolerant wheat variety that is helping farmers produce more wheat under challenging climatic conditions.

Driving Zimbabwe's Wheat Revolution

Released in 2022 and rapidly adopted across Zimbabwe, SAVE enables farmers to grow wheat during both winter and summer seasons, increasing production opportunities and strengthening resilience to climate shocks.

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The variety's superior performance has been supported by strong partnerships among government, research institutions, farmers, irrigation schemes, financial institutions, and the private sector.

Beyond Self-Sufficiency

By reducing dependence on costly imports and boosting domestic production, Zimbabwe has strengthened its food security, improved farmer incomes, and enhanced national economic resilience.

Today, the country is transitioning from a wheat-importing nation to a potential regional supplier, demonstrating the power of science-driven agricultural transformation.

The TAAT Difference

Through the development and scaling of climate-smart technologies like SAVE, TAAT is helping African countries build resilient food systems, increase productivity, and achieve food sovereignty.

TAAT Impact: Record wheat harvests, 40% higher yields, US\$300 million in annual import savings, and a pathway from wheat imports to regional exports—showing how innovation can transform national food security.

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