

## Harvest results of main crops, 2020

Neither the drought in the spring nor the large quantity of precipitation at the time of the harvest set back the yields of the majority of arable crops per hectare in Hungary. The average yield of barley and maize was close to record, but that of wheat and potatoes was higher as well than in the previous year. The same quantities of sunflower and rape seeds were gathered per unit of area. Hungary invariably has an important role in maize and sunflower production in the European Union.

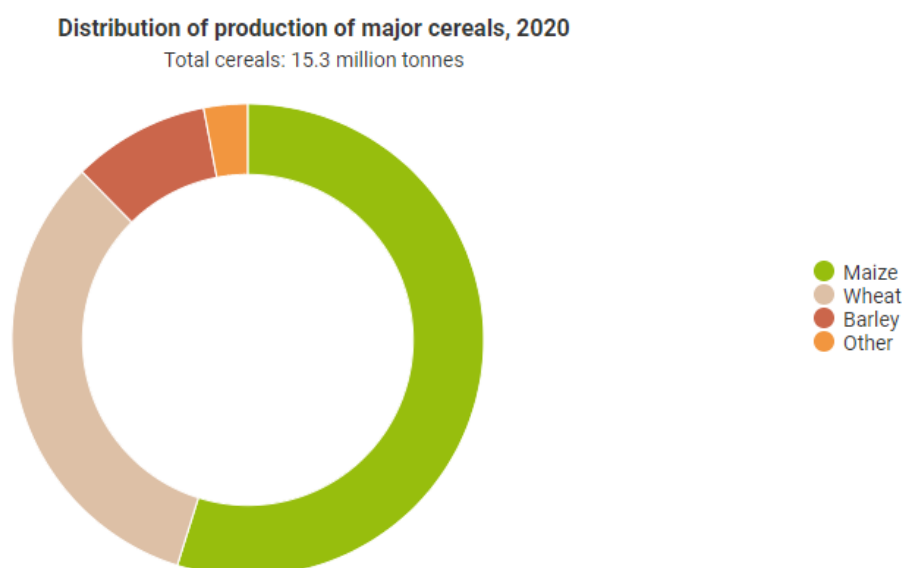
### Favourable harvest results<sup>[1]</sup> despite adverse weather conditions

According to data of the Hungarian Meteorological Service there were 8.8 millimetres of precipitation on a national scale between 1 and 29 April 2020, 20% of the average April value (44 millimetres) calculated since the beginning of the measurements, so April last year can be considered as the third driest one ever in the rankings from 1901. However, despite the drought in the spring, repeated for many years, as well as the large quantity of precipitation falling by the time of the harvest, **farmers could count on favourable average yields in 2020**. The **average yield of maize was close to record**, but the average yield of wheat and potatoes was also higher than the respective harvest results in the previous year.

- 15.3 million tonnes of cereals – 421 thousand tonnes less than in the previous year – were harvested from nearly 2.3 million hectares.
- The area of cereals has almost continuously been reduced since 2014.
- The total production of cereals was 2.7% less than in the previous year.

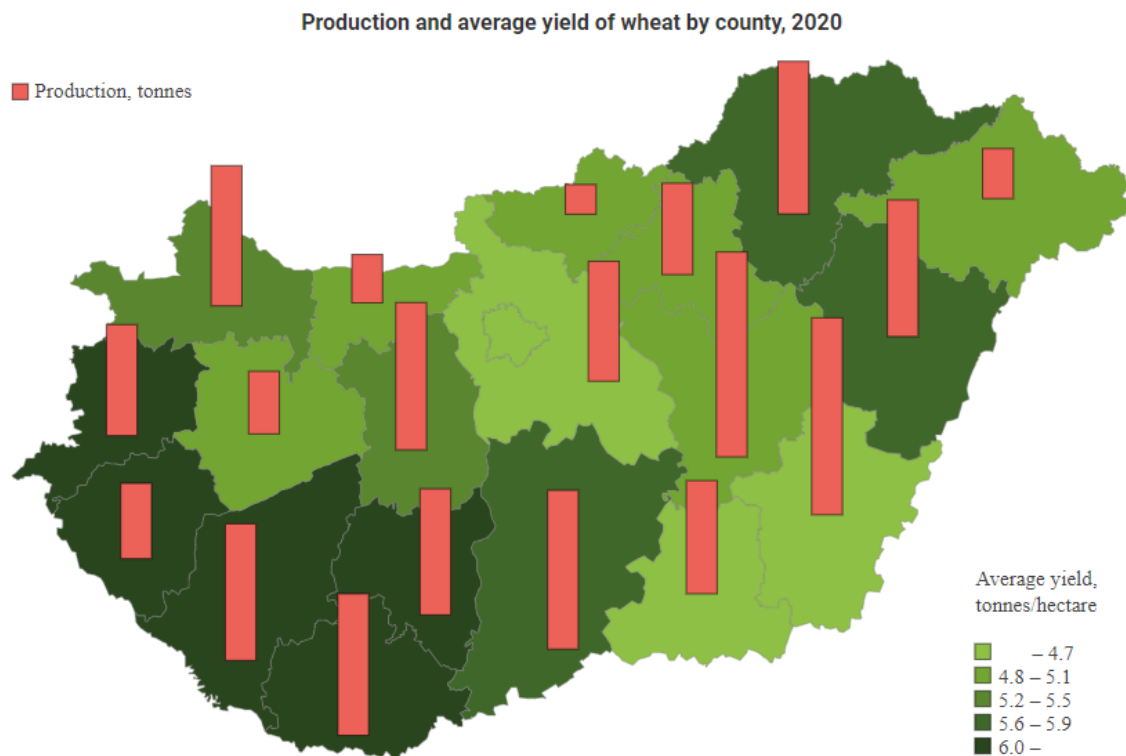
**Nearly 55% of cereal production was made up by maize** in Hungary in 2020, and the **harvested production of wheat**, our main ear cereal, accounted for **33% of total cereal production**. The production of **barley**, grown on the third largest area, saw the highest yield in the last three years, while **its share was 9.4%**.

Figure 1



The **wheat production** of 5.0 million tonnes was **6.8% less** than in 2019. This mainly resulted from the harvested area in 2020 being 8.1% smaller, at 933 thousand hectares. At the same time, the average yield of 5.4 tonnes/hectare was an outstanding result, 1.5% higher than the previous year's and 1.8% more than the average of 2015–2019.

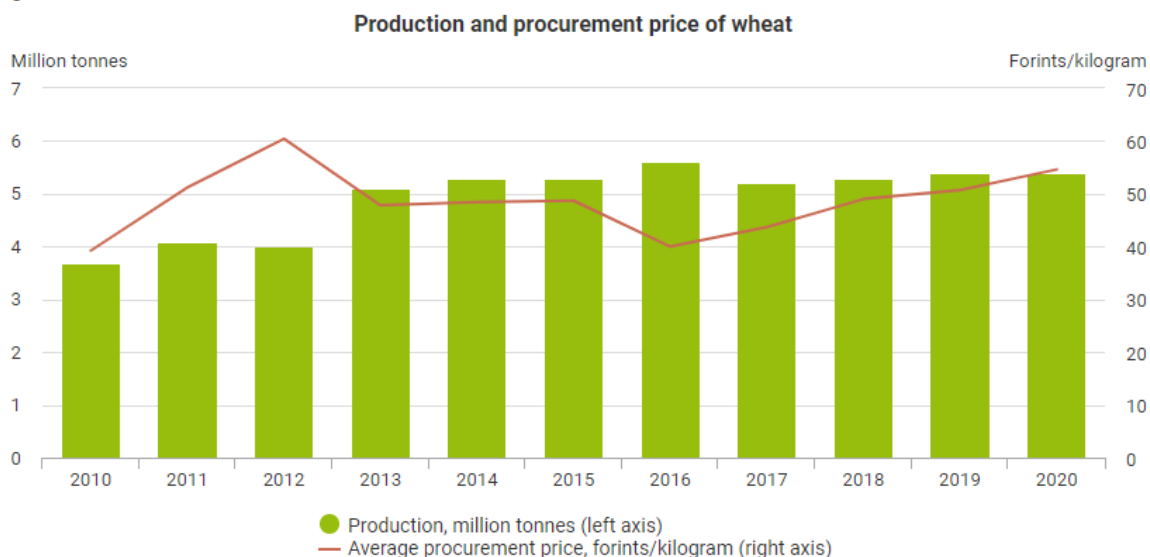
Figure 2



**The most wheat was produced in Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok County in 2020, too** – about 9% of the national production – , though Békés County hardly lagged behind. **The average yields were outstanding in counties in Transdanubia:** the average production per hectare was 6.5 tonnes in Baranya County, 6.4 tonnes in Somogy County and 6.3 tonnes in Zala and Vas Counties each. The lowest average yields were recorded for Pest, Békés and Csongrád-Csanád Counties, but they were even so higher than in 2019.

In the first 11 months of 2020<sup>[2]</sup>, 2.7% more wheat was procured from producers than in the same period of 2019. The procurement price was 55 forints/kilogram.

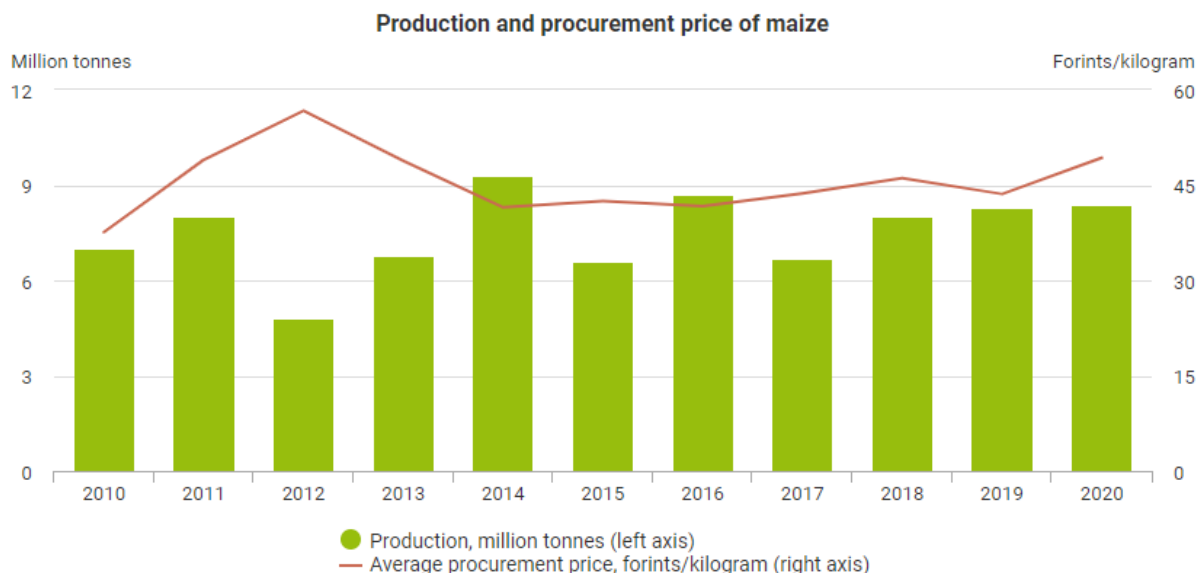
Figure 3



### Average yield of maize close to record

The harvested area of **maize** went below 1 million hectares again in 2020 (973 thousand hectares), by 5.3% over a year, but the 8.4 million tonnes of harvested production was 1.3% larger than in 2019 and 9.3% larger than the average of the previous five years. The average yield (of 8.6 tonnes) per hectare was 6.9% higher compared to 2019 and 15% higher than the average of the last five years preceding 2020.

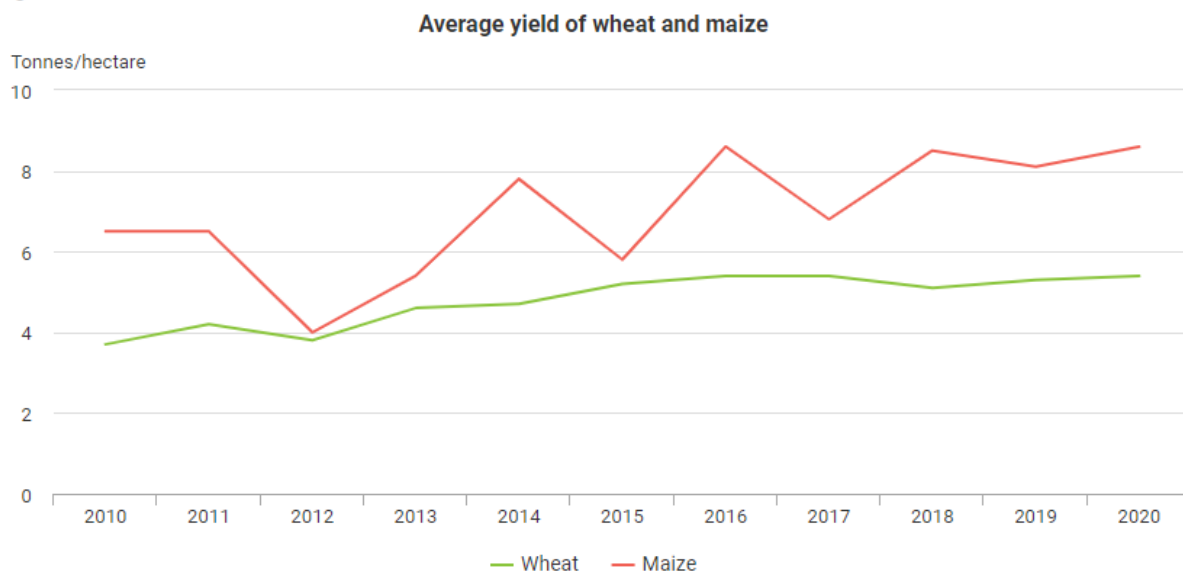
Figure 4



5.8% more maize was procured from producers in the first 11 months of 2020 than in the same period of 2019, at an average price of 49 forints per kilogram.

The **average yield of both wheat and maize has shown an increasing trend** since 2010. The yield of maize per hectare has already exceeded 8.0 tonnes in the two years before 2020. As a result of rainfalls at the beginning of the summer, the average yield in 2020 approximated the high in 2016. The yield of wheat per hectare was higher as well than in earlier years, it has been more than 5.0 tonnes in every year since 2015.

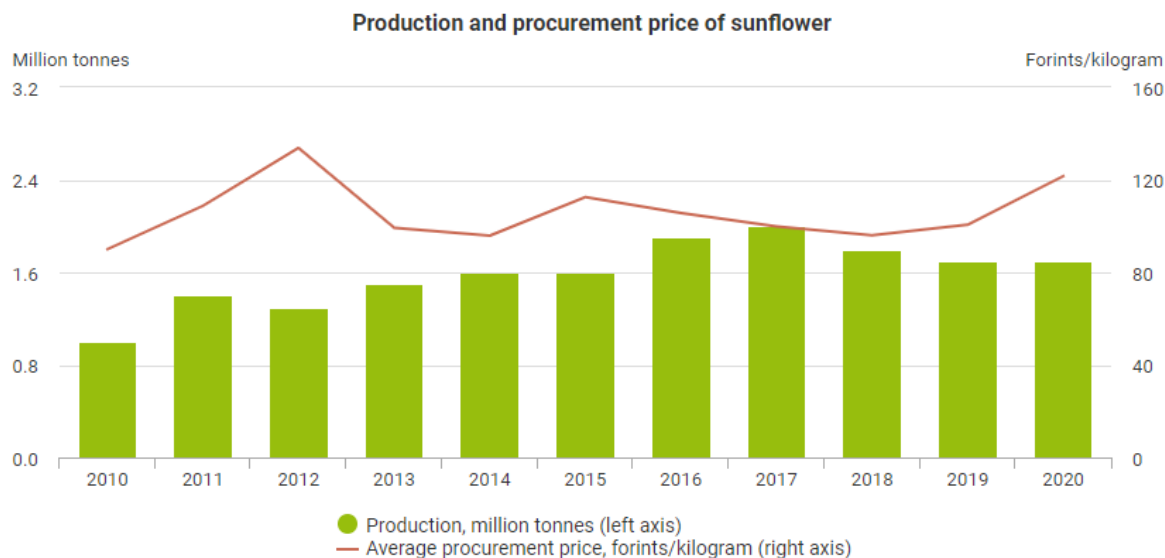
Figure 5



## Sunflower and rape yields considerably lower

**Sunflower growing has been continuously reduced in Hungary since 2018**, so merely 1.7 million tonnes were produced in 2020, which was nearly 2.4% lower than in 2019. This was mainly owing to the yield per hectare decreasing by 9.2% compared to the previous year, to 2.8 tonnes. The harvested area of 605 thousand hectares was 7.3% larger than in the previous year. Partly as an effect of the smaller production, the procurement price was 21% higher than in the previous year, at 122 forints per kilogram.

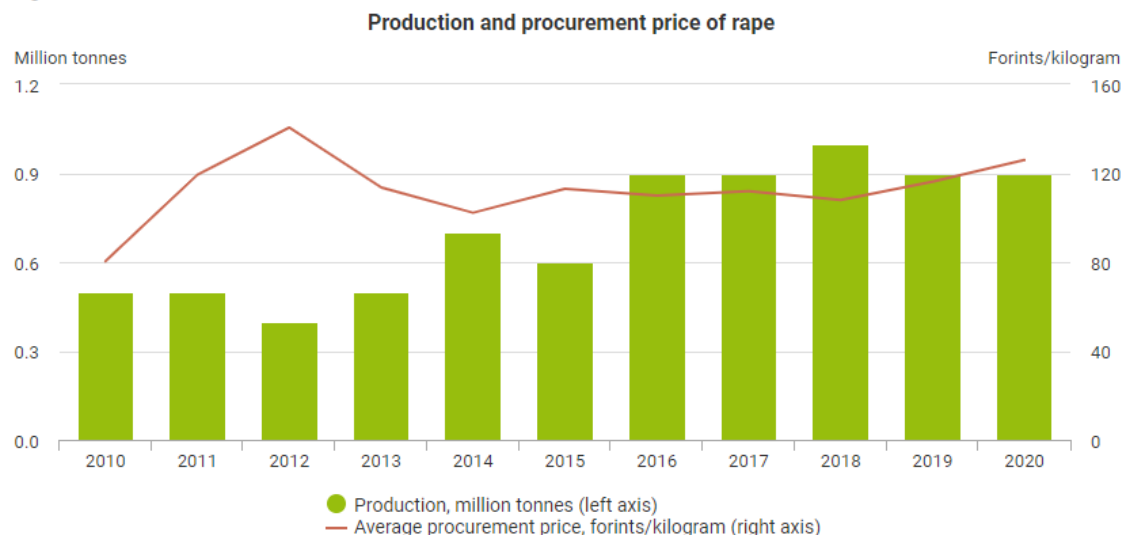
Figure 6



**The area of rape has almost continuously grown since 2013**, the crop was produced on 307 thousand hectares in 2020, a 2.1% larger area than one year earlier. However, 859 thousand tonnes of production, 5.8% less than a year earlier, was harvested from the larger area. The average yield per hectare (2.8 tonnes/hectare) was lower in 2015 for the last time, and was 9.4% lower than the average of 2015–2019.

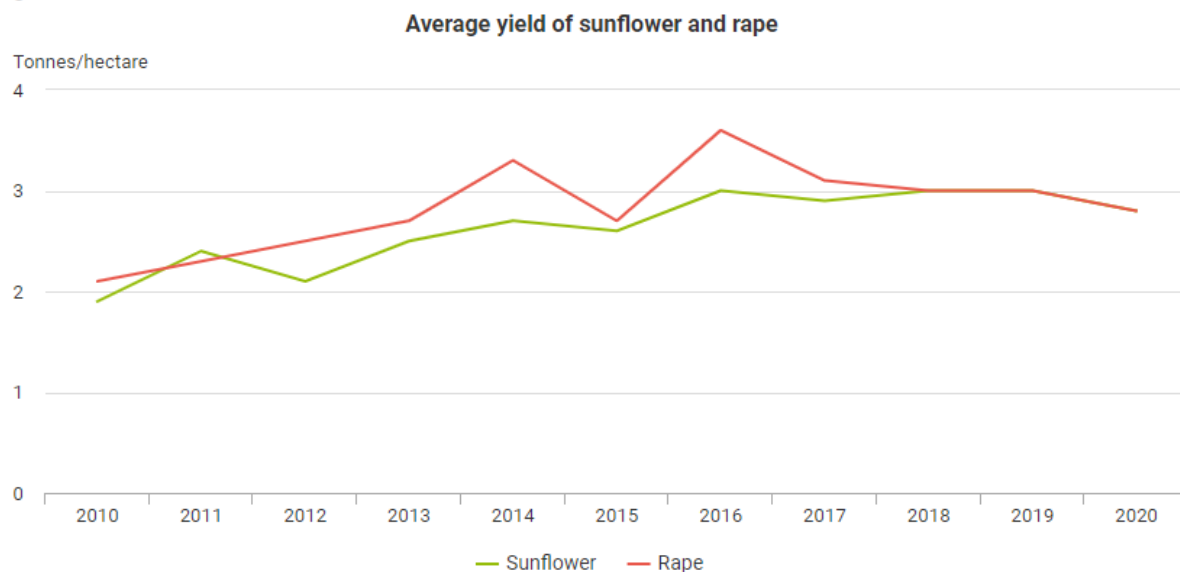
The procurement price of rape was 126 forints/kilogram on average in January–November 2020, 7.7% higher than in the same period of 2019.

Figure 7



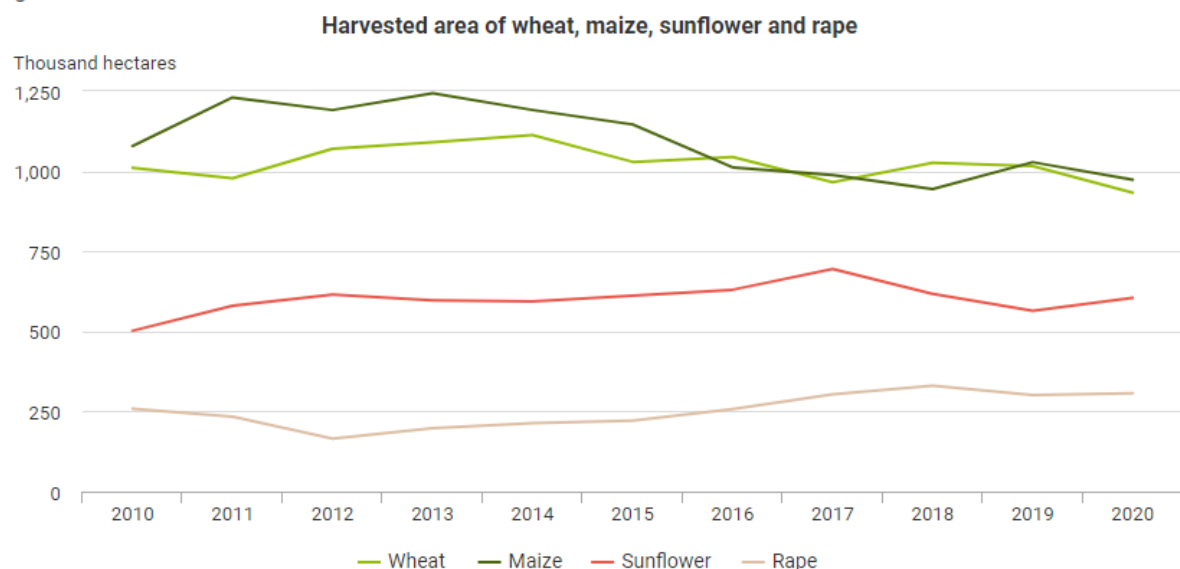
The average yield of sunflower and rape considerably rose between 2010 and 2020 overall, and their yields have been nearly the same since 2017.

Figure 8



Out of the four arable crops with the largest values of production, the **area of sunflower and rape grew and that of maize and wheat was reduced** compared to 2010.

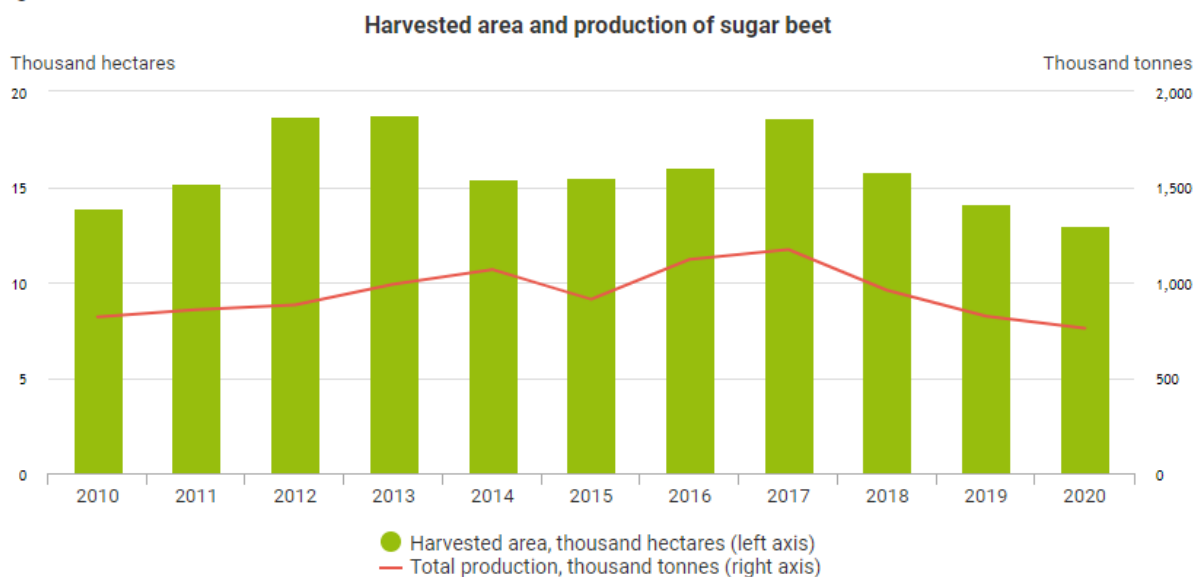
Figure 9



### Sugar beet and potatoes produced on a smaller and smaller area

The harvested area of **sugar beet** has been reduced for years, which continued in 2020. The area of 13 thousand hectares became 7.4% smaller than in the previous year and nearly 19% smaller compared to the average of the previous five years. In addition to the reduction of area and to drought, viral diseases of sugar beet also led to a lower production, so farmers harvested merely 760 thousand tonnes, 7.7% less than in the previous year. The average yield of sugar beet was 58.3 tonnes/hectare, 6.4% lower than the average of the previous five years.

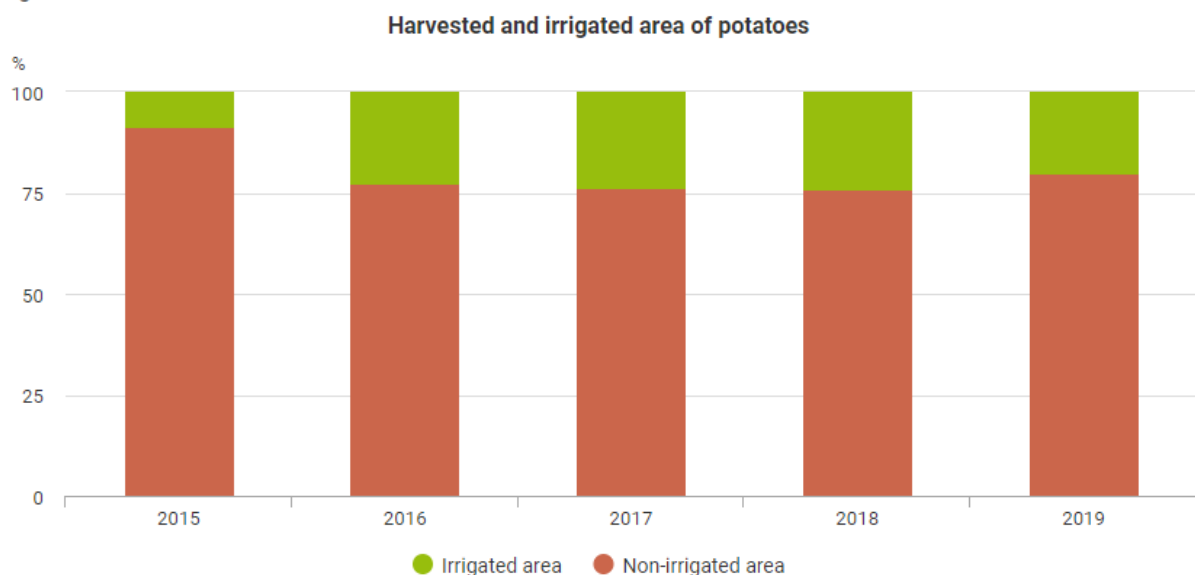
Figure 10



As is the case with sugar beet, the area of **potatoes** shrinks year by year, too, the area of potatoes harvested on arable land was 8.6 thousand hectares in 2020. The yield per hectare of arable land was up from 23.8 tonnes in 2019 to 24.8 tonnes in 2020. The profitability of potato producers was largely influenced by steadily returning drought in the past years. In many cases, the lack of irrigation, the absence of technological change as well as the fragmentation of areas contributed to the poor harvest results.

2.9% more potatoes were procured from producers in the first 11 months of 2020 than in the corresponding period of 2019. The procurement price of 95 forints per kilogram in January–November 2020 was a 17% decrease compared to the same period of the previous year.

Figure 11



### Hungary's maize and sunflower production still achieves podium position in the European Union

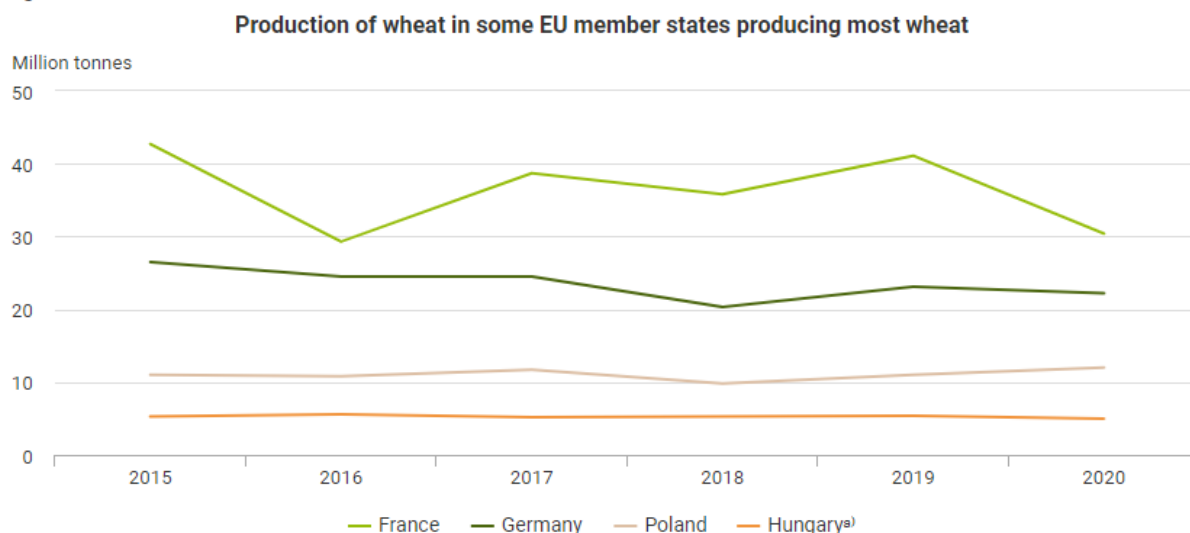
The weather and the presence of pests unfavourably influenced crop production results in 2020 all over Europe. The relatively significant amount of precipitation in the autumn of 2019 made

it more difficult to carry out sowing works, and plant lice multiplied, too, owing to the mild winter.<sup>[3]</sup> In the growing season, drought caused problems.

The **quantity of harvested wheat went down in the majority of the 27 member states of the European Union** in 2020 compared to the previous year according to preliminary data, **so over 10% less was produced at the level of the EU in total**. France, the largest producer, accounted for more than 30 million tonnes, the largest part of the total quantity (125 million tonnes). The quantity of wheat became less in second-place Germany, too, however, even so nearly twice as much was reaped there (22 million tonnes) as in Poland (12 million tonnes).

**Wheat production in Hungary made up nearly 4% of the production in the European Union**, with which **Hungary moved one position higher in the rankings** in 2020. Average yields were typically lower in 2020 than in 2019. The average yield exceeded 8 tonnes/hectare in countries engaged in intensive production (e.g. in Ireland and Belgium). In contrast, it did not reach even 3 tonnes per hectare in Romania because of a severe drought there.

Figure 12



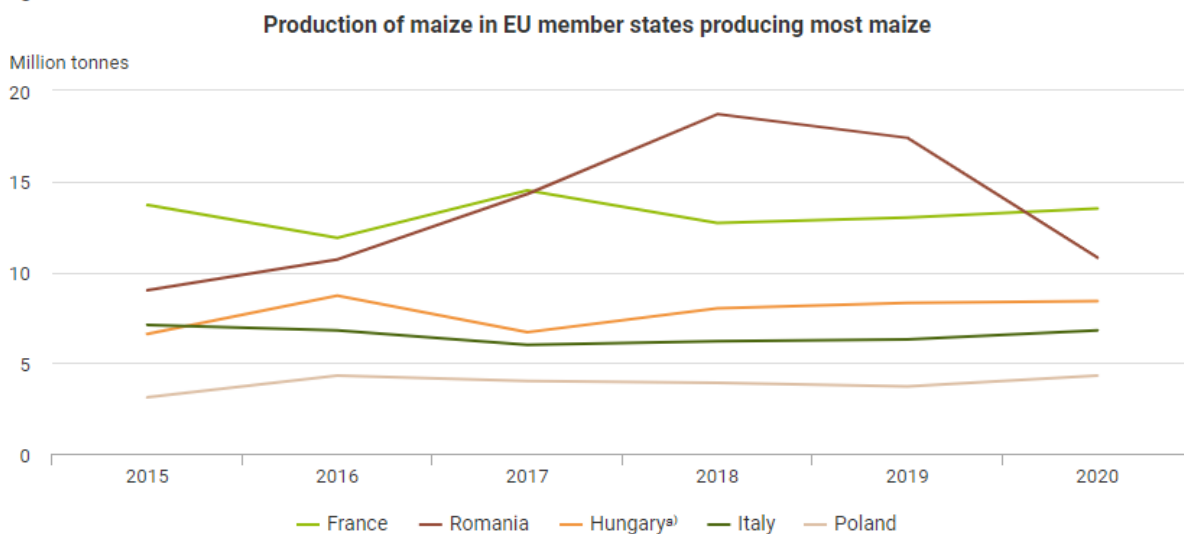
Source: Eurostat.

<sup>a)</sup> The source of the 2020 figure is HCSO.

As was the case with wheat, the **quantity of harvested maize was also lower** compared to the previous year. A total of nearly 65 million tonnes of maize was produced in EU member states in 2020. Romania, with a rising tendency earlier on and harvesting a record quantity in 2018, fell back to the second place (11 million tonnes) in 2020, overtaking by more than 2 million tonnes **third-place Hungary (8.4 million tonnes)**. The most maize was produced in France in 2020 (13 million tonnes).

**Hungary produced nearly 13% of the maize production in the EU** in 2020, and with its yield of 8.6 tonnes/hectare it was put in the middle of the rankings. Spain produced the most favourable yield, with nearly 12 tonnes/hectare, and the EU average was 7.2 tonnes/hectare.

Figure 13

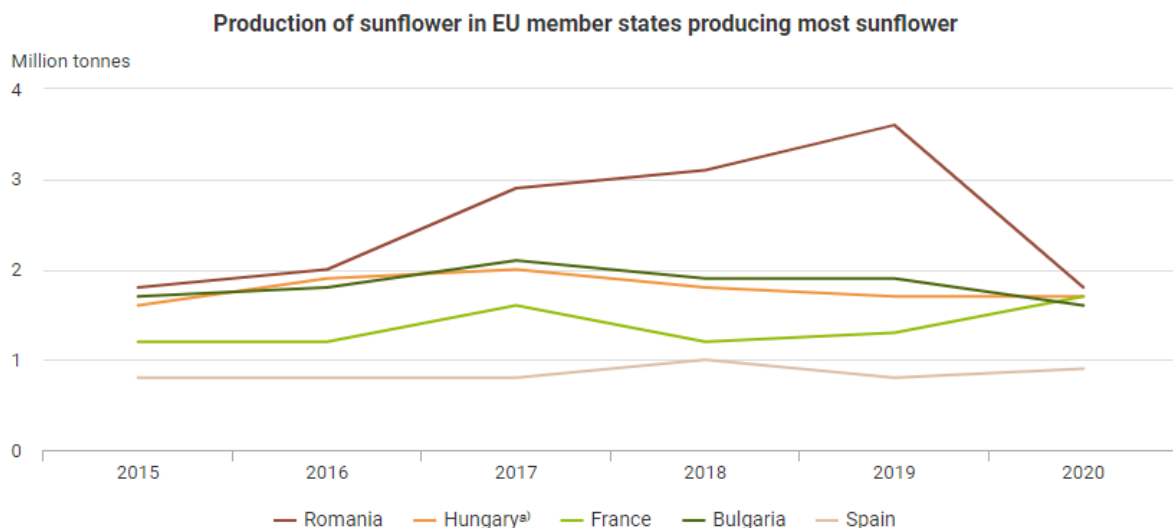


Source: Eurostat.

<sup>a)</sup> The source of the 2020 figure is HCSO.

Romania, the most substantial **sunflower** producer in the EU, was hit by drought in 2020, which was a serious blow also to the harvest results of the crop. With its production of 1.8 million tonnes our eastern neighbour was the first in the rankings of the member states, though our country did not lag far behind (1.7 million tonnes). **Hungary accounted for nearly 20% of the EU's total productin (8.8 million tonnes)**. The growth in the sunflower production of France was clearly due to their sowing sunflower on a nearly 30% larger area compared to the previous year, their area of 775 thousand hectares was only overtaken by Romania's and Bulgaria's out of the member states. In addition to Hungary (2.8 tonnes/hectare), some smaller producers such as Croatia (3.2 tonnes/hectare), Greece (3.0 tonnes/hectare) and Slovakia (2.8 tonnes/hectare) topped the EU rankings of sunflower yield.

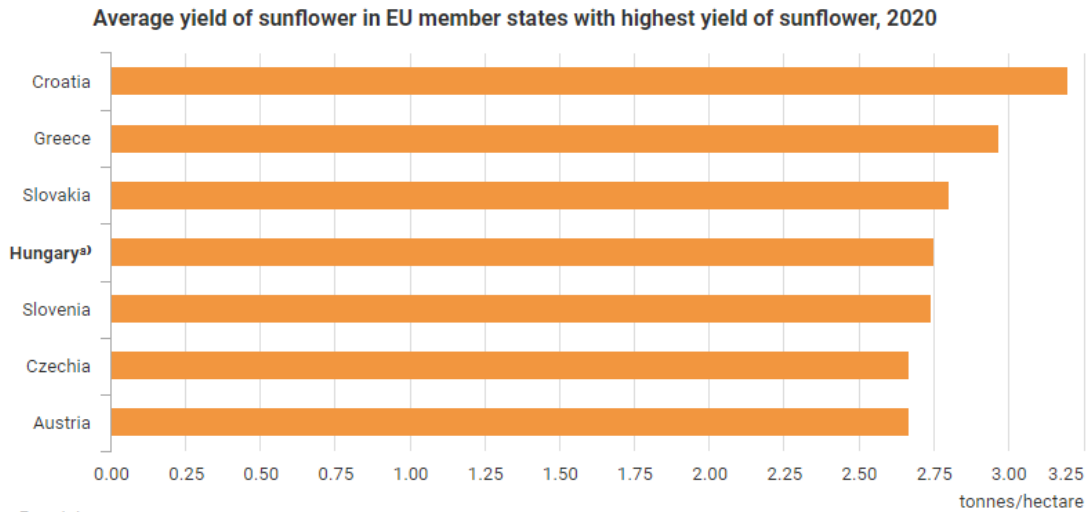
Figure 14



Source: Eurostat.

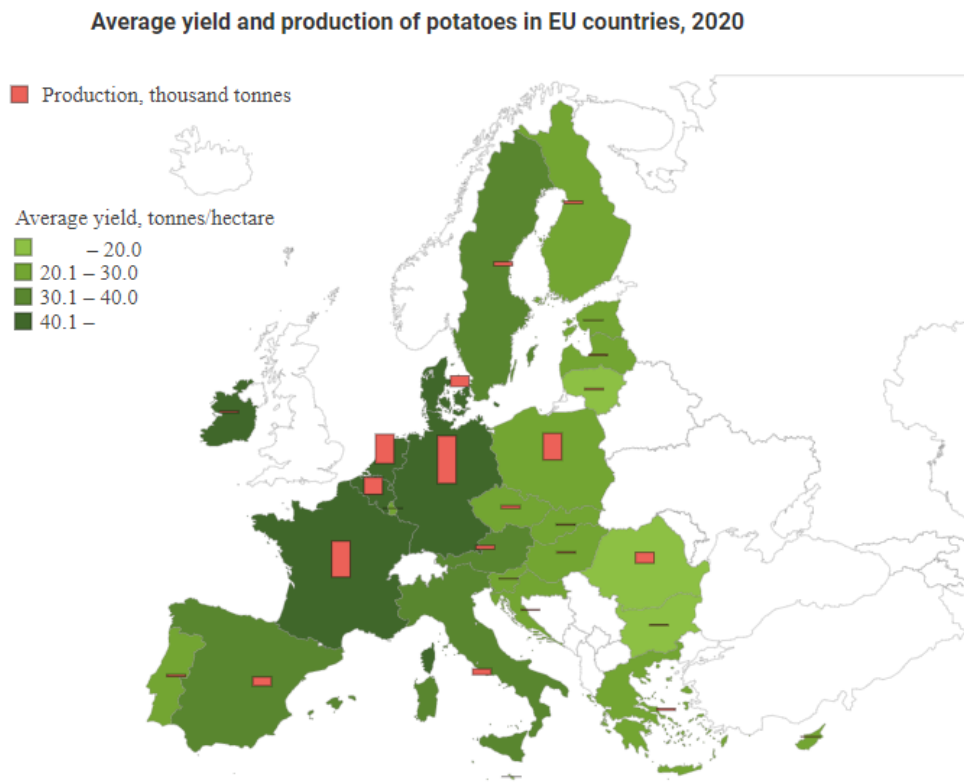
<sup>a)</sup> The source of the 2020 figure is HCSO.

Figure 15



**Potatoes were produced in the EU on a total 1.7 million hectares**, over 50% of which was made up by Poland (22%), Germany (17%) and France (12%), the three producers with the largest harvested area. **In terms of the produced quantity Germany led**, with 12 million tonnes. The yield did not reach even 20 tonnes/hectare in certain countries (Romania: 16 tonnes/hectare, Lithuania: 18 tonnes/hectare), at the same time, typically no less than at least 40 tonnes of production per hectare could be harvested using intensive technology (Denmark: 43 tonnes/hectare, the Netherlands: 43 tonnes/hectare, France: 42 tonnes/hectare, Germany: 42 tonnes/hectare). With its yield of 28 tonnes/hectare, Hungary did not reach the EU average.

Figure 16

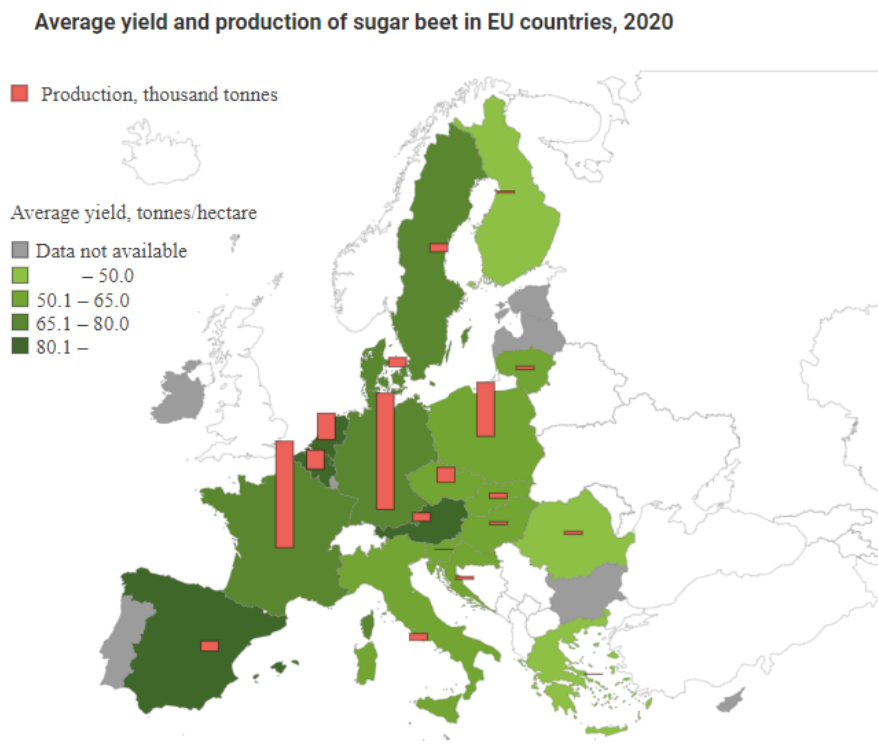


Sources: Eurostat, HCSO. Note: The figures for Poland refer to 2019.

Large sugar beet producers are generally the same as the countries reaching significant results also in terms of potato production. **France was at the top of the EU rankings with a harvested quantity of over 27 million tonnes** according to data for 2020, though this was a substantial decline compared to 38 million tonnes in 2019. (The harvested area was reduced as well, by more than 6%.)

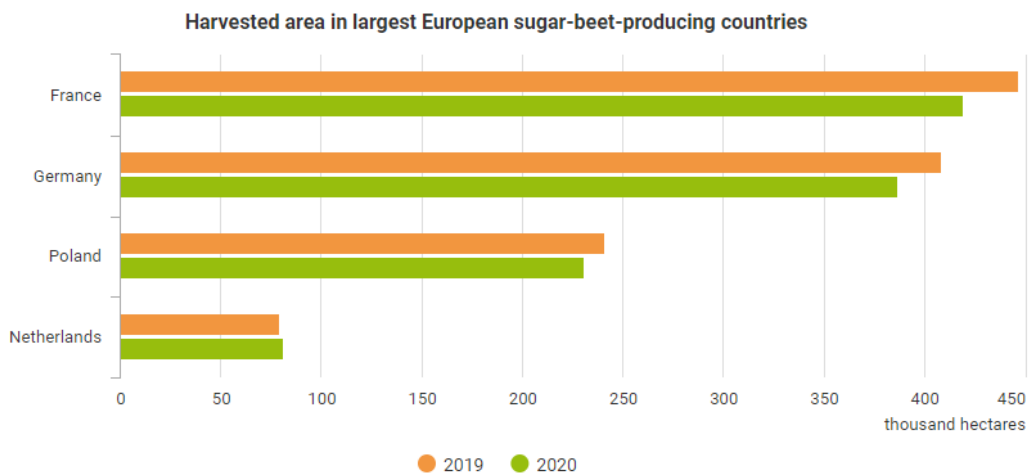
The fall in the total area of sugar beet, 4.0% at the level of the EU, was observed in most European countries, too, growths of a few per cent occurred only in the case of Denmark and the Netherlands out of larger producers. Average yields also typically tended to go down or stagnate, except for Austria, where the yield of 70 tonnes/hectare in 2019 could be increased to 81 tonnes/hectare in 2020.

Figure 17



Sources: Eurostat, HCSO. Note: The figures for Poland, Italy and Germany refer to 2019.

Figure 18



Source: Eurostat.

## Methodological notes

The Hungarian Central Statistical Office estimated the harvest results of main crops in 2020 as follows:

- a full-scale compulsory survey was made of **agricultural enterprises**,
- in the case of **private holdings** estimates were made. The basis of estimation was land area data from the single area payment scheme (SAPS) for 2020 and data from the survey titled 'December survey of private holdings, 2020', and operative reports issued by the Ministry of Agriculture.

[1]:↑ According to preliminary data for 2020.

[2]:↑ The 2020 procurement price data refer to January–November.

[3]:↑ <https://www.world-grain.com/articles/14080-france-wheat-production-declines-25>