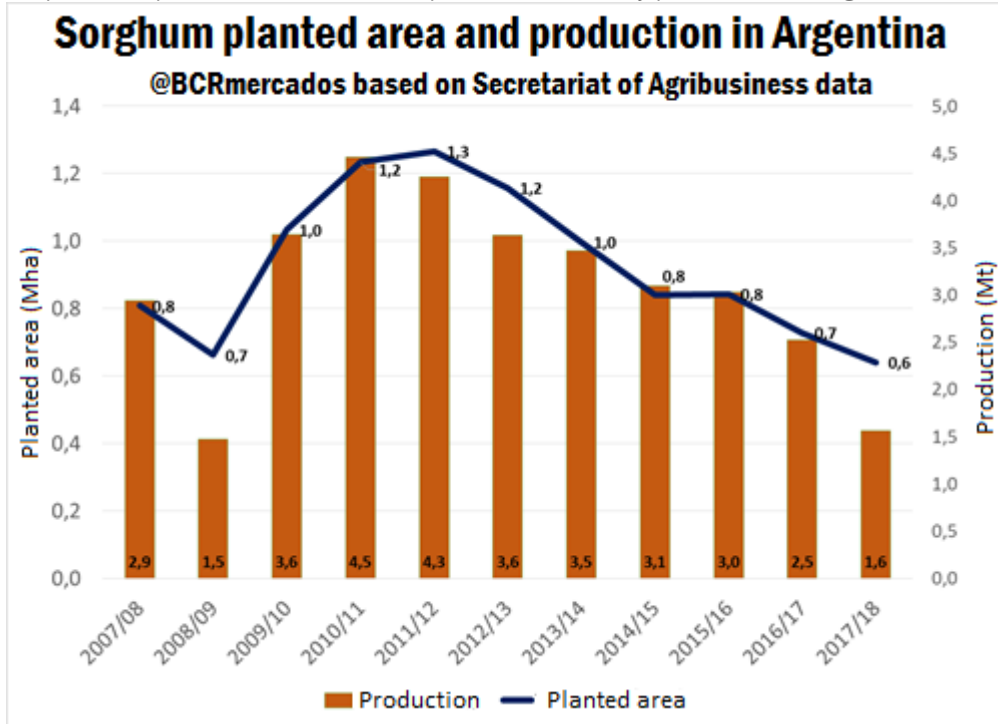


# Sorghum outlook in Argentina

JULIO CALZADA - SOFÍA CORINA

According to the Secretariat of Agribusiness, sorghum planted area in 2017/18 cycle barely reached 600,000 hectares, a minimum record since 2004/05 season. Moreover, 2018/19 expected planted area is even lower than the previous season. In addition, the technology applied to sorghum is very poor compared to the technology used on the rest of the crops. Thus, poor fertilization of crops that are usually planted on marginal fields, limits sorghum's potential yields.



According to the last official projections, 2018/19 sorghum production would reach 3.74 Mt; a hard-to-reach volume given the projected 770,000 planted hectares. Last cycle's drought cut sorghum production in almost a million tons, resulting on a 1.6 Mt output. Exports also dropped from 450,000 tons in 2015/16 to 200,000 tons in 2017/18. Moreover, purchases for export this year are 700 tons, while in the previous cycle they reached 6,000 tons. Finally, there is no record of export sales so far, while by this time last year there were 166,000 tons committed. Despite the lower demand, final stocks fell to 140,000 tons without causing an improvement in sorghum local prices. Current Rosario Board of Trade reference price for sorghum is US\$ 106/t, while its price a year ago was US\$ 116.8/t. Naturally, sorghum low prices do not encourage farmers to grow this crop. As for Argentine sorghum main export destinations, in the last 5 years Japan concentrated around 57% of the total. Other regular destinations are the United States, Chile and Taiwan.