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REDSUN RAISIN REPORT #9 – 2020
SOUTH AFRICAN RAISIN CROP JULY 2020

Highlights of this report

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The Delays in shipping from Cape Town Harbour
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A cold Winter along the Lower Orange River Basin

For those of you who have visited us during the raisin production period of February and March, this must be a picture hard to imagine. Now the weather is perfect for the grape vines. Long periods of very cold weather with many mornings being below 0°C.

The vines are put into a deep dormant phase, which builds up energy for the next season. The insects and mould spores are also brought into control by the cold weather.

The farmers are out hunting! The weather and culture pattern is “normal” in our region, with good prospects for next season’s production.



Cold weather in July. Perfect for the vines.

Some Thoughts on the next raisin crop 2021

The 2021 crop is a long way off and many things can happen between now and then. We want to share a few thoughts about what we will see as the crop develops,

- The crop will be bigger than the record 85,000mt achieved during 2020. Despite calls to “trim bunches” to avoid over production of more than 35mt wet grapes per hectare, there are young vines that will now come into full production.
- According to a survey of nurseries done by Raisins SA, there have been the following sales of new vine plants during 2020 to farmers, 1,2 million Selma Pete variety (enough for 545 ha), 470,000 sugra 39 variety (enough for 213 ha), 400,000 merbein variety (enough for 181 ha) and 22,000 currants (enough for 10ha).

That represents new vine plants for 949 ha of grapes. That translates to 6,643mt of raisins in 2023.

We note with interest that there is no record of any flame variety vines sold. From the market, Redsun has experienced a growing popularity of the flame variety in its natural select/bold size.

The mix between the production of goldens and Thompsons produced in South Africa is driven by two factors, namely

- The relative price between Thompson medium and golden mediums, and
- The infrastructure that the farmer has on his farm

We now see another factor coming into play, namely, the variety of grapes the farmer has. There are some varieties that are not suitable for making goldens, in that they do not give a “golden” colour after having been treated with sulphur dioxide. Selma Pete is such a variety. Therefore, we see farmers making a solid commitment to the Thompson variety of raisin by planting Selma Pete.

From the SA 2020 crop, the Thompsons represented 39,5% (2019 it was 62%) of the total, while the goldens represented 34% (2019 it was 19%) of the total.

The Delays in shipping from Cape Town Harbour

- We believe the problems experienced in Cape Town Harbour are almost over. Redsun has spoken to Mr Dube, the CEO of Portnet, the company operating the functions at the Harbour. We are convinced that the organisation has a clear, sustainable plan of action to eliminate the delays we have been experiencing. The planning includes,
- Bring two operating gangs from Durban to assist Cape Town so that operating gangs will be maintained at 6.
- Maintain separate gangs made up of growing numbers of members who have recovered from COVID-19, and are therefore largely more resistant to infection keeping each gang isolated from each other to avoid contamination and providing accommodation to the gangs avoiding contamination at home or en route to work.

We have been given the week 28 (commencing 6th July) as the timing to eliminate the delays. We salute the management of the Port. These gentlemen took a serious problem and have made concrete plans to solve it. As at Thursday 2 July, we had 11 container ships moored outside Cape Town, waiting to enter the Harbour. On Tuesday 7 July, there are now 4 ships still waiting.

WE wish the Harbour success in their ambitions. Once again, we apologise to our customers for the delays in the shipping experienced during the past two months.



All of this cannot however avoid the natural weather elements. Over the weekend of 28 June, Cape Town experienced winds of over 90km and hour. See damage in photo. 40 mm of rain is forecasted for 10th and 11 July. These are natural elements occurring in Cape Town at this time of the year. It is "normal". This cannot be controlled and will affect the shipping.

Organic Raisins and Chemical Free Raisins

The Redsun organic raisin project is progressing well. We have 8 farmers who are now fully committed to progressing through the numerous requirements to achieve organic accreditation. There will be some time before the volumes of organic certified raisins will come through.

Redsun is employing a consultant to assist the farmers through this process. It is very technical. The farmers we are working with have a total of 165ha of vine to be converted. That will deliver 825mt of organic raisins in the next two to three years.

In the meantime, these farmers will be delivering chemical free raisins during the next few years. This product is supported with laboratory certificates showing zero residues. There will

not yet be “organic” certification. The chemical free raisins are available at a small premium over the conventional raisin price.



The Redsun consultant for organic conversion discussing the requirements with a farmer, Robert O'Connor

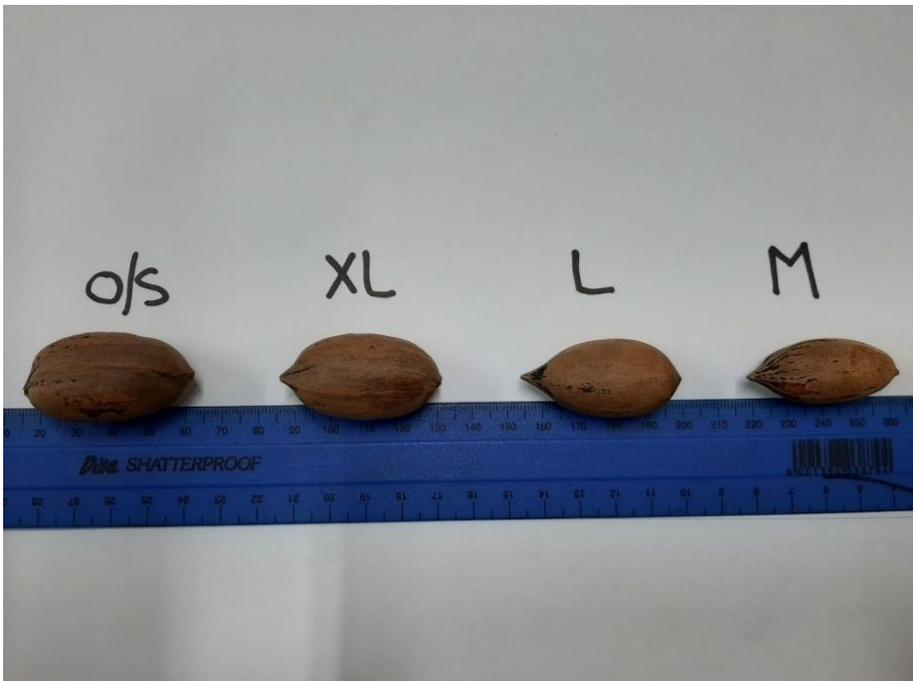
Pecans harvesting is underway

The icy weather means the farmers are harvesting pecans. The process is to collect the pecans from the orchard floor. The pecans fall from the tree when they are completely ripe. In this regard similar to macadamias.

The crop is good in our region along the lower Orange River basin. We can offer pecan NIS (nut in shell) at this stage, as our cracking facility is not yet operational. Our nut in shell is sold plain or polished, and is packed in 25kg bags. There are various sizes available from over size, extra-large, large and medium.



Pecans being harvested.



4 different sizes of pecans in shell being offered

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