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## REDSUN RAISIN REPORT #7 – 2019 SOUTH AFRICAN RAISIN CROP JULY 2019

### HIGHLIGHTS FROM THIS REPORT

**Farmers accept the prices for 2020 crop will fall**

**SA Raisin Exports for 2019 Crop**

**Thompson Medium Sales are Slow**

**Quality of Thompson mediums is exceptionally good**

**Flame Variety Jumbo Raisins will change in the future**

### **Farmers accept the prices for 2020 crop will fall**

Winter has set into the grapevines of South Africa. Temperatures from 0°C to 24°C during the day. The frost is causing the leaves to turn and fall from the vines. Farmers will now start to prune the plants in preparation for the 2020 crop.

Farmers are all very satisfied about the high prices they received for their 2019 crop. They are aware that the prices for Thompson mediums from the next crop will be adjusted downwards by a considerable margin. Estimates of the amount vary according to market price predictions and ZAR/USD exchange rate forecasts.

The fact remains, farmers are part of a well organised industry, with financially stable processors all looking to buy their products. Therefore, they are happy to be guided by the transparency displayed by the processors regarding world prices and food safety requirements. Despite the change in the pricing, farmers continue to invest in new vines to increase raisin production volumes.

### **SA Raisin Exports for 2019 Crop**

Part of the innovation in the South African dried grape industry are statistics of the crop and exports. These statistics are being generated through Raisins SA, the statutory body established to assist the growth of the industry in South Africa.. We have accurate and detailed breakdown of the various types of dried grapes delivered to processors from the 2019 crop. The total is 74 830 mt. Detailed information about how the production was made up is included in our Redsun Raisin Report #6-2019 June.

Now we are receiving statistics of exports from South Africa.

As at 30 June 2019, South Africa has exported 16,984 mt. (there will be a variance of an additional 1 500mt exports from one processor who has not yet joined the data collection process). Of the exported volume 8 500 mt represents goldens and 6 100mt Thompsons. The balance are flames, currants, and sultanas.

2 400mt of the exports represented goldens to Africa, which illustrates the continued strong demand for South African goldens from North Africa, despite the earlier commencement of the Ramadan Festival and the relatively cheaper availability of goldens from Iran. We believe that the golden exports to Africa figure will be higher than reported when all processors come on board the data collecting process. This year so far Africa represents 15% of the SA dried grape exports

Europe is by far the biggest export market for SA. Statistics show 10 058mt to Europe. (59% of the total). USA and Canada represent 2 223mt, or 13% of total exports so far.

What is clear is that the volume of SA exports to date is very low for a crop of 74,000mt. The domestic SA market is developing, representing a volume of about 13 000mt per year. These domestic market statistics are not yet available. Domestic sales are excluded from the figures quoted.

### **Thompson Medium Sales are Slow**

The international market for South African raisins is quiet. This is especially true in the case of Thompson mediums. In the case of Redsun, all goldens we have in stock have been sold. Most other varieties such as currants, Flames, ORs and WP sultanas are almost sold out.

The Thompson mediums is the only product where we see the market is quiet. That is unfortunate since the statistics published in our Redsun Raisin Report #6 2019 gave the volume of 44,416mt of Thompson mediums produced in SA from the 2019 crop. (That represents 59% of the crop, up from the “normal” 46% of the SA crop.) We are hearing very competitive prices being offered by SA Processors in the market for the Thompsons, in an effort to get the volumes moving.

### **Quality of Thompson mediums is exceptionally good**

The quality of the Thompson mediums this year has been exceptionally good in terms of total plate counts, yeast and moulds. Redsun has embarked upon a project to test every load in order to gain a better understanding of the “cause and effect” of these important food safety indicators. We are seeing a high percentage of “undetected” for yeast and mould. Counts of under 500 cpu on the total plate count are also commonplace. Our study is geared towards the effect of the actual growing conditions of the grapes with the drying facilities used on the quality of the finished product.

Part of the study is motivating farmers to produce Thompson mediums with a zero chemical residue. This test has proved successful with 420mt of residue free Thompson mediums delivered to Redsun. The important issue is we can demonstrate that a farmer does not need chemicals to produce a good quality Thompson raisin.

### **Flame Variety Jumbo Raisins will change in the future**

Jumbo raisins made from the grape variety Flame as the market has always known will become very scarce. The Flame variety of fresh grape is no longer a popular variety in the market and it has been replaced with other varieties. Therefore, the flame variety will not be produced as a jumbo. However, the Flame variety of grape does make a delicious raisin. It has a strong flavour and is a naturally round shape. Without being treated with the natural hormone obtained from the grape pips/seeds, the Flame variety will produce a medium or select size raisin. Therefore the future of the Flame variety raisins is as a medium size raisin.



Flame medium variety raisins as per the future. (sundried without sulphur)

The new grape varieties that will be made into jumbo raisins to replace Flames will be from the varieties Crimson, Arra 18, Autumn Royal, Midnight Beauty and others.

These jumbo raisins will be a good replacement for the actual Flame variety because

1. The grape is a red colour that dries to a black raisin, as against the dark blue colour of a green grape such as the Thompson.
2. The shape is not a rounded shape such as the Flame variety, but more elongated as with the Thompson variety.

The following are photographs that compares the traditional flame variety jumbo, with a few of the newer varieties.

Please let us have any comments or questions.

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Newer grape varieties that will replace the Flame variety for jumbo raisins.



Newer grape varieties that will replace Flame variety for bold size raisins.