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## **REDSUN RAISIN REPORT #1 -2024 January**

### **SOUTH AFRICAN RAISIN CROP**

#### **HIGHLIGHTS OF THIS REPORT**

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#### **The 2024 South African raisin crop has started**

It is beginning February 2024. The grapes are ready and the raisin farmers are excited. It is the first time in three years that they have this optimism. The SA raisin crop has been the following over the years mentioned;

<b>Crop Year</b>	<b>Crop size mt</b>	<b>comment</b>
2020	83435 mt	Good crop
2021	72732 mt	Rain affected
2022	78757 mt	Rain affected
2023	60204 mt	Perfect weather, vines affected by mildew
2024	85000 mt	Estimated

Farmers have started harvesting the grapes and making raisins.

The question was put by a customer if the berry size will be smaller in 2024 due to the bigger crop. Our Technical team, answered saying, "2024 is not an exceptionally big crop, the crop is in line with projected growth for the SA raisin crop". The crop has been growing, but the fruit has been damaged by rain for three years. The berry size of 2024 crop is not smaller than previous years. It will deliver the regular size of 220-300 berries per 100gr. Not many midgets.

The projected growth of the SA Raisin crop should see 100,000 mt of raisins produced in South Africa by 2028. Redsun is of the opinion the projection is conservative. The SA raisin crop is well managed, and transparent. Farmers do have confidence in the industry, therefore are prepared to develop their vines.

### How is the 2024 South African crop made up?

The SA raisin crop has several varieties, which are made by the farmers from their grapes based on demand and market conditions. Most importantly the price the farmers will be paid. All farmers in SA are paid an amount directly related to the market price. Another important factor is the infrastructure the farmers has on his farm. We remind everyone, that South Africa has about 730 farmers that make raisins.

Based on the crop estimates received from farmers at Redsun so far, we see the crop comprising the following varieties

Variety	Percentage for 2024 est..	Volume mt 2024 estimated	Volume mt 2022	Volume mt 2023
Thompson select	43%	37400	48019	28078
Thompson select organic	5%	5100	Incl. in TS	Incl. in TS
Jumbos	10%	8500	4287	6783
Black/Flame	6%	5100	4580	4819
Goldens select	27%	23000	10454	15727
Currants	7%	3400	3508	3073
SA/OR Sultanas	2%	2500	5887	1725
<b>Total Crop</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>85000</b>	<b>78757</b>	<b>60205</b>

One of the noteworthy points is the Thompson select volumes from the crops 2022 and 2023. These are both actual figure but they vary considerably. In the 2022 crop, the Thompson select made up 61% of the crop. The farmers were restricted from making goldens due to the rain damage on the grapes. They were left with no alternative but to make Thompsons. However, the rain conditions did allow for sultanas to be made, so they could dry faster.

In 2023, the weather conditions were ideal, so farmers made as many goldens as possible. In this year, there were fewer grapes available. However, the percentage of goldens was higher, at the cost of the Thompson mediums (only 43% of crop).

### How will the weather and market conditions affect the 2024 crop

Raisins in South Africa are produced in two main areas, each with different climates;

1. Lower Orange River, Northern Cape Province, a summer raisin fall region (we make raisins when the rain is due) 85% of the crop, with everything except currants.
2. Olifants River region, Western Cape Province, a winter rainfall area (no rain when we are making raisins ), 15% of the crop with 100% of the currants, jumbos, Flames and Thompsons, but no goldens.

### Thompson Mediums

The TS is the most import variety made in South Africa. The prices are good for the farmers. Most farmers are operational with the correct facilities to dry Thompsons. They are dried on concrete aprons, on drying tables and dry on vine. The Thompson can take some rain while drying. The effect is the raisins are a little darker towards the black colour.

There has been sporadic rain in the region of Orange River since the beginning of the year. The effect is not serious. All farmers remain fully on track to produce Thompsons.

The quality at intake is 82% choice grade average. That is after 897 mt delivered and graded. Redsun is looking to buy 8000 mt of Thompson mediums from farmers. That includes about 1000 mt organic quality.



Thompsons on the drying tables



Thompsons on the drying aprons

### **Goldens Medium**

We have received some very good quality goldens so far. There was pressure on Redsun to supply a market that has been empty since about August 2023. Our first few loads golden medium choice have already left the factory.

The volume that Redsun is planning to buy 4500 of golden mediums as discussed with farmers. The average intake grading to date is 74% choice grade. For goldens, that is a good choice grading.

The rain can still have a role to play. The majority of the grapes remain on the vines and have not yet been harvested. If we get rain, then the quality of the grapes will not suit the making of goldens due to the colour and “swartbekkies”. If the grapes are damaged by rain, farmers will make Thompsons from the grapes. That is what happened during 2022.

Therefore, the goldens are always vulnerable until the grapes have been harvested. Once they are harvested, sulphured and drying on the trays, the rain will not affect the quality. The weather looks good for at least the next two weeks.



Golden drying racks after sulphuring

### **SA Sultanas medium**

SA Sultanas is a similar product to the Turkish #9 RTU sultana. It is made from a green seedless grape, exactly the same grape as the Thompson medium. For many years, Farmers have not been making SA Sultanas because the return in value from Thompsons was better than the SA Sultanas (compared in price to Turkish #9).

2024 is different. Now Farmers have the same return for the SA Sultanas as compared to the Thompsons. However, farmers do not necessarily want to produce SA Sultanas. They are accustomed to making Thompsons, therefore they prefer to make Thompsons. The infrastructure necessary to make the sultanas is also a problem. Therefore, we do not see a strong positive response to our request to make SA Sultanas. There remains time to convince the farmers before the end of the crop, and Redsun is working hard in this regard.



SA Sultanas



## **Currants**

Vredendal region weather has been very dry. Enough water from the river, but no rain. This is perfect for the currants which are produced only in this region. The cool air comes in from the Atlantic Ocean.

So far, the average choice grading is 90%. Redsun is expecting to buy 1100mt of currants. The berry count is consistently 900-1300 berries per 100gr.



Farmer's stock currants in a bin

## **Jumbos**

Jumbos include Thompsons and black jumbos (berry count 80-120 per 100 gr), including the super jumbos of the same varieties. (Berry count 60-90 berries per 100gr).

The quality is looking good, however, we are anxious about the volumes. Initially, farmers said Redsun could expect the same volume as we received in 2023. That was slightly more than 3000 mt. However, we are now seeing that the fresh grape market was very strong. Most of our farmers have packed their grapes to fresh grape buyers, allowing for better margins to the farmer.

Therefore, we must see what volumes we can achieve. We are now planning 1600mt of Jumbos. We are working very hard to secure further volumes.

There have been many inquiries for bold size. Due to the smaller volume, bolds are not easily available. They make up about 15% of the volume.

## **Intake process underway**

The raisins are being delivered to Redsun. The samples are being drawn and the grading is done. At present we are aiming at taking in about 2000mt of farmer's stock per week for the duration of the intake season (Feb to Mar).



Redsun quality team grading incoming raisins

### Shipping out of Cape Town

Unfortunately, there has been some strong winds in Cape Town. Furthermore, the delays in processing the ships in Durban port continues. The combination of these two factors contribute to delays in the Redsun shipping schedule out of Cape Town.

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