

SA table grape harvest volume resilient despite drought

The South African Table Grape Industry (SATI) says the country's harvest is resilient with volumes stabilising despite the worst drought in decades. The 4th Crop Estimate for the 2017/18 table grape season shows the upper and lower limits about 16,8% and 12,2% lower, respectively than the previous record 2016/2017 season. The new estimate is between 56,2 million and 59,3 million cartons, reflecting an unchanged upper limit and a slight increase in the lower limit.

The Northern Provinces region, nearly at the end of their harvest, with enough available water fared even better than predicted. The Orange River region, which also has enough water, has done reasonably well despite some challenges with smaller berries and lower bunch weights. Producers in this region are expected to practically complete packing within the next two weeks.

Table 1: 4th Crop Estimate in 4.5 kg carton equivalents

CROP ESTIMATE 2017/2018 SEASON								
REGION	FOURTH CROP ESTIMATE 5 FEBRUARY 2018		THIRD CROP ESTIMATE 16 JANUARY 2018		SECOND CROP ESTIMATE 15 DECEMBER 2017		FIRST CROP ESTIMATE 03 NOVEMBER 2017	
	LOW	HIGH	LOW	HIGH	LOW	HIGH	LOW	HIGH
Northern Provinces	6 700 000	6 900 000	6 000 000	6 500 000	6 000 000	6 500 000	6 000 000	6 500 000
Orange River	18 700 000	18 900 000	18 500 000	19 000 000	18 500 000	19 800 000	21 500 000	22 500 000
Olifants River	2 400 000	2 600 000	2 500 000	2 800 000	2 500 000	3 000 000	3 000 000	3 000 000
Berg River	11 200 000	12 500 000	11 200 000	12 500 000	11 200 000	12 500 000	11 200 000	12 500 000
Hex River	17 200 000	18 400 000	17 200 000	18 500 000	17 200 000	18 500 000	17 200 000	18 500 000
TOTAL	56 200 000	59 300 000	55 400 000	59 300 000	55 400 000	60 300 000	58 900 000	63 000 000

The three regions hardest hit by the drought and heat are the Olifants, Berg and Hex River. The effect of the drought and heat varies between producers who are seeing a reduction of between 10% and 30% in their volumes compared to last season.

Close to normal export volumes estimate will continue for at least the next 4 weeks. However, a shorter tail-end of the harvest is expected due to the cut in water allocations and possible further effect of the ongoing drought.

Crop estimates are done in co-operation with industry experts who are in close contact with growers in all regions, with the expectation that the best information available was used. This structure enables SATI to be more responsive to in-season developments and deviations.

Table 2: Volumes of previous seasons in 4.5 kg carton equivalents.

REGION	ACTUAL PACKED VOLUMES				
SEASON	2016/2017	2015/2016	2014/2015	2013/2014	2012/2013
Northern Provinces	5 537 784	4 730 931	4 510 726	4 083 599	4 155 648
Orange River	20 532 515	18 642 605	17 686 726	15 118 961	16 039 382
Olifants River	3 968 073	3 157 059	3 788 287	3 121 056	2 725 942
Berg River	15 426 175	12 599 726	13 062 448	11 379 002	12 672 168
Hex River	22 110 612	18 849 218	20 331 091	16 846 196	18 286 725
TOTAL	67 575 159	57 979 539	59 379 279	50 548 814	53 879 865

Lien article : <http://www.freshplaza.com/article/189066/SA-table-grape-harvest-volume-resilient-despite-drought>