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## **South Africa, Republic of**

### **Dried Fruit**

#### **Raisins, update.**

**1999**

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#### **Report Highlights:**

**South Africa's seedless raisin production reached 40,358 tons during 1999 (FAS98), up almost 50% on 1998, mainly due to better weather conditions. As a result 1999 exports could reach 30,000 tons again after only 20,200 tons were exported in 1998.**

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Includes PSD changes: Yes

Includes Trade Matrix: No

Semi-Annual Report

Pretoria [SF1], SF

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## **Executive Summary**

South Africa's seedless raisin production reached 40,358 tons during calendar year 1999, (FAS98), up almost 50% on 1998, mainly due to more favorable weather conditions. CY 1998 exports reached only 20,200 tons due to the smaller crop. CY 99 exports could reach 30,000 tons again. The various fruit industry associations are pooling their data bases and we should soon be getting more reliable data after the deregulation of the industries in 1997, which led to shortage of information. Prospects for the CY 2000 crop are still promising at this stage.

PSD Table						
Country:	South Africa, Republic of					
Commodity:	Raisins					
		1996		1997		1998
	Old	New	Old	New	Old	New
Market Year Begin		01/1997		01/1998		01/1999
Area Planted	0	11136	0	11683	0	12346
Area Harvested	0	11136	0	11683	0	12346
Beginning Stocks	11469	11469	10306	10306	0	5744
Production	39896	38889	25361	27063	37000	40358
Imports	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL SUPPLY	51365	50358	35667	37369	37000	46102
Exports	30183	30183	25981	20200	27000	30000
Domestic Consumption	10876	9869	9686	11425	10000	12422
Ending Stocks	10306	10306	0	5744	0	3680
TOTAL DISTRIBUTION	51365	50358	35667	37369	37000	46102

## Production

South African raisin production data for the 3 most recent marketing years have been revised again after more information became available.

South Africa produces three kinds of sultana type raisins from the same light colored seedless grape. The final product is only differentiated by the drying process. The major product is Thompson Seedless raisins and the process is the simplest. The grapes are harvested when the sugar content reaches 23% and then laid out on concrete slabs in direct sunlight until the desired moisture content is reached. No chemical treatment is used and the final product has a dark brown to black color. Unbleached sultanas are the second most popular product, but the drying process is more intricate. Grapes are harvested when the sugar content reaches about 20% and then dipped in a lye solution (potash/lime mixture) for a short time. The grapes are then placed on wire shelves in the shade and no direct sunlight is allowed on the fruit. The final product has a light brown color. Bleached sultanas are the third major product and the most expensive. The grapes are first dipped in a lye solution as with unbleached sultanas, placed on wooden mats, then put in cages and bleached in the smoke of burning sulfur for six to eight hours. The product is then dried in the shade. The final product is golden, comparable to the California Golden.

Since the demise of the Dried Fruit Board we unfortunately did not have the details by product available but this industry created an organization "Dried Fruit Technical Services" which supplied the following data:

South Africa, Raisin production by type: Metric tons

Year	FAS 96 (MY 97)	FAS 97 (MY 98)	FAS 98 (MY 99)
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Unbleached	7 994	3 700	5 097
Golden	6 945	6 912	8 539
Thompson seedless	23 950	16 451	26 722
Total sultanas	38 889	27 063	40 358

The FAS 98 grape crop was good and conditions were favorable for drying with the result that the initial crop estimates were exceeded. The 1999 winter was warm with late rains and some frost in the production area along the Orange River but conditions still favor a crop of about 38,000 tons to be delivered during 2000.

## Consumption

According to Dried Fruit Technical Services domestic consumption amounted to about 9,800 tons during CY 1998 to which 1,625 tons of cleaning and packing losses must be added. Cleaning losses, which are calculated at about 6% of production, are added to domestic consumption in the PS&D.

## Trade

The Customs and Excise export data we received earlier this year indicated total exports of 31,100 tons during the 1998 calendar year. When we received the detailed data by destination we realized that there was a mistake in data captured for a specific country. As a result the table has been adjusted and now totals 20,200 tons. The following table contains the details:

South Africa, raisin exports by destination, January to December 1998

Destination	Quantity, Metric tons	Value, Rand million
U.S.A.	336	2.044
United Kingdom	3 356	17.810
Canada	2 760	15.692
Netherlands	2 731	17.816
Germany	2 664	15.012
France	2 619	19.138
Japan	1 497	7.870
Israel	1 261	2.600
Other	2 976	18.522
Total	20 200	116.504

The revised export figure, now used in the PS&D, gives much more credibility to the data for FAS 97, CY 98. The FAS 98, CY 99 exports are now expected to reach 30,000 tons.

## **Stocks**

The last, hard, figure for carry over stocks was the 10,306 tons carried over at the end of December 1997 which were also the beginning stocks for CY 1998. Due to the confusion created with the early export figure for 1998, the stock figure at the end of 1998 is not yet known but it is clear that stocks are very low.