

Table Grape Vine Census 2008

Area Planted

The area under table grape production is at the same level as previous season. The 2008 vine census revealed that the total area under table grape production is 13 982 hectares, a slight decline from the previous year. In the Berg River region there was an insignificant number of new hectares brought into production as all new plantings were the replacement of old cultivars. The Hex River region suffered severe flooding that washed away almost 80 hectares of vineyards and/or arable land. The Olifants River region has been the most stable and consistent region, recording a small increase in the area planted with table grapes. The Orange River region was the only region that has seen larger number of new hectares being planted with table grapes. The Northern Province region retained the same number of hectares as the previous year. In 2008, a total of 298 hectares were planted with new vines and the majority of these hectares were the replacement of old cultivars.

Table 1: Area under Table Grape Production

Area (Ha) and Vines (00') under Table Grape Production				
Region Name	2007		2008	
	Ha	Vines	Ha	Vines
Berg River	3, 646	6, 360, 594	3, 637	6, 428, 871
Hex River	4, 636	9, 808, 963	4, 534	9, 723, 443
Northern Province	1, 196	2, 139, 522	1, 198	2, 143, 673
Olifants River	491	857, 732	506	865, 278
Orange River	4, 041	7, 125, 695	4, 107	7, 175, 762
Total	14, 010	26, 292, 506	13, 982	26, 337, 027

Vine Age Distribution

The production shift from seeded to seedless varieties has resulted in a major replacement of old vineyards. The majority of South African vineyards are between the ages of one to ten years old. Early season and better yielding cultivars has attracted the attention of many producers in recent

years. Producers are planting early season varieties with an objective of meeting market requirements as well as receiving better market returns. The 2008 vine census revealed that 46% of vines are older than ten years, 29% between the ages of six to ten years, 16% between the ages of three to six and 9% are younger than three years. In the 9% of vines younger than three years, 21% comes from 2008 plantings.

Planting Trends

South Africa has a wide range of fine table grape varieties, which are harvested from October to May to bring the full flavour of the crop to local and international consumers over a period of eight months. Crimson Seedless, Red Globe, Thompson Seedless, Sugraone, Flame Seedless, Prime Seedless and Dauphine accounts for the bulk of South African production and exports. The 2008 vine census showed that new plantings of Crimson Seedless and Red Globe are still taking place in all production regions. The census also illustrates the rise of new cultivars that are planted country-wide. These new cultivars include Midnight Beauty, Autumn Royal, Sable Seedless, Scarlotta, Star Light and Ebony Star. Old cultivars such as Almeria, Alpha Red, Bonheur, White Gem, Sundance Seedless, Datal, Waltham Cross, Majestic and Muscat Supreme that are no longer important for today's market are vanishing from the South African basket.

In 2008 the majority of new plantings were black seedless cultivars (e.g. Midnight Beauty, Sable Seedless and Autumn Royal), while a substantial amount of red seedless cultivars (Scarlotta, Crimson Seedless, Star light) was planted. The spectacular growth in the production of black seedless varieties is driven by a number of factors, including: cultivar characteristics (larger berry sizes, crisp berries and exceptional bunch appearance) and the earlier maturation (e.g. Midnight Beauty ripens about 14 days earlier than Thompson and Sugraone). Though production volumes for black seedless are lower than volumes of white and red seedless, this variety group is showing higher potential in the markets.

Table 2: Age Distribution and Plantation Trends

Cultivar Name	No. of Vines	No. of Hectares	% Contribution	< 3yrs	3-6 yrs	> 6yrs
Crimson Seedless	2,613,237	1,447.55	10.35%	145.79	498.29	803.47
Red Globe	2,644,499	1,397.32	9.99%	74.88	117.40	1,205.04
Thompson Seedless	2,407,853	1,387.65	9.92%	61.98	130.69	1,194.98
Prime Seedless	2,010,090	1,277.14	9.13%	142.14	156.09	958.38
Sugraone (Superior Seedless)	1,941,621	1,196.83	8.56%	114.72	211.47	870.64
Flame Seedless	2,275,075	1,185.59	8.48%	182.92	326.25	676.41
Dauphine	2,388,625	1,120.95	8.02%	32.97	128.11	955.57
Regal Seedless	1,262,331	645.51	4.62%	3.42	30.89	611.20
Sunred Seedless	1,046,254	535.30	3.83%	2.14	19.51	513.60
Barlinka	965,433	491.38	3.51%	-	27.03	464.35
La Rochelle	878,555	430.54	3.08%	0.83	22.35	408.52
Dan Ben Hannah	743,771	342.18	2.45%	4.87	30.63	306.68
Datal	556,411	329.92	2.36%	5.17	22.76	301.99
Victoria	654,216	328.12	2.35%	-	34.78	293.34
Waltham Cross	488,948	263.31	1.88%	4.90	14.66	243.75
Alphonse Lavallee	498,740	243.08	1.74%	-	9.17	226.94
Autumn Royal	417,740	209.82	1.50%	165.03	26.98	17.81
Bonheur	367,219	177.43	1.27%	2.47	7.77	167.19
Ralli Seedless	204,585	140.64	1.01%	70.85	63.18	6.59
Sugrathirteen (Midnight Beauty)	227,810	127.20	0.91%	68.90	45.20	13.10
Moonballs	293,196	104.68	0.75%	24.90	22.73	79.78
Sugrasixteen (Sable Seedless)	117,579	57.13	0.41%	52.75	4.38	-
Ebony Star	71,519	31.02	0.22%	7.01	24.01	-
Sugratwelve (Coachella Seedless)	16,399	9.76	0.07%	3.86	5.90	-
Others	1,245,321	501.95	3.59%	150.59	175.68	183.95
Total	26,337,027	13,982.00	100.00%	1,323.09	2,155.91	10,503.28

***Note:** A total of 10 503 hectares are carrying vines that are older than six years, 38% of these vines are between ages of six to ten and 62% are older than ten years.