

For fresh fruit and vegetable marketing and distribution in Asia



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RSA grapes reach final stretch

It is likely that South Africa's grape export crop could be more or less the same as last year



The South African table grape crop is moving into its final period, with weekly volumes in the late Hex River Valley region expected to start reducing from now on.

With the harvest nearing its end, SATI is retaining its estimate that the harvest will end up between 63.2m and 70m cartons.

For this higher level to be achieved, the two remaining regions – the Berg River and the Hex River Valley – will have to deliver some 15m cartons in the coming few weeks. Observers therefore believe that it will be unlikely that this level will be achieved. In fact, the season so far has followed very much the pattern of last season.

At 7.1m cartons, the northern

regions achieved a slightly higher export figure than last year, which was a record for the area.

Everywhere else growers have been looking forward to recovering from last year's drought. The Orange River improved slightly on last year but, at 19.1m cartons, it is still well down on the 2017 volume of 20.5m cartons.

The Olifants River, which nearly reached 4m cartons in 2017, had another disappointing year, with only 2.27m cartons shipped.

SATI says the Berg River is at the tail-end of its harvest, with 12.4m cartons having been taken in compared with 12.3m cartons at the same time last season. In 2017 the Berg River packed 14.6m cartons.

At the end of week 9 Hex River growers had delivered 13.7m cartons compared with 13.4m last year and 16.3m in 2017. For the total export crop to reach last year's level of 62m cartons, the remaining weeks will have to deliver another 7m cartons.

Observers say it is therefore realistic to expect conformance more or less to the lower level of the SATI estimate, but that it will take another year to get to 70m cartons. They also point out that with increased plantings and higher yielding varieties, and a favourable climate, a crop of 70m cartons during the next season will be attainable.