SAWIS – REPORT: OCTOBER 2012

District conditions (winter and spring 2012) and 2013 crop expectations

Olifants River : Jeff Joubert

Winter conditions (June/July/August)

June temperatures were particularly conducive to proper dormancy breaking of grapevines and the low temperatures persisted throughout winter. If one compares the July temperatures to last year's figures, the average is lower throughout, and the same applies to August. Although the maximum temperatures measured at a number of weather stations were slightly higher in 2012 than in 2011, the same does not apply to August. In both instances the minimum temperatures were nevertheless lower.

The Clanwilliam dam is currently 100% full and with the anticipated precipitation in the catchment area, the usual amount of irrigation water should be available for the coming season.

There was relatively little rainfall (12 mm) in June, only 17 mm in July, and 44 mm in August, which explains the poor flower season. Total precipitation in Vredendal for the year is 103 mm, practically identical to last year's 103.5 mm at the same time.

Spring (September/October)

Spring weather conditions are normal to slightly cooler, with just a few warm days and especially cold nights. The customary westerly winds prevail every afternoon, resulting in further cooling. So far there has been no rain in any significant volumes, although the vineyards are moist with dew practically every morning.

Initial bud burst in Chenin blanc was approximately a week to 10 days later than usual, but dates for the later cultivars such as Sauvignon blanc, Cabernet Sauvignon and Hanepoot do not differ significantly from those of previous years. In many instances bud burst in Colombar preceded that of Chenin blanc, but this can probably be ascribed to pruning dates. In most cultivars bud burst was good and even; also in Chardonnay where no dormancy breaking aids were applied. The only exception is probably Shiraz, with uneven bud burst in places.

Generally vineyards are looking very good with sufficient growth and healthy green colour, and no symptoms of deficiencies. In many instances producers have already commenced spraying against fungal diseases.
So far, probably due to the favourable climate, there have been no reports of outbreaks of any diseases.
Snails, and the dune snail especially, remain a problem for producers.

Grapevine statistics (SAWIS)

The trend to uproot uneconomic red blocks continues and these are mostly replaced by Colombar or Chenin blanc. The only red cultivar to be planted in significant numbers is Pinotage. A fair amount of Currents as well as Merbein Seedless have been planted over the past three years.
Total plantings in the Olifants River remain static for all intents and purposes, but have nevertheless increased to almost 10 000 ha over the past 10 years. This past winter many old blocks with decreasing yield were sawn off above the graft joint and trellised from scratch.
The most important cultivar in respect of planting is Colombar, which helps to keep the total production of ageing grapevines fairly constant, with Chenin blanc close on its heels.

Crop expectations 2013

In October and November 2011 there were only three and five rainy days respectively, with the result that there were more than enough sunlight hours and sufficient heat to ensure optimal bunch initiation.
The Olifants River probably has one of the most consistent production patterns in the SA wine industry, with relatively little fluctuation from one vintage to the next.
The net effect of uprootings and plantings is that production remains largely constant with a slight upward trend.
Weather conditions in winter and spring so far have been optimal for most cultivars with the possible exception of Shiraz, consequently a crop similar to or even better than last season can be expected.
In cultivars such as Chenin blanc, Colombar and Pinotage the bunches, of which there are more than enough, are already clearly visible. How the remainder of the season unfolds will mostly determine the crop size.

Swartland : Braham Oberholzer

Winter (June/July/August):

The good winter of 2012 meant that it was business as usual, after the previous years' mild winters. Rainfall was very good with Malmesbury and Riebeek-Kasteel getting 500 and 600 mm respectively. It was a cold winter with sufficient chill at the end of May and beginning of June over the greatest part of the Swartland to provide in the cold requirements of the grapevines. Persistent snowfall on neighbouring mountains throughout the cold winter also impacted favourably on the cold units. Ground water in October is considerably higher than in 2011, which means that the season kicks off well. The dams are full and subsoil conditions are at field capacity.

Spring (September/October):

Grapevines experienced very even bud burst, approximately two weeks later than last year. Bud burst in Steen is very even. As usual Shiraz is very uneven, but even so, better than in 2011. Some of the producers are spraying for the second time as a result of regular light showers.

The crop looks like it could be a good one, but much will depend on the provision of moisture, as well as the effect of the previous dry years on the grapevines' reserves.

Grapevine statistics (SAWIS)

Uprootings still exceed plantings and the net annual trend in respect of wine grape hectares remains negative. The number of hectares uprooted as on 31 December 2011 amounts to 441 ha compared to the previous period's 345 ha. Of these white cultivars represent 297 ha uprooted versus 228 ha for the previous period; red cultivars 441 ha versus 117 ha.

At the same time 218 ha (95 white and 124 red) were planted, compared to 99 ha (62 white and 37 red) of the previous period.

Uprooted: *Highest to lowest*

Chenin blanc (old vines especially), Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay and Cinsaut.

Malmesbury producers are uprooting old Steen blocks and Chardonnay in particular. Chardonnay performs less well in the area and vines are also old.

Crop expectations 2013:

Don't count your chickens before they hatch, the saying goes, but one would like to get excited about the 2013 season. Wheat is looking incredibly good and some years there is a clear correlation between wheat and the subsequent grapevine crops.

The Swartland kicked the season off well and if the dryland vines get rain at the critical periods, we can be assured of bigger crops. Unfortunately it will take some time for grapevines to recover from the 2011 drought.

Grapevine plantings in the area are in a downward trend and it is inevitable that total production will decrease. Productions should nevertheless be better than in 2012.

Klein Karoo : Johannes Mellet

Winter conditions (June/July/August)

Winter kicked off favourably with cold conditions from mid-May. Cold units in the critical period from mid-May to mid-June were more than sufficient for complete dormancy breaking. During the critical period only five consecutive cold days are required, but this year 29 of the 30 days complied with the required cold. The most cold units from May to August were measured for the most recent 10 years for which weather data exists.

Throughout winter maximum monthly temperatures were considerably lower (average -1.5^{o}C) than the long term average maximum temperature. Minimum temperatures were only slightly cooler (average -0.5^{o}C) than the long term average minimum temperature.

The past winter's rainfall was very high (180% to 225%). Rainfall was properly distributed, but with exceptionally high rainfall in early August. Only limited flood damage occurred in the vicinity of Montagu, damage was restricted to infrastructure such as roads and dams, with no damage to grapevines. Soils are thoroughly drenched with sufficient water above and below the soil. Farm dams are full almost without exception. Large dams in the Klein Karoo are mostly filled to the point of overflow, with an average of almost 90% of full capacity. Even more water than last year is available for irrigation.

Spring (September/October)

Spring so far has been cool with regular showers. Based on heat units, only 2009 was cooler than this year.

Bud burst ocurred at the usual time, but it seems as though the supposedly mid-season cultivars also kicked off early. As can be expected following a cold, wet winter, bud burst

was particularly even and good. Both water and temperature in the soil are beneficial factors, but regular cool and rainy weather conditions hamper growth. Flower cluster numbers and size look very promising.

On several occasions climatic conditions have been conducive to the development of oidium and in certain stations the development of downy mildew. Erinose is common in susceptible cultivars. Snails are widespread and move to grapevines following herbicide applications. Mealybug multiplied only late last year and was mostly not controlled; it should therefore be carefully monitored and controlled this year.

Grapevine statistics (SAWIS)

As in the rest of South Africa, plantings in the Klein Karoo are also less than required to replace the existing hectares. The past two seasons have nevertheless seen a slight improvement in the planting of new grapevines. Producers with small vineyards and few grapevines are leaving the industry, while others with considerable plantings are expanding gradually.

New plantings are carefully selected in terms of cultivars, clones, rootstocks, soils and trellis systems, for better yields than in the past. It is therefore possible to maintain good yields even with fewer plantings.

Crop expectations 2013

2012 was an exceptionally good season, with the highest average yield per hectare in recent years. Vineyards in Oudtshoorn and Ladismith, which were very dry in 2011, are expected to fare even better this year. In Montagu and Calitzdorp the chances are good that productions will be slightly down from the 2012 record levels. Availability of water this year is even better than in 2012, but conditions were less favourable during bunch initiation in November. Bud burst was good this year, although it took place in more infertile shoots than last season.

Furthermore 2012 was an exceptionally healthy season. This year already there is pressure from diseases and snails that have to be properly managed.

At present a crop of approximately 43 500 tons is expected for the Klein Karoo.

The potential is consequently there for a very good crop this year, with available water to see it through, but also challenges not normally faced by our customarily dry region.

Worcester : Pierre Snyman

Winter conditions (June/July/August)

The winter rains arrived relatively late in the season. It was very dry in autumn and the first good showers were recorded in June (66 mm). In July 35 mm and in August 80 mm were measured at the Nuy weather station. There was snowfall on the mountains in July and August. During this period there was sufficient cold weather for dormancy breaking in the grapevines. It was a strange post-harvest period, with leaf fall not taking place according to any set pattern. In some instances leaf fall occurred directly after the harvest. Consequently some of the shoots were not properly ripened throughout and the accumulation of reserves was not ideal everywhere.

Spring (September/October)

Spring started at the usualy time, but because of largely fluctuating weather conditions, bud burst and subsequent growth were slow. Preliminary indications are nevertheless that the crop will be normal. It is just the older Steen vines that appear variable in respect of the number of flower clusters; in most grapevines bud burst was very even. The only disease that has been observed at this stage is erinose.

Grapevine statistics (SAWIS)

In 2011 195 ha white varieties and 79 ha red varieties, altogether 274 ha, were planted. In the same year 295 ha white and 45 ha red, altogether 340 ha, were uprooted. This means that the Worcester region uprooted 66 ha more than it planted during this period. Consequently Worcester is now also part of the larger trend that uprootings exceed plantings.

Total plantings for the region comprise 8 648 ha, 2 765 ha being red and 5 881 ha white, giving a red/white ratio of 32 : 68. The most important white varieties in the region are the following: Chenin blanc (1 971 ha), Colombar (1 078 ha), Chardonnay (853 ha), Sauvignon blanc (1 064 ha). As regards the red varieties, the following cultivars were most planted: Cabernet Sauvignon (570 ha), Merlot (392 ha), Pinotage (339 ha), Shiraz (680 ha) and Ruby Cabernet (200 ha).

From this it is clear that Chenin blanc and Colombar remain the most important cultivars in Worcester and these two consequently have the biggest impact on crop trends each year.

Crop expectations for 2013

The 2012 record crop of 172 000 tons constituted 21% more than the 2011 crop. This makes it difficult to estimate a figure for the 2012/2013 season. The conditions in October/November 2011 were conducive to cluster initiation, and subsequently confirmed by the early signs at bud burst which showed two flower clusters per shoot and even shoulder clusters. There were nevertheless vineyards which lost their leaves at an early stage, moreover, the late crush was an unknown factor in terms of the forthcoming season.

In 2011 340 ha grapevines were uprooted. The figure for 2012 has yet to be confirmed, but should be more or less the same and could amount to a loss of about 3 000 tons. The 321 ha planted in 2010 are coming into full production and should amount to about 6 000 tons.

A conservative estimate of the existing grapevines' production in the upcoming harvest is 5 to 10% less. Add to this the net increase of 3 000 tons due to plantings and uprootings, and the provisional estimate is that the region will be able to produce about 160 000 tons.

Weather conditions currently are chilly and cool. There has been little precipitation in the Worcester region and little to no downy mildew and rot conditions are foreseen. However, the risk of frost is not entirely over.

Robertson : Hennie Visser

Winter conditions (June/July/August)

Robertson experienced proper cold and good rainfall during the winter months. The accumulated Richardson cold units for week 20 to 35 represented more than double the long term average for the same period. During the critical period for dormancy breaking (mid-May to mid-June) excellent cold conditions prevailed, which would ensure good and even bud burst. Over the winter months Robertson received 80% more rain than the long term average for the corresponding period. In instances where cover crops had been established, very good growth ensued.

Spring (September/October)

Cold weather and good rainfall persisted in September. Average temperatures fell short of the long term and rainfall exceeded the long term average by approximately 55%. Bud burst was very good and even, and at the usual time, as a result of the proper cold, with

a few exceptions only. These can possibly be ascribed to insufficient accumulation of reserves. Initial shoot growth was rapid as a result of a few warm days and good soil water status. Growth decelerated rapidly however as a result of the cooler weather and currently appears to be normal. No diseases and pests are manifest at this stage, but snails have been observed in places. At this early stage symptoms of erinose are visible in some cultivars.

Grapevine statistics (SAWIS)

From 2009 to 2011 there was a net gain of 81.55 ha in plantings in the Robertson Wine Valley. During this period the hectares of white varieties decreased by 259.23 ha whereas red varieties increased by 341.38 ha. It is clear therefore that the red grapes represent an increasing percentage of total plantings in the Robertson Wine Valley. Despite the net planting trend of the past three years, it is a cause of concern that 5% of the total white hectares are not being replaced annually. In 2011 more than 5% of the total red hectares were established, however. Assuming a productive lifespan of 20 years, this means that the age distribution is systematically changing and the average age of the grapevines is becoming older. This will definitely impact negatively on production over the long term. The most planted white varieties during this period are Colombar, Chenin blanc, Sauvignon blanc and Chardonnay. The most planted red varieties include Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon, Pinot noir and Pinotage.

Crop expectations 2013

At this early stage the crop appears to be smaller than the record crop of 2012, but even so production is expected to be good. This can be ascribed to the positive planting trend and good winter. The net plantings should not have a big impact on total production seeing that the average grapevines are becoming older. Despite the cooler weather in October and November 2011 (around the time of bunch initiation) the flower clusters are properly developed. Bud burst was also good and even in most bud spurs. Producers still aim to increase yields so as to ensure sustainable production. Cold weather and regular showers persisted in September, thereby increasing disease pressure and impacting negatively on growth.

Breedekloof : Leon Dippenaar

Winter conditions (June/July/August)

June was wet and cold. The average minimum and maximum temperatures were respectively 0.6°C and 1.7°C below the long term averages. The rainfall was slightly more than the long term, measuring 80.5 mm compared to the long term figure of 74.12 mm.

In July the rainfall was considerably less than usual, but it remained cold throughout. The average minimum and maximum temperatures were 4.15°C and 17.43°C respectively, while the corresponding long term figures are 4.23°C and 18.94°C. Rainfall at 51.5 mm was considerably less than the long term figure of 115.76 mm. In August the average minimum and maximum temperatures were 4.67°C and 17°C respectively, whereas the corresponding long term figures were 5.89°C and 18.67°C respectively. Winter rainfall was late this year, but clearly made up for the relatively drier first half of winter in August when 156.3 mm were recorded, compared to the long term figure of 87 mm.

The onset of winter was therefore wet and cold, with slightly drier conditions in July, whereafter it ended with a cold and wet August. There was a lot of snow this year, which could be seen on the mountains for almost two months non-stop. This is very good news for the supplementation of underground water reserves, as well as the filling up of farm dams. Sufficient cold units accumulated during the winter months to ensure good bud burst.

Spring (September/October)

For the most part bud burst occurred at the usual time. In Chardonnay especially bud burst was lovely and even this year. However, the initial shoot growth does not appear to be as vigorous as last year. The newly planted grapevines in particular are very slow out of the starting blocks, which may be explained by the slightly cooler climate in September.

In September rainfall was slightly lower compared to the long term average (40 mm compared to the 48 mm of the long term). The average minimum temperature was slightly lower (7.32°C compared to 7.58°C) and the average maximum temperature was also slightly lower (20.5°C compared to 21.63°C) measured against the long term temperatures.

Even shoot growth is a characteristic this year with bud burst occurring mostly on the bearers.

So far there have been no problems in terms of diseases. However, snails appear to be probematic once again this year.

Grapevine statistics (SAWIS)

Total plantings for the Breedekloof as on 30 November 2011 amount to 12 627.29 ha, 8 259.8 ha (65.4%) being white grapes and 4 367.49 ha (34.6%) red grapes.

The total hectares in November 2008 amounted to 12 248 ha (66%), of which 8 106 ha are white and 4 142 ha red. There was consequently a net increase of 379.29 ha (34%) over this four year period, with white grapes increasing by 153.8 ha and red grapes by 225.49 ha.

If one takes the 2012 plantings into account, an increasing growth in red grapes can be expected. On the red side Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot remained fairly stable over the period from 2008 to 2011, whereas Ruby Cabernet is gradually decreasing. While Cinsaut showed a decrease, Pinotage displayed good growth. Based on the 2012 red plantings, it looks like the growth trend in Pinotage is set to continue. There is also a slight revival in Ruby Cabernet and Shiraz plantings.

On the white side, Colombar and Chenin blanc experienced the biggest growth over the period from 2008 to 2011, followed by Sauvignon blanc and Chardonnay. Taking into account the 2012 white plantings, it seems that Chardonnay is being planted increasingly, as well as Chenin blanc, whereas the trend in Sauvignon blanc plantings is decreasing.

Crop expectations 2013

At this stage budding percentage is looking good. The percentage of flower clusters per shoot also appears to be quite normal. However, the weather conditions during the flowering and set period can still play a significant role in terms of the crop size.

Plantings can impact positively, especially with a large number of Chenin blanc and Colombar plantings that are coming into full production, as well as a significant number of Pinotage vineyards, which may impact positively on the crop as far as the reds are concerned. Then again the age composition, with an increasing number of ageing grapevines, may possibly have a negative impact. It is doubtful whether the record crop of 2012 will be matched, but it still seems likely that the crop size will be above average. All in all, the crop is currently estimated at approximately 7% lower than the 2012 crop.

Stellenbosch : Conrad Schutte

Winter conditions (June/July/August)

Winter in the Stellenbosch region was cold and wet. Rainfall measured at the Helderfontein weather station (situated between Nietvoorbij and Infruitec) indicate that rainfall in June, July and August was 140 mm more than the 48-year average.

Average minimum as well as maximum temperatures in winter were below the long term average. At the beginning of winter (the last two weeks in May and the first two weeks of June) the cold was theoretically sufficient to satisfy the grapevines' requirements. The cold units during the above-mentioned period exceeded the previous year's figures, as well as the long term average.

Spring (September/October)

Bud burst this year was approximately seven days later than last year, depending on the vineyards' location and cultivar. Bud burst in the region was even, with the exception of some Sauvignon blanc and Shiraz blocks. Cold conditions after bud burst caused initial shoot growth to be slow and until now there have not really been warm days to accelerate shoot growth.

Until now spring has been wet with an average of 39 mm more rain in September measured at the above-mentioned weather station. At the end of September the region already had 145 mm more than the average annual rainfall. The highest rainfall figures since 2004 occurred from April to September. Irrigation dams have excellent water levels and the big catchment dams in the region (Steenbras and Theewaterskloof) are more than 100% full.

Spring was also characterised by average minimum and maximum temperatures which are respectively 1.3ºC and 0.6ºC below the long term average.

Wet conditions in spring are normally conducive to the incidence of dead-arm disease. At this stage no symptoms have been reported, because most producers spray preventatively for fungal diseases.

Snails prevail in large numbers on new shoot growth, just like the previous season, and although they are problematic, control is effective. Erinose on Sauvignon blanc has been observed, but it is not problematic. Snout beetle as well as long-horn grasshopper activities have been observed in the Simonsberg area, although no significant damage is visible. These populations are subject to strict monitoring, having been quite problematic the previous season. Weeds are under control at this stage, vigorous growth being hampered by the cool temperatures.

Grapevine statistics (SAWIS)

The Stellenbosch region continues to make the biggest contribution in terms of total hectares planted to grapevines with 16.73% of South African plantings.

During the 2010/2011 season 180 ha were planted for the production of wine grapes. White cultivars comprised 74 ha of the above-mentioned total. The white plantings consisted mainly of Sauvignon blanc (25 ha), Chardonnay (24 ha) and Chenin blanc (19 ha). Red cultivars comprised 106 ha of the above-mentioned total. These red plantings consisted mainly of Cabernet Sauvignon (30 ha), Pinotage (20 ha), Shiraz (14 ha), Merlot (14 ha) and Pinot Noir (8 ha).

During this period 478 ha grapevines were uprooted. Altogether 212 ha white cultivars were uprooted, compared to 266 ha red cultivars.

From the above it is clear that the trend persists from the previous season, namely that more grapevines are being uprooted than planted. During the 2010/2011 season 298 ha more grapevines were uprooted than planted, compared to 120 ha of the previous season.

Crop expectations 2013

Weather conditions during the bunch initiation period in the previous season (October/November) were wet and cold. Current observations in terms of bunch sizes and numbers across all cultivars are nevertheless positive. The prevalence of favourable weather conditions during flowering and set will play a decisive role in determining the crop size. Provided producers protect their vineyards against the possible incidence of pests, plagues and fungal diseases during the growing season, the crop should be good. It seems likely, however, that the total size of the crop will trend downwards as a result of decreasing plantings in the region.

Paarl : Johan Viljoen

Winter conditions (June/July/August)

Night temperatures dropped from the beginning of May and consequently cold units started accumulating at an early stage. This winter has been described as one of the coldest in many years. According to weather station data cold units accumulated particularly rapidly and by mid-June the 2012 cold units at that stage were the highest since 2002. During July and August positive cold units kept on accumulating on a weekly

basis, although the tempo slowed down. With such good cold, very even bud burst was on the cards.

Rainfall in Northern Paarl for May was slightly below the long term average, but from June to September the monthly rainfall was considerably higher throughout than the long term average. This year's total annual rainfall until the end of September was approximately 850 mm, which is already ±250 mm more than the total rainfall for 2011. Since 2005 the highest total annual rainfall was recorded in 2008 (1 039 mm) and 2009 (916 mm) and the other years had 811 mm (2005) and less. The large catchment dams in the region are all at 100% capacity and most irrigation dams on farms are also practically full thanks to the persistent rain and run-off during the last week of September.

Spring (September/October)

September was very cold and wet, with approximately 140 mm rain in the course of the month. These conditions delayed bud burst to approximately 12 days later than normal. Despite the lateness of the bud burst, it was generally very even with a few exceptions in Shiraz. In young vines too bud burst was even on long cordon shoots, and in places where dormancy breaking aids had not been applied, bud burst on long bearers and young shoots was also very even. As a result of bud burst being delayed and a few warm days in between, growth was rapid in young shoots and some grapevines even had shoots of 30 - 50 cm at the beginning of October. Suckering had to start without further ado so as not to fall behind schedule. Disease pressure is fairly high considering the ongoing showers and dew in the mornings. A few periods of primary downy mildew infection have already occurred. Preventative control measures are therefore once again critical at this early stage of the season.

The widespread incidence of damage by feeding insects is a matter of concern and also requires the application of pesticides to exercise control. Snails and centipedes inflict the most damage, whereas snout beetles and termites cause isolated damage only. So far only a few cases of long-horned grasshoppers have been reported.

In all cultivars fertility appears to be very good, with two or more flower clusters per shoot already visible.

Grapevine statistics (SAWIS)

The total surface planted to grapevines in the region has once again decreased by ± 200 ha to a total of 16 370 ha (SAWIS, November 2011).

Currently the cultivar composition in Paarl is approximately 58% red and 42% white. The most planted red cultivar is Cabernet Sauvignon (29%) with Shiraz in second place (23%). In the case of white cultivars Chenin blanc constitutes approximately 45% of the plantings, followed by Chardonnay at 19%, slightly ahead of Sauvignon blanc.

Slowly but surely the old Chenin blanc blocks are being replaced by young Chenin blanc plantings, although the greater majority of new plantings are Shiraz and Pinotage. These cultivars fare very well in the Paarl region with excellent yields and wine quality; Chardonnay en Sauvignon blanc are being planted to a lesser degree.

The total production of wine grapes in the region should decrease slightly because there are still large surfaces planted to old vines (>20 years), which produce increasingly less each season. On the other hand practices are being adopted on a large scale to increase yields in old and young vines. The net effect is also largely dependent on the seasonal climate, which makes forecasts very difficult.

Crop expectations 2013

Even now cold day temperatures persist and the first predictions of warmer day temperatures that will rise close to 30°C are forecast for mid-October. Bud burst therefore took place under abnormally cool conditions, with regular showers.

Climatic conditions during the previous season's flower cluster initiation period were also cool and characterised by almost weekly showers. These conditions were not very conducive therefore to the initiation of flower clusters (2013 crop). Despite these facts many flower clusters are visible on the young shoots of all cultivars. Naturally this is heartening and bolsters expectations for a good crop in 2013 (even bigger than in 2012), but viticulturists are also puzzled by the so-called factors that impact on and determine fertility.

The region's crop is expected to be bigger than that of 2012, mainly as a result of extremely good fertility (number of flower clusters per shoot) as well as good bud burst percentage. The dry summer of 2011/2012 also impacts negatively on the volume of the 2012 wine grape crop. Climatic conditions during the next four to five months will determine the size of the 2013 crop.

Orange River : Henning Burger

Winter conditions (June/July/August)

Day and night temperatures decreased dramatically from the third week of May onwards, with the first signs of frost occurring at the same time. Leaf fall started at the end of May. Good cold units accumulated in June – the total cold units for the Kanoneiland area for June 2012 amounted to 181 units, compared to 130 and 134 respectively in 2011 and 2012. Regular showers prevailed in June and July, with the accompanying high humidity conditions that have proven very beneficial to good budding percentages and yields in the Orange River area. These also had a cooling effect which contributed to the accumulation of cold units. By mid-August 2012 the total cold units for Kanoneiland were 581 compared to 329 for the corresponding period in 2011. Rainfall during the winter period exceeded the long term average.

Spring (September/October)

Bud burst in the early cultivars started at the beginning of September, a week earlier than 2011. Bud burst was remarkably even, with a good percentage in most cultivars. The budding percentage on bearer pruned grapevines was especially good – this can probably be ascribed to the bitterly cold conditions in the area over the critical period from the end of May to mid-June 2012. Fertility is good in most cultivars with both Colombar and Chenin blanc displaying double bunches in the majority of instances. The raisin cultivars also appear to have a better yield than in 2011. Very cold weather prevailed over the weekends of 21 - 23 September and 28 - 30 September 2012. Widespread frost damage occurred due to very low temperatures on Sunday, 30 September 2012. "*Streaky frost*" as it is called hereabouts caused damage to Sultana vineyards in particular and to a lesser degree to wine grapes. Due to the good recovery ability of wine grape blocks damaged by early frost, the loss is currently estimated at 2 000 tons of wine grapes. Temperatures at the moment are average for this time of the year. So far there have been no showers. Vineyards are healthy and no visual signs of any diseases have been remarked. Even considering the frost damage that has been inflicted, it looks as though the crop will be better than in 2011 and 2012.

Grapevine statistics (SAWIS)

Wine grape plantings for 2010 and 2011 exceeded uprootings, but these are expected to be considerably more than the plantings in 2012. The main reason for this is the

burgeoning period for the raisin industry in the Orange River area at present. Producers are planting raisin cultivars such as Merbein at the expense of wine grape cultivars. The wine grape cultivars that are being uprooted are mainly old unproductive cultivars such as Chenel, Raisin blanc, Clairette blanche and older Colombar. Cultivars that are currently making the biggest contribution to plantings in 2012 are Villard blanc and Chenin blanc. The most planted cultivar in 2012 was Villard blanc – mainly for the purposes of juice production. In view of the fact that uprootings exceed plantings, the region will experience a decrease in total receipts of wine grapes in future.

Crop expectations 2013

Good weather conditions during the bunch initiation period last year and the accumulation of good cold units during the winter period, which resulted in even bud burst and good bud burst percentage, may impact positively on crop size. The size of the wine crop, provided no further environmental damage occurs, looks like it may exceed the previous year's crop by 15-20%. Given that last year's crop was small, the said increase appears to be quite feasible. Colombar and Chenin blanc are looking very promising this year. Flowering has not started yet, but slightly higher temperatures during the second half of October may result in good set percentages.

In summary

Region	Crop expectation : Trend based on 2012 crop
Orange River	++
Olifants River	+
Swartland	++
Paarl	+
Stellenbosch	-
Breedekloof	-
Worcester	-
Robertson	-
Klein Karoo	=