



While a health crises sweeps through our countries, the grapes continue to grow and we all keep on keeping on. Therefore it is our pleasure to publish the Grapa Newsletter this week, sharing with our readers a report from TopFruit, the ARRA and Early Sweet agent for Southern Africa, on the 2019/2020 ARRA season in South Africa and Namibia



South Africa

The South African table grape season that started two weeks early this year, is now at the very end and from [TopFruit](#)'s point of view, the season went very well. The average ARRA varieties' grape quality was very good and most arrivals were well received. Given that the average yield of the ARRA™ varieties was very

well regulated, the growers enjoyed good bunch quality and very good berry size, as can be seen in the pictures below.



ARRA Mystic Bloom™ (ARRA 14)



ARRA Sweeties™ (ARRA 15)



ARRA Passion Star™ (ARRA 13) achieved a very impressive size



Arrival of ARRA Sweeties (ARRA 15) to the UK

In the **Limpopo province** in South Africa, the table grape season looked very good for the most part and the growers were very excited about their ARRA varieties. As the season went on, unusually heavy rainfall was a big problematic factor for many of these growers, fortunately, the ARRA varieties are earlier varieties and were not badly affected.



ARRA Mystic Bloom (ARRA 14) thriving in South Africa

The growers in **Western Cape** are becoming aware of the advantages of the ARRA varieties, with large amounts of ARRA Passion Fire (ARRA 29) being ordered for planting. In 2019, ARRA Passion Fire plantations amounted to more than 150 hectares in total, and this number is still growing due to continued ordering and demand to increase plantation.





ARRA Passion Fire (ARRA 29); always a taste for more

The **Hex River region** experienced very heavy of rainfall towards the end of their harvesting season, which had devastating affects on some of the varieties. Luckily, with the resistance of the ARRA varieties, most of which were packed by the time the rain occurred, they were unharmed. Some of the later ARRA Sweeties (ARRA 15) blocks were not harvested by the time of the rainfall, but they were very resistant to the effects of the rain.



Abundant ARRA Sweeties (ARRA 15)

Season summation

The ARRA varieties performed very well under the many different climatic challenges faced throughout the season. The main focus is still on the great fertility that the ARRA varieties have, together with low labour costs. The ever-increasing direct costs of growing grapes in South Africa is forcing the growers to think differently about the varieties they plant and how they go about their farming practices to ensure good profit and investment. The positive outlook for the ARRA programme in South Africa is increasing. As TopFruit's table grape technical field officer, AJ Jansen van Vuuren explains, "I really think that the ARRA varieties have a bright future in South Africa given the key elements of these great varieties".



ARRA season in Namibia

Both the **Orange River** and **Namibia** had good harvests despite Namibia experiencing a heatwave with temperatures going beyond 50°C. However, even under such extreme conditions, the resilient growers still managed to produce ARRA grapes of exceptional quality. Although some yields were down, good berry weight and quality were achieved.





ARRA Sweeties (ARRA 15); impressive production in Namibia

ARRA 33 generates much interest in Southern Africa



The main aims of the ARRA varieties grown commercially in South Africa and Namibia are that the varieties should have low production costs and be easy to produce [Press here to read more.](#)

Meet the team

We are delighted to introduce to our readers AJ Jansen van Vuuren, who in recent times joined the TopFruit team as table grape technical field officer.

AJ holds a Bachelors degree in Viticulture and Agronomy from Stellenbosch University and an Honours degree in Agriculture, with the focus on soil science from the University of Free State. For most of his career AJ has worked in the viticulture industry. Since 2011, he has worked both in the plant improvement and production sides of the industry and was employed as a viticulturist in the Orange River region before his move to TopFruit. We at Grapa are delighted to welcome AJ and wish him a successful career at TopFruit.



Thank you!

The Grapa team would like to take this opportunity to extend our gratitude and appreciation to the ARRA growers and to the Topfruit team for their achievements and continued support of the ARRA programme in South Africa and Namibia.



To all our readers

The global health crises is affecting so many of our lives at present and throughout these challenging weeks and months ahead, we would like to wish all our readers and their loved ones health, peace and security and we look forward to the better days that will surely come.



Thank you for reading