

Press Release:

2018 International Seedless Dried Grape Producing Countries Conference

The International Seedless Dried Grape Producing Countries Conference was recently held in Windsor UK. This was the first visit of this conference to the UK since 2002 and followed on to the SIAL Food Fare in Paris. The conference supported the exchange of information on world production and marketing. Delegations from Australia, Argentina, Chile, South Africa, Turkey, USA as well as marketers from UK and the Netherlands were in attendance.

Dappie Smit of South Africa chaired the conference for the seventh time, while the deputy chairman was Mark King of Australia and Ferdie Botha the secretary.

The Conference considered the world supply and demand position and noted seedless dried grape production from the Sultana / Natural Seedless Raisin varieties have increased over the 2017 crop but is still not at the same level as the 2016 crop. Carryover stocks dropped by 15% due to the short crop in 2017, but it will be possible to supply normal market demands.

The supply of Golden raisins have also returned to the 2016 levels but supply of currants has not turned around, mainly due to the smaller Greek crops, which was again damaged by adverse weather conditions.

The Conference recorded the attached seedless dried grape production estimates.

The Conference heard presentations from each country represented explaining the seasonal outlook and production conditions in each. Presentations were also heard by Simon Melik, Chairman of the NDFTA on the UK trade's requirements for raisins and dried fruit, Andrew Ciclitira, Director of Demos on marketing raisings through written media and Jennette Higgs, Food to Fit, on Research opportunities for raisins and its positive effect on human health. Jennette also alluded to dental health and sugar and pointed out some misconceptions about the intrinsic sugars in raisins and their effect on dental health. She expressed the hope that this association will set the facts straight

It was confirmed that the next conference will be hosted by Australia in the production region of Mildura along the Murray River in 2019 and Mark King was elected chairman and Monty Schutz deputy chairman for the next conference.