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Start to Harvest the 2024 South African Pecan crop

The 2024 SA pecan crop is developing well, and is expected to be 30 550 mt nut in shell. The harvesting is slow to start. However, the winter has been slow in coming. Temperatures experienced in main growing areas are 28-30°C. We need the cold temperature to open the chucks. Actually, we will watch this very carefully, incase we see the start of germination inside the chucks before they burst open caused by the cold weather.

The South African pecan crop is harvested from May through to August. These are our winter months.

Weather reports show the cold will start next week 23 (beginning 2 June). Morning temperature will fall to a little above freezing. 2-4°C. The day temperatures will be up to 20°C. This will be perfect for harvesting to keep the whole process dry.

Food Safety of the pecans Nut in Shell

If we listen to the farmers, they are hearing information from pecan collectors for the Chinese market. There is more critical attention to NIS quality from Chinese NIS buyers this year.

The quality of the pecans starts on the farm. We can see and taste the quality, however, as the Redsun business grows, we need to build our traceability and food safety for pecans

As an example of the practices we see this year,

1. Deliveries are made according to variety, which makes processing more efficient and the appearance of the kernel more homogenous in the box (flavour, colour and shape). This requires closer attention to the locations and timing of collection from the orchards,
2. Spray and fertilization records are now being kept for the orchards,
3. Moisture level and maturity of nut in shell is more closely monitored at farm level, and
4. Deliveries are being made in bins and not bulk bags, which avoids possible premature germination from the farm.

Exports of NIS to China

The South African Pecan Producers Association -SAPPA, expects 90% of the SA 2024 crop to be exported NIS to China. Demand from China remains strong, and prices are supporting the demand. According to the statistics of the INC (Vancouver conference May 2024), 49% of the pecans nut in shell imported by China, originate from South Africa (approximately 21,000mt per year). Redsun believes that the timing of the South African crop in relation the Chinese New Year celebrations at the end of January, is the main reason for the concentration of demand.

Redsun pecan processing plans for 2024 crop.

Redsun remains optimistic that we will buy 1700mt of NIS during the 2024 season. Of this we expect 1000mt will be for cracking. That volume of NIS represents 500mt of kernel. That remains the focus of our attention. Our cracking process is the using the wet process to extract as much as possible kernel as whole halves. That means, we lift the moisture level of the NIS to 11% from the 3% at which it is delivered from the farm. After cracking, the kernel is once again dried to 3,25% which is the maximum moisture level at which Redsun packs the kernel.

The balance of the Redsun’s 2024 700 mt pecan NIS crop will be sold as NIS

1. 100 mt as polished NIS to the European market. This is a very attractive NIS pecan, that is polished with Carnauba wax, a vegetable wax. The pecan NIS is first cleaned to remove the black marks left from the chuck during the growth on the trees. Then the carnauba wax is applied to give it shine as per the photo.



Pecan NIS polished with carnauba wax.

2. 600mt NIS will be sold to China. These pecans are large size NIS, such as jumbo (less than 100 pieces per kg), Over size (100-122 pieces per kg) and Extra large (120-144 pieces per kg). To use these size NIS to crack will result in kernel whole halves bigger than mammoth halves.

