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FURTHER DECREASE IN WINE GRAPE HARVEST

The third crop estimate made by producer cellars and viticulturists in the various regions during the second week of February, shows a decrease of more than 62 000 tons compared to the January estimate. The 2010 crop is currently estimated to amount to 1 243 449 tons – a decrease of 6.5 per cent, in effect 86 908 tons less than the 2009 crop and 182 164 tons less than the 2008 record crop. The 2010 wine crop, including juice and concentrate for non-alcoholic purposes, wine for brandy and distilling wine, is expected to amount to 948,8 million litres calculated at an average recovery of 763 litres per ton of grapes.

With the exception of Orange River, all the other districts are now anticipating decreases compared to the January estimate. Most blocks that have already been harvested – the older vineyards especially – show considerable decreases compared to 2009. Berries are generally smaller and bunches looser than usual. Sunburn, wind and heat damage combined with a shortage of irrigation water and downy mildew outbreaks in some districts have resulted in crop losses.

Winemakers and viticulturists are most satisfied with the quality of the grapes that have been crushed so far. The grapes are healthy with excellent grape flavours and analyses.

The above factors will cause the stock level at producer and private cellars to decrease to an estimated 253,0 million litres on 31 December 2010, compared to 337,2 million litres on 31 December 2009.

For further queries contact Yvette van der Merwe (tel 021-807 5703, fax 021-807 6000, email yvette@sawis.co.za).


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