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SA Olive Awards: the country's finest extra virgin olive oils

South Africa's finest extra virgin olive oils (EVOO) were announced at the 12th annual SA Olive Awards recently held at The Venue at Pearl Mountain, Paarl.

SA Olive chairperson, Nick Wilkinson, congratulated all olive producers on their achievements despite a crippling drought and political uncertainty.

He said that the 2017 harvest was down 35% from 2016. However, current nursery sales indicated increased plantings throughout the country.

"We can look forward to doubling this in the next eight years if the [favourable] weather prevails," he said.

Wilkinson added that international olive oil prices had risen 30% over the past year, and were set to rise higher as drought and high temperatures devastated olive crops in Europe, indicating a possible shortage in 2018.

"The market is good, but it's no time to rest on our laurels in this ever-changing world," he cautioned.

According to Wilkinson, the EU was funding a five-country project that aimed to increase Mediterranean olive oil producers' competitiveness. This project would develop quality control and production techniques to aid producers, while educating consumers about the health benefits of

olive oil. Wilkinson highlighted the importance of polyphenol (antioxidant micronutrients) content, saying that international olive oil buyers wanted confirmation of high polyphenol levels before committing to premium prices. "In South Africa we don't even have a laboratory to analyse this. The world is catching up on us and we don't want to lose out," he said.

Nineteen EVOOs received gold medals in three categories: Delicate, Medium, and Intense style oils. The winners in the Delicate category were: Cederberg Olives Frantoio EVOO, Mount Ceder EVOO, Rio Largo Gold EVOO, and Tokara Mission Premium EVOO.

Top honours in the Medium category went to Adamskloof EVOO, De Rustica Estate Medium EVOO, De Rustica Estate Collection EVOO, Green & Gold EVOO, Kleinbergskloof Olive Estate Blend EVOO, Mardouw EVOO, Olyvenbosch EVOO, Serrado EVOO, and Wildekrans Keerweer EVOO.

The Intense category winners were De Rustica Estate Collection Coratina EVOO, Kransfontein Coratina EVOO, Marbrin Olive Growers Directors' Reserve EVOO, Premium XXV Intense EVOO, Morgenster EVOO, and Andante Intenso EVOO. – Jeandré du Preez



ABOVE: Kedidimetse Rakgoale, national winner of the Top Entrepreneur: Commercial category, receives her award from Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Senzeni Zokwana. COURTESY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES

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2017's top women agricultural entrepreneurs

The 2017 Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries' (DAFF) Female Entrepreneur Awards were recently held in Nelspruit, Mpumalanga, where pro-

winners vied for top honours.

The 2017 national winners were: Zona Nzimande from Eastern Cape in the Best Worker category; Kobani from the Free State in the Subsistence Producer category; Julia Madihlaba of Limpopo in the Top Entrepreneur Smallholder category; Be-

Damons of the Western Cape in the Top Entrepreneur Processing category; Kedidimetse Rakgoale of North West in the Top Entrepreneur Commercial category; and Carmelita Kelly of the Western Cape in the Top Entrepreneur Export Markets category.

Ministerial special awards went to the Western Cape's Berene Damons in the Young Female Entrepreneur category and to Mpumalanga's Bongiwe Nyathi in the Disabled Entrepreneur category. The competition's overall winner was Kedidimetse Rakgoale, who owns Selame Poultry, which produces 2,16 million broilers annually. – Staff reporter

BELOW LEFT: The gold medallists at the 2017 SA Olive Awards: (Back, from left): Jan-Hendrik Marais (Cederberg Olives); Chris van Niekerk (Mardouw Olive Estate); Briony Coetsee (Marbrin Farm); Clive Heymans (Marbrin Farm); and Peter Coetsee (Marbrin Farm). Middle: Joop Steenkamp (De Rustica Estate); Danie Goosen (Wildekrans Wine Estate); Willie Duminy (Porterville Olives); and Sandy Jeffery (Green & Gold). Front: Yvette Jordaan (Mount Ceder Olives); Nico Loubser (Morgenster Estate); Nick Wilkinson (Rio Largo Estate); Gert van Dyk (Tokara); and Dial Steyn (Kransfontein Estate). SUPPLIED