WINE LAW

INFORMATION

13 November 2009
10 of 2009
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Unsubscribe
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1 DEALCOHOLISATION OF WINE
2 USE OF PIMARIZIN

1 DEALCOHOLISATION OF WINE FOR EXPORT TO THE EU

Under the EU's new wine regime the partial dealcoholisation of wine by producers in the EU Member States are now allowed. The European Commission has just confirmed that, despite the provisions of the wine agreement between South Africa and the EU, partial dealcoholisation will also be allowed for our wines destined for export to the EU, under their conditions.

Dealcoholisation, described as "eliminating some of the alcohol (ethanol)", may be done by using physical separation techniques. Only the techniques prescribed in our regulations may be used under the conditions set out therein. Additionally, the following requirements apply for export to the EU:

(a) Reduction of the actual alcoholic strength by volume may not be more than 2 % vol.; and

(b) The actual alcoholic strength by volume of the final product may not be less than 8.5 %.

2 USE OF PIMARIZIN

We have cautioned against the use for export wine of this substance in more than one previous edition of this newsletter. Important new developments are set out in the attached circular of the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

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agriculture,
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Department:
Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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TO ALL PRODUCERS/EXPORTERS OF WINE AND SUPPLIERS OF GRAPE MUST PRODUCTS

PIMARIZIN/NATAMYCIN IN WINE - NOT ALLOWED FOR EXPORT: LIQUOR PRODUCTS ACT, ACT 60 OF 1989

All producers and exporters of wine, including suppliers of grape must products, should note that Natamycin, also known as Pimarizin (listed in Table 6 of the regulations under the Liquor Products Act, Act 60 of 1989, as an allowed additive for the local market) may not be used in wine intended for export to many countries, including the European Union, USA, Argentina, Chile, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

Although Natamycin is used in the food industry as a preservative and is widely used for products such as cheese and sausages in Europe, its use is not permitted in wine. Germany has implemented a method of analysis that can effectively test for trace amounts of Natamycin. Some South African wines have already tested positively for the presence of Natamycin and these wines were blocked in Germany.

Kindly note that the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries has implemented a similar method and is now actively screening all exports for the presence of Natamycin. Should any exports be found to contain this additive, the consignment of wine will be rejected for export. The Department will identify and contact the producers of such wines and will then focus its attention on screening all the wines of that specific producer.

We appeal for your assistance in informing all your suppliers that the use of Natamycin/Pimarizin to these markets and specifically to Europe, is illegal. The use of this product in wine for export can potentially be damaging to the international image of South African wine. The Department also encourages producers to find alternatives to Natamycin, for example Dimethyl-dicarbonate (DMDC), as DMDC is allowed internationally.

Your cooperation and assistance in ensuring compliance is appreciated, especially to uphold the image of the South Africa wine industry.

Kind regards

SIGNED

THE ADMINISTERING OFFICER: ACT 60 OF 1989