



United States Department of Agriculture
National Agricultural Statistics Service



2014 California Raisin Grape Mechanical Harvest Report

Cooperating with the California Department of Food and Agriculture

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RESULTS

Total acreage harvested by mechanical means was 48,265, just over 26 percent of the State's total raisin-type grape acreage. The Overhead Trellis Management System was used on 14,196 bearing acres in 2014, accounting for 8 percent of the total raisin-type grape acreage. Fresno and Madera County growers have 49 and 38 percent of the Overhead Trellis acreage in the State. Kern County growers have 11 percent of the Overhead Trellis acreage. Other mechanical harvest systems include Continuous Tray at 18 percent of the acreage and South Side with less than one half of 1 percent of the raisin-type grape acreage.

Although Fresno County has the most acreage with mechanical harvesting, at 34,005, that acreage only represents 26 percent of the Fresno County raisin-type grape acreage. Kern and Madera County growers harvest 19 and 37 percent of their raisin-type grape acreage by mechanical means, respectively.

By variety, Thompson Seedless grape acreage with mechanical harvesting is 35,900 or 22 percent of the total raisin-type grape acreage. Seventy-four percent of the Fiesta grape acreage is harvested mechanically and 51 percent of the Selma Pete acreage is harvested mechanically.

Most California raisins are produced by sun drying after placing the bunches on paper trays on terraces between vine rows. The Overhead Trellis System has led to increased production of dried-on-the-vine raisins, increased machine harvesting, and decreased hand labor use.

PROCEDURES

The Pacific Regional Office-California of USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service, in cooperation with the California Department of Food and Agriculture, conducts an annual grape acreage survey. The 2014 Grape Acreage Report, published in April, summarized the latest survey results. At the request of the raisin industry, an additional question was added to the grape acreage survey form the past eight years to gather information on raisin-type acreage that is harvested mechanically. In addition to the mechanical harvest data, producers were asked to update acreage by variety and year planted. Growers were initially contacted by telephone. Follow up was done by mail. This report summarizes data for raisin-type grapes grown using mechanical harvest.

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Raisin-Type Grapes: Acreage by County, California, 2014

County	Total Acreage	Mechanical Harvest		Type of Mechanical Harvest		
		Acres	Percent of Total Acreage	Overhead Trellis Acres	Continuous Tray Acres	South Side Trellis Acres
Fresno	130,541	34,005	26	7,024	26,569	1/
Kern	10,448	1,966	19	1,509	1/	1/
Madera	31,144	11,583	37	5,414	5,815	1/
Tulare	10,989	1/	1/	236	1/	1/
Other Counties	2,269	711	31	13	863	1/
Total	185,391	48,265	26	14,196	33,247	822

1/ County level data not published to avoid disclosure.

Raisin-Type Grapes: Acreage by Variety, California, 2014

Variety	Total Acreage	Mechanical Harvest		Type of Mechanical Harvest		
		Acres	Percent of Total Acreage	Overhead Trellis Acres	Continuous Tray Acres	South Side Trellis Acres
Black Corinth	1,720	1/	1/	1/	1/	1/
Fiesta	12,227	9,036	74	5,830	3,056	1/
Selma Pete	4,503	2,314	51	1,284	1,003	1/
Thompson Seedless	165,313	35,900	22	6,708	28,548	645
Other Raisin-Type 2/	1,628	1,015	62	375	640	1/
Total Raisin-Type	185,391	48,265	26	14,196	33,247	822

1/ Included in Other Raisin-Type varieties.

2/ Includes Dovine, Negrita Black, and Sultana varieties.

MECHANICAL HARVEST METHODS

OVERHEAD TRELLIS – Grapes are dried directly on the vine, forming a canopy over the rows. It allows the mechanical grape harvester to get underneath and gather the dried fruit.

SOUTH SIDE TRELLIS – In an east-west row orientation vineyard, an angled cross-arm is added to each trellis stake to support two wires on which fruiting canes are tied. The southern exposure of the fruit facilitates drying. The raisins may be harvested mechanically with a south side harvester.

CONTINUOUS TRAY – Grapes are mechanically harvested and laid out on a continuous (rather than individual) thin sheet of paper where they dry in the sun for two or three weeks.