

South African floods cause over \$230 million damage, crippling citrus and avocado farms

The South African agricultural industry has been **severely impacted by days of torrential rainfall and floods** in the Limpopo and Mpumalanga provinces, in the country's north-east.



Since it started pouring on January 9, precipitation has **exceeded the 100-year flood level** in many areas, and places like Tzaneen, in the north of the country, have received **almost 16 inches of rain** in one week.

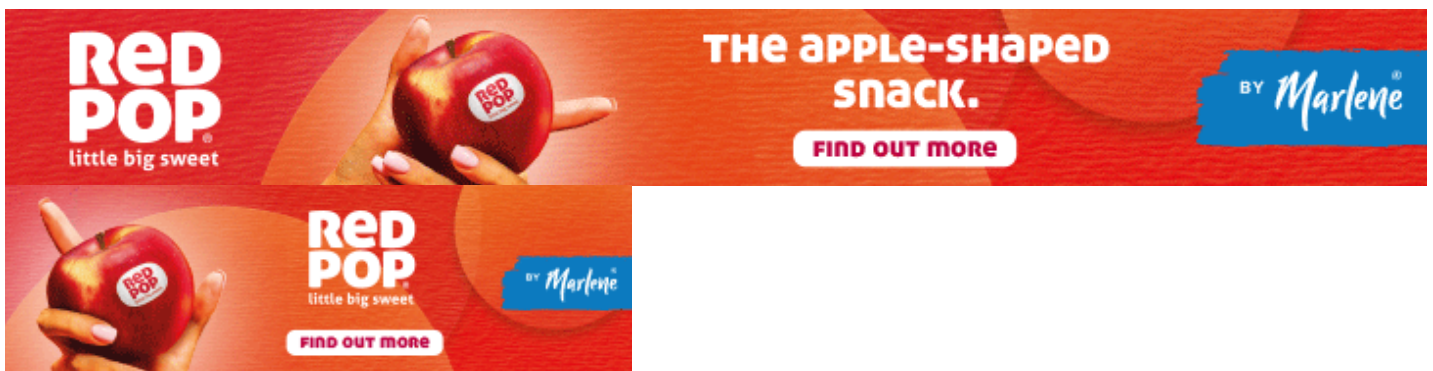
The local government declared a national emergency and reports that **37 people have lost their lives** so far due to the floods. Infrastructure damages are currently estimated at approximately \$237 million.

Floods have South Africa's citrus season on standby

The main affected provinces are **major citrus and avocado production areas**, but other crops also thrive there, including mangoes, papayas, lychees, and even macadamia nuts.

For South African citrus growers, the impact hits particularly hard. The extreme weather comes **just before the start of the harvest**, potentially delaying it and jeopardizing the entire season.

Locals report that once small streams are turning into actual rivers [over 160 feet wide](#). This has greatly damaged connectivity and infrastructure, isolating millions of people in the north of the country. For the citrus industry, this has meant **it's currently practically impossible for farmworkers to reach groves**, a situation with no end in sight, as the downpour continues even after the government warning advisory was [lowered from 10 to 5](#).



Likewise, South African news outlet Farmer's Weekly reports that **some waterlogged orchards are totally inaccessible**. The site says the situation is currently preventing growers from treating trees for black spot because the equipment cannot reach the groves. Locals even fear that water pressure will collapse the walls of nearby dams.

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa visited the affected areas and noted **the role climate change is playing** in these kinds of disasters and weather patterns.

Accuweather forecasts [clear skies and high temperatures](#) for northeastern South Africa, with severe thunderstorms expected for Thursday.

**Main image courtesy of the [Government of The Netherlands](#).*

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