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Citrus exports from flooded areas to be at least 5% lower – CGA

4TH JUNE 2026 BY: SCHALK BURGER - CREAMER MEDIA SENIOR DEPUTY EDITOR



Initial assessments of flood-impacted citrus-growing areas indicate that the recent severe weather will cause a

decrease of at least 5% in expected export estimates from flood-damaged areas, says industry organisation the Citrus Growers' Association of Southern Africa (CGA).

The areas affected are Patensie, in the Eastern Cape, and Citrusdal and Boland, in the Western Cape.

CGA states that it is difficult to establish more precise figures on the impact of the flooding at this time, as a limited number of growers have still not regained access to their orchards to assess the

damage, and these preliminary damage estimates will likely increase over time.

Additionally, damage in the form of fruit dropping from trees can have a delayed impact over time that cannot be immediately assessed, the organisation points out.

Further, CGA says the mandarin crop has been impacted the most by the floods, because the country's main mandarin-production regions were affected, and harvesting activities were interrupted at a critical early stage of the mandarin season.

The most severe impact from the floods was felt in the Kouga municipality, in the Eastern Cape, particularly in the Gamtoos Valley around Patensie. Citrus orchards have been flooded, some to such an extent that topsoil has been washed away, trees uprooted and roads destroyed.

Additionally, in the Western Cape, areas including Citrusdal and the Boland also experienced intense rainfall. While water levels in Citrusdal were higher than during the two previous flood events in 2023 and 2024, the overall damage appears less severe, with key access routes remaining operational.

This is largely owing to the infrastructure improvement and river works implemented by the provincial government over the past two years.

These efforts have saved lives and safeguarded a citrus export season for the Oliphant's River Valley, the CGA emphasises.

Meanwhile, the majority of affected farms have worked hard to recover from flood-related delays and, while export volumes have

been revised downward, the integrity and reliability of supply to international markets remains intact.

In general, orchards situated close to rivers bore the brunt of the flooding, while the majority of orchards received rainfall without damage and are able to supply high-quality fruit, the organisation says.

“Over the past weeks, many farming communities across these regions have been dealing with both immediate losses and the longer-term implications of infrastructure damage,” says CGA CEO **Dr Boitshoko Ntshabele**.

The timing of the rain was particularly challenging, as the citrus season was beginning to gain momentum. While it remains too early to exactly quantify the cost of the floods, it is clear that orchards, farm structures and road infrastructure have been affected, mostly around Patensie, he highlights.

Meanwhile, the CGA welcomed the May declaration of a national state of disaster.

It calls for fellow agriculture associations, such as South African Table Grape Industry, to advocate for provincial and national government authorities to provide increased disaster relief and recovery support to producers and rural communities.

The extreme weather challenges come at a difficult time for growers who are navigating global disruptions triggered by the war in the Middle East. Rising input costs, especially diesel and fertiliser, as well as significantly higher shipping costs, are exerting pressure on the citrus industry.

“What had been shaping up as a strong season now requires a high degree of adaptability from producers and exporters alike,” says

Phone: +27 (0)11 622 3744

Email: newsdesk@engineeringnews.co.za

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