

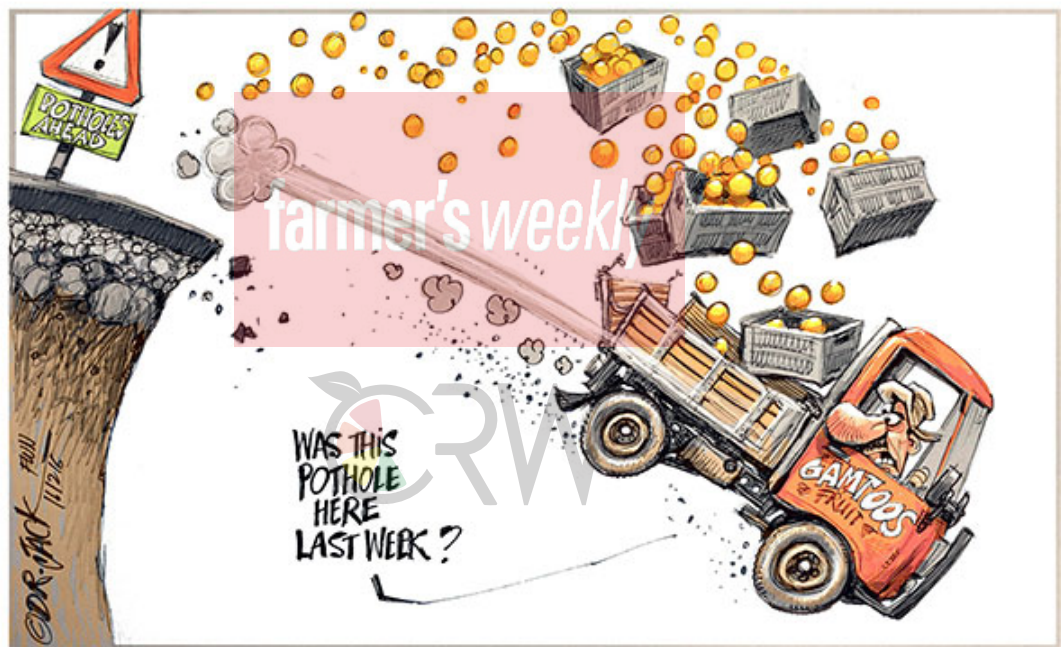


News Opinion Business Animals Crops Technology Farm Basics

Lifestyle Events

Appalling condition of roads in Eastern Cape

The Eastern Cape's Department of Roads and Public Works has not performed any road maintenance in the Gamtoos Valley, one of the prime vegetable- and citrus producing areas in the Eastern Cape, for more than a year.



The Department of Roads and Public Works has not performed any road maintenance in the Gamtoos Valley, one of the prime vegetable and citrus producing areas in the Eastern Cape, for more than a year. Baviaanskloof, easily navigable by normal vehicles a few years ago, is now a significant test for 4x4 vehicles.

Photo: Dr Jack

By Lourens Schoeman
December 28, 2016 11:00 am

According to organised agriculture in the region, gravel roads were in such a parlous condition that it was risky to use cars on them, while large potholes in tarred roads could cause considerable damage to vehicles, or even serious accidents.

Petrus du Preez, chairperson of the Gamtoos Agricultural Association, said that the patchwork carried out at some points on the R331, the region's main road, could not handle the growing load volumes.

"Because of this critical situation, Gamtoos citrus producers are currently doing a long-term evaluation so that we can approach the powers-that-be on a higher level than provincial government with the necessary statistics to negotiate for what is our constitutional right," said Du Preez.

"Alternatives, such as the currently unused railway line, form part of our planned negotiations. We should be ready with enough data to get the ball rolling."

One of the disgruntled farmers, Danie Malan of Tierhok Farm in the Patensie district, told *Farmer's Weekly* that maintenance work was being carried out ad hoc by only one team comprising a driver and two workers.

"When the team has to fill up a pothole they actually have to apply for material to carry out the work.

"The provincial department should listen to their road engineers who carry out requirement evaluations and act accordingly. Roads have deteriorated to such an extent that you're scared to use a normal car on it.

Baviaanskloof, which a few years ago could be negotiated with normal vehicles, has now become a huge test for 4x4 vehicles," Malan said.

Mpumzi Zuzile, spokesperson for the provincial Roads and Public Works Department in the Eastern Cape, assured motorists that the department was doing its utmost to eradicate the backlog for maintenance of roads in the area.

"The province needs R102 billion to maintain roads in the province, but we received only R2 billion this financial year," said Zuzile. "Luckily, Sanral chipped in with R5 billion to assist with the maintenance of roads in the province."

More From Our Archives



The effects of poor rural road conditions on produce

Highlighting the effects of rural road conditions on agricultural cargo is one way of enhancing the visibility of rural road research, according to Prof Wynand...



Western Cape toll roads shelved for now

The Western Cape High Court has ruled in favour of the City of Cape Town and Sanral cannot go ahead with the Winelands Tolling Projects, ...

More tolls for Limpopo on the cards

Farmers will have to brace themselves for another increase in transport costs if more toll gates for Limpopo are approved.