

South Africa launches website for improved CBS management

The South African citrus industry has launched a website that gives information on the risk of Citrus Black Spot (CBS) infection for each citrus growing region on a daily basis, in order to reduce



occurrences of the disease.

The [CRI-PhytRisk](#) website was developed by Citrus Research International and went live late last year.

The creators highlighted the system was still in the development stages and would require further improvements, but growers were being invited to use it and provide feedback.

The research project was funded jointly by CRI and the Department of Science and Technology.

Along with providing daily regional CBS infection risk information, CRI-PhytRisk informs users of the suitability of fungicide spray conditions based on expected weather conditions.

A document authored by Mareli Kellerman and Paul Fourie from the CRI said the website aimed to answer questions including 'were weather conditions suitable for CBS infection?', 'when will fungicide application be most effective for CBS control and should I alter my spray programme based on the CBS risk?', and 'when will weather conditions be suitable for spraying?'

The website uses weather data input from *yr.no* to calculate the CBS risk and 'good-to-spray' conditions for the current day, as well as a six-day forecast.

"Please note that CRI-PhytRisk is still in a development and validation phase and improvements and validation of the CBS models are continuously being conducted," the document said.

"The CRI PhytRisk website and services are made publically available at this stage to encourage use and feedback from stakeholders, but CRI cannot be held liable for any damage resulting from use of CRI-PhytRisk."

The next phase of CRI-PhytRisk includes building a smartphone app, and enabling users with weather stations to use their own weather data, as well as the ability to log spray data per orchard.

CRI-PhytRisk will be linked with the PhytClean platform in order to keep spray and CBS risk records that may be needed by authorities to determine export eligibility.

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