

Trading and transport permits introduced to combat fruit fly outbreak

20 Feb 2018 - by Staff reporter



The Oriental fruit fly.

The Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (Daff) has issued a directive to all traders and transporters of fruit and vegetables from areas infested by the Oriental fruit fly (OFF) demanding a removal permit for fruit being transported to non-infested areas.

According to the directive, a removal permit or a copy of a valid removal permit is required if fruit from infested areas – Limpopo, Mpumalanga, North West, Gauteng and some parts of KwaZulu Natal – is removed or destined to be sold in the OFF pest-free areas that include the Western Cape, Eastern Cape, Free State and parts of KwaZulu Natal.

This follows confirmation that the OFF has been detected in the in the Grabouw region in the Western Cape.

Since the OFF was first detected on January 31, 2018, packing and processing facilities of host material have been placed under quarantine and eradication initiated in a 25sq

km area surrounding the detection point.

Growers within the eradication area now have to apply for permits to remove produce for packing or to move produce outside the area subject to phytosanitary conditions.

The commercial fruits at threat include mango, guava, citrus, papaya, apple, pear, apricot, peach, pear, cherry, grapes, passion fruit, pepper, tomato and cucurbits.

According to Daff, this pest could result in food insecurity, yield reduction, job losses, market restrictions and high production and post-harvest costs, if not effectively controlled.

As part of the official control mechanism, farmers are reminded not to remove fruit from quarantine areas to non-quarantine areas without first receiving a removal permit obtainable from Daff.

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