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Northern Cape gets Oriental fruit fly 'all clear'

07 Jan 2020



The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development has confirmed the successful eradication of the invasive fruit fly species Oriental fruit fly in the Pixley ka Seme and ZF Mgcawu district municipalities in the Northern Cape province.

The department said that eradication, which included the application of protein bait sprays, deployment of male annihilation blocks and strict field sanitation within the quarantined areas, had been successfully conducted.

With citrus and grapes being the main fruit produced in the area, the detections posed a serious threat to the production of these fruit crops. Food insecurity, yield reduction, job losses, market restrictions, high production and post-harvest costs were amongst the many concerns raised by the department.

An Exotic Fruit Fly Surveillance Programme has since been established. "It is essential to ensure that pest-free areas are maintained. Monitoring of the fruit fly population levels remains critical and growers must implement a monitoring programme for early detection or to ensure measures are implemented in time," said the department. – Zoë van Rooyen

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