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Citrus growers concerned over impact of Eloise on crops

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Citrus growers in the north of South Africa, Zimbabwe and eSwatini have expressed concern about the possibility of destructive downpours in the wake of Cyclone Eloise.

“While all are keen to get more water into their systems, the associated winds could cause considerable fruit drop as the fruit is still small,” says Citrus Growers’ Association CEO Justin Chadwick.

If growers had one wish it would be that the rain falls in exactly the right places and without destruction. “This is particularly true for those in Patensie where the Kouga dam stands at a mere 8.8%, and the Tzaneen dam catchment area where the dam is only at 21.7%. Other dams below 50% are Katrivier dam (48.9%) and Waterdown dam (19.2%) in the Eastern Cape Midlands, and Kwená dam on the Crocodile River in Mpumalanga (28%). These dam levels were as recorded on 18/1/21. Earlier in the year, good rains in other parts of the country have kept dams relatively full.”

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