

Full scope of Western Cape flood damage still unknown

By [Fred Meintjes](#) | 18 July 2023

South Africa's Citrus Growers' Association (CGA) asks for swift disaster declaration to help Western Cape citrus growers after floods

The Citrus Growers' Association of South Africa (CGA) has asked the country's National Disaster Management Centre to act with urgency and declare the recent floods in the Western Cape a provincial disaster.

"We agree with the Western Cape Department of Agriculture that losses of more than R1bn in the region are "a more credible, albeit conservative estimate" of the damage," said Justin Chadwick, chief executive of the CGA.

"The full scope of all losses is, of course, not yet known," he continued. "Damage to riverbanks, irrigation equipment, private roads, vineyards, and fruit orchards was extensive. Citrus growers in three district municipalities were affected by the severe rains.

"Especially hard hit was the Cederberg Local Municipality, home to many citrus growers," Chadwick noted.

"The CGA calculates that damages in the Citrusdal Valley alone are R55,000 per hectare of citrus. The flood thus caused a total estimated damage of nearly R500m to growers in that specific valley.

"Luckily, close to 60 per cent of the early cultivars were already harvested when the worst rain hit," he said.

Initially the floods caused a two-week delay in the harvesting and shipping of citrus fruit from the region.

"Due to the tireless efforts of farmers and farm workers, they have now caught up with the schedule of the export season," Chadwick explained. "However, the Citrusdal area estimates close to a 20 per cent loss of early cultivar crops."

The CGA said the citrus industry was an important economic contributor in the Western Cape.

“It is more than 20m cartons of citrus every season,” he said. “It is the CGA’s hope that the floods are declared a provincial disaster as soon as possible and that funds will be speedily channelled towards the repair or replacement of affected infrastructure.

“It is important that the contribution citrus makes to the South African economy continues without any hindrance.”

EUROFRUIT

