

Rain in Cape region will have little impact on season

By [Fred Meintjes](#) | 28 September 2023

While some sectors of the Western Cape's farming economy have suffered severe damage from recent storms, there will be little impact on fruit crops

While some parts of the Western Cape fresh produce community are counting the cost of last weekend's heavy and unusual rain and storms, the table grape and stonefruit sectors have said there will probably not be much damage to the coming harvest.

"It is very early in our season," said Anton Viljoen, chairperson of industry body SATI and leading table grape farmer in the Hex River Valley.

"Despite the unusual rain this weekend, we will probably not have to adjust our prospects for the season," he explained. "Overall, we expect very much the same volume as last year when around 72m cartons were exported."

Western Cape Government sources said initial calculations pointed to damage worth around R150m in the vine and citrus sectors.

Viljoen said it was mainly wine growers who had been affected in low lying areas. "Here in the Hex River Valley, we deal mainly with road repairs and fixing fences which have been damaged."

Stonefruit sources in the Cape region said the harvest was very much at the beginning and so far, exported peaches had mainly been packed in the northern regions of the country.

Along with blueberry exporters, stonefruit growers are now mostly hoping for sunshine and warmer weather.

This is also the case in the apple and pear industry where most orchards will blossom in October. Peak exports of blueberries are expected over the next two months.

The Cape citrus harvest is just about over, and the weekend's rains will have had little impact on the season's crop.



Image: Adobe Stock

EUROFRUIT by industry body the Citrus Growers' Association indicated that the export crop would be in line with the season's first estimate of 165.6m cartons, even with South Africa ending its shipments to the EU earlier than expected.

Western Cape citrus growers are also now in their final sales month in the US, with stock expected to be cleared before the end of October.

Apple exports will continue for some time, but volumes are also comparing favourably with last year.

Up to week 34 the total export figure was 2 per cent up on last year's volumes, but pear exports were down 7 per cent.

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