

WCDoA allocates R14.9m to Citrusdal for flood damage mitigation

Dr Ivan Meyer, Western Cape Minister of Agriculture, Economic Development and Tourism, recently presented R14.98m to the Citrusdal Water Users Association. The funds will mitigate future flood damage to the Upper Oliphants River catchment area.



Front row: L-R - Jannie Toerien - (Citrusdal Water Users Association); Dr Mogale Sebopetsa (Head of Department: WC DoA); Stefan Theron (Citrusdal Water Users Association)

Accompanied by Dr Ruben Richards, Executive Mayor of Citrusdal, and Boffie Strydom, Executive Mayor of the West Coast District Municipality, Minister Meyer was thanked by local officials for the Western Cape Government's support in addressing flood damage to agriculture in the region.

Minister Meyer said the 2023 and 2024 floods significantly affected farmland's ecological infrastructure.

Minister Meyer said, "The flood resulted in the agricultural sector requiring significant repairs, including removing debris and sediment build-up over approximately 60 kilometres along the main stem of the Olifants River and its apocopated tributary."

Focus on water security, adaptation

"We must protect the water security of the region, particularly the agricultural industries and livelihoods that depend on it," added the Minister.

Western Cape Government Head of Agriculture, Dr Mogale Sebopetsa, highlighted that partnership and collaboration with the citrus farmers, businesses, municipalities and water user associations is crucial to dealing with more frequent extreme weather patterns due to climate change.

Dr Sebopetsa said, "Our focus is also to care for the environment and the local communities affected by the recent floods," adding, "The funding is in line with the value of responsiveness of the Western Cape Government."



Agreement signed.

Thanking the Western Cape Department of Agriculture, Stefan Theron of the Citrusdal Waters Users Association said that they “ have been through a rough time over the last couple of months,” adding that it is “significant to note the impact the floods and the damage to the roads have on people’s lives and their access to food and cash.”

“The R14.98m donation will enable us to reinstate drainage along the river, remove sediment and debris islands that can block or divert river flow and reinstate access along the river where roads, cultivated fields, orchards, and infrastructure have washed away.”

Minister Meyer said, “While we need a permanent solution to the road infrastructure at the entrance/exit to Citrusdal, it is also essential that, as the agricultural sector, we adapt to climate change to repair our agricultural infrastructure in a way that is resilient and able to withstand more unpredictable weather.”

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