

Citrus growers in South Africa seek support after floods

The Citrus Growers' Association of Southern Africa (CGA) has reached out to the Western Cape's Agriculture Minister, Dr Ivan Meyer, seeking aid for Citrusdal's farming communities following the second major flood in two years, which also marks the third instance of the town being isolated due to flood-induced road damages. The region is grappling with shortages of essential goods amidst these challenges.

Gerrit van der Merwe, CGA chairperson and local citrus grower, reported that the recent floods have inflicted more damage than those in 2023, with last year's damages to citrus growers in the valley surpassing R430 million. In response to the crisis, the provincial government has declared a state of disaster and approached the National Disaster Management Centre for support.

The CGA has requested prioritization for Citrusdal's citrus growers and farm workers, emphasizing the citrus industry's central role in the community and its contribution to employment and economic development. The association also highlighted the potential of a private bridge at Mouton Citrus to restore town connectivity, albeit with concerns over liability and infrastructure wear.

The timing of the floods coincides with the peak of the export season, affecting the transportation of citrus, particularly oranges, to the Port of Cape Town. The CGA underlined the industry's significant role in the Western Cape's economy, with annual exports exceeding 20 million 15 kg cartons. The association advocates for enhanced infrastructure and emergency management to mitigate future flood impacts, acknowledging the provincial department's efforts in extending river protection works.

Source: proagri.co.za (<https://proagri.co.za/citrusdal-agricultural-community-faces-serious-hardships-and-requires-immediate-access-to-funds-and-support/>)

Publication date: Thu 18 Jul 2024

