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South Africa warns fruit farmers against moving plants amid bud rot discovery

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Officials in South Africa, the world's biggest exporter of citrus after Spain, discovered bud rot in commercial papaya orchards in two provinces and warned farmers to exercise caution when moving plants to stop the spread.

The agriculture department reported that it found the pathogen that's also known as grey mould and is capable of destroying thousands of hectares of various species including pineapple and citrus, in both the northernmost Limpopo and Mpumalanga provinces.

It has started a delimiting survey in all production areas to determine the extent and spread of the pest in the country and has set up phytosanitary measures to restrict the movement of host material from infested areas, the department said in a statement Wednesday.

"Farmers and community members are encouraged to practice effective cultural control," it said. Officials also urged international travellers to avoid illegally importing agricultural

commodities because this may introduce “new pests and diseases that are expensive and difficult to manage.” 🇿🇦

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