

2025/2026 SEASON UPDATE FOR DRIED FRUIT PRODUCERS

CERES

Apricots

- Harvest finished about a week earlier than normal.
- Crop lighter than usual but fruit quality very good.

Peaches

- Elberta peach season has just started and fruit quality is good.

Prunes

- Average crop. Fruit are smaller, but excellent quality.
- Season came early due to warm, dry conditions.

Pears

- Early cultivars matured about a week earlier than normal.
- Mid-season and later cultivars developing on schedule.

General / Climate

- Growing conditions are good with no extreme heatwaves. Dry weather with no cold fronts or rain.

PRINCE ALFRED
HAMLET

Apricots

- Average crop. Fruit quality good. Size is a challenge in some areas.

Peaches

- Large crop for both clingstone and Elberta peaches. Sufficient supply to meet current demand.

Pears

- Average crop, but supply is higher than demand as a result of canning quotas.

General / Climate

- All fruit 7–10 days earlier than last season due to warm weather.
- Water shortages in some areas.
- Drying season progressing well under warm, dry conditions.

KLEIN KAROO

Apricots

- Last year's apricot crop was very large, while this season has seen more variable results across regions. Vleiland crops were slightly below average, Barrydale and Montagu delivered average crops, and Ladismith experienced smaller-than-average fruit due to early ripening, drought, heat, wind, and very dry conditions.
- Fruit size was a widespread challenge, particularly in older orchards, with the season being short and fruit ripening 5–10 days earlier than normal.
- Fruit quality good (sugars, colour, firm fruit) and drying ratios are favourable.

Pears

- Large crop but smaller fruit due to warmer weather.

General / Climate

- Very dry conditions; low irrigation dam levels in Ladismith, closer to normal in Barrydale & Montagu.
- Dry weather good for drying, though wind accelerates drying and dust can cause foreign material issues.

CITRUSDAL

Apricots

- Full crops and drying almost complete. Season ended earlier than last year.
- Ripening was uneven and fruit size variable, generally smaller.
- Fruit quality good with strong keeping ability.

Peaches

- Elberta peach trees are full with good quality fruit, although ripening happens faster than normal. The drying ratios are good. Clingstone peach trees are also full and the drying ratio is better than normal which confirms good quality.

Pears

- Large crop but it is a challenge to get good fruit size.

General / Climate

- Very dry weather, but enough water for irrigation; dry conditions favourable for drying.
- Trees under pressure from heat and heavy crop loads.

MARKET OVERVIEW

Apricots

- As a result of a smaller harvest and last year's crop failure in Turkey, apricots are currently in short supply.

Peaches

- Additional clingstone peaches available for drying due to canning quotas. Strong demand for Elberta peaches. Market for dried clingstone peaches are limited.

Prunes

- Driers are only interested in buying large and extra-large fruit and even the prices for these fruits are under pressure. To make economic sense producers are forced to pursue opportunities in the fresh market.

Pears

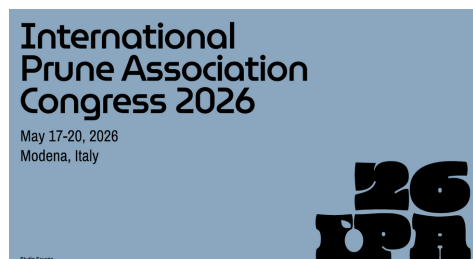
- Carry-over stocks significant with limited quotas available.
- Additional fruit available for drying due to canning quotas.
- Uncertainty about how bigger driers will manage stock levels which might influence selling prices.
- Marketing is also constrained by EU low-sulphur requirements.

Overall

- Export competitiveness continues to be affected by a stronger Rand and a weaker US dollar, while US tariff structures place pressure on returns in certain markets. Despite these challenges, demand for high-quality South African dried fruit remains steady in key markets.

IPA CONGRESS 2026

Prune producers are invited to attend the IPA Congress 2026. Click images below for more information. **Deadline for registrations are 13 Feb 2026.**



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We wish all Dried Tree Fruit Producers favourable conditions for the last half of the season.

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