

*Statement by Hortgro  
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## Severe weather: More good than bad

Western Cape deciduous fruit farmers were not immune to the severe weather conditions over the past week, but the consensus is that at an industry level, the rain has done more good than bad. It is noted though that some individual farmers were significantly impacted.

On Sunday, the South African Weather Service (SAWS) issued a level five weather alert for hail and thunderstorms. The SAWS warned that damage to infrastructure, settlements, property, vehicles, communication disruption and loss of agricultural production is possible.

The reports of flooding, wind and hail have had a marginal impact on the stone fruit industry and the consensus on farms in the major producing areas is that the rain was a blessing in disguise given the challenges with loadshedding and the impact on irrigation scheduling.

There were some incidences of hail and wind damage reported, however these were localized and will not materially influence the stone fruit export volumes at this stage. No infrastructure damage was reported. Harvesting and subsequent packing of fruit were affected and postponed for two days to allow the fruit to sufficiently dry off and avoid quality issues as result of the rain.

Pome fruit crops have been negatively impacted by hail during recent weather events (two weeks ago and on Monday). The areas affected are in the Ceres (Witzenberg and Koue-Bokkeveld) and Grabouw regions. The hail was localized to certain areas. Early indications at this stage are that the hail in the Witzenberg earlier in the season and the more recent hail impacted between 100,000 tons to 120,000 tons of fresh apples and pears. Most of this fruit will be channeled to juicing. At this stage, weather permitting, we are still anticipating a decent pome fruit export crop.

The situation is being monitored closely as additional severe weather alerts were issued for later this week and possibly over the weekend.

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