

Avocado farms 'partially' hit by cold spell

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Subtropical Fruits Growers Association (SFGA) said on Wednesday, 14 July 2010, that the total damage estimate to avocado crops as a result of the current bad winter spell is "negligible", and will therefore not drive up prices at this stage.



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SFGA CEO Derek Donkin told *I-Net Bridge* that the total production lost is about 5% or 2,000 tons.

"The impact on individual producers was felt differently, with low lying farming areas getting hit harder than others," he said. The affected areas are Tzaneen in Limpopo, Nelspruit in Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal.

Donkin said the association anticipates that it will export between 42,000 and 44,000 tons of avocados this season, which kicked off in March and ends in October. Its exports markets are the European Union and UK.

Local consumption accounts for 35,000 tons.

Dawie Maree, an agricultural economist at Agri SA, said wheat plantations were not yet affected by the frost. The plantations are located mainly in the Western Cape and Free State.

Other affected areas

Meanwhile, the Tomato Producers Organisation (TPO) said on Tuesday that it was unlikely that South Africa will encounter tomato supply shortages due to frost that ruined crops on some tomato farms.

TPO CEO Phillip van Zyl told *I-Net Bridge* that the total damage estimate to tomato producers is between 5% and 10%.

"We are not anticipating any major disruptions to normal supply of tomatoes in the country because the total damage to crops so far is between 5% and 10% in lost production, and the damage was limited in certain areas in the country," Van Zyl said.

The tomato production is mainly concentrated in the lowveld areas of Mpumalanga and Limpopo. The harvest season is from June to December.

The affected areas include the western parts of Limpopo, Northern Cape's Gariep River, Western Cape and Eastern Cape.

The Citrus Growers Association of Southern Africa said the association has so far received one report of damage among its 1,400 members.

But industry affairs manager Paul Hardman said the damage was less than 1% as a proportion of the entire citrus crop.

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