

ARC aims to free Southern Africa from the fruit fly

Spring day marks the beginning of the F3 Fruit Fly Free project. This project aims to establish and maintain fruit production areas free or under low prevalence of this pest in Southern Africa. The project is coordinated by the Agricultural Research Council (ARC).



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One of the primary objectives of the project is to develop a regionally harmonised framework for the development and implementation of recognised pest-free areas (PFA) and areas of low pest prevalence (ALPP) for regulated pests of commercial fruit commodities in Southern Africa (South Africa and Mozambique). The project follows the directives of relevant international standards for phytosanitary measures (ISPMs) as approved by the International Plant Protection Convention.

Collaborative effort between research institutions

Dr Tertia Grove, a senior researcher at the tropical and subtropical crops division, explains the ARC's role in the project. "The ARC has been appointed co-ordinator of this significant project because of its capacity build over 100 years as well as strong relations with other research partners globally."

The project is funded by the World Trade Organization (WTO) Standards and Trade Development Facility. This facility supports countries in building capacity to implement international sanitary and phytosanitary standards, guidelines and recommendations.

The project is a collaboration between various research institutions and government departments. Other partners involved in the project include the Departments of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development and its Mozambican counterpart, Citrus Research International, Stellenbosch University, Eduardo Mondlane University (Mozambique) and the Royal Museum for Central Africa (Belgium).

The targeted fruit flies

The project will run for three consecutive years. The project targets the Oriental (*Bactrocera dorsalis*), the Mediterranean (*Ceratitis capitata*) and the melon fruit fly (*Zeugodacus cucurbitae*).

Other objectives of the project include:

- Established PFA areas in South Africa and Mozambique for target fruit fly species.
- Scientific evidence for low levels of specified fruit fly prevalence for target fruit fly pests.
- Established ALPP areas in South Africa and Mozambique for target fruit fly species.
- Operational database platform for determination of fruit fly status in different regions in South Africa and Mozambique.
- Identification protocol and service for rapid and unambiguous recognition of target fruit fly pests and related taxa.
- Financial model for maintenance of PFA and ALPP for target fruit fly pests.

"Through various research and development programmes over the years, the ARC has been instrumental in improving South Africa's agricultural productivity and global competitiveness while increasing the nation's food security, reducing hunger and improving food and nutrition," says ARC CEO, Dr Shadrack Moephuli.

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