

W Cape agriculture infrastructure damage estimated at R1bn

Following the recent severe floods, the Western Cape Department of Agriculture (WCDoA) on Thursday released an updated assessment of the estimated financial cost of the damage.



Image source: ammentorp – [123RF.com](https://www.123RF.com)

A rapid assessment conducted during the period 26-30 June 2023 confirmed extensive damage to riverbanks, irrigation equipment, private roads and sediment over vineyards and fruit orchards.

According to WCDoA, the assessment considered damage to primary agriculture sites on the West Coast, Cape Winelands and the Overberg.

The heavy rains last month caused huge damage to roads and infrastructure in the province, also claiming two lives.

The provincial department said the damage is estimated to be R7.7m for irrigation, R1.4m for fencing, R1.4m, R278m for crop losses and R18.7m for seasonal workers' loss of income.

Meanwhile, the WCDoA said it will cost a tune of R748m to rehabilitate rivers, riparian zones, vineyards and orchards due to large volumes of sediment removed upstream and deposited downstream in rivers, riverbanks, vineyards and orchards.

In addition, the department is expected to spend about R120,000 for the cost of clearing a weir to provide drinking water to 400 people.

The department said the estimates do not consider potential losses experienced along the agriculture value chain nor provide insight into the impact on future exports.

“Armed with a more credible, albeit conservative estimate, officials will, together with the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, approach the National Disaster Management Centre with the aim of having the flood-damaged areas declared a disaster and unlocking the relevant funding and support that could be provided.”

In the interim, the WCDoA will ensure that affected producers can access the best technical information through its extension and advisory services.

In addition, the department will also extend its current river protection works programme to flood-affected river systems as this will mitigate the impact of future flooding.

“The WCDoA will also reprioritise existing allocations, as well as approach its national sector department and the National Disaster Management Centre, via the Provincial Disaster Management Centre, to cover the costs of river protection works.”

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