

Navel supplies for South African retail under pressure

Current availability of late mandarins unaffected by Cape floods

Availability of citrus for South African consumers has been affected by severe flooding in Citrusdal, where harvesting had to be suspended.

According to the South African Weather Service, the area had received 151.9mm of rain over ten days, wrecking the main entrance road into town and flooding orchards.

The local community was quick to organise reconstruction efforts themselves as soon as the skies cleared, but the long term impact on orchards along the river could be profound.

Retailers are reporting difficulty in keeping the shelves stocked with citrus from the town, one of South Africa's major citrus-producing areas.

"We're desperate for orange pockets out of Citrusdal," says a buyer at one of South Africa's major retailers, remarking that this area grows the tastiest oranges she has ever tasted.

Says the chief citrus buyer at another retailer: "Last week we had enough stock this side which kept us going for a few more days. This week is a different story, but we do have supply from the Robertson area."

Robertson, which has seen robust soft citrus expansion over the past decade lies 200km southeast of Citrusdal.

Fortuitously for the late mandarin category, large volumes of South Africa's late mandarins are currently packed in Limpopo and Mpumalanga provinces until mid-August, when it switches to the Western Cape.



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