

An "unprecedented catastrophe": Spanish crops destroyed covering more than 300,000ha

The agricultural losses from what is considered to be the worst storm to hit eastern Spain in more than a century are expected to top €100 million in the region of Valencia alone.

Much of the country's east coast was hit by a cold front - named Dana - last week that brought with it torrential rain and heavy flooding, causing at least five deaths.

National farming organization ASAJA says that more than 300,000 hectares of farmland have been ruined.

Valencian farming body AVA-ASAJA said that 90% of the regional damages were in the Alicante area. As well as damage to crops, a large amount of infrastructure and farming equipment was also lost.

"The most affected crops are citrus - mainly located in the south of Alicante - for which the damage estimates are around €60m due to farms being flooded," AVA-ASAJA said. "The surface area of citrus that has been affected to some degree is at least 40% of the harvest covering 20,000 hectares."

Table grape and wine grape growers are expected to have incurred damages of more than €22m, mostly caused by heavy rains. Meanwhile, vegetables - which in many cases had been recently planted - have been wiped out in an area covering 6,000 hectares, it said.

Farming association ASAJA Alicante says that the situation there is an "unprecedented catastrophe", with crops lost over more than 150,000 hectares.

It said that 100% of vegetables including potatoes, broccoli and carrots in the areas of Vega Baja and Villena have been destroyed.



It is assessing the damage to citrus, which is widely planted in the area. Many farms remain waterlogged and it is unlikely that farmers will be able to access them until later this week.

Further south in Murcia, there has also been extensive damage.

"It is still too early to know the extent of the losses, but it is clear that the water has been very bad for crops such as vegetables, table grapes and citrus," said Alfonso Gálvez of ASAJA-Murcia. "Many packhouses used for export are flooded and the losses will be substantial."

Avocado and mango production have also been damaged in Malaga and Granada, largely due to strong winds.

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