



Chile: Weather-related fruit losses pegged at \$150M

Chile's Fedefruta has estimated that losses stemming from last weekend's heavy rain and hail total around US\$150 million, amid damage to half of the mid-season grapes and a third of blueberries still to be harvested.

The organization said the 'agricultural catastrophe' - caused by unseasonal adverse weather in the middle of summer - had affected around three in every four growers in some way around the country.

"The current loss for producers, as of yesterday, Wednesday, is already \$150 million, without considering the problems that will be seen later due to eventual rotting," said Fedefruta President Jorge Valenzuela.

"There are producers who have already lost everything, hundreds of small farmers who have serious problems, and the state must take emergency measures to help all of them".

Regarding the problems caused to fruit crops still to be harvested, a Fedefruta survey found that an estimated 53 percent of mid-season table grape varieties had been damaged.

As for stone fruit (plums, peaches and nectarines), there is 30 percent damage in volume per hectare at harvest. And in blueberries, 32 percent of what was yet to be harvested had been lost - mainly from the Ñuble region to the south.

The estimated damage in apples and pears is 21 percent of volume per hectare.





By region, the survey indicates that 78 percent of fruit growers in the Valparaíso Region reported some degree of damage from the rains. Two-thirds of fruit growers in the Metropolitan Region reported damage, along with 85 percent of fruit growers in O'Higgins, the country's main fruit-growing area in terms of surface area. Meanwhile, 57 percent of growers in Maule reported some kind of problem due to the adverse weather.

Among those who suffered damage, 78 percent reported fruit splitting, 42 percent fruit drop, 17.8 percent downed trees, and 10 percent fall or deterioration of vines/orchard structures.

Around 4 percent had problems with their irrigation systems, and 3.1 percent had hail damage.

"With this estimate, fruit growers in Chile have already lost US\$150 million from the beginning of the rains as of Wednesday, Feb. 3," Valenzuela said.

"This figure is preliminary and apart from the losses that will be seen later due to eventual rots and other phenomena. There will also be a loss for related industries, including packaging, transport, freight, and for workers. The damage for the country is great."

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