

Agricultural zones near the epicenter of last week's 8.4-magnitude earthquake in Chile have had a substantial portion of their irrigation water supply cut off, but officials and farmers are pushing for a fast recovery.



Governmental authorities visited the towns of Illapel and Salamanca 36 hours after the natural disaster struck to assess the damages in the area. Agriculture Minister Carlos Furche highlighted infrastructure had been damaged including irrigation systems.

"The main task we are taking on is to quickly clear the channels as growers will have to start irrigating in the next two weeks, so we need to reestablish irrigation and not have problems with production and employment in a few more months," Furche said.

"The estimate we have is that more or less 50% of the channels of the Choapa Basin are obstructed and there is a similar proportion in the Limarí Basin as well, but we are optimists. We believe that in two weeks, working shoulder to shoulder with the supervisory boards, we will manage to clear the channels.

"This year promised to be better precisely because there was a greater availability of water resources, so our next task in the very short term is to get water flowing again."

Photo: Chilean Ministry of Agriculture

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