


Australia's stone fruit industry has received a serious blow from flooding in the southern state of Victoria, national daily The Australian reported. 

In the wake of Queensland flooding, which alone could take US\$2.48 billion out of farm production value, new floods in Victoria will cost hundreds of millions of dollars to the economy.

Victorian Fruit Growers Association general manager John Wilson told the newspaper that cherry, grape, apricots, nectarine, peach and tomato crops have been damaged in the recent floods.

Victoria is Australia's leading producer of stone fruit, and also accounts for about 90% of the country's pears and a third of its apples.

The paper reported at least \$20 million worth of damage to unharvested crops in the Wimmera area, while Victorian Farmers Federation deputy president Peter Tuohey said there had been 'devastating loss' to horticulture, grain stocks and livestock.

"This year was supposed to be the best year ever after so many years of drought and now it's turned out to be a real gut-wrenching year," he told The Australian.

State Agriculture Minister Peter Walsh told Victorian daily The Age that stock and crop recovery were a priority for government.

"Clean-up and restoration grants for primary producers and small businesses have been increased to \$25,000, effective immediately, while food and fibre producers will also have access to low-interest loans of up to \$200,000 through Rural Finance," he told the newspaper."

Photo: wikipedia.org

Source: [www.freshfruitportal.com](http://www.freshfruitportal.com)