

A Chilean agricultural leader says it could still be another two to three weeks before the full effects of frosts on fruit crops are known, while the leader of the country's Fruit Growers Federation (Fedefruta) admits the situation may be more complicated than [previous estimates](#). 

At a press conference Wednesday, National Agriculture Society (SNA) president Patricio Crespo said the exact magnitude of the damage was still unknown.

"This is a phenomenon that has happened from the III (Atacama) to the VII (Maule) regions with different intensities. The IV (Coquimbo) region always hangs in the air a bit and this region has not just suffered from the impact of frosts, but is going into its eighth year of water shortages, which is why they are experiencing very dramatic conditions as their reservoir reserves are around 8%," Crespo said.

"In other words, the frost damages add to the critical water shortage situation."

"These figures are approximations that give an idea of the phenomenon's magnitude. There are many surprises that you could glimpse. We expect that in 15-20 days the problem will be expressed in its total dimension, but even then, it is possible that it will be difficult to deliver an exact figure."

To tackle this issue, the SNA will coordinate a working group to help farmers affected by frost, including representatives of both private and public entities.

"We have tried, firstly to approach territories to know the dram in the field and then devote ourselves to building working strategies, forming teams, and in a joint effort between the public and private sectors, see the best way to aid this situation, which for us is equivalent to a second earthquake.

"Today, agriculture and rural Chile have lost part of their flows, in production and therefore, income."

When asked about the work undertaken and the role of the Chilean Meteorological Office, Crespo said there was a lack of combined efforts with this government entity.

"I think that concern will now rise and we will put on the table how we can improve the system, but that is not something that has been discussed yet. There is a void, an insufficiency that we also have to overcome."

Fedefruta president Cristian Allendes said that his group had come to better understand the

situation with the passing of time.

"Today it is not an exaggeration to say that around 60% of the average of what Chile exports is being lost," he said.

"We have never had a frost of this magnitude - it is a white earthquake - and it is a bit seismic in the sense in that you don't know how to prevent it. The entities in charge of predicting these things were delayed - there was no good information and the seriousness of what was coming was never announced - 0°C (32°F) was spoken about never -6°C (21.2°F) or -8°C (17.6°F)."

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