

***Editor's note (Sept. 1): This article was published on Friday August 30 when the U.S. National Hurricane Center was forecasting there would be a direct hit in Florida by Hurricane Dorian. It is now expected to move upward just off the U.S. East Coast.***

The Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association (FFVA) says that the timing of Hurricane Dorian could not be much worse for the state's citrus growers.

The U.S. National Hurricane Center said on Friday: "Dorian is likely to remain an extremely dangerous hurricane while it moves near the northwestern Bahamas and approaches the Florida peninsula through the weekend."

FFVA director of public affairs Lisa Lochridge told FreshFruitPortal.com the organization is "hoping for the best".

"Right now, the cone couldn't be much worse, but it's still relatively early," she said.

"This storm is extremely concerning for our citrus growers, who are just a few weeks out from harvest. The timing is about as bad as it could be - it seems we just can't catch a break from Mother Nature."

In 2017, Hurricane Irma plowed through the state just a couple of weeks later than this, she noted.

"We all remember the devastation that occurred then. Hurricane-force winds blew the fruit off the trees, and there was deep standing water in groves, which posed additional problems," she said.

Some scattered vegetable crops have just been planted in South Florida, she added. But for the most part, growers there are behind planting schedules because of the frequent heavy summer rainfall in that region.

"Growers do everything they can to get their operations ready when a storm is approaching, securing equipment and making sure they have need supplies such as gas for generators," she said.