

A severe late freeze in northern Italy has dealt a huge blow to growers, many of whom have suffered enormous damage to their fruit and vegetable crops.

Temperatures dipped between around -4°C and -7°C at the beginning of the week for more than 10 hours in the Emilia-Romagna region, website [MyFruit](#) reported [in Italian].

The weather event is said to have put the survival of hundreds of companies at risk.

"The damage is enormous," said Davide Vernocchi, president of growers' association Apo Conerpo, an umbrella organization of 51 cooperatives.

"From stone fruit to kiwifruit, the frost has hit production at a crucial phase for fruit development. In such a challenging time, it is a really severe blow for the whole agricultural industry, especially fruit growers."

Production of vegetables including artichokes, asparagus, beets, chicory and peas, was also heavily impacted.

"For stonefruit the damage is significant - almost all the apricot production is affected," Vernocchi told [RenoNews](#). "And the damage on nectarine and plum peaches, as well as on the delicate cultivation of yellow kiwifruit, is very significant."

The impact on pome fruits remains to be assessed, he said.

The hard blow comes as the Italian fruit sector recovers from climate-related challenges last year, including a particularly wet spring and dry summer, and damage caused by pests.

"This freeze affects a sector that has already been heavily tested and which, despite the difficulties, is putting the maximum effort into meeting the demands of fresh fruit and vegetables despite the ongoing epidemic and all the critical issues connected with it," Vernocchi said.

"In this context of general and prolonged suffering, the survival of thousands of farms is seriously at risk. The Emilia-Romagna Region and the Government, despite facing an unprecedented emergency, must take immediate action to provide for initiatives to protect farms damaged by this freeze."