



WESTERN CAPE BI-ANNUAL AGRICULTURAL DISASTER RISK ASSESSMENT REPORT: MARCH 2021

1. PURPOSE

To report on the categorisation of drought areas based on the March 2021 Disaster Risk Veld Assessments and the concurrent M&E beneficiary visits.

2. MOTIVATION

The persistent drought has had a devastating impact on the veld conditions across the province. These bi-annual assessments are an integral part of the planning and implementation of all disaster interventions.

Albeit the Covid-19 restrictions, the department was able to conduct its bi-annual disaster risk assessments in two of the five Districts across the Province. Veld assessments were conducted in the Garden Route and Central Karoo Districts. Concurrently, the Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) office, in conjunction with the Provincial Disaster Management Centre, conducted monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of the beneficiaries that received drought funding. The M&E was conducted in the Central Karoo, Garden Route and West Coast Districts.

The outcomes of the assessments are due to the inputs from various stakeholders across the department. These stakeholders include the Research and Technology Development Services Programme (RTD), the (DRR) Sub-programme, the Agricultural Producer Support and Development (APSD) Programme and the LandCare Sub-programme.

The disaster risk assessments play a critical role in assisting the department to direct its limited resources to beneficiaries who are most in need. The veld assessments are used as a decision making tool based on the condition of the veld across the province.

3. ASSESSMENT OUTCOMES

Veld Categories

1. Extremely Critical Dry

- The extremely critical dry areas are the plants that are black and some already turning white.
- This means that the veld is in the worst possible condition with little to no signs of life.
- The extremely critical dry areas, marked red, would require monthly support, as the conditions are highly unfavourable in terms of the veld conditions and water availability.

2. Critical Dry

- The critical dry areas, in yellow, are areas that is still affected by the current drought conditions.
- These areas however have experienced very little plant growth.
- The area is not categorised as high risk due to the availability of water.
- The critical dry areas however still require support every alternate month.

3. Very Dry

- Majority of the plants are living, but very dry.
- The plants don't break easily and there are still leaves present, although brown.
- Little to no flowers present are visible. Grasses are dry, but not yet black (e.g. Kraalbos is yellow).

4. Dry, with signs of recovery

- Majority of the plants in the area are dry, with most of them baring leaves.
- The area consists of plants that are still green with flowers and showing signs of regrowth.

5. Good condition

- Areas listed in the "green" column are classified as good, meaning that the veld conditions have improved to an extent that the farmers can be removed from the drought support.

Should the veld conditions in any area in the Province deteriorate or improve over time, the department will reclassify the area and adjust the required support accordingly.

Municipal Veld Assessments

Central Karoo District Municipality

Municipal Area	Extremely critical	Critical	Good	Additional comments
	(monthly support)	(support every second month)	Remove from drought support	
Beaufort West	X			See narrative below
Laingsburg	X			See narrative below
Prince Albert	X			See narrative below

March 2021 Assessment

- The veld conditions in the Central Karoo has over the last six (6) months shown no improvement. In fact, veld conditions in many parts of the Central Karoo have deteriorated.
- Areas previously categorised as recovered, have now been re-classified as very dry. Parts of Murraysburg in the Beaufort West Local Municipality, is one of the areas where the veld condition has deteriorated.
- Should the Central Karoo not receive any autumn rains, conditions across the district will deteriorate even further.
- Farmers in this region will continue to receive support from the department.
- As part of the monitoring and evaluation exercise in the Central Karoo region, the DRR team interacted with a number of local farmers.
- This interaction allowed the DRR team to hear first-hand the effects of the drought on farmers, their families, their workers and the community at large.
- The 8-year long drought has taken its toll on the farming community and this is evident in the loss of livestock, drop in fruit farming production and the rise in unemployment, especially those agri-workers working within the fruit farming sector.
- Most farmers have reduced their stock numbers and many of them were forced to retrench staff.
- Many farmers admitted that had it not been for the intervention of the Department, they would not have survived the ongoing drought.

- Through interaction with the farmers, the department identified predation and the lack of predation management as a key risk factor
- Farmers were losing up to 30% of their livestock due to predation.

Garden Route District Municipality

Municipal Area	Extremely critical	Critical	Dry - to very dry	Additional comments
	(monthly support)	(support every second month)	Monitor Closely	
Kannaland		X		See narrative below
Oudtshoorn		X		See narrative below
Mossel Bay			X	Should the area not receive any winter rainfall, drought support will be required.
Hessequa			X	Should the area not receive any winter rainfall, drought support will be required.

March 2021 Assessment

- The veld in Little Karoo is currently in a very dry condition, with areas that are critically dry.
- This is due to large parts of the Little Karoo receiving below average winter rainfall in 2020/2021 and very little summer rain.
- Full recovery of the veld could take more than three (3) years of above average rainfall.
- The veld condition in the Mosel Bay and Hessequa Local Municipality is currently in a dry condition having received below average rainfall.
- Animal numbers should be kept low to give the veld a chance to recovery.
- The farmers also confirmed the lack of rainfall in the area and the subsequent lack of plant growth.
- The impact of the drought has negatively affected the livelihoods of all farmers within this region.
- Most farmers have reduced their stock numbers and many of them were forced to retrench staff.

West Coast District Municipality

- The last veld assessment was conducted in September/October 2020.

Municipal Area	Extremely critical	Critical	Good	Additional comments
	(monthly support)	(support every second month)	Remove from drought support	
Matzikamma (North-East part)	X			See narrative below
Cederberg			X	Good recovery
Bergriver			X	Good recovery

September/October 2020 Assessment

- Based on the interactions with farmers during the M&E visits in March 2021, the feedback indicated that conditions in the Matzikama Local Municipality have not changed much since the September/October 2020 assessment. The area is still in extremely critical condition.
- The DRR Unit interacted with a number of key stakeholders, including local farmers, APSD staff and Landcare officials, to ascertain whether the department should continue to provide drought support to farmers in the area.
- The Department will continue to support farmers in the Matzikama region of the West Coast.

4. Conclusion

In light of the fact that disasters are increasing in both intensity and frequency, the department has shifted its focus to disaster reduction, mitigation and prevention. The bi-annual veld assessments provides the department with a clear indication of the status of the veld condition in the assessed areas.

Figure 1: Identifies the veld conditions in the areas across the province and the resultant level of drought support.

- Areas marked in green do not need drought support.
- Areas marked Orange will need drought support every second month.
- Areas that are marked Red will receive drought support every month.

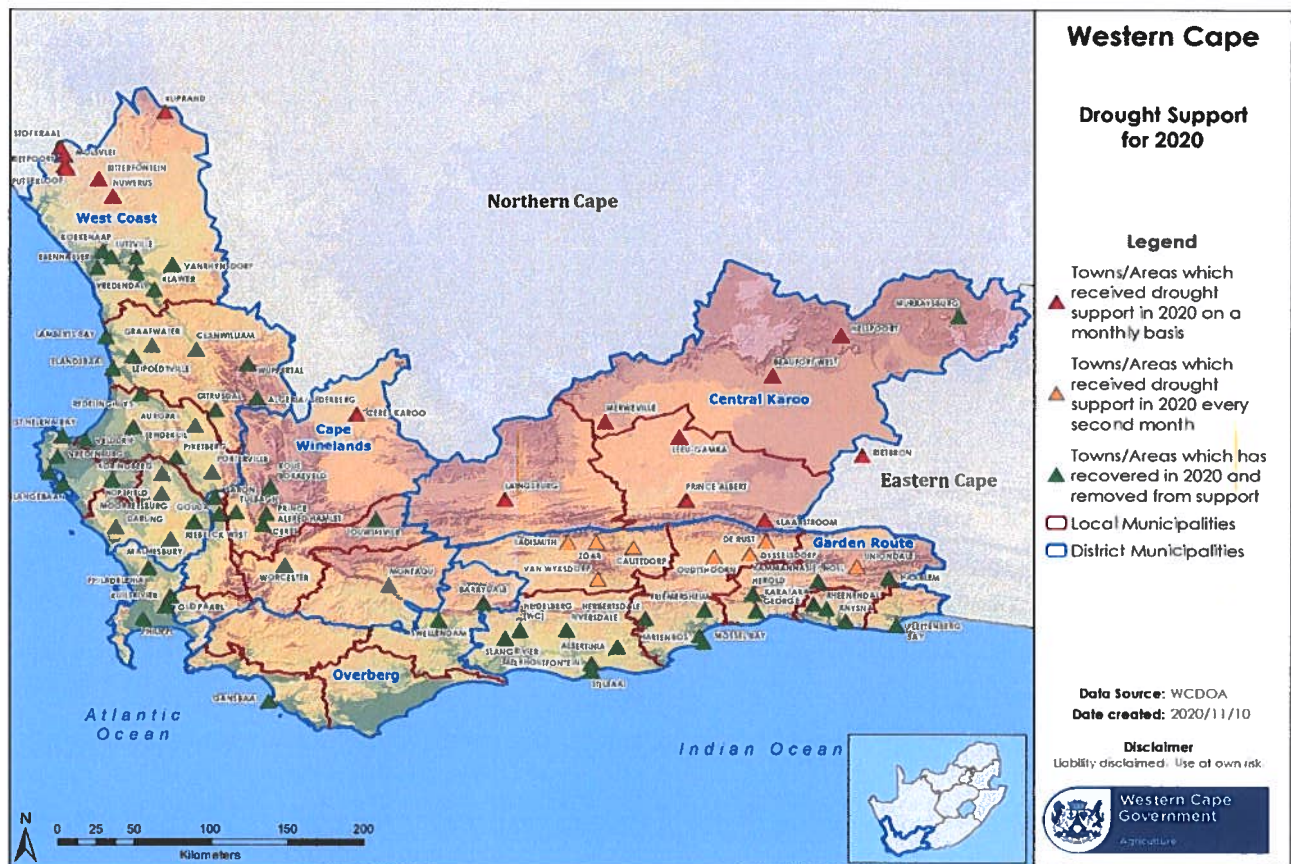
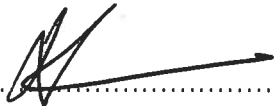


Fig 1. Western Cape Department of Agriculture - Drought Support Map 2020

COMPILED BY:



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DISASTER RISK REDUCTION: SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE USE AND MANAGEMENT

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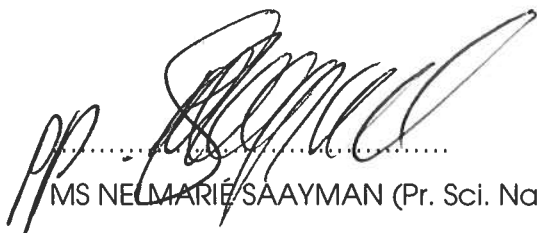
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DISASTER RISK REDUCTION: SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE USE AND MANAGEMENT

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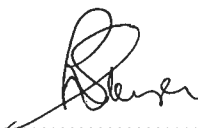
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