



30<sup>th</sup> May 2024

## Notification of the presence of spotted wing *Drosophila* (SWD) in South Africa.

Dear growers and other industry stakeholders,

We would like to notify you that the Department of Agriculture Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) officially declared SWD as present in South Africa in a 24 May 2024 notification to the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC). According to the notification, SWD has a restricted presence in four provinces (Western Cape, Eastern Cape, Kwazulu-Natal, and Limpopo).

SWD is a major pest of soft-skinned fruit like berries, cherries and other deciduous stone fruit. Apples and pears are not primary hosts of SWD, but damaged fruit and fruit left on the tree after harvest will be attacked to serve as a source of more flies. More information on SWD is provided in a **fact sheet** accompanying this BerriesZA Newsletter. **Management guidelines**, also accompanying this Newsletter, were compiled by the technical teams of BerriesZA & Hortgro and in consultation with crop protection advisors and industry stakeholders.

There has been low resolution surveillance for SWD for several years, by other industries i.e. Hortgro considering the extremely high invasiveness of this pest as evidenced from its rapid spread through North and South America as well as Europe. Prediction models also suggested a high likelihood that SWD would spread to and establish in South Africa.

In late 2023, a single male fly was identified from a trap at Misgund in the Langkloof. Traps were subsequently deployed in most berry production regions in coordination with Hortgro. To date, SWD has been caught in the following regions/ towns: Tzaneen, Curry's Post (KZN midlands), Patensie, various locations in the Langkloof, Barrydale, George, Montagu, Napier, Worcester, Wolseley, Riviersonderend, Hemel-en-Aarde, Villiersdorp, Paarl, Simondium, Stellenbosch and Somerset West. Based on experiences elsewhere in the world, we expect SWD to rapidly spread to most stone fruit production regions by next season.

Surveillance is a key step in safeguarding our industry from invasive pests and diseases. Some pests can be eradicated if initial incursions are spotted soon after it occurred. Eradication is not possible in the case of SWD. However, if not for the surveillance run by Hortgro and the close cooperation between BerriesZA and Hortgro, its presence in South Africa would likely only have become apparent at the onset of the 2024/25 harvest season with crop losses, no registered control options, and no time for notification and negotiation with trading partners. Further monitoring of SWD will be continued by BerriesZA and coordinated across industries and with DALRRD.

BerriesZA has kept their board up to date on all developments regarding SWD, and informed the growers where SWD has been detected. The restriction on information must be seen in the context that SWD is a quarantine pest in South Africa in accordance with the Agricultural Pests Act No. 36 of 1983 (Act No.36 of 1983). Accordingly, all information regarding SWD had to be treated as strictly confidential until such time as

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### Executive Committee:

Herman van Dyk (Chair) • Bruce Carter • Dylan Coleman • Justin Mudge • Jeán Kotzé • Hannes Laubscher • Johan le Roux • Jon Salters • Sean Tager • Brent Walsh (CEO)

DALRRD officially declared its presence in South Africa. This also required that DALRRD, through their inspection services, confirmed the presence of SWD in DALRRD-accredited laboratories.

Although SWD is present in many of the countries that we trade with, we do not know how trading partners may react and what phytosanitary control measures they may insist on. Negotiations with trading partners can ensue now that DALRRD has officially declared SWD as present in South Africa.

DALRRD still needs to engage with industries on the conditions for movement of fruit off farms in regions where SWD is present. Appropriate conditions will contain SWD or slow its spread while not jeopardizing export markets or impinging on the ability of producers to sell their crop. We will circulate the conditions for the movement of fruit as soon as available. In the meantime, the BerriesZA & Hortgro technical teams with assistance from Hortgro's market access team, Hortgro's crop protection advisory group (CPAG) and private crop protection consultants, have identified products registered for fruit fly control in South Africa and used to control SWD in the USA and Europe. DALRRD is assisting in requests to the registrar for label extensions for these products so to also include SWD.

Going forward, BerriesZA will keep producers informed on the presence and spread of SWD in different production regions. Efforts to find effective pre- and postharvest control options will be ongoing. With SWD also significantly impacting production in Europe and the USA, large investments are being made by crop protection companies, industries, and the public sector to find solutions to this pest.

Producers should please direct their queries relating to SWD to BerriesZA (Dr Gulu Bekker) via their representatives that participate in the BerriesZA Technical Forum. We will consult with the members of the BerriesZA Technical Forum on the need for regional information sessions.



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Brent Walsh  
CEO