Water allocations for subtropical crops in Limpopo

At the beginning of 2013 it came to Subtrop’s attention that the Department of Water Affairs (DWA) together with engineering consultants are busy with a process of verification of water allocations for agricultural use in the Limpopo Province.

Gerhard Nortjé
SUBTROP

Subtrop did their homework and a meeting was scheduled with DWA and the consultants in Polokwane. The crops involved were avocado, litchi, macadamia and mango. Subtrop used the same model as DWA to determine the real water needs of the Subtrop crops per region. The model was applied to the following regions: Tzaneen, Politsi, Letsitele, Soekmekaar, Levubu and Soutpansberg. Historical weather data were also used.

In the discussion we noticed that the major problem was with water allocations for macadamias, where there were major differences. It was agreed that DWA would accept the figures of Subtrop in their allocations. With regards to avocados, mangoes and litchis, the figures were compared and no significant differences were found between the water allocation figures of DWA and Subtrop.

The figures proposed by Subtrop and accepted by DWA included micro sprinkler irrigated orchards and drip irrigated orchards. Producers tend to migrate between systems. It was also agreed that the crop with the highest water requirement should be used for the specific area as a base to register water. Producers replant orchards, and orchard types tend to change over time.

The Table below shows the figures for both irrigation systems per area as was agreed. Producers in these areas should therefore be comfortable with the fact that they will be allocated the correct amount of water for their crops. Subtrop would like to thank Stephan Schoeman from Soetkalmoes Consultation, as well as Gerhard Mostert and Jip Bette, for their help and support.

This is an excellent example of the service which Subtrop can deliver to their members. The same exercise will also be done for the other production areas in due time.

Please contact Gerhard Nortjé at Subtrop (015 306 6241) for further information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SAPWAT irrigation requirements</th>
<th>Avocado</th>
<th>Litchi</th>
<th>Macadamia</th>
<th>Mango</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mm/annum</td>
<td>Micro</td>
<td>Drip</td>
<td>Micro</td>
<td>Drip</td>
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<tr>
<td>Politsi</td>
<td>534</td>
<td>514</td>
<td>786</td>
<td>657</td>
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<tr>
<td>Letaba</td>
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<td>623</td>
<td>883</td>
<td>726</td>
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<tr>
<td>Soekmekaar</td>
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<td>586</td>
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<td>Letsitele</td>
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<td>903</td>
<td>1181</td>
<td>999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levubu</td>
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<td>951</td>
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<tr>
<td>Soutpansberg</td>
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<td>696</td>
<td>977</td>
<td>808</td>
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