



Hans Meiring

"All the orchards are under nets and over the years every hailstorm taught us valuable lessons"

Adverse weather is one of the biggest headaches for growers around the world and a hail storm can destroy a grower's crop in a matter of minutes, this is why more and more growers are investing in hail nets to protect their crops.

Hans Meiring a Fruit Production Consultant in South Africa said that the huge losses to hail in the Ceres area and the Langkloof this season could have been prevented if there were more orchards protected by effective hail nets.



"For the last 25 years I have been involved in apple production in the northern production regions of the Free State, Mpumalanga, and the new low chill apples in the Limpopo province. All the orchards are under nets and over the years every hailstorm taught us valuable lessons. Out of this some innovative solutions were born and could be of great value to farmers new in the net business. Five years ago, a typical free state net system was erected on the farm of Pierre Burger in the Koo valley. From day one it was clear that the nets had a huge effect on his trees as well as the quality of his fruit. This year the results was even more spectacular and that made him decide to put some late apricots under nets as well."



According to Hans there has been a huge movement in South Africa to covering orchard with nets but it is a big investment especially in times like these when all costs are increasing and markets are volatile.

"Growers know they must do it, but it is expensive. It only takes one major hail event to recoup the cost of investment and there are many more benefits besides saving your crop. The climate in South Africa is harsh and fruit can suffer from sunburn, this can be avoided by using nets. They also create a protected ecosystem and save around 30% in water used for irrigation as well as protection from wind."

Photo: *Pierre Burger from Protea farm, Koo valley*

Hans has been working with nets for 30 years and has seen all kinds of types used with varying results.



ClemenGold under new net system, Burgersfort

“Around 15 years ago farmers came together to swap results and look at the different systems, some were very effective, others less so. There is a huge difference in the quality of nets, we have found woven nets to be the most effective and longer lasting. If growers are investing a lot of money, they want nets to last longer than a couple of years, with woven nets we have found them to be effective for around 10 years, sometimes much longer.”



Hail unloaded; crop protected Goedehoop Lydenburg

Good nets can be hard to find in South Africa, There is only one factory which produces woven nets but their capacity is limited. To get enough nets Hans has worked with a factory in China which can produce good quality at a good price and they are manufactured specifically to a South African design and to be able to withstand the harsh conditions in South Africa.

For more information:

Hans Meiring

Tel: +27 83 627 6493

hans@isat.co.za



Publication date: Fri 7 Apr 2023

Author: [Nichola McGregor](#)

© [FreshPlaza.com](https://www.freshplaza.com)

	Put the future of your Apple business on the road to success.	Apples Sort 3 UNIQ Apples	
---	---	------------------------------------	---

