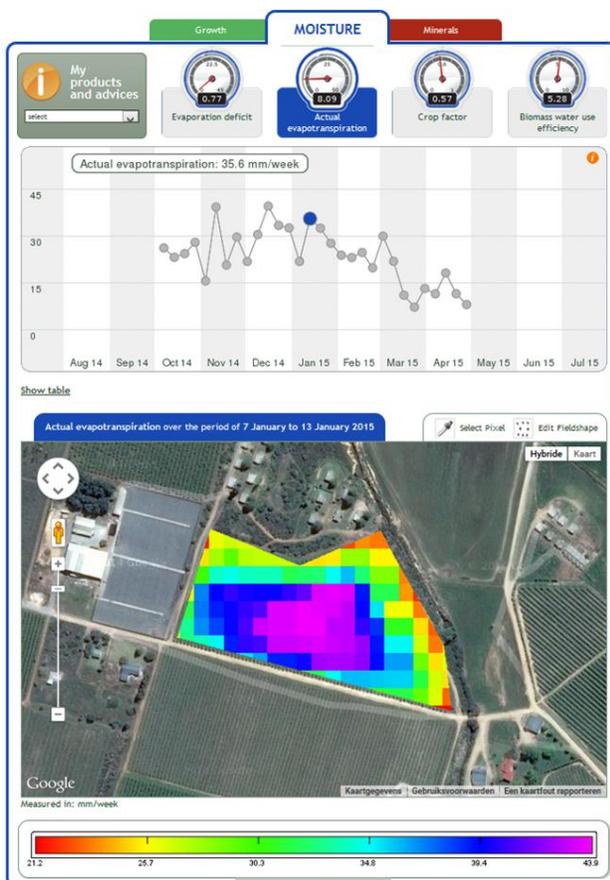


Dutch Trade Mission emphasizes bright future for FruitLook – About turning water into wine

A broad delegation of the Dutch water sector participates in the Dutch Trade Mission to South Africa. One of the focal points for this sector is “Water for food” which links to the need to produce ‘more crop per drop’ to keep feeding the growing world population. Increasing the efficiency of agricultural water use is also an essential objective for the South African government. FruitLook, an online platform providing satellite based information on farm level, helps Western Cape fruit and grape growers to do just that. The Dutch Trade Mission, presided by Prime Minister of the Netherlands Mark Rutte and Minister of Agriculture Martijn van Dam, to South Africa forms the stage for the Western Cape Department of Agriculture and eLEAF, the Dutch service-provider, to take course towards a long-term sustainable relationship.

eLEAF is a Dutch firm that operates in the transition area between consultancy, remote sensing science and operational applications for agricultural and water resources management. eLEAF is the developer and owner of a set of algorithms that transform meteorological and remote sensing based data into quantitative crop-, water- and climate parameters per pixel. This technology is called Pixel Intelligence Mapping® and the resulting PiMapping® data components form the building blocks for applications and management systems. Worldwide eLEAF is the only commercial party able to provide this type of information on an operational basis. The FruitLook portal is a key example of the usefulness of eLEAF data where hundreds of users benefit from their service.



Why is FruitLook important?

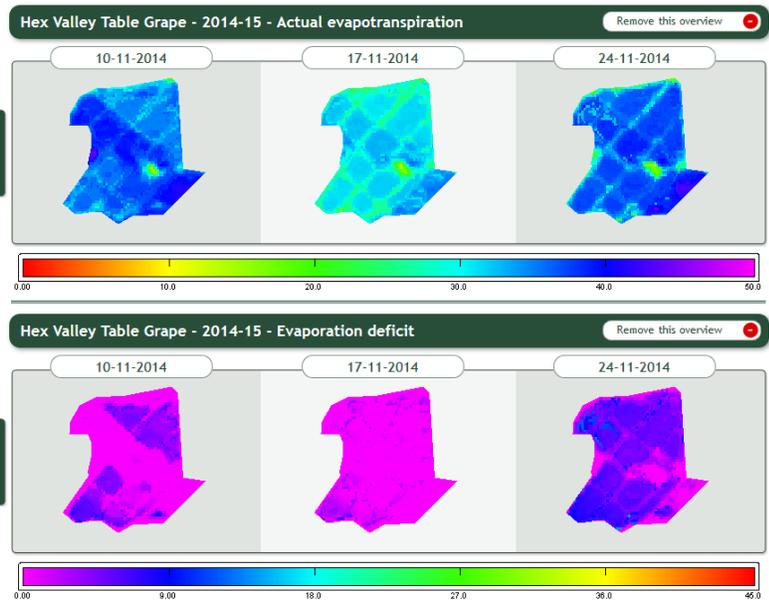
Where the Netherlands faces rising sea levels— a case of too much water- South Africa faces challenges on the other side of the spectrum. Droughts cause significant damages to agricultural produce and it is expected the impact of droughts will increase due to climate change. In the Western Cape of South Africa this affects one of its biggest industries: fruit and wine production. The grape and fruit industry is of huge fiscal importance— representing almost a third of the provinces’ exports – so maximising its production while minimising the ecological impact is both an economic and environmental boon. The Western Cape Department of Agriculture takes appropriate action to stimulate efficient use of farm resources; in particular of water. In cooperation with Dutch company eLEAF FruitLook was created: an open online platform to monitor vineyards and orchards, building on satellite imagery and weather information. FruitLook provides farmers weekly

insights in crop production and water use during the growth season. A better informed farmer makes better decisions in farm resource management, which eventually leads to more efficient water use on their farm. As FruitLook is accessible to almost every fruit and wine grape farmer in the Western Cape it has the potential to improve water use efficiency at an unprecedented scale.

What is achieved so far?

FruitLook has been initiated with support from the South African authorities (Western Cape Department of Agriculture and Hortgro) and the Integrated Application Promotion Program of the European Space Agency in January 2012. Currently it is running for the fifth season in a row. The service supports over 250 active users (and rising) that access thousands of hectares of satellite based information on a field by field basis. Simultaneously FruitLook triggers conscious use of fresh water supplies within the farming community. In a recent questionnaire more than half of the respondents experienced that their water use efficiency increased by 10 to 30 % through using FruitLook. This results mostly from improvements in irrigation system design, better soil moisture probe placement and earlier detection of over- and under irrigation.

Several case examples show FruitLook is also valuable for other aspects of farm management. For example, disease infected blocks show growth deficits compared to healthy blocks. The farmer can use FruitLook to delineate the infected areas and limit pesticide application to these areas, saving resources and the environment.



What does the future hold?

A changing climate, rising input costs and increased competition for water are forcing farmers worldwide to attain higher yields with less water. More knowledge from advanced information technology is necessary to face this challenge. The PiMapping technology behind the FruitLook portal is applicable on any land surface, providing a huge potential aid to farmers worldwide. Within South Africa FruitLook forms a unique concept initiated by the Western Cape Department of Agriculture to help their farmers. And one with a bright future: at the Dutch Trade Mission eLEAF and the Western Cape Department of Agriculture, in the company of Dutch Minister of Agriculture Martijn van Dam, will affirm FruitLook 2015-16 and mutually commit to accomplish sustainable fruit and wine production in the Western Cape of South Africa.

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