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High-tech map shows fruit, macadamia farms hit by bushfires

Amid devastating bushfire activity across Australia, scientists have released a map that shows avocado, mango, olive, banana, macadamia and citrus orchards that have been impacted, to help with response and recovery efforts.

Driven by a Hort Innovation investment, in collaboration with various universities, state and federal government agencies, private sector companies and industry, the [Australian Bushfires Rapid Response Map](#) outlines the location of targeted treecrop farms across Australia, overlayed with a map of burnt areas, which updates every ten minutes.

Scientist Craig Shephard, from the University of New England's Applied Agricultural Remote Sensing Centre (AARSC), said the new tool aims to help authorities and industry bodies easily identify any crop damage and loss.

"While broad land cover maps are useful for making general assumptions and policy decisions regarding the impact of national disasters such as bushfire, it is industry specific maps that allow the impact and extent of the damage to be calculated," he said.

"This data can also be useful in instances such as claiming insurance and it can help growers if they are unable to get out to assess damage themselves."

The map reveals that avocado, mango, olive, banana, macadamia and citrus orchards have suffered minimal fire damage this season, with the bulk of farms unscathed.

Avocados Australia chief executive John Tyas said the Australian Bushfires Rapid Response Map has provided an easy, up-to-date and credible tool to help his industry body keep growers informed and respond as needed.

"This mapping has done exactly what it was meant to do: allow for assessment and response to a natural disaster," he said.

"Like everyone, we're hoping for some better conditions in the coming weeks and months and our thoughts are with everyone affected."

The web map works in any browser on any smart device and offers three different base maps (imagery, terrain or streets) and has a search function to find an address or place of interest.

This response map is a snapshot of work being delivered as part of a broader national avocado, mango, olive, macadamia, banana and citrus crop mapping project.

This initiative is supported by Hort Innovation, through funds from the Australian Government's Department of Agriculture Rural R&D for Profit program and coordinated by the University of New England, with bushfire extent from the EMSINA Group and Geoscience Australia.

You can see the Australian Bushfires Rapid Response Map [here](#). For more details regarding the map, see the overview [here](#).

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