

# Spanish fruit farmers arrested for using illegal wells during long-term drought

Farmers are turning to desperate measures in drought-hit Spain, which just had its warmest April on record.

Twenty six people have been arrested for tapping illegal wells to grow tropical fruit in southern Spain, police said on Tuesday.

During a four-year investigation, authorities uncovered more than 250 illegal wells, bore holes and ponds in the Axarquía area of Andalusia. The region has been hit by drought since 2021.

Spain is Europe's biggest producer of tropical **fruit**, which requires large volumes of water. Producers estimate that avocado production will drop by 25 per cent this year due to high temperatures and a lack of water.

## Why are Spanish fruit-growers being arrested?

The suspects are being investigated for misappropriation of public waters and alleged fraudulent use of water for irrigation of subtropical **crops** such as avocados and mangos, police said.

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