

MAURITIUS SUGAR INDUSTRY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

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SUGAR CANE CROP 2009

Status: End January 2009

1. CLIMATE

1.1 Rainfall (Table 1a and 1b, Figure 1)

Rainfall recorded over the sugar cane areas of the island in January 2009 was 243 mm and it represented 94% of the long-term mean. The January rainfall exceeded the long-term mean by 6 mm (3%) in the North, 55 mm (33%) in the West and 29 mm (8%) in the Centre. In the East and South sectors rainfall for the month was inferior to the long-term mean by 55 mm (21%) and 15 mm (5%), respectively.

Rainfall for the period October 2008 to January 2009 amounted to 568 mm. This is 8% lower than the long-term mean (617 mm) of the island for that period. During that same period, 329 mm were recorded in the North, 626 mm in the East, 675 mm in the South, 356 mm in the West and 796 mm in the Centre. These amounts represented 81%, 100%, 91%, 108%, and 97% of the respective long-term mean.

January 2009 has been characterized by frequent heavy downpours, which sustained soil moisture availability over the sugarcane areas.

Table 1a. Rainfall (mm) of January for crops 2008, 2009 and the long term mean (LTM)

	North	East	South	West	Centre	Island
2008	211 (113)	291 (112)	291 (100)	171 (102)	266 (75)	261 (101)
2009	192 (103)	205 (79)	275 (95)	222 (133)	383 (108)	243 (94)
LTM	186	260	290	167	354	257

* figures in brackets are % of LTM

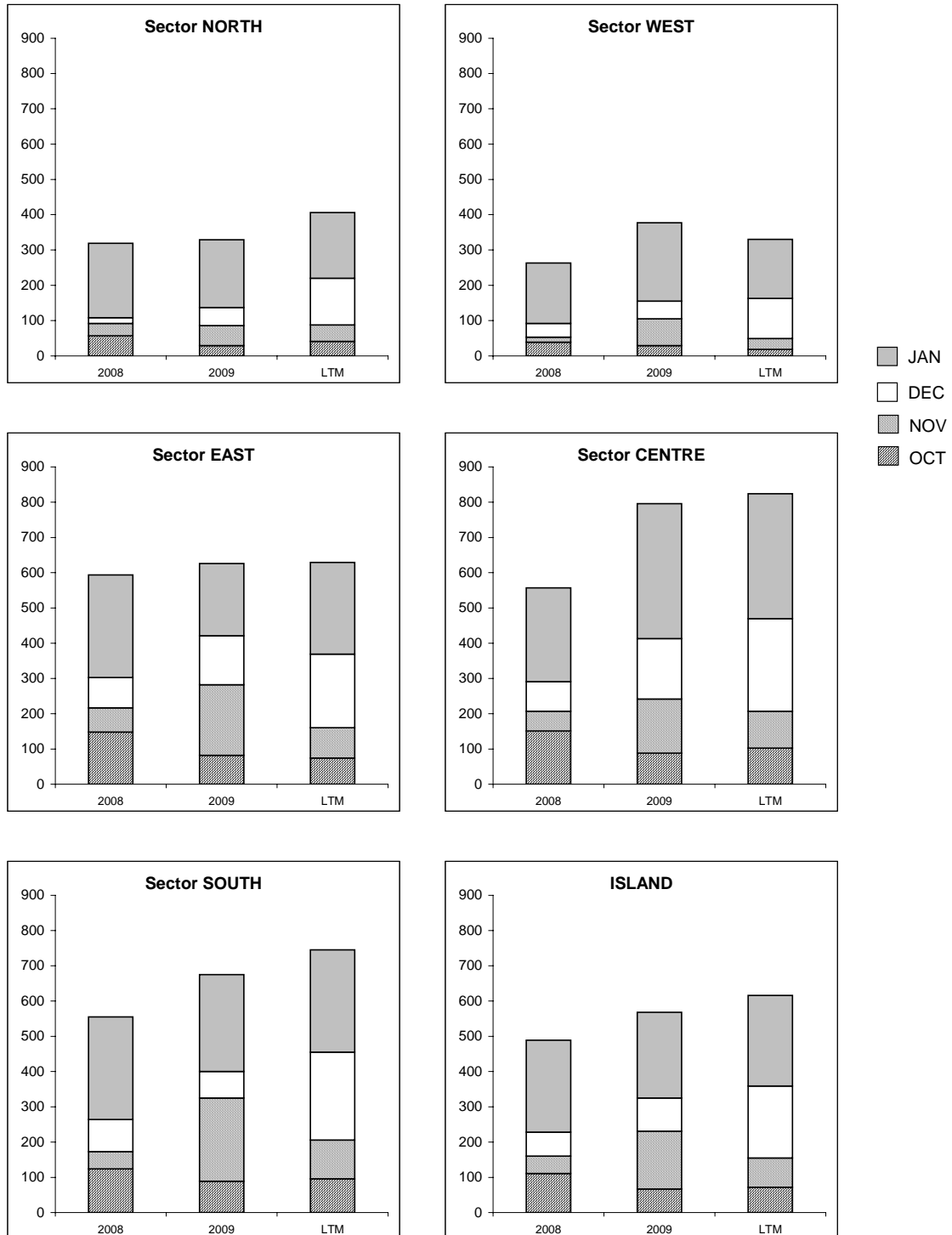
Table 1b. Cumulative rainfall (mm) from Oct 2008 to Jan 2009 for crop 2009 compared to that of crop 2008 and the long term mean (LTM)

	North	East	South	West	Centre	Island
2008	319 (79)	594 (94)	555 (74)	263 (80)	557 (68)	489 (79)
2009	329 (81)	626 (100)	675 (91)	356 (108)	796 (97)	568 (92)
LTM	406	629	745	330	824	617

* figures in brackets are % of LTM

[Source : raw provisional data from Meteorological Services]

Figure 1. Monthly rainfall (mm) for period Oct 2008 to Jan 2009 of the 2009 crop compared to the same period for crop 2008 and the long-term mean (LTM).



2. STALK HEIGHT (TABLE 2)

Cane growth was assessed during the last week of January 2009 in the 59 sites representative of the five sugar cane sectors of the island. These sites cover the various agro-climatic zones, varieties under cultivation and stages of development of the crop. Data collected are compared to those of the corresponding period in January 2008 and to the mean of the five best cane yielding crops of the last ten years in each sector (referred to as normal).

2.1 Stalk elongation (Table 2a)

Stalk elongation during the month of January 2009 was superior to that of the same period in 2008 in all sectors, except in the East. During January 2009, the best growth was observed in the South with 49.3 cm followed by 48.0 cm in the West, 41.4 cm in the Centre, 37.7 cm in the East and 33.1 cm in the North. Compared to the normal for the corresponding period, growth was lower by 1.0 cm in the North, 7.5 cm in the East and 2.7 cm in the South whereas in the West and Centre it was above normal by 7.6 cm and 2.7 cm respectively. The stalk elongation of 41.4 cm for the island was higher than that for the corresponding period in 2008 by 4.5 cm (12.2%) but below the normal by 1.7 cm (4.0%).

Table 2a. Stalk elongation during the month of January.

Sectors	Stalk elongation (cm) during Jan			Jan 2009 as % of	
	2009	2008	Normal	2008	Normal
North	33.1	25.6	34.1	129.3	97.1
East	37.7	42.8	45.2	88.1	83.4
South	49.3	42.0	52.0	117.4	94.8
West	48.0	28.9	40.4	166.1	118.8
Centre	41.4	37.3	38.7	111.0	107.0
Island	41.4	36.9	43.1	112.2	96.0

2.2 Total cane height (Table 2b and Figure 2)

Total cane height at end January 2009 was 67.5 cm in the North, 84.0 cm in the East, 110.3 cm in the South, 89.5 cm in the West and 92.6 cm in the Centre to give an island average of 89.6 cm. Compared to the corresponding period in January 2008, cane height was superior by 20.0 cm in the North, 27.0 cm in the South, 27.1 cm in the West and 12.2 cm in the Centre but was lagging by 5.1 cm in the East. Total cane height at the end of January 2009 exceeded the mean of the five highest cane yielding years in sectors North, South, West and Centre by 8.5 cm (14.4%), 6.5 cm (6.3%), 21.7 cm (32.0%) and 6.2 cm (7.2%) respectively but lagged by 3.6 cm (4.1%) in the East.

At island level, the total cane height of 89.6 cm at the end of January 2009 was superior to that of the corresponding period in 2008 by 15.0 cm (20.1%) and the normal by 6.4 cm (7.7%).

Table 2b. Stalk height at end-January

Sectors	Stalk height (cm) at end-Jan			End-Jan 2009 as % of	
	2009	2008	Normal	2008	Normal
North	67.5	47.5	59.0	142.1	114.4
East	84.0	89.1	87.6	94.3	95.9
South	110.3	83.3	103.8	132.4	106.3
West	89.5	62.4	67.8	143.4	132.0
Centre	92.6	80.4	86.4	115.2	107.2
Island	89.6	74.6	83.2	120.1	107.7

3. CROP 2009

Overall weather conditions, especially the well-distributed rainfall over the sugarcane areas, have been conducive to growth and development of the crop. This is very apparent in the elongation data of all sectors except in the East. Despite the small disadvantage observed in the East, based on the present growth status a better crop than that of 2008 is expected if no adverse weather conditions are experienced during the remaining part of the crop cycle.

Figure 2. Stalk height at end- January 2009.

