

MAURITIUS SUGAR INDUSTRY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

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SUGAR CANE CROP 2012

Status: End January 2012

1. CLIMATE

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

Rainfall recorded over the sugar cane area of the island in January 2012 was only 93 mm and represented 37% of the long-term mean. Below normal rainfall was recorded in all sectors with 72 mm in the North, 130 mm in the East, 81 mm in the South, 57 mm in the West and 102 mm in the Centre. These figures represented 39%, 50%, 28%, 34% and 29% of the respective long-term mean of the sector.

Table 1a Rainfall (mm) of January for crops 2011, 2012 and the long-term mean (LTM)

	North	East	South	West	Centre	Island
Crop 2011	188 (102)	480 (185)	223 (77)	288 (172)	374 (106)	304 (120)
Crop 2012	72 (39)	130 (50)	81 (28)	57 (34)	102 (29)	93 (37)
LTM	186	260	290	167	354	254

* figures in brackets are % of LTM

Cumulative rainfall for the period October 2011 to January 2012 amounted to 420 mm, 72% of the long-term mean for the island. During the same period 237 mm were recorded in the North, 505 mm in the East, 511 mm in the South, 181 mm in the West and 514 mm in the Centre. These data represented 60%, 83%, 73%, 58% and 65% of the respective long-term mean.

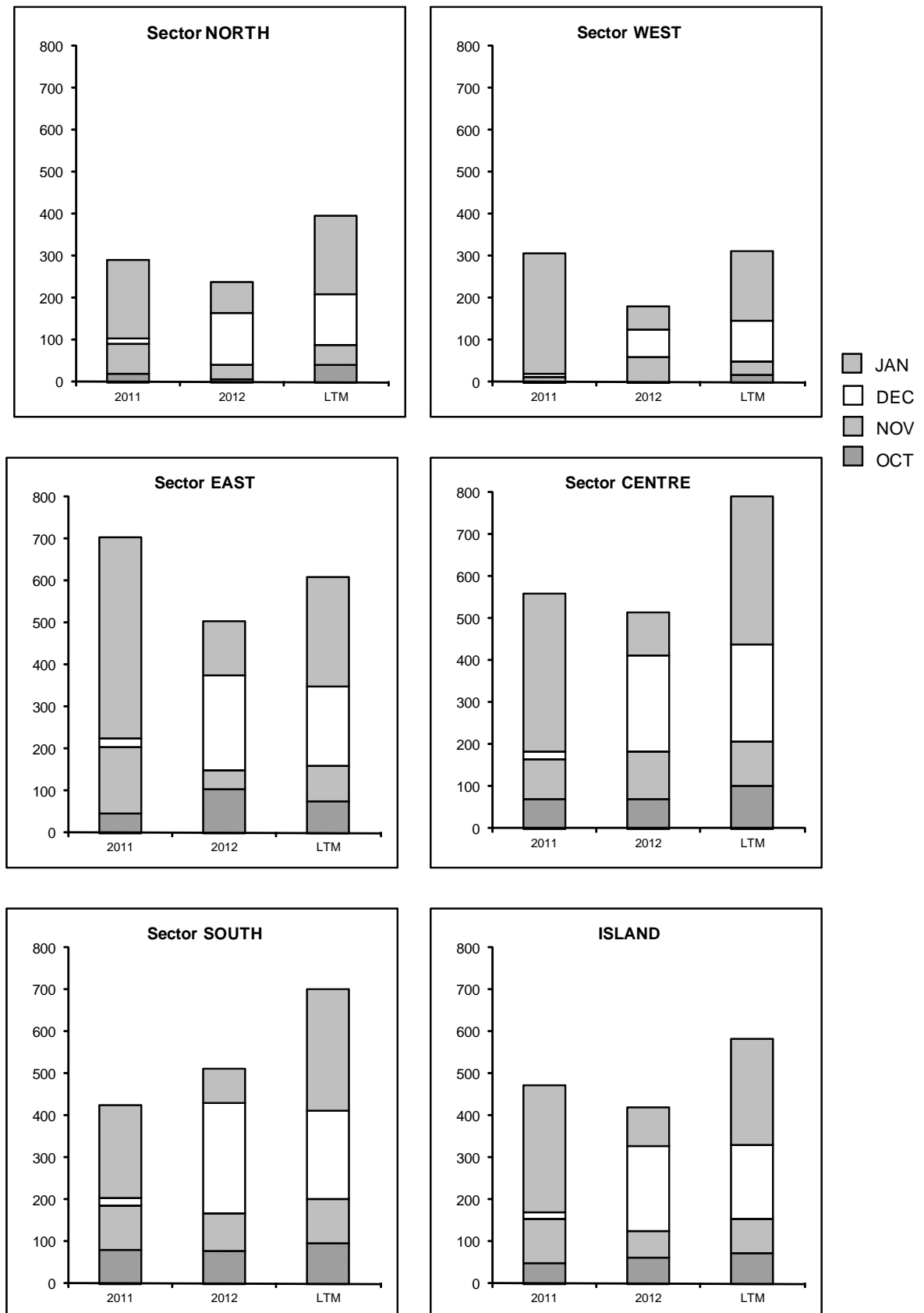
Table 1b Cumulative rainfall (mm) from October 2011 to January 2012 for crop 2012 compared to that of crop 2011 and the long-term mean (LTM)

	North	East	South	West	Centre	Island
Crop 2011	292 (74)	704 (116)	426 (61)	307 (98)	558 (70)	473 (81)
Crop 2012	237 (60)	505 (83)	511 (73)	181 (58)	514 (65)	420 (72)
LTM	395	608	701	313	792	583

* figures in brackets are % of LTM

[Source : raw provisional data from Meteorological Services]

Figure 1 Monthly rainfall (mm) for the period Oct 2011 to Jan 2012 for the 2012 crop compared to the corresponding period of the 2011 crop and to the long term mean (LTM).



2. STALK HEIGHT

Measurements of stalk height had been carried out during the last week of January 2012 at 60 sites in the five sugar cane sectors of the island. These sites are representative of the various agro-climatic zones, varieties and crop categories. Data collected are compared with those of the corresponding period in January 2011 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 2012 was superior to that of the same period in 2011 in all sectors, except in the West. During January 2012, the best stalk growth was observed in the East with 35.3 cm followed by the South (31.8 cm), the Centre (29.6 cm), the North (22.3 cm) and the West (19.2 cm). Growth during January 2012 was below normal in all sectors for the corresponding period. It lagged by 10.6 cm in the North, 6.0 cm in the East, 13.3 cm in the South, 21.1 cm in the West and 6.1 cm in the Centre. The island stalk elongation of 29.2 cm was higher than that for the corresponding period in 2011 by 8.2 cm (39.2%) but below the normal by 9.7 cm (24.8%).

Table 2a. Stalk elongation during the month of January

Sectors	Stalk elongation (cm) during Jan			Jan 2012 as % of	
	2012	2011	Normal	2011	Normal
North	22.3	13.7	32.9	162.8	67.9
East	35.3	19.9	41.3	177.4	85.4
South	31.8	27.4	45.1	116.1	70.6
West	19.2	22.4	40.3	85.7	47.6
Centre	29.6	20.0	35.7	148.0	83.0
Island	29.2	21.0	38.9	139.2	75.2

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

Total cane height at end January 2012 was 43.0 cm in the North, 85.9 cm in the East, 75.0 cm in the South, 49.0 cm in the West and 67.9 cm in the Centre to give an island average of 67.4 cm. Compared to end-January 2011, cane height was superior by 8.3 cm in the North, 33.5 cm in the East, 7.7 cm in the South, 1.8 cm in the West and 17.8 cm in the Centre. Total cane height at the end of January 2012 was lower than the normal by 16.7 cm (27.9 %) in the North, 21.1 cm (21.9%) in the South, 25.5 cm (34.2 %) in the West and 12.9 cm (15.9%) in the Centre. In the East, it was close to the normal.

At island level, the total cane height of 67.4 cm at the end of January 2012 was superior to that of the corresponding period in 2011 by 15.1 cm (29.0%) but lagged behind the normal by 13.8 cm (17.0 %).

Table 2b. Stalk height at end-January.

Sectors	Stalk height (cm) at end-Jan			End-Jan 2012 as % of	
	2012	2011	Normal	2011	Normal
North	43.0	34.7	59.7	123.9	72.1
East	85.9	52.4	86.4	163.9	99.4
South	75.0	67.3	96.1	111.4	78.1
West	49.0	47.2	74.5	103.8	65.8
Centre	67.9	50.1	80.8	135.5	84.1
Island	67.4	52.3	81.2	129.0	83.0

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The salient feature of January 2012 is the low precipitation recorded which has been detrimental to normal crop growth and development. This is prominent when comparing the total cane height measurements with the normal. The East sector with 83 % of normal rainfall to-date is the least affected and the West with only 58% cumulated rainfall is the sector with the highest setback. The higher elongation recorded in January 2012 compared to January 2011 should be taken with caution as it reflects climatic conditions observed since regrowth of all harvested crops and not the month under consideration only. However, there is still room for the 2012 crop to catch up with the normal if favourable weather conditions are encountered during the remainder of the season.

Figure 2. Stalk height at end- January 2012.

