MONTHLY AGRO-METEOROLOGICAL BULLETIN

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OVERVIEW OF CONDITIONS FOR JANUARY 2014

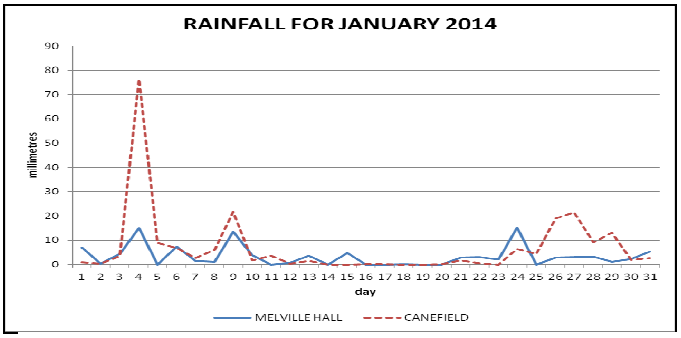

Figure 1 Daily rainfall at Canefield and Melville Hall Airports

Rainfall total at the Canefield Airport was almost twice the monthly mean. 214.1mm of rainfall was recorded. More than half of this rainfall occurred during the first 10 days of the month. The middle of the month was mostly dry with 9 consecutive dry days being recorded from the 12th to the 20th. Winds were gusty throughout the month as the Atlantic high pressure system dominated conditions. The highest wind gust was 48km/h recorded on the 4th, 5th and 12th.

Rainfall total was normal at Melville Hall for the month with 102.8mm recorded. The maximum daily total of 15.1mm was recorded on the 24th. Eight of the 11 dry days occurred during the second 10 day period with a dry spell of 5 days. Melville Hall also experienced gusty winds. The highest wind gust recorded was 63km/h on the 30th of the month.

Reports from the western and southern farming communities indicate that January was much too wet for vegetables and herbs. Crops drowned while others such as cabbages suffered from insect pest infestations and herbs and cucumbers were plagued by fungi. Root crops such as dashes and yams on the other hand fared well. In the eastern regions farmers were able to participate in land preparation activities for all types of crop. The only set back was fungal disease in some Irish potato crops as a result of the December rains.

MONTHLY WEATHER PARAMETERS FOR JANUARY

Parameter	Canefield Airport	Melville-Hall Airport
Rainfall Total **30 year average**	214.1mm 108.3mm	102.8mm 136.0mm
Wet Days (>1.0mm)	19	20
Temperature **30 year average**	26.1°C 26.4°C	26.3°C 26.1°C
Maximum Temperature	30.7°C (18th ,19th ,20th ,22nd)	29.3°C (2nd)
Minimum Temperature	20.2°C (15th)	21.1°C (30th)
Relative Humidity	65%	73%
Maximum wind gust	48km/h	63km/h
Average daily sunshine hours	-	7hrs 24mins

Table 1 Monthly weather parameters

CLIMATE SUMMARY FOR FEBRUARY

Parameter	Canefield Airport	Melville Hall Airport
Rainfall	62.1mm	112.8mm
-highest total	131.5mm (1982)	317.4mm (1995)
-lowest total	0.4mm (2010)	27.7mm (1994)
Temperature	26.9°C	26.4°C
-maximum	34.4°C (2010)	32.3°C (2010)
-minimum	18.1°C (2009)	17.2°C (2000)
Chance of 5 day dry spell	100%	66%
Chance of 10 day dry spell	73%	24%

Table 2 Climate summary for February

REGIONAL OVERVIEW ON SEASONAL CLIMATE FORECASTS

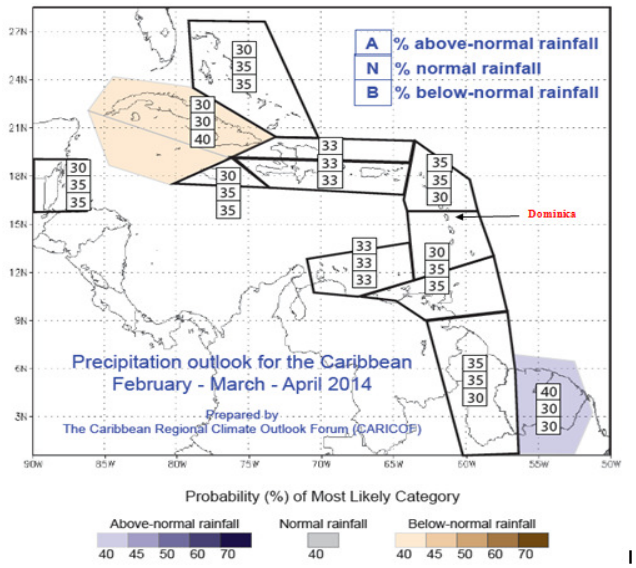

Figure 2 Precipitation outlook for the Caribbean: February-March-April 2014

- Weather expected to be mild and dry. Rainfall totals hardly predictable this period with 30% chance of above normal, 35% normal and 35% below normal amounts.
- 80% confidence for normal to above normal temperatures.

OUTLOOK FOR THE FARMING COMMUNITY

The weather is expected to be mild and dry this period as the dry season becomes more pronounced. Heavy rainfall events are expected to lessen.

The chance of heat stress in livestock and other animals will be reduced. However, proper nutrient management of grazing animals needs to be undertaken such as alternative feeding as grasses wilt and yields become low.

Irrigation management is also important so that there is adequate soil moisture for crop growth and development. Measures include:

- ❖ Harvesting rainfall
- ❖ Using compost and plastic or grass mulches to reduce soil water evaporation

The dominance of the Atlantic ridge during these months results in increased winds speeds. It means that rates of evaporation also increase compounding water deficiencies.

In high winds, the dispersal of spores such as those from *Black Sigatoka* also increases. Famers should not become dependent on spraying as the only management practice in controlling the spread of the disease. Remember that *Black Sigatoka* can build up resistance to these fungicides. In addition to spraying, proper farm management practices are very important.

- ❖ Infected leaves should be removed and destroyed.
- ❖ Do not move infected material from one place to another.
- ❖ There should be adequate spacing between plants and proper drainage on the fields.
- ❖ Continue monitoring and reporting any signs of the disease.

NM: 30th Jan FQ: 6th FM: 14th LQ:22nd

Agromet bulletins from across the region can be accessed via http://63.175.159.26/~cimh/cami/.

This bulletin is prepared by the Dominica Meteorological Service with support from the CAMI project and the Ministry of Agriculture. Feedback on this bulletin should be forwarded to The Senior Meteorological Officer at metoffice@cwdom.dm

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