



MONTHLY AGRO-METEOROLOGICAL BULLETIN

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OVERVIEW OF CONDITIONS FOR APRIL 2014

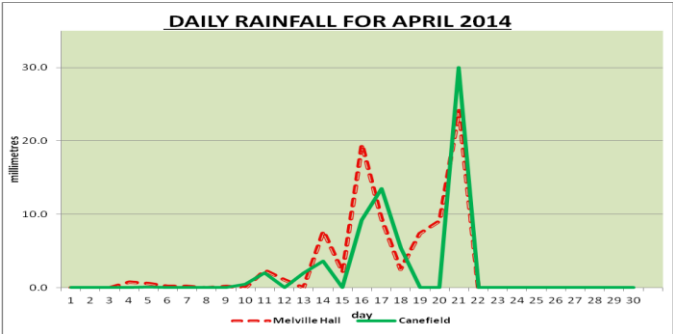


Figure 1 Daily rainfall at Canefield and Melville Hall Airports

The Atlantic high pressure system was the dominant feature for April. Meanwhile, weak instability mid-month produced some showers and broke the dry spell that became prevalent. Below normal to above normal rainfall totals were recorded across the island with occasional breezy conditions.

The Canefield Airport recorded 21% above average rainfall total for April with a total of 66.3mm of rainfall recorded. The highest daily total recorded was 30.0mm on the 21st. The number of rainfall days was normal, with 7 days recorded. Dry spells dominated the first and third dekad (ten days) of the month.

The Melville Hall Airport recorded 51% below average rainfall total with a total of 87.4mm recorded. The highest daily total recorded was 24.1mm on the 21st. The total rainfall days of 10 were down by 5 days from the normal. Dry spells length were the same as that of the Canefield Airport and that is, the dominance in the first and third dekad of the month.

Farmers' prayers were answered during mid-month when showers of blessing watered the farm lands after days of dry conditions. Despite this, an abundance of tomatoes, cucumbers, pumpkins, herbs, watermelons and plantains were observed at the markets. Irish potato farmers continued harvesting throughout the month. Land preparation for root crops establishment continued for the wet season.

Irish potato farmers reported Army Worms affecting their produce. There is a high incidence of the Chikungunya Virus, spread by the Aedes Aegypti Mosquito on island. Various measures are being undertaken to help curb the spread of the virus.

MONTHLY WEATHER PARAMETERS

Parameter	Canefield Airport	Melville-Hall Airport
Rainfall Total	66.3mm	87.4mm
30 year average	54.8mm	171.8mm
Wet Days (>1.0mm)	7	10
Temperature	27.7°C	27.2°C
30 year average	27.9°C	27.2°C
Maximum Temperature	32.6°C (23 rd)	29.9°C (8 th)
Minimum Temperature	20.9°C (17 th)	19.6°C (3 rd)
Relative Humidity	60%	71%
Maximum wind gust	56km/h	65km/h

Table 1 Monthly weather parameters

CLIMATE SUMMARY FOR MAY

Parameter	Canefield Airport	Melville Hall Airport
Rainfall	92.0mm	244.5mm
-highest total	298.3mm (1987)	815.7mm (1987)
-lowest total	9.8mm (2007)	12.1mm (2001)
Temperature	28.8°C	28.0°C
-maximum	34.6°C (2005)	33.0°C (2010)
-minimum	20.5°C (1989)	19.8°C (1984/ 1986)
Chance of 5 day dry spell	96%	53%
Chance of 10 day dry spell	50%	17%

Table 2 Climate summary for May

REGIONAL OVERVIEW ON SEASONAL CLIMATE FORECASTS

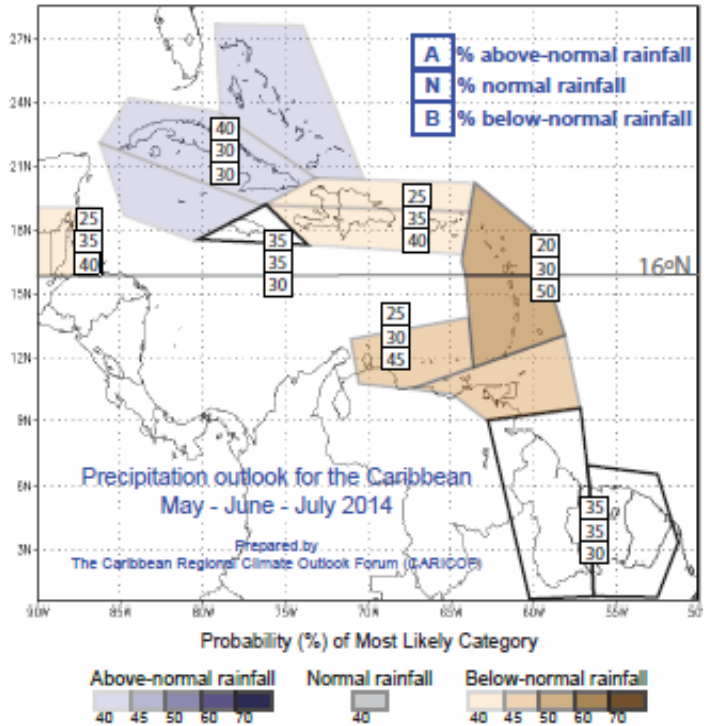


Figure 2 Precipitation outlook for the Caribbean: May – June- July 2014 (colored areas represent sub-regions in which the probabilities fall).

- Below to normal rainfall is expected with 80% confidence.
- Above to normal air temperature with 80% confidence.
- There is a 20% chance that rainfall total will be above normal, a 30% chance of being normal and a 50% chance of being below normal.

OUTLOOK FOR THE FARMING COMMUNITY

With below to normal rainfall totals expected farmers are encouraged to put in place an irrigation management system which will help maintain soil moisture. That will help in preventing the wilting of crops and enhance growth and development.

The use of compost and plastic or grass mulches will reduce soil water evaporation.

Sufficient amounts of water should be given to livestock to help prevent dehydration. Grazing animals should be provided with some form of sheltering to keep them from being exposed to direct sunlight for an excessive period. Alternative feedings may come in handy as grass yields may become low.

The Black Sigatoka Disease remains a major problem for banana and plantain farmers. Farmers should continue to adhere to protocols in the fight against this disease. Strict measures should be undertaken now more than ever, especially with the spread **Fusarium Wilt** now affecting the European and African continents.

One should be on the lookout for other pests and diseases on their farms for example the Giant African Snail.

June 1st is the official start of the Atlantic hurricane season. Records show that tropical cyclones have formed in the month of May. Therefore, preparations and mitigation measures should be put into place.

Start stocking your Hurricane Kit with: extra cash, batteries, flash lights, battery operated radio, bottled water, toilet paper, non-perishable foods such as cereal or crackers, canned goods, candles, prescription medicines and any over-the-counter remedies you use regularly.

Fusarium Wilt

Popularly known as **Panama disease**, is a lethal fungal disease caused by the soil-borne fungus.

The fungus enters the plant through the roots and colonizes the xylem vessels thereby blocking the flow of water and nutrients.

Disease progression results in the collapse of leaves at the petiole, the splitting of the stem base and eventually plant death.



The fungus can persist in soil for decades and cannot be managed using chemical pesticides.

The solution best adapted to the continued production of bananas in infested soils is replacing susceptible cultivars by resistant ones.

Chikungunya Virus

A viral disease transmitted to humans by infected *Aedes Aegypti* Mosquitoes.



It causes fever, severe joint pain, muscle pain, headache, nausea, fatigue and rash.

Farmers are advised to practice good hygiene on farms to help reduce the mosquito population.

Water stored in drums for irrigation purposes should be kept covered or thrown away if not in use.

Livestock farmers should ensure that waste water is not collected in ponds around farms.

A proper drainage system should be put in place to avoid the buildup of stagnant water.

☾FQ: 7th ○FM: 14th ●LQ: 21st ●NM: 28th

The first-ever Agriculture and Forestry Festival will be held during the week of May 12th to 17th, 2014 under the theme “Agriculture and Forestry: Our Sustainable Future”.

Agromet bulletins can be accessed via http://www.weather.gov.dm/agro_bulletin.php, <http://63.175.159.26/~cimh/cami/>. Request for hard copies can be made at the Dominica Meteorological Service or Ministry of Agriculture.

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