CARIBBEAN AGRO-CLIMATIC BULLETIN OF THE CARISAM

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A joint bulletin of the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI) and the Caribbean Institute for Meteorology and Hydrology (CIMH). As of May 2017, the previous monthly CAMI bulletin transitions into the Caribbean Agro-Climatic Bulletin of the CariSAM.

KEY MESSAGES

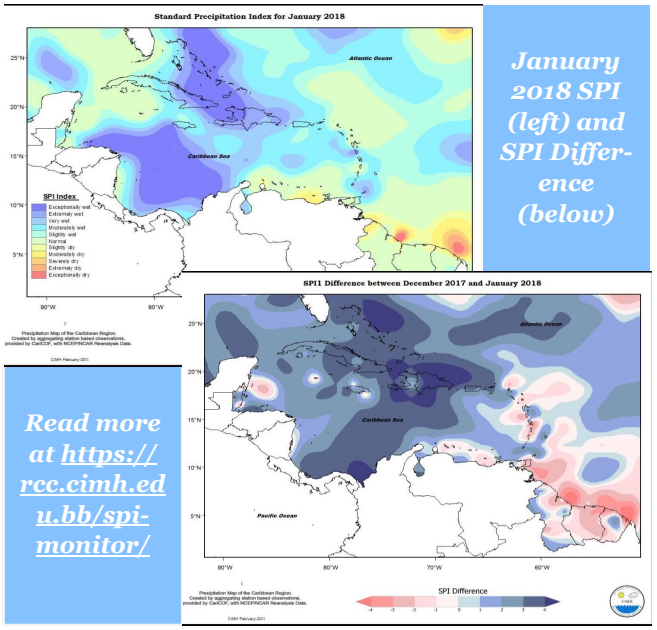
During the latter part of the dry season, the northwest of the Caribbean may be wetter than usual. By contrast, drier than usual conditions may persist in the Lesser Antilles. Despite this, drought should not be a major concern in the region by the end of the dry season, with the exception of the ABC Islands, St. Maarten, Cayman Islands, and western Cuba.

JANUARY IN REVIEW

Normal to above normal rainfall was experienced across the eastern Caribbean island chain for January. Trinidad was normal to moderately wet; Tobago and Dominica very to extremely wet; Grenada very wet; Barbados, St. Kitts, St. Thomas moderately wet; St. Lucia, Guadeloupe, Antigua and St. Maarten normal; and Martinique slight to moderately wet. The Guianas were predominantly normal apart from coastal areas that were normal to below normal and the southeast French Guiana that was slightly wet. Aruba was slightly dry, while Curacao was normal.

Puerto Rico was moderately wet, while conditions in Hispaniola ranged from exceptionally wet in northern Haiti to very wet in southern Dominican Republic. Most of Jamaica was moderately wet with the western extreme very to extremely wet, while Grand Cayman was normal. Conditions in Cuba ranged from normal in the west to exceptionally wet in the east. Belize was moderately wet in central areas to normal to the north and south.

For January, much of the Caribbean experienced increasing relative wetness since last month, with only a few islands in the east being relatively drier.



January 2018 SPI (left) and SPI Difference (below)

Read more at https://rcc.cimh.edu.bb/spi-monitor/

AGRI-NEWS

The Government of the Republic of China (Taiwan) has once again pledged its support to the agriculture industry in the Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis with the Handing Over of the Vegetable, Fruit and Upland Crop Quality and Safety Improvement (VFUCQSI) Project Facility. Read more at https://caribbeannewsservice.com/now/st-kitts-taiwan-continues-strong-support-of-agriculture-sector/

The Canadian Government under the PROPEL project continues to assist the Barbados Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and Water Resource Management to encourage Barbadians to grow more food. Read more at https://caribbeannewsservice.com/now/barbados-canada-assisting-with-food-growing-efforts/

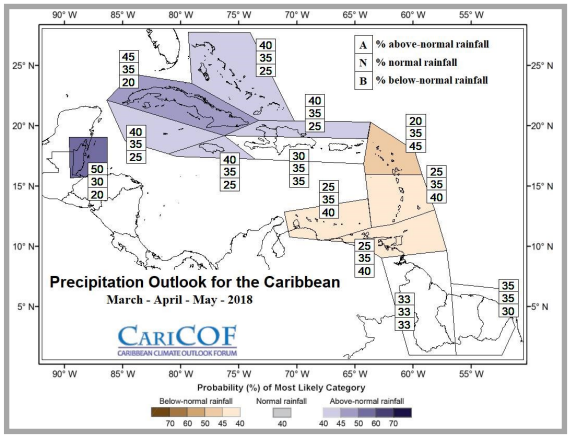
ABOUT CariSAM

The Caribbean Society for Agricultural Meteorology (CariSAM) is an online platform that hosts forums, provided online weather and climate information for agro-meteorologists, and much more. Agricultural interests can register and access relevant information and be a part of future capacity building exercises, and more. Visit us at: *www.carisam.cimh.edu.bb*

REGIONAL OUTLOOKS

MARCH—APRIL—MAY 2018

Rainfall is likely to be above- to normal in The Bahamas, Belize, Cayman Islands, Cuba, Jamaica, northern Hispaniola, but below- to normal in the ABC Islands, Barbados, The Leeward Islands, Trinidad and Tobago, and The Windward Islands.

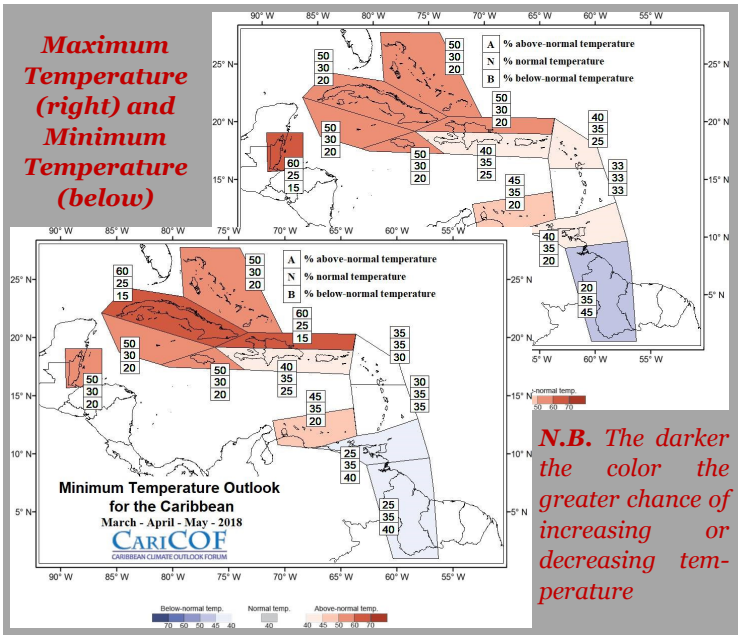


Flash flood and long-term flooding potential from very wet spells (from St. Maarten southwards) may become a concern, especially in May.

However, ***the chance of having at least three 7-day dry spells is above to normal*** across the region, likely increasing the need for irrigation where crops are growing.

Night-time (minimum) and day-time (maximum) temperatures in the Caribbean are likely to be above- to normal, except Guyana and, at night, Trinidad and Tobago.

Maximum Temperature (right) and Minimum Temperature (below)



N.B. *The darker the color the greater chance of increasing or decreasing temperature*

There are no concerns for short-term drought (until the end of May 2018) across most of the region with the exception of the ABC Islands, St. Maarten, Cayman Islands, and western Cuba, where water resources should at least be closely monitored, except in the ABC islands where more stringent measures might have to be taken. *Visit* ***https://rcc.cimh.edu.bb/long-range-forecasts/caricof-climate-outlooks/***

CLIMATE-SMART ADVISORIES

The incidence of pests and diseases (e.g. bacterial leaf diseases and water mold) could be an issue in territories where there is above normal rainfall. Follow the guidelines from your local agricultural representatives to effectively control pests and diseases.

Some citrus crops may suffer root damage and yellowing of foliage due to excess soil wetness. Alternately, periods of dry spells may result in new growth and blooms.

In territories where flash flood potential may be a concern , farmers are advised to:

- Maintain drains around crop beds and/or plant crops on raised beds
- House animals on high ground and/or on raised pens
- Store fertilizer, feeds and pesticides away from moisture and water sources

In regions where rainfall amounts are likely to be below normal, techniques such as mulching could be employed so as to conserve soil moisture.

Lower night-time temperatures favour pollen viability and would also give rise to increased crop production. However in regions where higher day-time and night-time temperatures could be a reality, this could given rise to heat stress for crops and livestock. Therefore the farmer should take necessary precautions against heat stress.

Did you know???

It is advisable not to grow continuously the same crop or crops of the same family on a given land area. This may decline in soil fertility and a buildup of pests and diseases. To avoid these problems and ensure better yields, a crop rotation scheme must be completed. Read more from *Production Planning: A Farmer's Guide* at http://www.caribbeanfarmers.org/index.php/styles/fact-sheets

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