

# ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA MONTHLY AGROMETEOROLOGICAL BULLETIN

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA METEOROLOGICAL SERVICE CLIMATE SECTION

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Antigua and Barbuda Meteorological Service (ABMS) [Climate Section](#) is looking forward to participating in the next Dry Season [Caribbean Climate Outlook Forum](#) schedule for St. Kitts in Late November. One of the main and exciting outcomes of this forum will be the automation of the climate outlooks for the region. Additionally, we would like to official announce the unveiling of our ABC Reef Watch. We continue to welcome feedback on this product and any other related matters.

## NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL SUMMARY – OCT 2015

According to the extension officers attached to the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), farmers more than welcomed the timely showers this month, as they have been battling dry conditions. Reportedly, there has been an improvement in soil moisture levels across majority of the growing regions. Therefore, some farmers have decided to proceed with seeding activities, while others remain cautious.

As a result of the increased precipitation, farmers were less dependent on government supplied water from the state owned Antigua Public Utilities Authority (APUA). In speaking with the company's water production manager, he outlined that the situation remains unchanged from the previous month. Water supply coming from desalination and ground water sources, still remains fixed at 92% and 8% respectively. Furthermore, all surface catchments are still dry or below extraction levels. Therefore, as stated in the previous bulletin, to deal with the water situation on island, APUA has purchased a desalination plant that is still expected to come online next month.

For October, there has been a notable increase in sowing activities as farmers are currently planting crops such as sweet potatoes, cassava, tomatoes, pumpkins, onions and carrots. At the same time, harvest activities are also underway for okras, butternut squash, eggplant, melons and cucumbers. It is also of importance to note, that although there is a lot of butternut available, it not sufficient to be considered a glut. Additionally, one extension officer expressed puzzlement over the hike in prices for the crop as he expected the costs to be going in the opposite direction. Nevertheless prices remain inflated at \$4.50 to \$4.75 per pound versus the normal \$3.25 to \$3.50 per pound. No reasonable explanation was given as to the cause behind the increase.

Across some farms, producers have been complaining about the increase in pests, resulting from the uptick in moisture. Worms are reportedly wreaking havoc on agricultural produce

to the point where some farmers are reducing seeding activities, so as to help deal with the situation. According to the MoA, there have been crop losses of spinach, cucumbers and squash. Additionally, concerns are also being raised about the potential increased infestation of the Giant African Snail. Officials from the MoA have stated that there are 16 locations on island under threat. They further expressed that the crop damage sustained has yet to be quantified.



*Figure 1: Eggplants being grown at Carlisle; Credit: Kenrick Francis*

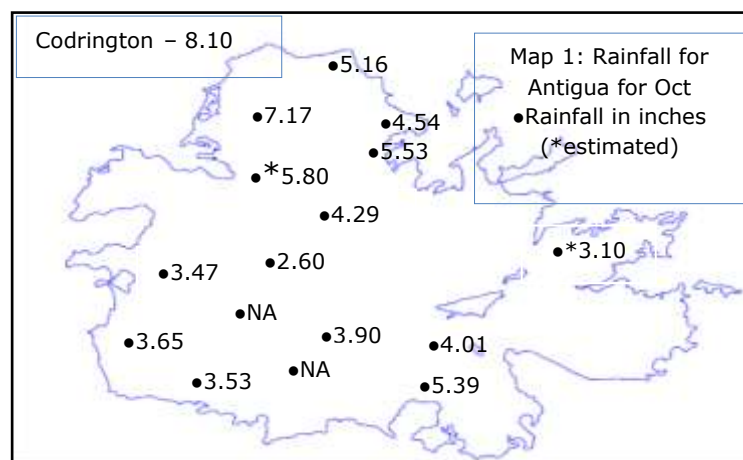
The livestock division has stated that although many ponds remain dry or near dry, there has been an improvement in feed for animals. However, some producers are still practicing the cut and carry system (where feed, crop residues and/ or litter is cut and carried from communal areas and/or other farms to livestock) in order to provide nourishment for their animals. In comparison to the previous month, cattle are showing marked signs of improvement, thanks to the favorable weather throughout month.

## WEATHER SUMMARY IN BRIEF FOR ANTIGUA – OCT 2015

October started off on a very hot note as the island was in the grips of its second heatwave to date for the year. The highest

temperature measured at V. C. Bird International Airport (VCBIA) of 34.0 °C (93.2 °F), recorded on the first day of the month, is the fifth highest on record dating back to 1971. The sixth warmest temperature was also recorded during the month – 33.9 °C (93.0 °C). Further, the mean daily maximum temperature at VCBIA tied with five other years for the highest ever for October on record, while the mean daily minimum tied with 2001 for the highest on record for the month. Meanwhile, the mean temperature of 28.1 °C (82.6 °F) was well above normal and tied with 2001 for the third highest for October.

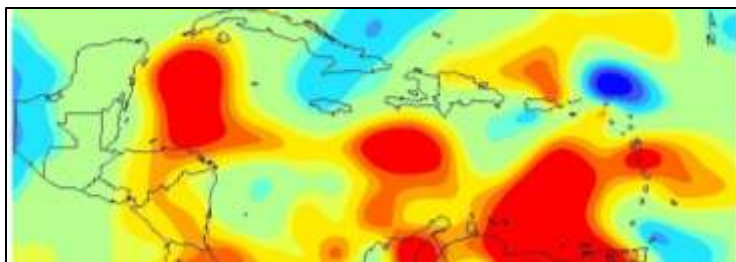
To date for the year, October is the second wettest month, despite finishing with below normal rainfall. The rainfall on average for the island was 90.7 mm (3.57 in). The number of wet days (days with at least one mm) and heavy rainfall days (days with at least 10mm) recorded at the V.C Bird International Airport were both near normal. The maximum 24-hour total recorded was 34.9 mm (1.37 in).



Moreover, the rainfall for the month has aided in slightly downgrading the intensity of the drought from severe to serious. August to October is now the seventh driest such period on record, dating back to 1928.

### WEATHER SUMMARY IN BRIEF FOR THE REGION – OCT 2015

Apart from Tobago that was moderately wet, rainfall across the Eastern Caribbean was normal to below normal. Trinidad and St. Lucia were moderate to slightly dry; Grenada, St. Vincent, St. Kitts, Anguilla and St. Croix normal; Barbados and St. Maarten moderately dry ([SPI explanation](#)). [Read more...](#)



Map 2: Standardised Precipitation Index (SPI) for October

## WEATHER AND CLIMATE OUTLOOKS FOR ANTIGUA

### EXPERIMENTAL MONTHLY OUTLOOK – NOVEMBER

#### Rainfall

Equal chance of below, near or above normal rainfall i.e. **96.5-165.1 mm** (3.8-6.5 in). Probabilistically, there is a

- **33%** chance of above normal rainfall;
- **33%** chance of near normal rainfall and
- **33%** chance of below normal rainfall.

#### Temperature

Equal chance of below, near or above normal temperature i.e. **26.6-27.1°C** (79.9-80.8 °F). Probabilistically, there is a

- **33%** chance of above normal temperature;
- **33%** chance of near normal temperature and
- **33%** chance of below normal temperature.

### SEASONAL OUTLOOKS – NOVEMBER TO JANUARY

#### Rainfall

Below normal to normal rainfall is most likely i.e. less than **378.5 mm** (14.9 in). Probabilistically, there is a

- 25% chance of above normal rainfall;
- 35% chance of near normal rainfall and
- **40% chance of below normal rainfall.**

#### Temperature

Above normal temperature is most likely i.e. greater than **26.3 °C** (79.3 °F). Probabilistically, there is a

- **75%** chance of above normal temperature;
- 20% chance of near normal temperature and
- 5% chance of below normal temperature.

The [rainfall outlook](#) for the next three months does not look as disheartening as previous ones. The probabilities of below normal rainfall remain relatively low (See inserts on the left). Meanwhile, for November and February to April, there are equal chances of below, near or above normal rainfall. As for temperature, it should be above normal for most of the next six months. For short-term agricultural planning, the [7-Day Forecast](#) and [Hazardous Weather Outlook](#) are recommended tools.

### Acknowledgements

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