

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 ([CliSec](#)) was happy to participate in the recently held Dry Season [Caribbean Climate Outlook Forum](#) at the Marriott St. Kitts in Late November. We were especially pleased that the organizers allowed two persons from our Climate Section to attend, instead of the usual one participant. Antigua and Barbuda was the only country fortunate to have had more than one participant from the meteorological/climatological service. Please share your feedback all of our products.

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL SUMMARY – NOV 2015

Growing conditions across the major growing regions of the island were generally good throughout the month of November. As a result of the much-needed showers that fell, farmers took full advantage by moving forward with planting activities. However, many expressed that the rainfall was unevenly distributed with some areas benefitting more than others. Due to this, soil moisture reserves differed across the island. In fact, the germination process was slow in areas that registered low rainfall amounts.

In an interview with extension officers attached to the Ministry of Agricultural, it was highlighted that farmers moved ahead with seeding crops such as sweet peppers, corn, sweet potatoes and cassavas. Additionally, the harvest campaign consisted of okras, pumpkins, butternut squashes, sorrels and eggplants.

The situation remained unchanged from last month as butternut squashes are still plentiful on the market but not at a level to be considered a glut. After speaking with various ministry officials, it's safe to say that the only glut at present is that of okras. The price of the commodity is normally \$3.00 per pound; however, this month, prices have been slashed in half. For butternut squashes, prices have stabilized in the public markets at \$3.50 per pound; however, they remain high in supermarkets at \$4.50 per pound. Additionally, tomatoes, sweet peppers and onions are scarce.

One of the downsides to the continued rainfall this month is the increase in weed growth and the worm population across farms. Therefore, as a result of this, farmers have somewhat intensified the use of herbicides and pesticides to help deal with the situation. So far, the crop loss from worms has not been quantified.

Conditions have also gotten better for farm animals. Livestock farmers have stated that although ponds remain dry, there has been an improvement in feed as animals have been

gaining weight, contrary to what happened for most of the year. As a result of this, livestock officers are suggesting culling so as to maximize profit before animals start to feel the effects of the dry season.

Notwithstanding, water remains a major challenge for many farmers. The potable water deficit remains at about 25%. Farmers must irrigate if they are to produce a financially viable crop. However, there's just not enough water to go around.

Farmers are encouraged to practice climate smart agriculture, which emphasizes the need for water conservation and efficiency. This is especially so in times of rainfall deficits. [Water efficiency](#) by farmers can be improved by making the right decisions on crop selection, irrigation scheduling and methods and source of water.



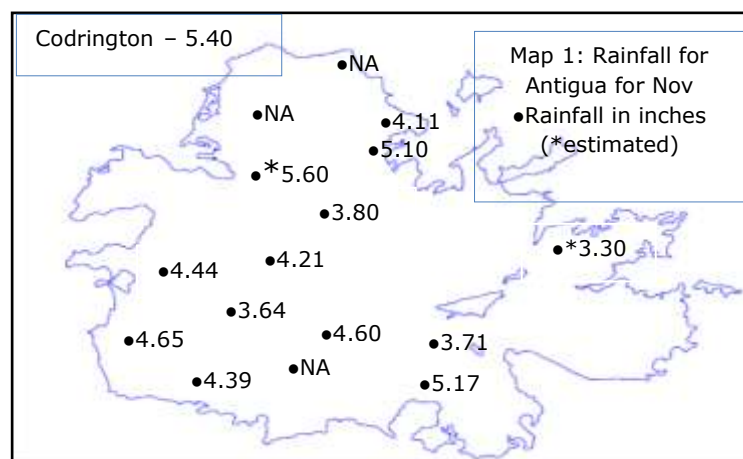
One acre of okras left in the field due to glut.
Credit Kenrick Francis – Extension Officer

WEATHER SUMMARY IN BRIEF FOR ANTIGUA – NOV 2015

[Warm nights](#) and [normal wetness](#) prevailed through November. The mean minimum temperature, an indicator (proxy) of night-time temperature, was above normal. At the V. C. Bird International Airport (VCBIA) it was 24.4 °C (75.9 °F), the sixth highest on record, tying Novembers 2012, 2009 and

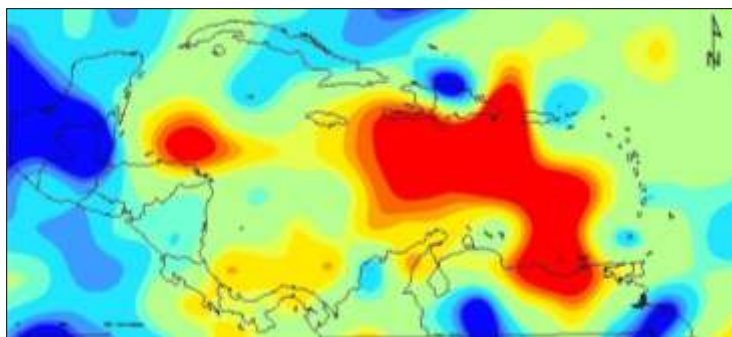
1992. Overall, the mean temperature for November was near normal – 27.0 °C (80.6 °F). However, it tied with 2012 for the warmest November since 2009 and second warmest November since 2002. The absolute maximum and minimum temperatures were 30.5 °C (86.9 °F) and 22.6 °C (72.7 °F) respectively.

The rainfall for the month has eased the drought from serious to moderate levels ([See the Drought and Precipitation Statement for more](#)). Rainfall on average across the island was 105.7 mm (4.16 in). So far, this has been the wettest month of the year. In fact, it is only one of four months with more than four inches of rain since December 2013. The number of wet days, 16, (days with at least one mm) and heavy rainfall days, four, (days with at least 10 mm) recorded at the VCBIA were above normal and near normal respectively. The maximum 24-hour total was 25.9 mm (1.02 in). [Read more...](#)



WEATHER SUMMARY IN BRIEF FOR THE REGION – NOV 2015

Apart from Trinidad that was slightly dry, normal to above normal rainfall was experienced in the islands of the eastern Caribbean for November. Tobago, Barbados, St. Vincent, Dominica, St. Kitts, Anguilla, and St Maarten were normal; Grenada moderately wet; and St. Lucia and St. Croix slightly wet. ([SPI explanation](#)). [Read more...](#)



Map 2: Standardised Precipitation Index (SPI) for November

WEATHER AND CLIMATE OUTLOOKS FOR ANTIGUA

EXPERIMENTAL MONTHLY OUTLOOK – DECEMBER

Rainfall

Equal chance of below, near or above normal rainfall. Normal is **73.7-101.6 mm** (2.9-4.0 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

Above normal temperature is most likely i.e. greater than **26.1 °C** (79.0 °F). Probabilistically, there is a

- **70% chance of above normal temperature;**
- 20% chance of near normal temperature and
- 10% chance of below normal temperature.

SEASONAL OUTLOOKS – DECEMBER TO FEBRUARY

Rainfall

Near to below normal rainfall is most likely i.e. less than **256.5 mm** (<10.1 in). Probabilistically, there is a

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

Temperature

Above normal temperature is most likely i.e. greater than **25.7 °C** (78.3 °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 are much lower than previous months (See above). Meanwhile, for December and March to May, there are equal chances of below, near or above normal rainfall.

As for temperature, it is likely to be warmer than 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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