MAURITIUS SUGAR INDUSTRY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Ref A 1/2012 9 January 2012

SUGAR CANE CROP 2012

Status: End December 2011

1. CLIMATE

1.1 Rainfall (Tables 1a and 1b, Figure 1)

Rainfall recorded over the sugar cane areas of the island during December 2011 was 201 mm and represented 114% of the long-term mean. Above normal rainfall was recorded in sectors North, East and South with 123 mm, 226 mm and 263 mm, which represented 102%, 120% and 126% of their long-term mean, respectively. In the West, the 64 mm of rain recorded was below the long-term mean for December by 33%, whereas the Centre recorded normal precipitation with 230 mm.

Table 1a Rainfall (mm) of December for crops 2011, 2012 and the long-term mean (LTM)

	North	East	South	West	Centre	Island
Crop 2011	**11** *(9)*	**19** *(10)*	**18** *(9)*	**7** *(7)*	**19** *(8)*	**16** *(9)*
Crop 2012	**123** *(102)*	**226** *(120)*	**263** *(126)*	**64** *(67)*	**230** *(99)*	**201** *(114)*
LTM	120	188	209	96	231	176

* figures in brackets are % of LTM

Cumulative rainfall, for the period October to December 2011 for the island was 327 mm and was close to the long-term mean of 330 mm. For that same period, 165 mm were recorded in the North, 375 mm in the East, 430 mm in the South, 124 mm in the West and 412 mm in the Centre. These amounts represented 79%, 108%, 105%, 85%, and 94% of their respective long-term mean.

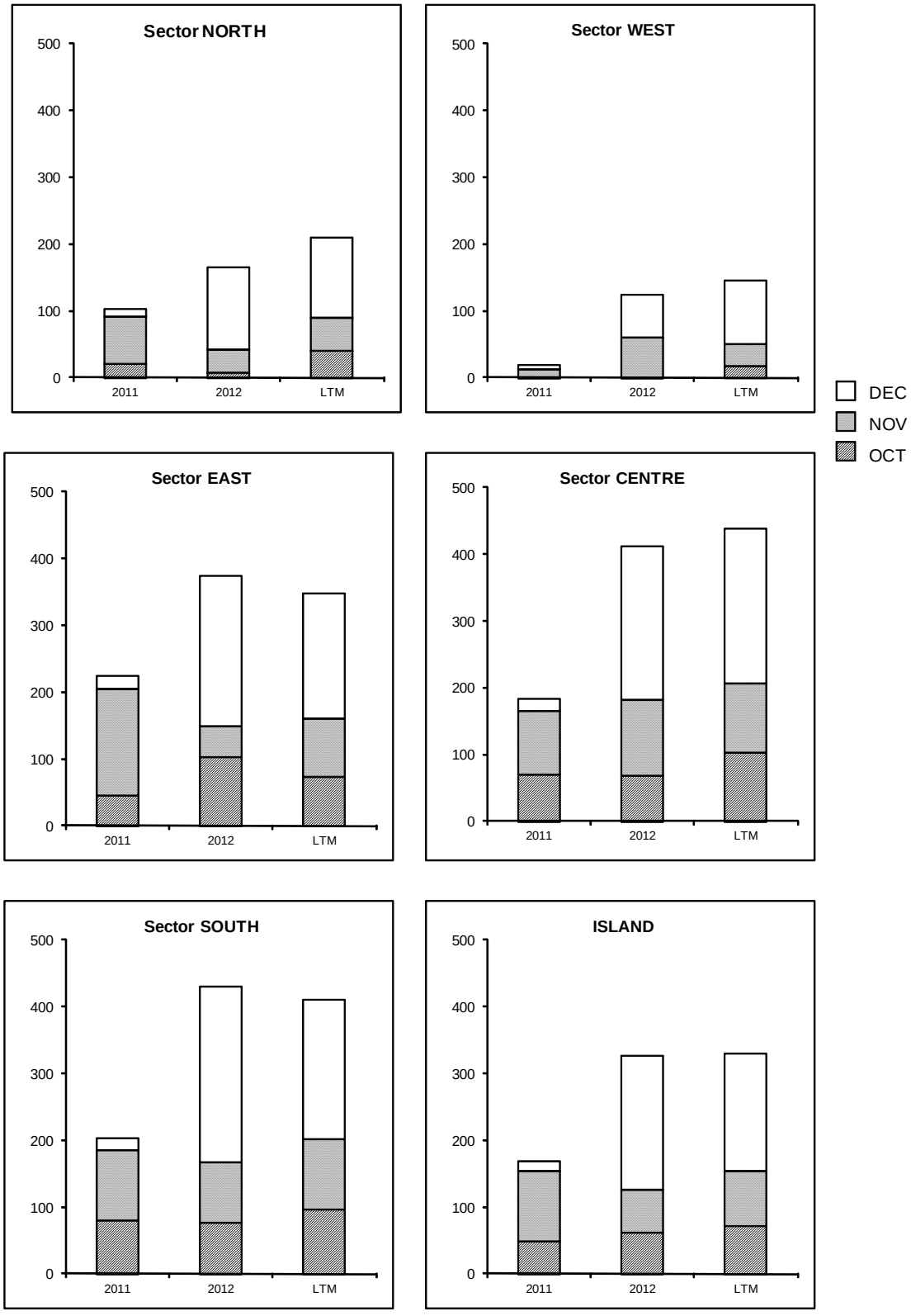
Table 1b Cumulative rainfall (mm) from October to December 2011 for crop 2012 compared to that of crop 2011 and the long-term mean (LTM)

	North	East	South	West	Centre	Island
Crop 2011	**103** *(49)*	**224** *(64)*	**203** *(49)*	**19** *(13)*	**184** *(42)*	**169** *(51)*
Crop 2012	**165** *(79)*	**375** *(108)*	**430** *(105)*	**124** *(85)*	**412** *(94)*	**327** *(99)*
LTM	209	348	411	146	438	330

* figures in brackets are % of LTM

[Source : raw provisional data from Meteorological Services]

Figure 1 Monthly rainfall (mm) for the period Oct to Dec 2011 for the 2012 crop compared to the corresponding period of the 2011 crop and to the long term mean (LTM).



2. STALK HEIGHT *(Table 2)*

Initial measurements of stalk height were made during the last week of December 2011 at 60 sites in the five sugar cane sectors of the island. These sites are representative of the various agro-climatic zones, varieties and crop categories. The measurements are compared to those of the corresponding period in December 2010 and to the mean of the five best cane yielding crops of the period 2002 to 2011 in each sector (referred to as normal).

The average stalk height at end-December 2011 stood at 20.7 cm in the North, 50.6 cm in the East, 43.2 cm in the South, 29.8 cm in the West and 38.3 cm in the Centre. Compared to the corresponding period in 2010, cane height at end December 2011 was comparable in the North whereas in the other sectors it was taller by 18.1 cm in the East, 3.3 cm in the South, 5.0 cm in the West and 8.2 cm in the Centre.

Cane height in December 2011 exceeded the normal by 5.5 cm in the East whereas in the other sectors it was below normal. It lagged by 22.8% (6.1 cm) in the North, 15.3% (7.8 cm) in the South, 12.6% (4.3 cm) in the West and 15.1% (6.8 cm) in the Centre.

Island-wise the cane height of 38.2 cm as at end-December 2011 was higher than the 31.3 cm of end-December 2010 by 22.0% (6.9 cm) but lagged behind the normal (42.3 cm) by 9.7% (4.1 cm).

Table 2. Stalk height at end-December

	Stalk height (cm) at end-Dec			End-Dec 2011 as % of	
Sectors	**2011**	**2010**	**Normal**	**2010**	**Normal**
North	20.7	21.0	26.8	98.6	77.2
East	50.6	32.5	45.1	155.7	112.2
South	43.2	39.9	51.0	108.3	84.7
West	29.8	24.8	34.1	120.2	87.4
Centre	38.3	30.1	45.1	127.2	84.9
Island	**38.2**	**31.3**	**42.3**	**122.0**	**90.3**

3 CROP 2012

Weather during the regrowth period has been more favourable for the 2012 crop when compared to that experienced by the 2011 crop. This is reflected by the initial stalk height data, with those for the 2012 crop being superior to that for the 2011 crop in all sectors except in the North where it lagged behind by only 0.3 cm. For the island the average stalk height was 22% higher than at the corresponding period for the 2011 crop but it remained 9.7% lower than the normal. This shortfall can be easily recouped if favourable weather continues to prevail. The present situation therefore augurs well for the 2012 crop.