

MAURITIUS SUGARCANE INDUSTRY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

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6 April 2012

SUGAR CANE CROP 2012

Status: End March 2012

1. CLIMATE

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

Rainfall recorded over the sugar cane areas of the island in March 2012 was 368 mm and represented 148% of the long-term mean. March rainfall exceeded the long-term mean by 98 mm (61%) in the North, 225 mm (93%) in the East, 69 mm (21%) in the South, 49 mm (44%) in the West and 83 mm (25%) in the Centre.

Rainfall for the period October 2011 to March 2012 cumulated to 1007 mm for the island. This was 13% lower than the island long-term mean of 1159 mm for that period. During that same period, 606 mm were recorded in the North, 1232 mm in the East, 1173 mm in the South, 448 mm in the West and 1228 mm in the Centre. These amounts represented 76%, 104%, 84%, 70%, and 77% of the respective long-term mean.

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

	North	East	South	West	Centre	Island
Crop 2011	373 (232)	582 (240)	365 (112)	157 (140)	384 (114)	410 (165)
Crop 2012	259 (161)	468 (193)	394 (121)	161 (144)	420 (125)	368 (148)
LTM	161	243	325	112	337	248

* figures in brackets are % of LTM

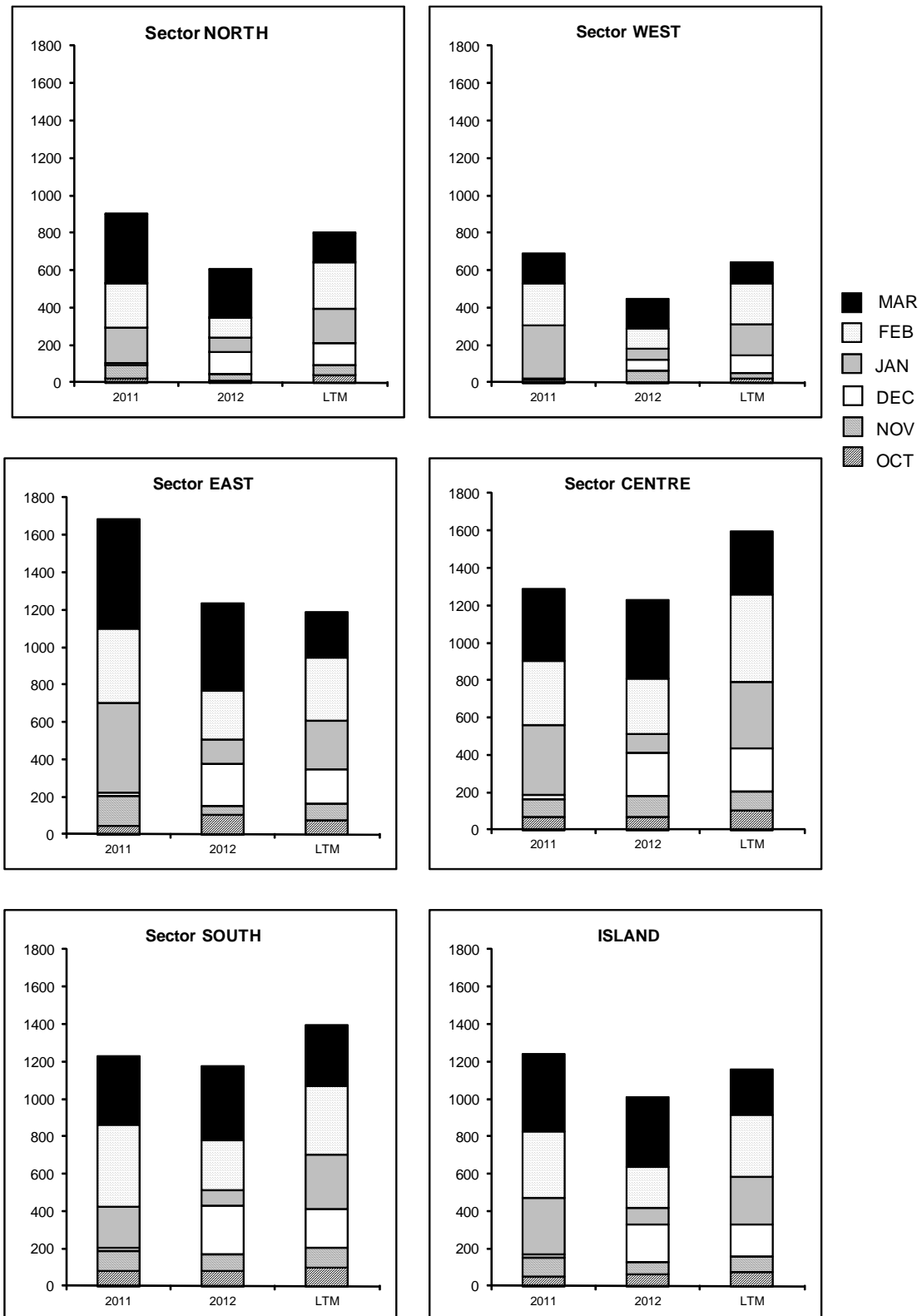
Table 1b Cumulative rainfall (mm) from October 2011 to March 2012 for crop 2012 compared to that of crop 2011 and the long-term mean (LTM)

	North	East	South	West	Centre	Island
Crop 2011	906 (113)	1682 (142)	1229 (88)	687 (107)	1288 (81)	1239 (107)
Crop 2012	606 (76)	1232 (104)	1173 (84)	448 (70)	1228 (77)	1007 (87)
LTM	801	1187	1392	644	1593	1159

* figures in brackets are % of LTM

[Source : raw provisional data from Meteorological Services]

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



2. STALK HEIGHT

Cane growth was assessed during the last week of March 2012 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. Data collected are compared with those of the corresponding period in March 2011 and to the mean of the five best cane yielding crops of the last ten years in each sector (referred to as normal).

2.1 Stalk elongation (Table 2a)

Stalk elongation during the month of March 2012 was lower than during the corresponding period in 2011 in all sectors. It amounted to 46.0 cm in the North, 49.8 cm in the East, 50.2 cm in the South, 36.8 cm in the West and 46.4 cm in the Centre. These growth increments are inferior to those of 2011 by 21.4 cm, 8.7 cm, 7.9 cm, 26.0 cm and 9.7 cm, respectively. Compared to the normal for the same period, elongation rates of March 2012 was lower in the North by 8.9 cm and in the West by 11.1 cm. In the South, it was comparable to the normal whereas in the East and Centre, it was higher by 3.1 cm and 1.5 cm, respectively. The 47.7 cm average elongation for the island represented 78.6% of that recorded in March 2011 (60.6 cm) and 96.4% of the normal (49.5 cm).

Table 2a. Stalk elongation during the month of March

Sectors	Stalk elongation (cm) during March			March 2012 as % of	
	2012	2011	Normal	2011	Normal
North	46.0	67.4	54.9	68.2	83.8
East	49.8	58.5	46.7	85.1	106.5
South	50.2	58.1	50.7	86.4	99.0
West	36.8	62.8	47.9	58.6	76.9
Centre	46.4	56.1	44.9	82.7	103.2
Island	47.7	60.6	49.5	78.6	96.4

2.2 Cumulative Elongation (Table 2b)

Cumulative growth from end-December 2011 to end-March 2012 reached 94.9 cm in the North, 119.8 cm in the East, 115.7 cm in the South, 83.5 cm in the West and 110.9 cm in the Centre. These data were inferior to those of 2011 in all sectors, the difference being 31.0 cm (24.6%) in the North, 6.9 cm (5.4%) in the East, 17.7 cm (13.3%) in the South, 52.3 cm (38.5%) in the West and 4.2 cm (3.6%) in the Centre.

Table 2b. Cumulative elongation at end-March.

Sectors	Cumulative elongation (cm) at end-March			March 2012 as % of	
	2012	2011	Normal	2011	Normal
North	94.9	125.9	134.0	75.4	70.8
East	119.8	126.7	132.5	94.6	90.4
South	115.7	133.4	142.5	86.7	81.2
West	83.5	135.8	136.8	61.5	61.0
Centre	110.9	115.1	117.2	96.4	94.6
Island	108.8	128.2	134.9	84.9	80.6

For the same period, growth was below normal in all sectors. The difference amounted to 39.1 cm (29.2%) in the North, 12.7 cm (9.6%) in the East, 26.8 cm (18.8 %) in the South, 53.3 cm (39.0%) in the West and 6.3 cm (5.4%) in the Centre. Island-wise the cumulative elongation of 108.8 cm is inferior to that of the 2011 crop (128.2 cm) and to the normal (134.9 cm) by 15.1% and 19.4% respectively.

2.3 Total cane height (Table 2c and Figure 2)

At end-March 2012, total cane height stood at 115.6 cm in the North, 170.4 cm in the East, 158.9 cm in the South, 113.3 cm in the West and 149.2 cm in the Centre, giving an island average of 147.0 cm. Compared to the corresponding period in March 2011, cane was taller in the East and Centre by 11.2 cm and 4.0 cm respectively but shorter in the North, South and West by 31.3 cm, 14.4 cm and 47.3 cm respectively. Total cane height at the end of March 2012 lagged behind the normal by 45.2 cm (29.1 %) in the North, 7.1 cm (4.0 %) in the East, 34.6 cm (17.9%) in the South, 57.6 cm (33.7 %) in the West and 13.1 cm (8.1%) in the Centre.

Island-wise the total cane height of 147.0 cm at end-March 2012 was inferior to that at end-March 2011 by 12.5 cm (7.8%) and the normal by 30.2 cm (17.1%).

Table 2c. Stalk height at end-March.

Sectors	Stalk height (cm) at end-March			End-March 2012 as % of	
	2012	2011	Normal	2011	Normal
North	115.6	146.9	160.8	78.7	71.9
East	170.4	159.2	177.5	107.0	96.0
South	158.9	173.3	193.5	91.7	82.1
West	113.3	160.6	170.9	70.5	66.3
Centre	149.2	145.2	162.3	102.8	91.9
Island	147.0	159.5	177.2	92.2	82.9

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Rainfall recorded during the month of March contributed towards removing the soil water stress that existed in the North, West and other low rainfall areas. Nevertheless, stalk elongation during March suffered from a slow development of the crop particularly in the North and West sectors with only around 60% of the growth recorded in March 2011. As a result at end-March, total cane height was lagging behind that of 2011 and the normal at the same period, the difference being 12.5 cm and 30.2 cm respectively. The current picture is therefore one of below normal crop productivity in 2012 unless very favourable weather is experienced in the coming months.

Figure 2. Stalk height at end-March 2012.

