MAURITIUS SUGAR INDUSTRY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Ref A 1/2009 14 January 2009

SUGAR CANE CROP 2009

Status: End December 2008

1. CLIMATE

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

Rainfall recorded during December 2008 was below the long-term mean in all sectors of the island. The island average of 94 mm represented 46% of the long-term mean (204 mm) for the sugar cane areas. Rainfall recorded in December was 51 mm in the North, 139 mm in the East, 75 mm in the South, 50 mm in the West and 171 mm in the Centre. These amounts represented 39%, 67%, 30%, 44%, and 65% of the long-term mean of these sectors, i.e. 132 mm, 209 mm, 249 mm, 114 mm, and 263 mm respectively.

Cumulative rainfall for the period October to December 2008 reached 137 mm in the North, 421 mm in the East, 400 mm in the South, 134 mm in the West and 413 mm in the Centre, which represented 62%, 114%, 88%, 82% and 88% of the respective long-term mean. The island average rainfall of 325 mm for this period represented 90% of the long-term mean of 360 mm.

Table 1a. Rainfall (mm) of December for crops 2008, 2009 and the long term mean (LTM)

	North	East	South	West	Centre	Island
2008	16 *(12)*	86 *(41)*	91 *(37)*	39 *(34)*	84 *(32)*	68 *(33)*
2009	**51** *(39)*	**139** *(67)*	**75** *(30)*	**50** *(44)*	**171** *(65)*	**94** *(46)*
LTM	132	209	249	114	263	204

* figures in brackets are % of LTM

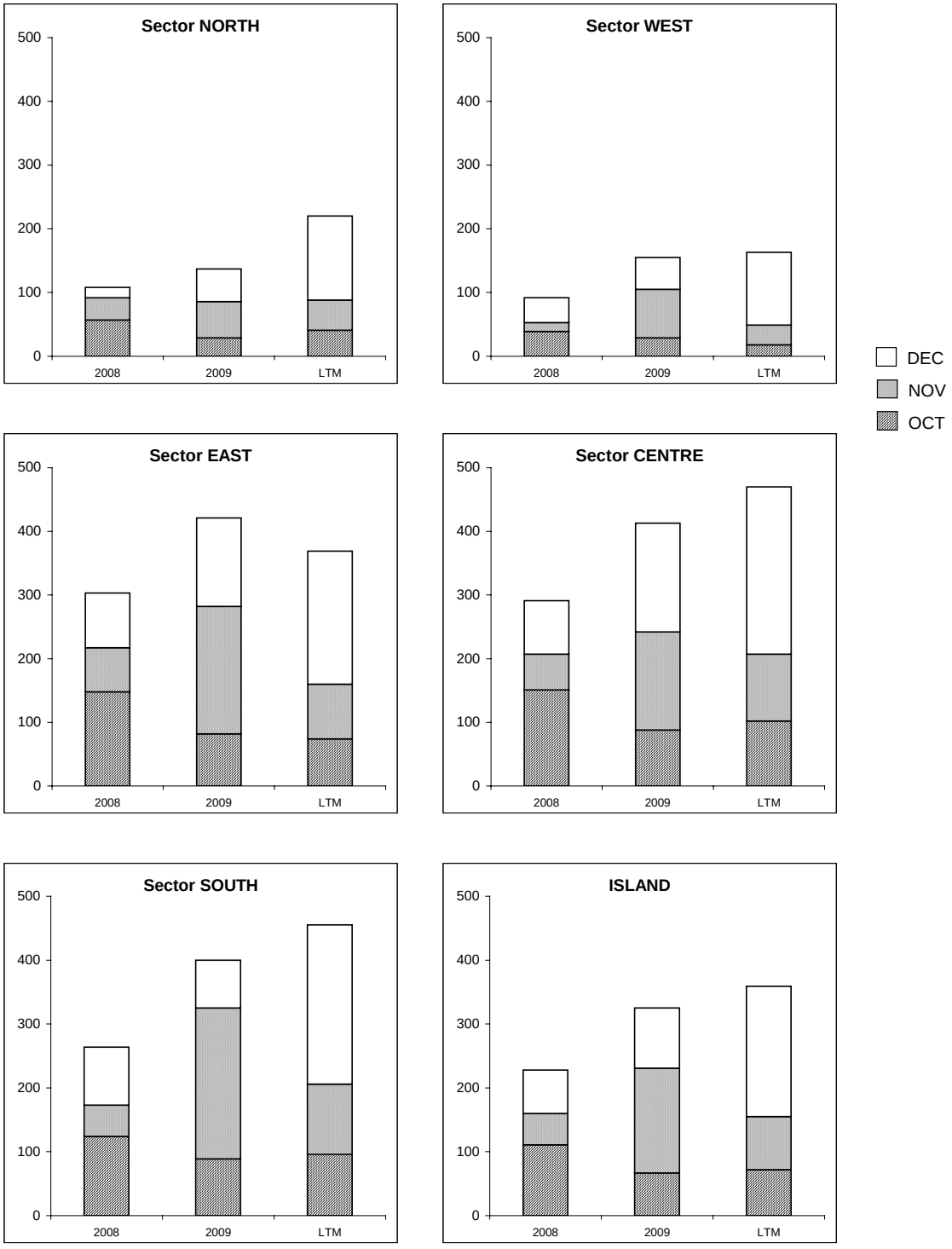
Table 1b. Cumulative rainfall (mm) from October to December 2008 for crop 2009 compared to that of crop 2008 and the long term mean (LTM)

	North	East	South	West	Centre	Island
2008	108 *(49)*	303 *(82)*	264 *(58)*	92 *(56)*	291 *(62)*	228 *(63)*
2009	**137** *(62)*	**421** *(114)*	**400** *(88)*	**134** *(82)*	**413** *(88)*	**325** *(90)*
LTM	220	369	455	163	470	360

* figures in brackets are % of LTM

[Source : raw provisional data from Meteorological Services]

Figure 1. Monthly rainfall (mm) for the period October to December 2008 for the 2008 and 2009 crops compared to the long term mean (LTM) for the corresponding period



2. STALK HEIGHT (TABLE 2)

Initial measurements of stalk height were carried out during the last week of December 2008 at 63 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 2007 and to the mean of the five best cane yielding crops of the last ten years in each sector (referred to as normal).

Stalk height at end December 2008 was 34.4 cm in the North, 46.3 cm in the East, 61.0 cm in the South, 41.5 cm in the West and 51.2 cm in the Centre. Compared to the corresponding period in 2007, cane height at end December 2008 was taller by 12.5 cm in the North, 19.7 cm in the South, 8.0 cm in the West and 8.1 cm in the Centre but similar in the East.

Cane height in December 2008 was also above the normal in all sectors, namely by 9.5 cm (38.2%) in the North, 3.9 cm (9.2%) in the East, 9.2 cm (17.8%) in the South, 14.1 cm (51.5 %) in the West and 3.5 cm (7.3%) in the Centre.

At Island level, the cane height of 48.2 cm as at end-December 2008 was taller than that of end-December 2007 by 10.5 cm (27.9%) and the normal by 8.2 cm (20.5%).

Table 2. Stalk height at end-December

	Stalk height (cm) at end-Dec			End-Dec 2008 as % of	
Sectors	**2008**	**2007**	**Normal**	**2007**	**Normal**
North	34.4	21.9	24.9	157.1	138.2
East	46.3	46.3	42.4	100.0	109.2
South	61.0	41.3	51.8	147.7	117.8
West	41.5	33.5	27.4	123.9	151.5
Centre	51.2	43.1	47.7	118.8	107.3
Island	**48.2**	**37.7**	**40.0**	**127.9**	**120.5**

3. CROP 2009

Weather during the 2009 crop season to-date has been very conducive for good regrowth of ratoons as well as plant cane crops. The present crop has benefited significantly from the substantial rainfall that has been recorded during the usually dry period of September to December. This is reflected in the stalk height which is higher than the normal in all sectors.