

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) will officially launch its facebook page within the next two weeks of January. Facebook has an established user base in Antigua of about 30 thousand accounts. CliSec intends to use facebook as a supplemental channel to disseminate weather and climate info and to increase its reach and visibility among other things. We are already using twitter (www.twitter.com/anumetservice) to broaden our reach and visibility. We continue to welcome feedback and questions from all, especially from farmers and the wider agricultural community indicating usefulness, relevance, appropriateness of language and possible changes to be made to this bulletin.

WEATHER AND CLIMATE SUMMARY IN BRIEF FOR ANTIGUA - DECEMBER 2011

Antigua experienced above normal rainfall during December with 4.26 inches or 108.20 mm; this was 107% of the normal total (1981 - 2010). This is the highest total for the month since 2007. The main rain-producers were two trough systems during the first half of the month, which were responsible for over 70% of the total. Heavy showers on December 3 resulted in minor to moderate flash floods in low lying and flood prone areas. At Coolidge, the 18 rainy days (≥ 1 mm) were well above normal and tied with 1981 for the second highest on record for the month; meanwhile, there were two heavy rainfall days (≥ 10 mm), which were near normal. The mean temperature (temp) of 25.3°C was below normal and the sixth coldest for December on record. The maximum temp of 29.7°C was also below normal and the minimum temp was above normal and the highest for the month since 2006. Further, the mean daily maximum and minimum temperatures were below and near normal respectively.

WEATHER AND CLIMATE SUMMARY IN BRIEF FOR CAMI ISLANDS - DECEMBER 2011

In December 2011, rainfall in the Eastern Caribbean Islands was predominantly normal with some exceptions. Tobago, Barbados, St. Vincent, St. Lucia and Dominica had normal rainfall; Grenada had below normal rainfall; Antigua and Trinidad had above normal rainfall. Conditions in Guyana ranged from very wet in the north to normal further south. Further to the west, Jamaica and Belize were predominantly normal but with below normal rainfall in the northeast of Jamaica, and the extreme south of Belize above normal.

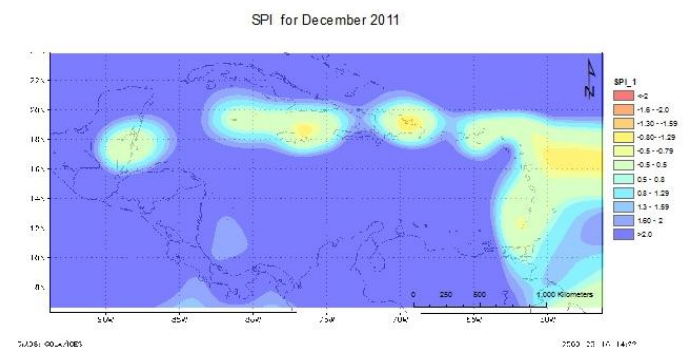
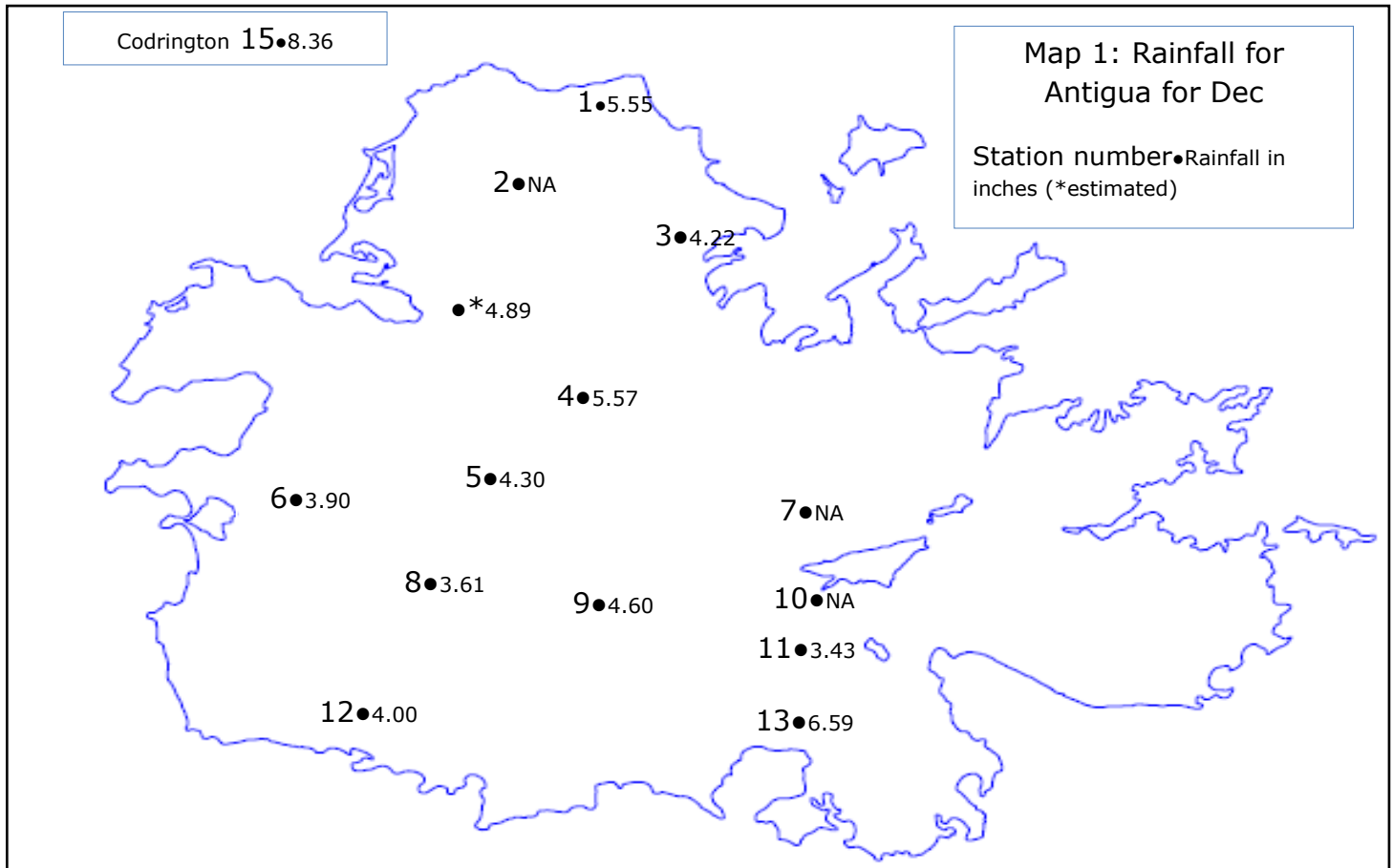


Figure 1. Standardised Precipitation Index (SPI) for the Caribbean for November. Information on the SPI can be viewed at <http://63.175.159.26/~cdpmn/spimonitor.html>.



Period	Rainfall (inches)			Description (1981 – 2010)	Rainfall Record – 1928 to 2011			
	Actual	Normal (1981 – 2010)	Anomaly (1981 – 2010)		Max	Year	Min	Year
1(Dec)	4.26	3.98	+ 0.28	Above normal	11.02	1971	0.96	1947
3(Oct – Dec)	17.19	16.19	+ 1.00	Near normal	31.18	1999	5.63	1983
6(Jul – Dec)	42.07	30.26	+ 11.81	Well above normal	44.26	1951	15.97	1983
9(Apr – Dec)	57.13	40.43	+ 16.70	Well above normal	62.60	1979	22.47	1930
12(Jan – Dec)	63.37	47.37	+ 16.00	Above normal	69.45	1951	26.83	1983
24(Jan – Dec)	128.66	93.86	+ 34.80	Well above normal	133.02	1952	66.55	1930

Table 1: Rainfall (inches) over the past 24 months Antigua. The year 2011 is now the 9th highest on record.

TEMPERATURE SUMMARY FOR ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA – DEC 2011									
Station	Mean			Maximum			Minimum		
	Temp(°C)	Rank (Total)	Anomaly (°C)	Temp(°C)	Rank (Total)	Anomaly (°C)	Temp(°C)	Rank (Total)	Anomaly (°C)
Coolidge	25.3	34(41)	- 0.4	29.7	24(41)	- 0.4	21.3	7(41)	+ 0.4
Jolly Hill	25.2	-	-	31.1	-	-	18.9	-	-

Table 1: Temperature Summary for Antigua – December 2011. Temperatures are ranked from the highest to the lowest.

WEATHER AND CLIMATE OUTLOOKS FOR ANTIGUA

MONTHLY WEATHER OUTLOOK - JANUARY

Rainfall

Near normal rainfall is most likely with than **2.01 to 2.82 inches**. Probabilistically, there is a

- **30%** chance of above normal rainfall;
- **45%** chance of near normal rainfall and
- **25%** chance of below normal rainfall.

Temperature

Near normal temperature is most likely with **25.1 to 25.5°C**. Probabilistically, there is a

- **20%** chance of above normal temperature;
- **45%** chance of near normal temperature and
- **35%** chance of below normal temperature.

SEASONAL OUTLOOKS – JANUARY TO MARCH

Rainfall

Near normal rainfall is most likely with **5.72 to 7.83 inches**. Probabilistically, there is a

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

Temperature

Below normal temperature is most likely with less than **25.2°C**. Probabilistically, there is a

- **20%** chance of above normal temperature;
- **35%** chance of near normal temperature and
- **45%** chance of below normal temperature.

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL SUMMARY

Frustrating rainy weather continued through December, especially for the first half of the month. The wet weather has taken a toll on many farmers. This was quite evident in the absence of a lot of local produce from the

market. The unavailability of local agricultural produce has prompted the Ministry of Agriculture to open imports for produce to minimise the impact on the populace.

The month followed up a very wet November, which has turned out to be the wettest month of 2011. Thus, the above normal rainfall in December caused some more misery for farmers. The wet weather has resulted in more waterlogged soil especially in low lying and flood prone areas. Inevitably, this caused more crop losses and prevented a lot of field work. Losses were reported regarding sweet peppers, tomatoes and squashes, to name a few. Also, there was a significant amount of pineapples that showed signs of heart rot.

The challenging rainfall has resulted in scarcities of such crops as tomatoes, sweet peppers, cucumbers and squashes. It is customary for farmers to plant to meet the relatively high demand for produce at Christmas. However, many farmers were unable to take advantage of this demand, as the wet weather impeded the annual plans of many farmers. This has resulted in scarcities and very high prices for what were available. To mitigate the impact of the scarcities, especially with respect to supplies to the hotels, the Ministry of Agriculture has relaxed their normal requirements for the imports of produce.

Notwithstanding the challenges, there were some produce in abundance. There continued to be an abundance of bananas and pumpkins. Also much work has been done to protect and prevent further crop losses.

Based on the outlook through March, less challenging weather conditions are likely to prevail for farming with near normal rainfall and below normal temperature most likely. A very useful tool for planning farm activities is the 7-Day Forecast, which can be had on our website at www.antiguamet.com/Climate.

International Weather and Crop Summary

EUROPE: Rain and snow continued to fall across the continent, improving soil moisture reserves for winter crops over central and northern growing areas.

WESTERN FSU: Rain and snow boosted soil moisture reserves for dormant winter crops.

MIDDLE EAST: Wet weather maintained excellent prospects for winter grains in Turkey and Syria.

NORTHWESTERN AFRICA: Showers in eastern crop districts maintained abundant soil moisture for winter grains.

SOUTH ASIA: Warm, sunny weather benefited cotton harvesting in southern India, while cool weather promoted winter crop development to the north.

EAST ASIA: Cold, dry weather prevailed for dormant winter crops in China.

SOUTHEAST ASIA: Drier weather in the southern Philippines aided recovery efforts following Tropical Storm Washi.

AUSTRALIA: In Western and Woutheastern Australia, drier weather favoured wheat, barley, and canola harvesting.

SOUTH AFRICA: Warm, showery weather maintained overall favourable conditions for summer crops, but additional rainfall would be welcome.

ARGENTINA: Unseasonable heat and dryness dominated the region during the early part of the week, stressing summer crops advancing through critical stages of development.

BRAZIL: Hot, dry weather maintained concern for corn and soybean prospects in key southern production areas.

U.S. Crop Production Highlights

All cotton production is forecast at 15.8 million 480-pound bales, down 3 percent (%) from the November forecast and down 13% from last year. Yield is expected to average 771 pounds per harvested acre, down 41 pounds from last year. Upland cotton production is forecast at 15.1 million 480-pound bales, down 14% from 2010. American Pima production, forecast at 737,200 bales, was carried forward from last month.

The **all orange** forecast for the 2011-2012 season is 9.12 million tons, up 2% from the previous forecast and up 3% from the 2010-2011 final utilization. Florida's all orange forecast, at 150 million boxes (6.75 million tons), is up 2% from the October forecast and up 7% from last season's final utilization. Early, midseason, and Navel varieties in Florida are forecast at 75.0 million boxes (3.38 million tons), up 1% from the October forecast and up 7% from last season. The Florida Valencia orange forecast, at 75.0 million boxes (3.38 million tons), is up 3% from the October forecast and up 7% from the 2010-2011 crop. Sizes for both Valencia and early, midseason, and Navel varieties in Florida are expected to be larger than average. The Florida crop has benefited from good growing conditions this fall.

Harvest is ahead of schedule for non-Valencia varieties in Florida. California and Texas orange production forecasts are carried forward from October.

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