

MAURITIUS SUGAR INDUSTRY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

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4 March 2009

SUGAR CANE CROP 2009

Status: End February 2009

1. CLIMATE

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

The island's average rainfall for the month of February 2009 was 297 mm. It represented 90% of the long-term mean of 331 mm. Sector-wise, rainfall for February 2009 was inferior to the respective long-term mean by 5 mm (2%) in the North, 56 mm (15%) in the South, 97 mm (44%) in the West and 116 mm (25%) in the Centre. In the East, rainfall of February 2009 exceeded the long-term mean by 29 mm (9%).

Cumulative rainfall for the period October 2008 to February 2009 amounted to 865 mm. This is 9% lower than the long-term mean (948 mm) of the island for that period. During that same period, a total of 569 mm were recorded in the North, 991 mm in the East, 985 mm in the South, 478 mm in the West and 1144 mm in the Centre. Compared to the respective long-term mean of these sectors, cumulative rainfall represented 87% in the North, 103% in the East, 89% in the South, 87% in the West and 89% in the Centre.

February rainfall was sufficient to meet the crop water requirement for that month in the North, East, South and Centre but it was slightly lacking for the rainfed crops of the West.

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

	North	East	South	West	Centre	Island
2008	148 (60)	287 (85)	353 (96)	112 (51)	373 (80)	270 (82)
2009	240 (98)	365 (109)	310 (85)	122 (56)	348 (75)	297 (90)
LTM	245	336	366	219	464	331

* figures in brackets are % of LTM

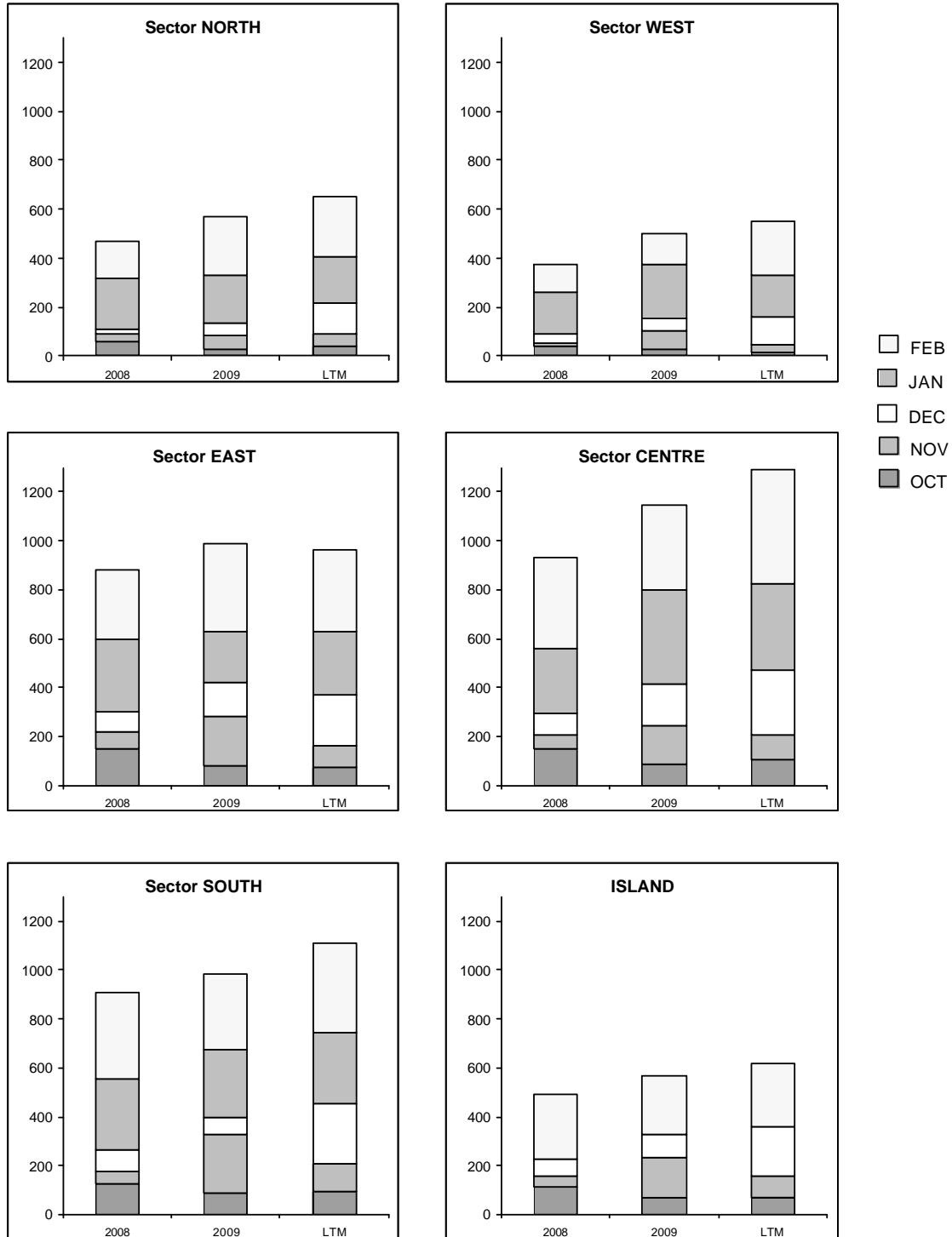
Table 1b. Cumulative rainfall (mm) from Oct 2008 to Feb 2009 for crop 2009 compared to that of crop 2008 and the long term mean (LTM)

	North	East	South	West	Centre	Island
2008	467 (72)	881 (91)	908 (82)	375 (68)	930 (72)	759 (80)
2009	569 (87)	991 (103)	985 (89)	478 (87)	1144 (89)	865 (91)
LTM	651	965	1111	549	1288	948

* figures in brackets are % of LTM

[Source : raw provisional data from Meteorological Services]

Figure 1. Monthly rainfall (mm) for period Oct 2008 to Feb 2009 of the 2009 crop compared to the same period for crop 2008 and the long-term mean (LTM).



2. STALK HEIGHT (TABLE 2)

Cane growth was assessed during the last week of February 2009 in the 59 sites representative of the five sugar cane sectors of the island. These sites cover the various agro-climatic zones, varieties under cultivation and the stages of development of the crop. Data collected are compared to those of the corresponding period in February 2008 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 February 2009 was inferior to that during the same period in 2008 except in the North sector. Growth during the month of February amounted to 43.5 cm in the North, 38.3 cm in the East, 41.8 cm in the South, 35.3 cm in the West and 27.1 cm in the Centre. These elongations recorded in February 2009 were below the normal, the difference being 8.7 cm in the North, 12.3 cm in the East, 10.8 cm in the South, 14.8 cm in the West and 12.9 cm in the Centre. The 39.4 cm average elongation for the island represented 93.8% of that recorded in February 2008 (42.0 cm) and 78.9% of the normal (50.0 cm).

Table 2a. Stalk elongation during the month of February.

Sectors	Stalk elongation (cm) during Feb			Feb 2009 as % of	
	2009	2008	Normal	2008	Normal
North	43.5	42.3	52.2	102.8	83.3
East	38.3	43.6	50.6	87.8	75.7
South	41.8	42.5	52.6	98.4	79.5
West	35.3	42.9	50.1	82.3	70.4
Centre	27.1	35.5	40.0	76.3	67.7
Island	39.4	42.0	50.0	93.8	78.9

2.2 Cumulative Elongation (Table 2b)

Cumulative growth from end-December 2008 to end-February 2009 amounted to 76.6 cm in the North, 76.0 cm in the East, 91.1 cm in the South, 83.3 cm in the West and 68.5 cm in the Centre. These cumulative growths exceeded those of 2008 by 8.7 cm (12.8%) in the North, 6.6 cm (7.8%) in the South and 11.5 cm (16.0%) in the West but lagged by 10.4 cm (12.0%) in the East and 4.3 cm (5.9%) in the Centre. For the same period, growth was below normal in all sectors; i.e. by 9.7 cm in the North, 19.8 cm in the East, 13.5 cm in the South, 7.2 cm in the West and 10.2 cm in the Centre. Island-wise the cumulative elongation of 80.8 cm was still higher than that of the 2008 crop (78.9 cm) by 2.4% but was lagging behind the normal (93.1 cm) by 13.2%.

Table 2b. Cumulative elongation at end-February.

Sectors	Cumulative elongation (cm) at end- Feb			Feb 2009 as % of	
	2009	2008	Normal	2008	Normal
North	76.6	67.9	86.3	112.8	88.7
East	76.0	86.4	95.8	88.0	79.3
South	91.1	84.5	104.6	107.8	87.1
West	83.3	71.8	90.5	116.0	92.0
Centre	68.5	72.8	78.7	94.1	87.0
Island	80.8	78.9	93.1	102.4	86.8

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

Total stalk height at end-February 2009, stood at 111.0 cm in the North, 122.3 cm in the East, 152.1 cm in the South, 124.8 cm in the West and 119.7 cm in the Centre. Compared to the same period in 2008, cane was taller by 21.2 cm in the North, 26.3 cm in the South, 19.5 cm in the West and 3.8 cm in the Centre but was 10.4 cm shorter in the East. Total cane height at the end of February 2009 was below the normal by 5.4 cm (4.6%) in the North, 15.9 cm (11.5%) in the East, 4.3 cm (2.7%) in the South and 6.7 cm (5.3%) in the Centre but exceeded the normal by 6.9 cm (5.8%) in the West.

Island-wise the total cane height of 129.0 cm at end-February 2009 was higher than at end-February 2008 by 12.4 cm (10.6%) but lower than the normal by 4.1 cm (3.1%).

Table 2c. Stalk height at end-February

Sectors	Stalk height (cm) at end-Feb			End-Feb 2009 as % of	
	2009	2008	Normal	2008	Normal
North	111.0	89.8	116.4	123.6	95.4
East	122.3	132.7	138.2	92.2	88.5
South	152.1	125.8	156.4	120.9	97.3
West	124.8	105.3	117.9	118.5	105.8
Centre	119.7	115.9	126.4	103.3	94.7
Island	129.0	116.6	133.1	110.6	96.9

3. CROP 2009

Weather conditions have on overall been rather favourable for growth and development of the crop except for the gusts that followed the passage of tropical storm *Gael* in the vicinity of Mauritius and that resulted in some leaf laceration and lodging in the most advanced fields. Despite adequate rainfall, elongation has consequently been checked during February in all sectors apart from the North where the cane was relatively less developed. Total height is still exceeding that of 2008 at the same period though it is slightly below the normal.

Figure 2. Stalk height at end- February 2009.

