

# Grenada Agriculture Climate Newsletter

**VOLUME 4, ISSUES 4** 

SEPTEMBER 2015

#### **Upcoming Events**

- World Food Day (16th October)
- National Symposium on Praedial Larceny (29th September)
- Submission of National Coastal Zone Policy to Cabinet (28th September)

#### This Issue

- National Rainfall Outlook
- Overview of Propagation 2015

# RAINFALL OUTLOOK FOR SEPTEMBER —DECEMBER 2015

20 % Above Normal Rainfall

30 % Normal Rainfall



50 % Below Normal Rainfall

#### NATIONAL RAINFALL OUTLOOK

The Rainfall Predictions for the period September to November is that there will be a 20 % Above Normal Rainfall, 30 % Normal Rainfall and 50% Below Normal Rainfall may be experienced during this Wet Season period. This means that we may experience below normal rainfall of 50% over the next three months. This may mean that the remainder of the wet season is highly likely to produce less rainfall than normal. With a normal to below normal 2016 dry season being likely there is a high possibility that there will be negative impacts on farming and water supply in general. Farmers will have to irrigate more and for longer period of time, and will have to consider planting more drought resist varieties. The outlook for NAWASA is not good because it means that is a high probability that there will be not be adequate supplies of water in the reservoirs and dams to meet domestic supplies. Water conservation must be observed by the general public and consumers in general. Farmers need to pay close attention and need to observe field conditions through soil moisture, plant condition and crop type. The predictions for end of 2015 going into 2016 is high likelihood of drought.

#### **Overview of Propagation 2015**

Another year has passed and we are in the same station wondering if there would be enough plants available to supply the growing demand. In 2014, there were request for 128,035 plants however we, the Agronomy Division of the Ministry of Agriculture, sold only 75,029 plants. There were some cases where we did not have the quantities and varieties, however for a very large number of applications, calls were made repeatedly to the applicant and most of them did not collect the plants. They were some cases where persons thought the plants were free and when informed about payments they changed their minds.

For 2015 however, we look forward to collaboration between you the client and the supplier which is our station in order to have a successful distribution period. We have a total of 64,147 plants available: 27,790 cocoa, 19,052 nutmeg, 3,203 citrus, 3,178 soursop, 1,364 mangoes, 437 breadfruit, 1,201 avocado and 3,682 minor fruit species produced by the Ashenden, Boulogne, Maran and Mirabeau stations and 3,682 other minor spices produced by the team from the Spice project here at Ashenden.

It should be noted that 6629 cocoa, fruits and spices plants were sold during the first quarter of the year when the rains were still blessing our land.

Later in the year we should also have over 26,000 (26,708) plants ready for sale. This includes 498 mangoes and 268 avocadoes around Aug, 7,300 nutmeg Sept to Oct., 2800 soursop and over 14,000 cocoa around November. There are some points we would like to highlight in order that you the client and we the service provide should come to an agreement on:

1. Apply for what you need: We need to know the types of plants and the quantities needed, on a timely basis in order for us to focus on meeting your demand. Some plants take a few months while others take up to a year before we can produce a saleable plant. If you don't provide us with the information on time you would find that we would not be able to satisfy your demand. We usually advise persons to send in applications before the September 15 deadline when we would be preparing our targets and budget estimates

## 2. Apply for what can be planted in the available land space:

If you inflate your request too high you would also find that we would be producing large quantities of plants that no one wants to buy. We cannot waste the limited resource that you the tax payers have provided to us.

3. Apply for plants that are best suited to your area: Some plants require open sunlight, some require a bit of shade, others need windbreaks while some could tolerate strong winds.

Some plants can tolerate damp conditions while others like soursop, avocado and papaya do not like their feet wet.

Challenges faced: Water is the most important factor affecting the propagation of plants. The adverse effect of climate change resulting in periods of heavy rain affect our soursop, avocado and some of our grafted plants. Most of our trees rely on the rain for moisture; the prolonged dry periods affect the quality of the planting material causing failure to meet targets as was the case with avocadoes this year.

Our dams at Mirabeau and Maran need some upgrading. About a mile of lines needs to be replaced at Ashenden in order to source water from our small dam. We depend solely on NAWASA to provide for us and with the scheduling of water this year some of our workers had to do shift early in the morning and later in the afternoon in order for survival of the plants seen here today.

We should be benefitting from funds from the OECS climate change adaptation and sustainable land management project for a rain water harvesting project for the Mirabeau station. This will help to improve the storage and increase the supply of water for periods in the dry season when water from our dam is diverted by NAWASA to increase the domestic supply for residents in St. Andrews.

#### We have limited resources:

Our stations do not have adequate sources of planting material since most of our germplasm were damaged during the hurricanes. We also have high demand for plants like soursop and nutmeg for which we have to rely on kind farmers and the GCNA to continue providing us with seeds and other planting material. Untimely supply of inputs resulted in decline in the quality of our products. Like the rest of the world, we are undergoing budgetary cuts resulting in us really tightening our belts. This situation has improved a bit so we look forward to some improvement in the months ahead.

One of our main problems in that the number of skilled propagators has been steadily decreasing and due to financial constraints replacements are not forthcoming.

### **About this Newsletter**

The purpose of this newsletter; which will be produced monthly, is to assist in improving and developing the weather information provided by the Meteorological and Agricultural Services, as well as provide timely, relevant information to the Farming community. It is hoped that the infor-

mation will be used by the Farming community as a guide to help them in crop selection and planting times. The newsletter is published by the Ministry of Agriculture, through the Land Use Division. Your feedback is highly appreciated and will help us to improve this newsletter!

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