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## Central America and Caribbean (<http://www.fews.net/central-america-and-caribbean>)

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Seasonal Monitor

# Abnormal distribution of rainfall is expected from May to July

April 29, 2014

## Key Messages

- Below-average rainfall is expected from June through July in Central America and Haiti, affecting the normal development of crops for the *Primera* season, especially in the already dry areas of Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Haiti. This could delay the start of the *Segunda* season.
- A normal start of season in Haiti is expected the last week of April, however during the last week of June, an abnormal distribution of rainfall could affect certain areas such as Jacmel, La Vallée, Côtes de Fer, Baintet, Anse-Rouge, Baie de Henne, and Bombardopolis.
- Above-average temperatures during the *Primera* season (July to September) are expected, negatively affecting soil moisture conditions and potentially having an impact on crop yields.

## Start of Season

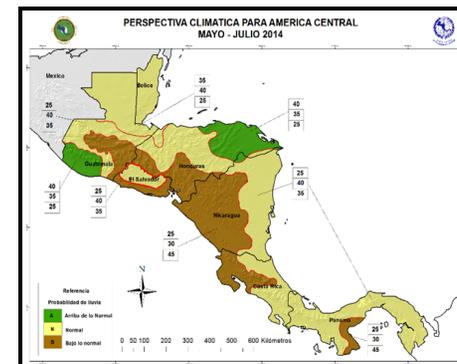
A normal start of the rainy season is expected in Latin America and Caribbean, beginning the last week of April in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Haiti, while in Honduras and Nicaragua, rains will get underway in May.

The forecast for Central America for April to July 2014 (Figure 1) indicates a normal rainfall scenario in central and northern areas of Guatemala, central Honduras, and the Pacific areas of Nicaragua. In the Pacific areas of Honduras near the boundary of Nicaragua above-average rainfall is expected. However, below-average rainfall is anticipated in the already and usually dry areas of Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua.

In Haiti, the forecast for the 3-month period of April to June 2014 projects average to below-average rainfall (Figure 2), implying a likely normal start of season. Nevertheless, the CARICOF Caribbean Climate Outlook Forum suggests that in June, a decrease in rainfall could occur, affecting the cumulative rainfall totals for this time period. These below-average precipitation totals are due to the above-average sea surface temperatures (SST) forecast during this time (Figure 3).

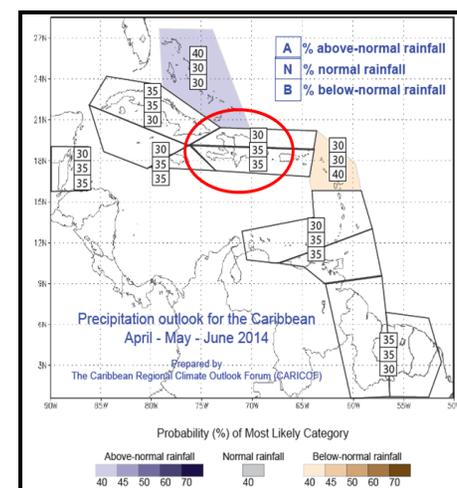
In the areas of Jacmel, La Vallée, Côtes de Fer, Bainet, Anse-Rouge, Baie de Henne, and Bombardopolis, which were affected in 2013 by drought, a high probability exists for below-average precipitation during June to July, affecting the normal development of crops. The start of season date will help to determine the likely growth/development stage that crops will have reached by the time the decreased rainfall will occur later in the season. This will inform potential impacts on *Primera* season production.

Guatemala's government will start distributing fertilizers to subsistence farmers across the country during the first weeks of May. Above-average rainfall is forecast for the departments of Escuintla, Suchitepéquez, Retalhuleu, and San Marcos, would be favorable for agricultural activities, although the possibility of flooding in plain areas and landslides in high elevations could produce localized damages. Below-average rainfall however expected in the dry areas of Guatemala could affect subsistence farmers' crops in the departments of Jutiapa, Chiquimula, El Progreso, Jalapa, and Baja Verapaz. Low precipitation levels at any stage of crop development could affect crops, especially maize during the *Primera* season.



**FIGURE 1. CLIMATE OUTLOOK FORUM FORECAST MAP TO CENTRAL AMERICA FROM MAY TO JULY 2014**

Source: CRRH



**FIGURE 2. CARIBBEAN CLIMATE OUTLOOK FORUM FORECAST FROM MAY TO JUNE 2014**

Source: CARICOF

The forecast for Honduras shows average rainfall in the main crop production areas of the country. Nevertheless, below-average forecasts may affect the departments of Choluteca, El Paraíso, Valle, Francisco Morazán, La Paz, Intibucá, Lempira, Ocotepeque, and Copán, where the majority of subsistence farmers live. This could potentially limit the availability of crops for the very poor in these areas of Honduras at the end of *Primera* season.

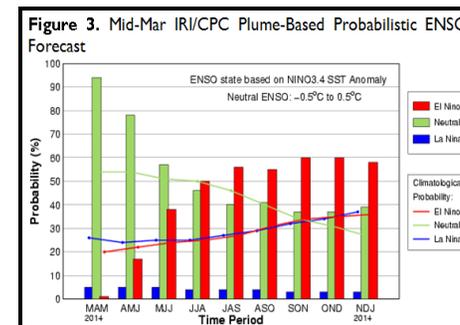
In Nicaragua, the below-average rainfall forecast in surplus areas includes the departments of Chinandega, Estelí, Madriz, Nueva Segovia, and Jinotega, as well as the self-sufficient farmers in the departments of León, Managua, Carazo, Masaya, Granada, and Rivas. Reduced rainfall totals would affect yields and therefore the availability of crops in the *Primera* season.

Support provided by the government for agricultural activities through agricultural extension agents could mitigate impacts on the region through the use of irrigation systems, improved seeds, and related technical activities—all measures which proved to be effective over the past two years.

Average rainfall in El Salvador is expected in the majority of areas throughout the country, while below-average forecasts are likely for areas bordering Nicaragua and El Salvador. In these areas, farmers have been supported with assistance on techniques to enhance agricultural activities in dry areas. Regardless, rainfall deficits could affect the departments of La Unión, San Miguel, Aguachapán, y Santa Ana.

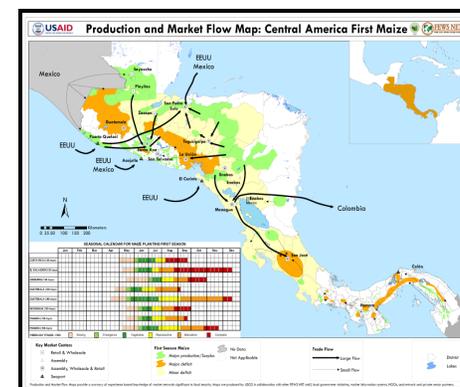
Figure 4 shows the production and market flow map of Central America during the *Primera* season. Green areas represent major production or surplus-producing areas, yellow zones show areas of minimal deficits where self-sufficient producers reside, and the orange zones illustrate the principal areas of deficit where subsistence farmers are located. Deficit areas coincide with the forecast for below-average rainfall for June and July, such that the crops located there would be more vulnerable to losses from water deficits.

## About this Report



**FIGURE 3. MID-MAR IRI/CPC PLUME-BASED PROBABILISTIC ENSO FORECAST**

Source: IRI



**FIGURE 4. PRODUCTION AND MARKET FLOW MAP: CENTRAL AMERICA FIRST MAIZE**

Source: FEWS NET

The seasonal monitor, produced by the FEWS NET USGS regional scientist and FEWS NET Regional Technical Manager, updates rainfall totals, the impact on production, and the short-term forecast. It is produced every 20 days during the production season. Find more remote sensing information [here](http://www.fews.net/sectors/agroclimatology) (<http://www.fews.net/sectors/agroclimatology>).

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