

El Nino Causes Huge Losses in Cuba's Production of Sugar Cane, Tobacco, Rice



Havana, February 1 (RHC-NNN) -- The El Niño weather phenomenon is causing millions of dollars in losses in Cuban agriculture, affecting the island's crops of sugar cane, tobacco, rice, coffee and vegetables, local experts are reporting in state-run media.

El Niño-Southern Oscillation, or ENSO, which was categorized as "very strong" between November 2015 and January 2016 – a level over the last 50 years reached only in 1982-1983 and 1997-1998 – has been adversely affecting the island since last summer with episodes of severe drought and heavy rains at the wrong times, the science supplement for the daily *Juventud Rebelde* reports.

Although no specific value to the agricultural losses has been established, "they could amount to hundreds of millions of pesos," the article says.

As an example, the paper cites losses of almost 90,000 tons of rice in 2015 due to the drought affecting the rice fields, along with ironically heavy losses in vegetable and grain crops due to too much rain in recent months.

The head of the agro-meteorology information service with the island's Weather Institute, engineer Eduardo Perez Valdes, warned of the "great risk" posed by the weather during the early part of the year.

He told Juventud Rebelde that El Niño is at its "most capricious" from January to April, often dumping a huge amount of rain in Cuba that negatively affects the sugar cane and tobacco harvests, along with vegetables such as potatoes.

He also said that the island's agricultural situation will not get back to normal quickly and the spring-summer period this year will, in all likelihood, be very hot with more drought.

<https://www.radiohc.cu/en/noticias/nacionales/82911-el-nino-causes-huge-losses-in-cubas-production-of-sugar-cane-tobacco-rice>



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