

Costa Rican Agriculture Will Suffer Wrath of El Niño



San Jose, May 14 (teleSUR-RHC)-- Costa Rican agriculture is likely to experience major damages this year as a result of extreme weather expected to be brought on by *El Niño*, the country's Meteorological Institute announced Wednesday.

El Niño, a climatic phenomenon originating in the Pacific Ocean that can trigger floods, droughts, and other extreme conditions around the world, is predicted to unleash an intense weather event this year disrupting regular climate patterns.

Costa Rican meteorological reserchers predict that adverse weather conditions, including drought in the country's Pacific Coast and Central Valley and heavy rains for Caribbean and northern regions, may extend into the beginning of 2016.

The difficult climate conditions are expected to impact livestock raising, beekeeping, basic grains cultivation including rice, corn, and beans, as well as the country's large fruit and sugarcane production, according to the Ministry of Agriculture.

In 2014, Costa Rica provided emergency support to agricultural producers as the country struggled with *El Niño* weather events, experiencing crop loss amounting to \$13 million. The Ministry of Agriculture predicts the severity of this year's agriculture losses will exceed the 2014 agricultural emergency.

Traditionally an agricultural economy, Costa Rica employs about 14 percent of its labor force in agriculture, which makes up about 6.5 percent of the country's GDP.

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