

Caribbean Institute for Meteorology and Hydrology

DROUGHT ALERT

Careful monitoring of rainfall allows for early detection and forecasting of rainfall extremes including drought. Since January 2009, the Caribbean Drought and Precipitation Monitoring Network (CDPMN) has been monitoring rainfall trends across the Caribbean (<http://www.cimh.edu.bb/precipindex.html>).

Beginning October 2009, many parts of Barbados have been experiencing rainfall amounts of well below average. Application of various rainfall and drought indices by scientists at the Caribbean Institute for Meteorology and Hydrology has indicated that for the period October to December 2009, meteorological drought conditions have affected many parts of Barbados. A severe drought of this magnitude calculated over this 3 month period would impact rainfed agriculture. However farmers with irrigation would be less negatively impacted, but would utilise a significant quantity of irrigation water.

The rainfall outlook across the eastern Caribbean for the period January to march 2010 indicates that below average rainfall will persist (<http://www.cimh.edu.bb/curprecip.htm>) leading to an intensification of drought conditions. It is expected that this intensification will impact water resources management in Barbados and other countries of the eastern Caribbean. As a result, water resources managers are urged to be vigilant and to carefully monitor their water resources over the next 3 to 6 months.

For further information contact Adrian Trotman at atrotman@cimh.edu.bb.