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Uruguay: State Power Company Announces New Electricity Cuts

by John Neagle

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On June 26, the state-run power company announced that electricity shutdowns in Montevideo and several other cities would be increased to six hours per day, or from 5 p.m. to 11 p.m. According to Jose Serrato, president of the Electric Power and Transmission Co., "Since records have been kept, there has not been so severe a shortage of rain." A large proportion of electricity in Uruguay derives from hydroelectricity generating plants. Drought has closed down 13 of the 14 turbines of the Salto Grande complex on the Uruguay River, a major power source. Throughout Uruguay, grazing land has dried out and water is being trucked in for livestock. For weeks, Uruguay purchased electricity from Argentina. This week Argentina, also affected by drought, was scheduled to resume power cutoffs. Thus far in 1989, said Serrato, slightly more than 8.5 inches of rain have been recorded, less than half normal precipitation. (Basic data from AP, 06/26/89)

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