

11-2-2005

Adverse Weather Damages Coffee, Dry Beans, Other Crops

LADB Staff

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/sourcemex>

Recommended Citation

LADB Staff. "Adverse Weather Damages Coffee, Dry Beans, Other Crops." (2005). <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/sourcemex/4925>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Latin America Digital Beat (LADB) at UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in SourceMex by an authorized administrator of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact amywinter@unm.edu.

Adverse Weather Damages Coffee, Dry Beans, Other Crops

by LADB Staff

Category/Department: Mexico

Published: 2005-11-02

Weather conditions are playing havoc with Mexican agriculture this fall, with hurricanes causing severe damage to coffee and other crops in southeastern and central Mexico and extreme drought devastating bean and livestock production in north-central states. The fishing industry in the Yucatan Peninsula is also feeling the negative effects of the inclement weather.

Hurricane Stan causes severe losses to coffee crop

The Secretaria de Agricultura, Ganaderia, Desarrollo Rural, Pesca y Alimentacion (SAGARPA) said Stan damaged several hundred thousand hectares of coffee, chile peppers, and fruit in Veracruz, Oaxaca, and Chiapas states in early October.

The storm inflicted its greatest damage near Tapachula and Soconusco in southeastern Chiapas and adjacent regions in Guatemala, including some of the area's most productive coffee plantations. Preliminary estimates indicate that as much as one-fourth of the coffee crop in Chiapas for the 2005-2006 season may have been lost because of the floods. A total of 270,000 ha of coffee is planted in Chiapas.

An estimated 170,000 coffee growers in Chiapas are affected by the hurricane-related damage. "This situation is truly the most horrible we have ever had here," said Tomas Edelmann, head of the Asociacion de Productores de Cafe de Tapachula. "We have never seen anything like this before, ever, not here in Chiapas, not on the other side in Guatemala." Chiapas accounts for 35% of Mexico's coffee production, which totaled 4.5 million 60-kg sacks in the 2004-2005 season. In an estimate released in May, the Coordinadora Nacional de Organizaciones Cafetaleras (CNOC) projected the 2005-2006 crop at only 3.8 million sacks, the lowest in 30 years.

The heavy losses in Chiapas could bring that total even lower. "The Soconusco region and Motozintala normally produce between 1 million and 1.2 million bags, and, just based on the damage we know of now, at least 300,000 bags have been lost, so I think a 25% loss for the region is a conservative estimate," Edelmann told Dow Jones news service. Ricardo Trampe, president of the Asociacion de Productores de Cafe del Soconusco, said the decline in production would almost certainly reduce revenues for the region's coffee producers, which average about US\$240 million annually.

Stan also affected coffee production in the neighboring states of Oaxaca, Veracruz, and Puebla, although total damage to plantations was not nearly as severe as it was in Chiapas. However, the hurricane destroyed other crops in Veracruz, including sugar cane, corn, chile peppers, oranges, watermelons, papayas, and squash. About 132,000 ha of cropland suffered hurricane-related damage in Veracruz, said state legislator Francisco Fernandez Morales, who heads the agriculture committee in the Veracruz state legislature. In Oaxaca, at least 27,000 ha of peanuts and fruit suffered flood and wind damage, said SAGARPA.

Just as Mexico was beginning to assess the damage from Stan, Hurricane Wilma hit the Yucatan Peninsula, causing some damage to crops such as corn. The fishing industry suffered extensive damage from the storm, which destroyed entire fleets and disrupted the lobster, octopus, and shrimp catch. Yucatan Gov. Patricio Patron Laviada estimates that Wilma left at least 12,000 workers in the fishing and agriculture industries in Yucatan without a job. Wilma also inflicted significant damage to the tourism industry in Quintana Roo (see other article in this issue of SourceMex).

Drought destroys bean crops in north-central states

In contrast to the extreme rain in southern Mexico, the states of Zacatecas, Durango, and San Luis Potosi have been ravaged by an extended drought that destroyed a large portion of the bean crop. Durango is experiencing its driest season in 80 years. The dry conditions caused partial or total damage to about 1 million ha of cropland in Zacatecas, Mexico's leading producer of dry beans. Local producers expect the state to lose about 150,000 metric tons of black, pinto, and other bean varieties this year, which is about 40% the state's annual production of 350,000 MT. "

At this moment, the damage to the state's bean crop is between 40% and 50%," Jesus Padilla Estrada, president of the Union Estatal de Productores de Frijol, said in mid-October. "Even if we get rain in the next few days, this is not going to reverse this disaster." Padilla estimated economic losses to bean producers in Zacatecas at about 700 million pesos (US\$65 million) this year. Bean production is expected to decline by 100,000 MT in Durango and by 20,000 MT in San Luis Potosi, creating a deficit of 270,000 MT in Mexico, said Padilla.

The heavy losses in bean production could force Mexico to boost imports, since the Zacatecas-Durango-San Luis Potosi region supplies nearly half the beans consumed in the country. The recent trend toward bean imports has caused friction between producers and the government, since Mexico at one time was self-sufficient in bean production (see SourceMex, 2001-01-19, 2000-03-22 and 2003-03-12).

Another concern in Durango and Zacatecas is the damage to the local livestock herds, which rely extensively on grazing. The lack of grasslands for foraging will force area producers to export a greater-than-normal percentage of their cattle to the US. Marco Antonio Felix Dominguez, a SAGARPA official in Zacatecas, said producers in the state could end up exporting close to 20,000 head of cattle to the US this year, twice as many as last year. "We have to sell them before they start to lose weight," said Felix.

Some area producers noted the contrast between the hurricane-related disasters in the southeast and the drought in the north. "While God has sent too much water to other areas [of Mexico], here, it hardly rained at all in August, and since September, the rains have completely abandoned us," Durango farmer Celso Garcia told the Mexico City daily newspaper El Universal. [Note: Peso-dollar conversions in this article are based on the Interbank rate in effect on Nov. 2, reported at 10.73 pesos per US\$1.00] (Sources: Notimex, 10/11/05; La Jornada del Oriente, 10/13/05; Dow Jones news service, El Siglo de Torreon, 10/16/05; The Wall Street Journal, 10/17/05; Reforma, 10/12/05, 10/16/05, 10/23/05; El Sol de Zacatecas, 10/23/05, 10/24/05; La Palabra de Saltillo, 10/24/05; El Economista, 10/26/05; La Jornada, 05/06/05m, 10/24/05, 10/25/05, 10/27/05; El Universal, 10/17/05, 10/19-21/05, 10/23/05, 10/27/05; The Herald-Mexico City, 10/17/05, 10/31/05)

-- End --