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Director General of Agriculture

**Agro-met Advisory - November to January (NDJ) during  
2020/21 Maha season**

The latest Seasonal Rainfall Outlook for the period of November through January of the current Maha season, issued by the Department of Meteorology can be summarized as follows:

**November**

Even though, the first couple of weeks of November may experience slightly below normal rains across the most parts of the island, except Northern province where cumulative rainfall is likely to be slightly above normal, there is a possibility for **Above normal** rainfalls to occur over most parts of the island during the **latter part of November**, resulting in an above normal cumulative rainfall for the month (Figure 1).



**Figure 1. Consensus Probabilistic rainfall forecast for November 2020 - January 2021**

*(Source: Department of Meteorology, November 2, 2020)*

## December

There is a higher chance of receiving above normal rainfalls over most parts of the country, particularly in Northern, Eastern, Uva and North-central provinces.

## January

There is an enhanced likelihood for above normal rainfalls over most parts of the country, particularly in Northern, Eastern, Uva and North-central provinces

Thus, the above outlook suggests that considerable inflows to the tanks and reservoirs in the Dry and Intermediate zones will not be realized until end of November given the excessive dryness prevailed in those two climatic zones of the country during last several months. Hence, an updated agro-met advisory for tank & reservoir based **irrigated agriculture** is given as follows:

- Dry seeding of paddy on light textured soils to be carried out wherever possible (i.e, Eastern province,- DL2a and DL2b; Northern province - DL3 and part of the Kurunegala district –IL3) in line with the customary practice;
- Use of incipient rains in the season for land preparation is a **MUST**, especially with rains that are likely to receive during the first couple of weeks of November;
- Complete the land preparation phase within 3 weeks of duration (maximum);
- Choose only 3½ months age paddy varieties where water storage of respective irrigation tanks and reservoirs that may reach a satisfactory storage level (at least 30-40%) by the end of November after the land preparation is completed;
- If any tank or reservoir has a satisfactory storage by now, and when and only if farmers can establish their paddy crop by mid-November, then, 4 months varieties could be cultivated, otherwise again restrict it to only for 3½ varieties;
- If a satisfactory storage cannot be realized in tanks and reservoirs by at least late December, then opt for *Bethma* approach or 2½ month age paddy varieties;
- Adopt strict water issuing schedules in both major and minor irrigation schemes by taking prevailing rainfall in each week in to consideration while the season is being progressed at both vegetative and maturity phases of the rice crop;
- Adopt transplanting or seedling broadcasting (Parachute method) for crop establishment in paddy tracts as much as possible;
- Growing OFCs where the drainage conditions are conducive for non-rice crops on well-drained and imperfectly-drained paddy tracts with **appropriate drainage provisions**, especially in Mahaweli system and Major Irrigation Schemes is encouraged, when and where, if current and anticipated water levels of respective reservoirs cannot guarantee an usual Maha season paddy crop ;

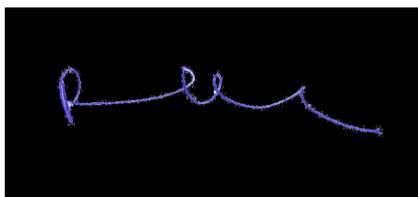
### **Upland cultivations**

- Pulses can be grown with its customary practice of seeding after mid-November;
- For farmers those who grow long aged upland crops such as chilli and maize, be ready to start the land preparation with incipient rains that are likely to receive during first couple of weeks of November and complete the sowing (maize) and transplanting (chilli) well before the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of November.

### **General**

- Seek the advantage of Crop Insurance Scheme as a risk transfer mechanism in agriculture under a situation where possibility of loss & damage arising from exposing to both drought & flood hazards (paddy) and excess soil moisture (OFCs) is a possible event

Arrangements will be made to issue an updated outlook in early December for the rest of 2020/21 Maha season, in consultation with the Department of Meteorology, Colombo.



Director/Principal Scientist (Agro-climatology)

Ic. Additional Secretaries (Technology + Development), All District Secretaries, Director General of Irrigation, Commissioner General of Agrarian Development, Mahaweli Water Management Secretariat, Director (Information) and all Directors of the DoA