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Situation Update: Haiti Agriculture

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Haiti is on the western side of the island of Hispaniola, with the Dominican Republic on the east (figure 1). The Atlantic Ocean is to the north and the Caribbean Sea is to the south. This location in the Caribbean offers Haiti moderate temperatures which allow for agricultural production to occur all year long. Haiti is prone to major natural disasters such as hurricanes, which can greatly affect crop production, as well as increased instances of regional droughts, floods, landslides, and soil erosion due to changing weather patterns.

The political, economic, and security situation in Haiti is rapidly deteriorating in certain areas, causing a food security hardship for the population and uncertainty for the future. There has been a substantial increase in armed gang violence inside and outside of the major cities and along major transportation routes, which has led to the disruption in the movement of locally grown and imported food throughout the country. In addition, many people have been displaced from their homes and are seeking shelter in other parts of the country. The accessibility of food and concerns over physical safety are worsening. The economic insecurities directly affecting agricultural production include low availability of inputs such as seeds, fertilizer, pesticides, and fuel, as well as inadequate irrigation infrastructure. More information on the insecurity and instability can be found in the latest Haiti Food Security Outlook published by Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET). <https://fews.net/latin-america-and-caribbean/haiti/food-security-outlook/february-2024>

Haiti grows three main crops: rice, corn, and sorghum, all of which have been declining in production over the last 5 years. USDA estimates rice production (milled basis) for marketing year (MY) 2023/24 at 55,000 metric tons (MT), down 8 percent from last year, and down 19 percent from the 5-year average. Corn production for MY 2023/24 is estimated at 305,000 MT, down 2 percent from last year, and down 5 percent from the 5-year average. Sorghum production for MY 2023/24 is estimated at 60,000 MT, down 8 percent from last year, and down 22 percent from the 5-year average.

Rice is the most important cereal crop grown in Haiti as it is a staple food. Rice is grown year-round and over 80 percent of the total production is in the Artibonite Department along the Artibonite River (figure 2). Other departments that also cultivate rice at much lower amounts include two northern departments: Nord and Nord-Est. The spring season rice, which is the largest producing season, is planted in March to April and harvested in July. The fall season is planted in August and harvested in

November. The winter season is planted in December and harvested in March. In some regions rice is harvested in only two seasons (figure 3).

Harvested area for rice for MY 2023/24 is estimated at 55,000 ha, which is 5,000 ha below the 10-year trend. According to the latest FAS/Port-au-Prince GAIN Report published in April 2023 (https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=Grain%20and%20Feed%20Annual_Port-au-Prince_Haiti_HA2023-0003). Some local producers and farmers have abandoned their rice paddies in the Artibonite River valley due to escalating gang activity and safety concerns, which have recently gotten much worse from a year ago when the GAIN report was published. Yield has also declined to 1.82 tons per hectare (rough basis), which is 8 percent below last year and 11 percent lower than the 5-year average.

As seen in figure 4, the monthly cumulative precipitation for the Artibonite Department was below normal for the beginning of the MY 2023/24 rice growing season and then increased to slightly above normal over the summer months. However, despite the adequate annual rainfall, harvested area, production, and yield have decreased probably due to the abandonment of some area and the inability to source agricultural inputs due to gang activity. The heavy rain in November and December 2023 benefit the MY 2024/25 spring crop. The Artibonite River valley is favorable for cultivating rice, but due to the political and economic difficulties that challenge farmers, rice production is at the lowest level in over 10 years (figure 5). Preparation for the MY 2024/25 crop season has begun and USDA will continue to monitor the situation.



Figure 1. The Caribbean island Hispaniola with the country of Haiti on the west and Dominican Republic on the east. Source: USDA Global Agricultural & Disaster Assessment System (GADAS)

Haiti: Rice

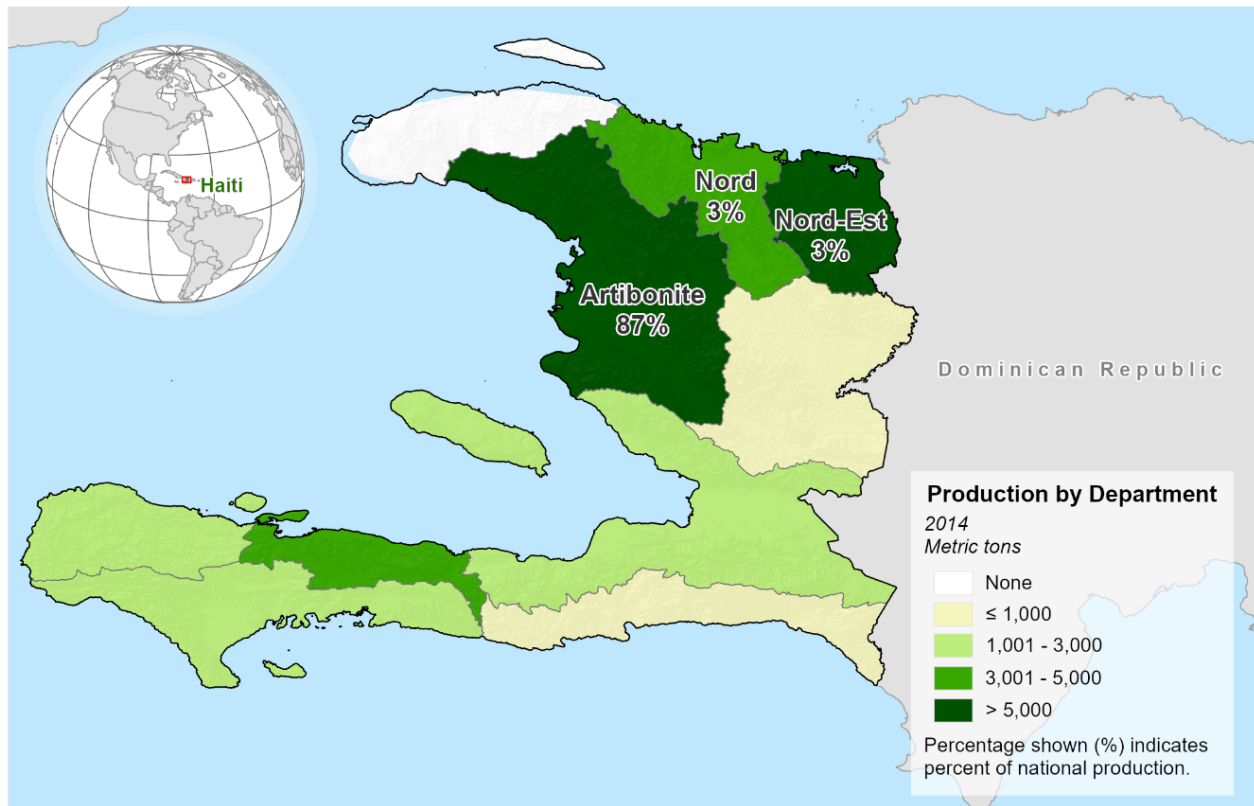


Figure 2. Haiti rice production map highlighting major rice producing regions

Haiti Rice

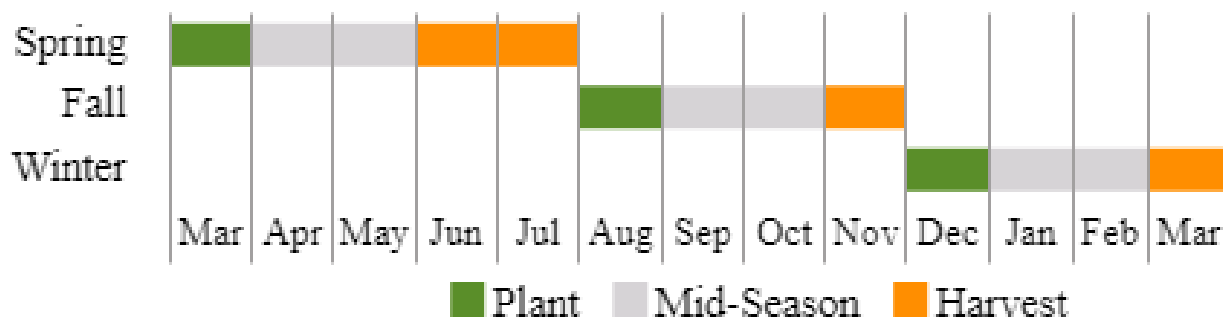


Figure 3. Crop calendar for the three rice seasons. Source: USDA/FAS Crop Explorer

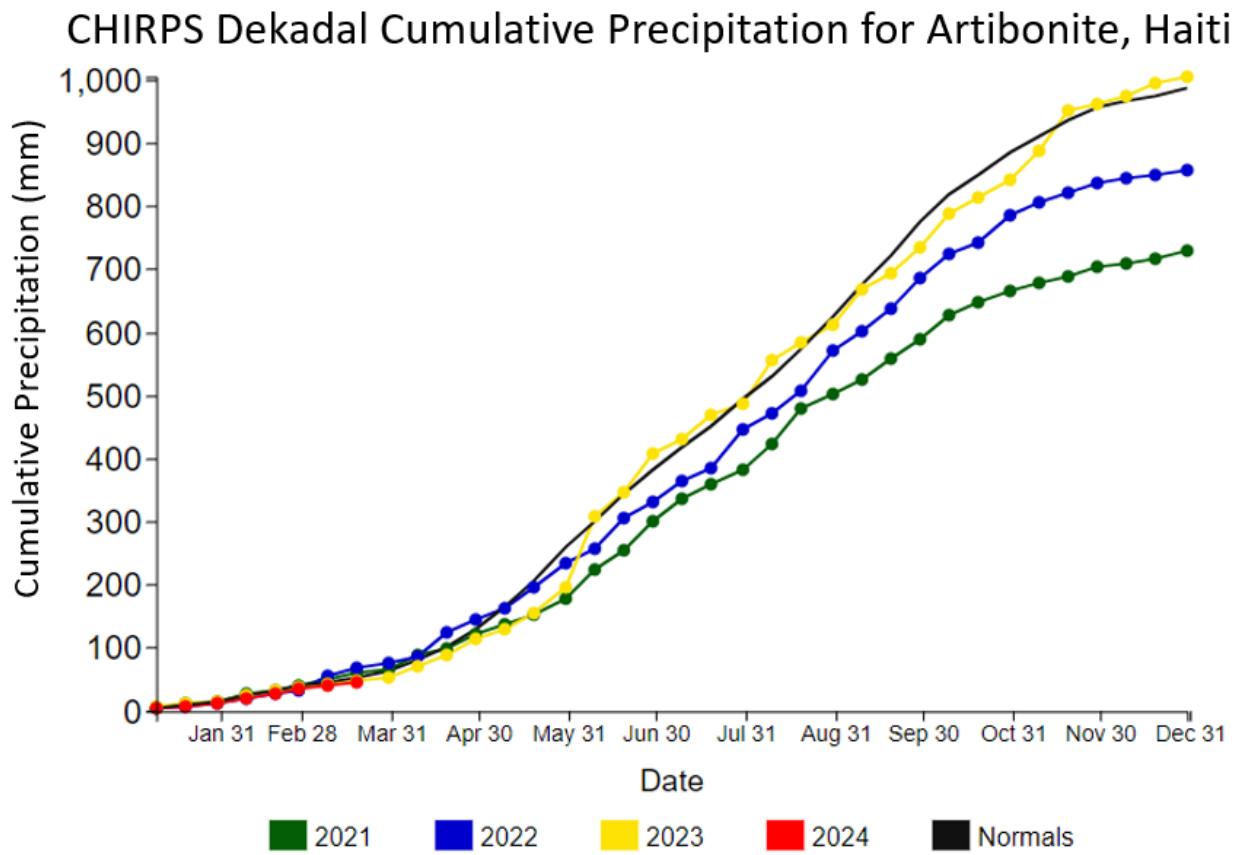


Figure 4. Cumulative precipitation chart showing monthly precipitation for Artibonite, Haiti, 2021-2023.
Source: UCSB Climate Hazards Group InfraRed Precipitation with Station Data (CHIRPS)

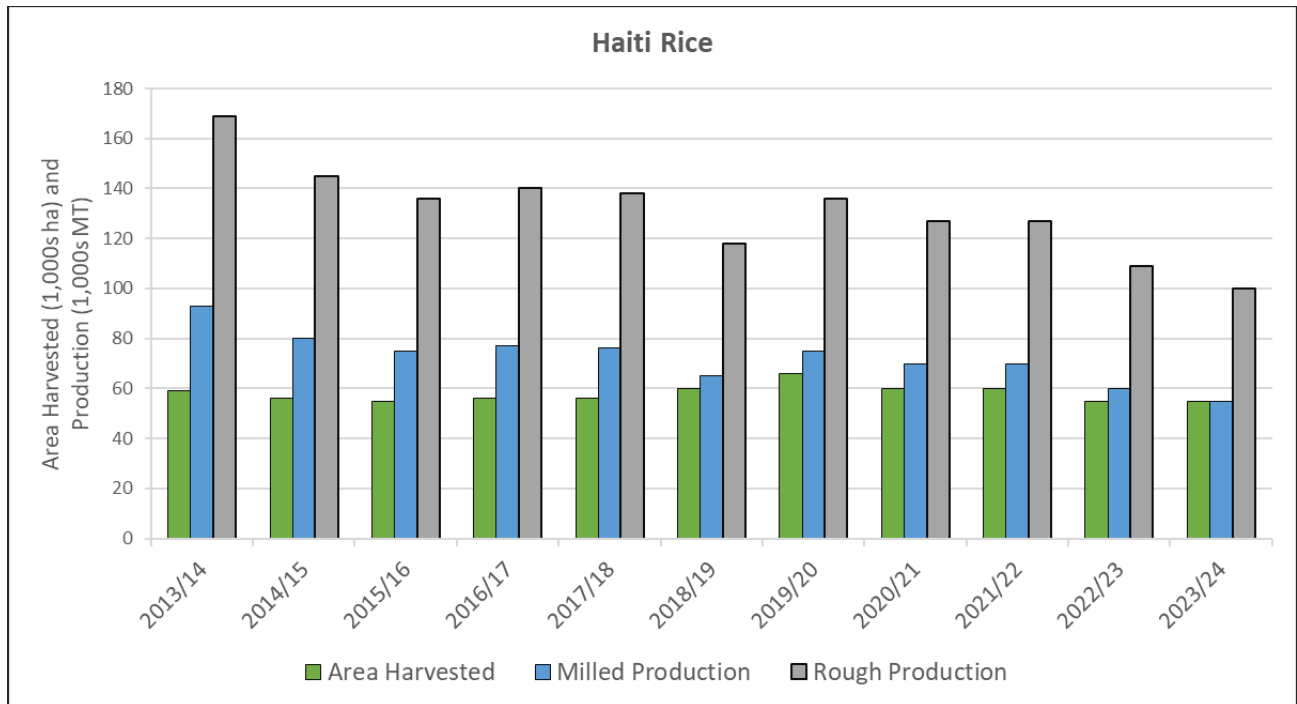


Figure 5. Haiti annual rice area and production. Source: United States Department of Agriculture PSD online

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For more information and to access USDA FAS databases and reports please visit:

Current World Agricultural Production Reports
<https://www.fas.usda.gov/data/world-agricultural-production>

Production, Supply and Distribution Database (PSD Online)
<https://apps.fas.usda.gov/psdonline/app/index.html#/app/home>

Global Agricultural Information Network (Agricultural Attaché Reports)
<https://www.fas.usda.gov/databases/global-agricultural-information-network-gain>

Crop Explorer
<https://ipad.fas.usda.gov/cropexplorer/>

Global Agricultural and Disaster Assessment System (GADAS)
<https://geo.fas.usda.gov/GADAS/index.html>