

Drought causes \$100 million in crop losses in El Salvador

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A drought cost nearly \$100 million in lost corn and bean harvests in El Salvador in June and July, the government said Monday in announcing a plan to distribute seeds to hard-hit farmers.

"I can say that 4.7 million quintals (213 million kilograms) of [corn](#) were lost (...) this may be around \$100 million in losses," agriculture minister

Orestes Ortez told local news Channel 10.

The bean harvest was expected to be short 5.2 million pounds (23.6 million kg) due to the drought.

The losses from the drought over the past two months exceed the \$70.1 million in losses from last year's drought.

A study by the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock found that 85,656 hectares (211,661 acres) of corn were lost in whole or in part due to the lack of rain this summer.

The drought in Central America's "Dry Corridor" affected 104 of the El Salvador's 262 towns and 102,609 Salvadoran farmers.

To help spur crop production in the second season, between August and November, the ministry distributed 117,400 packets of bean seeds to subsistence farmers. Each farmer received 25 pounds (11 kg) of seeds.

They also distributed 100,000 packages of corn seed for reseeded, giving each small-scale producer 22 pounds (9 kg) each. The farmers also got 100 pounds (45 kg) of fertilizer each.

Corn and beans are staples of most Salvadorans' diets. The government already has to import to avoid market shortages, officials said.

With the El Nino weather phenomenon still in place, large areas of Central American and Caribbean countries are facing major crop losses.

"El Nino" refers to the abnormal warming of surface waters in the tropical sections of the Pacific Ocean every three to five years.

Climatologists began observing the most recent El Nino several months

ago, and fear that because of global warming, the phenomenon will hit many areas hard with [drought](#) in Central America, the Caribbean and northern South America.

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