

Water, water everywhere and not a drop to drink

By Meghan Sapp

As doubt about climate change gets washed away by a series of hurricanes, it's a wonder the market hasn't calculated in more weather risk.

With Florida's cane crush ready to begin on October 1, it's [no surprise that growers and the market alike are concerned about the impact of Hurricane Irma](#), the largest hurricane on record to have developed in the Atlantic Ocean. More concerning, however, is that's just the beginning of peak hurricane season so we've really just begun.

With all of the focus on Irma and its destruction through the Caribbean since it made land fall earlier this week, causing [up to 225 mile per hour winds](#), the destruction caused by Hurricane Harvey just the week before that brought so much distraught and chaos to Houston is already nearly forgotten. It's one of the sad byproducts of the post-digital age where people have the attention spans of a mosquito—perhaps, not unlike the market.

ICE sugar [jumped 2% earlier this week in response to Irma's development](#) in the Atlantic, but the market was soon more interested in [India's potential 25 million tonne crop](#) next season that will potentially bring it back to the export market than the damage likely caused in Texas and Louisiana as a result of Harvey and in Florida thanks to Irma.

[Cane is indeed a resilient crop](#), as demonstrated by eons of hurricane seasons in the Gulf and [cyclones in Australia](#) and typhoons in other parts of Asia, so with some luck and some sun after the hurricanes pass the cane should stand back up and continue along its merry way towards sugar

development. If flooding occurs, it could rot the plant and damage begins to pile up. If it's hit by another hurricane before it's had a chance to fully recover, which is entirely possible as we head towards peak hurricane season, then damage could get worrisome.

But with all of the focus on Florida, the mass evacuation of Miami and the clean up from Harvey, little attention is paid to the significant damage to other cane growing regions in the Caribbean—or beyond sugar, the fact [that 90% of buildings and vehicles in the small island of Barbuda have been completely wiped out](#).

Climate change is making hurricanes and other extreme weather events more common and more dangerous, and that's before we've [reached the 1.5°C increase in global temperatures](#) since the industrial age that the International Panel on Climate Change says will be the point of no return as the infamous 2°C is already too much. With the government in Washington (though many of cities and states have gone rogue on the climate change issue) [continue to deny climate change](#) and fail to put in measures to slow it down and increase resilience against it, cane areas especially but the world at large is at greater risk.

So the market will go on flip-flopping over Irma and India and whatever else comes its way, but watch out. Hurricane Katia is edging towards Mexico's sugarcane regions in Veracruz while Hurricane Jose is ready to take another stab at Barbuda. We're only [now coming into the eight-week peak period of hurricane season](#) and it's the [first time since 2010 that three hurricanes were active in the Atlantic at the same time](#). Batten down the hatches!