

GOVERNMENT OF TONGA



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MEDIA RELEASE

Drought alert is now in force for Niuatoputapu

(27 September 2021, Nuku'alofa) The Tonga Meteorological Services has issued a **Drought Alert for Niuatoputapu**. The drought alert for Niuatoputapu is based on the amount of rain that has fell in the past 3 weeks which has been extremely low and reports of water deficiency and drought conditions in the island that has shown impacts in water supplies and in most areas in the island. Also the rainfall forecast for the next 10 days is biased towards below average rainfall.

For Niuatoputapu.

Rainfall has been very low, from the last week of August to the 5th of September 2021, there was only 1.0mm recorded. Because we are still in the dry season and with the 10 day predictions pointing to drier conditions, Niuatoputapu Island Groups are placed under drought alerts, water rationing measures should start to be put in place.

Advise to Rainfall Sensitive Sectors

Water

Households are advised to closely monitor and look after your water supply in the 3 to 6months. If your water supply is rainwater only consider rationing and prioritizing your water usage for drinking, cooking and WASH only, preserve water and collect as much rain water as possible by following the latest weather forecasts and reacting to forecasted rainfall events by collecting as much rain water as possible.

Agriculture

Careful drought planning and actions needs to be implemented now like the following:

- Prepare enough water if it can be spared for irrigating of water dependent crops
- Apply mulching to the soil around crops to keep as much soil moisture in the ground
- Plant drought resistant crops over the next 6 months e.g. cassava and lose yam
- Discuss with your local MAFFF Extension Officer on how to safeguard your crops from drought
 - Follow the 10-day rainfall forecast provided by the Met Office daily

Health

Drought especially prolonged drought always brings with it health risks. Drinking and using contaminated water could result in illnesses such as diarrhea and typhoid. And some skin diseases could be experienced due to lack of water for proper sanitation. Consider, boiling drinking water from water catchments. For those who pump ground water for usage, please consult with the Geology Division of the Ministry of Lands and

Natural Resources on proper pump and ground water management during drought situations if prolonged dry periods are experienced.

Disaster Management

Town Officers and NGOs please work closely with your communities' groups to monitor and gauge the water availability and report to NEMO or MIA any water shortages or difficulties that start to arise.

For more information on this media release, please do not hesitate to contact our Meteorological office at 0800638 or visit our Face book page (Tonga Meteorological Services) or by email at metstaff@met.gov.to for more information.

Some images showing impact of dry conditions in Niuatoputapu.



Table 1: Rainfall that fell at Niuatoputapu Station from 24 August to 27 September 2021

Date	Rain	Date	Rain	Date	Rain	Date	Rain	Date	Rain	Date	Rain
24 Aug	Nil	30 Aug	Nil	5 Sep	0.3	11 Sep	0.1	17 Sep	Nil	23 Sep	1.5
25 Aug	0.1	31 Aug	Nil	6 Sep	6.6	12 Sep	0.5	18 Sep	Nil	24 Sep	3.0
26 Aug	Nil	1 Sep	Nil	7 Sep	Nil	13 Sep	Nil	19 Sep	Nil	25 Sep	Nil
27 Aug	Nil	2 Sep	Nil	8 Sep	Nil	14 Sep	0.2	20 Sep	0.6	26 Sep	Nil
28 Aug	Nil	3 Sep	Nil	9 Sep	Nil	15 Sep	0.2	21 Sep	3.1	27 Sep	Nil
29 Aug	0.4	4 Sep	Nil	10 Sep	Nil	16 Sep	0.1	22 Sep	4.8	Total	21.5

For further information please contact the Meteorology Division on 0800638 or metstaff@met.gov.to. More information is also available at www.met.gov.to

10 Days Rainfall Outlook for Tonga

Issued Time: 5:00am (27th September, 2021)

Next Issue Time: 5:00pm (27th September, 2021)

Island Divisions	Monday 27 th September	Tuesday 28 th September	Wednesday 29 th September	Thursday 30 th September	Friday 01 st October	Saturday 02 nd October	Sunday 03 rd October	Monday 04 th October	Tuesday 05 th October	Wednesday 06 th October
Niutoputapu	80%	70%	60%	50%	40%	30%	20%	20%	10%	10%

Confidence Level

Low: 0 - 20% likelihood (or 1 chance in 10) that the event will actually happen.

Moderate: 20 - 50% likelihood (or 2 to 5 chances in 10) that the event will actually happen.

High: 50 - 70% likelihood (or 5 to 7 chance in 10) that the event will actually happen.

Very High: 70 - 100% likelihood (or 7 to 10 chance in 10) that the event will actually happen.

	<p>Rain amount: 0 – 1.0mm (Mainly fine with little to no rain)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water plants and crops as necessary. Carry Umbrella or Sun Screen to protect you from the Sun, and have drinking water available. Generally a Good Day for outdoor activities (e.g. Laundry, picnics, wedding ceremonies, sports activities etc...) Watch out for prolonged dry periods (red colour) for more than 14 days (drought).
	<p>Rain amount: 1.1 – 5mm (Cloudy periods with Light Showers or Light Rain: puddles form slowly)</p> <p>Impacts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School children may need to take rain coats or umbrella with them just in case of passing showers. Down pipes and water catchments should be clean and ready to receive as much water as possible. Expect slight muddy road conditions in some low lying areas. Household outdoor activities (e.g. BBQ, Birthday Celebrations, Clean up or Tapa Making etc.) should be planned to consider that there will be periods of rain. Favourable for Outdoor gardening especially planting.
	<p>Rain amount: > 5mm (Generally Cloudy or Overcast with Rain or Heavy Showers: puddles rapidly forming and down pipes flowing freely)</p> <p>Impacts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green means listening to radio for the weather forecast for any possible heavy rain or flood warnings. Possible Flooding and school cancellations if more than 50mm. Muddy ground conditions is likely, plan accordingly (e.g. use 4 wheel drive when going to the plantation) General Public should take rain coats/umbrellas with them and spare changing clothes. Beware of elevated chances of soil erosion and run offs in slope areas. Plan for indoor activities (e.g. indoor workshops, accounting, planning, etc...) Mosquitoes could be a problem, two week after continuous periods of heavy rain.