

Voluntary Report – Voluntary - Public Distribution

Date: December 08, 2025

Report Number: JM2025-0010

Report Name: Counting the Cost- Impact of Hurricane Melissa on the
Agricultural Sector in Jamaica

Country: Jamaica

Post: Kingston

Report Category: Agricultural Situation

Prepared By: Rasheeda Hall-Hanson

Approved By: Eric Baylor

Report Highlights:

Jamaica's agricultural sector sustained substantial damage due to Hurricane Melissa, which touched down on October 28, 2025. The category five hurricane destroyed most of Jamaica's agricultural productive areas, resulting in estimated losses and damages of approximately \$180 million. As the Government of Jamaica begins its recovery efforts, the immediate and medium-term risks of food shortages remain a serious concern.

Executive Summary

On October 28, 2025, Melissa, a category five hurricane, caused catastrophic damages to Jamaica's agricultural sector. The storm made landfall in St. Elizabeth – commonly referred to as the breadbasket of Jamaica –which along with other key agricultural parishes, such as Hanover, St. James, and Westmoreland, suffered extensive devastation. Preliminary damage assessments by the Ministry of Agriculture calculated agricultural losses exceeding \$180 million.

Both crops and animal production bore the brunt of the hurricane's impact. Major crop losses included fresh vegetables, bananas, plantains and tubers, such as yams and cassava, staples in the Jamaican diet. Official estimates for sugarcane production are not yet available. However, local sources have reported losses in some sugarcane fields, which are now approaching harvesting season. Post has also learned of infrastructural damage to some sugar mills.

Major livestock losses reported included poultry and small ruminant flocks as well as cattle and swine herds. The fisheries subsector also bore a wave of damage primarily resulting from loss of fishing equipment, gears, and fish stock. As rapid assessment continues, the government is not only eyeing the total cost to the sector but also evaluating ways to restore food supplies to maintain food security over the coming months.

Counting the Costs

As recovery and assessment efforts get underway, the massive destruction of Jamaica's agriculture sector becomes more evident. Loss and damage estimates by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Mining (MoAFM) are already in the millions.

Production:

Crop losses reached a record, accounting for at least 68 percent while animal and fisheries stood at 22 percent and 10 percent respectively. MoAFM preliminary reports indicated that fresh vegetables, such as cabbage, carrots, tomatoes, hot pepper and vine crops, like melon and pumpkin, registered over \$54 million in loss and damages. Tubers sustained the second highest level of damage and loss totaling \$28 million (see table 1 for list of estimates).

Table 1: Estimates of Damages and Loss to Jamaica's Agricultural Sector after Hurricane Melissa

Commodity		Damage and Loss (USD)
Vegetable Crops		\$54 mil
Cassava & Yam		\$28 mil
Bananas & Plantains		\$18 mil
Coffee		\$4.9 mil
Fruit Trees		\$2 mil
Small ruminants, pigs and cattle		\$18 mil
Poultry (Chicken-Broilers & Layers)		\$16 mil
Fisheries		\$16 mil

Source -Summarized data from MoAF

The livestock subsector also suffered significant impacts from the hurricane. The poultry subsector, particularly layers, was practically wiped out as some [major farms](#)¹ supplying the island were destroyed.

Hotel, Restaurant and Institution Subsector:

High winds, storm surges, and flooding negatively affected the Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional (HRI) subsector on the western side of the island. This disruption extended to popular tourist destinations, such as Negril and Montego Bay. [Several hotel groups](#)² in the western region and as far north as Ocho Rios have shuttered their properties due to severe storm damage. However, many of these hotels plan to re-open before the end of the year, pending final post-disaster assessments. Data for other local restaurants and eateries are scarce, but some have been gradually reopening.

Open for Business and on the Road to Recovery

Despite the disruption caused by Hurricane Melissa, Jamaica is actively engaged in restoration efforts and remains open for trade and economic activities. Both international airports – Norman Manley in Kingston and Sangster in Montego Bay – as well as major marine ports are open and operational. The MoAF also recently announced a [recovery plan](#)³ to jump start the agricultural sector with a \$18.7 million budget. These funds are designated for use in replanting, seed distribution, livestock restocking, and land preparation. The Ministry also intends to address market shortfalls with the [importation](#)⁴ of selected fruits and vegetables, including papaya, onions, tomatoes, cabbage and carrots. Table eggs are also a priority on the import list.

Local and international aid continues to pour into the country to support the rehabilitation efforts. The Government of the United States contributed over \$22 million so far to shore up disaster assistance and relief efforts across the island.

As Jamaica moves forward in the aftermath of Melissa, government officials expect that the country will continue to face great logistical obstacles due to the extensive devastation within the farming belt, compounded by social and infrastructural issues. Early warning reports indicate that food shortages are likely to drive up food prices and may limit access for consumers; furthermore, local officials have indicated that these challenges are expected to persist beyond the Christmas season and into the first quarter of 2026.

¹ <https://www.thepoultrysite.com/news/2025/11/hurricane-melissa-devastates-jamaicas-largest-egg-farm>

² <https://www.travelweekly.com/Travel-News/Hotel-News/Jamaica-faces-uneven-hospitality-recovery-Hurricane-Melissa>

³ <https://www.moa.gov.jm/content/450-million-redirected-emergency-recovery-agriculture-sector>

⁴ https://jamaica-gleaner.com/article/news/20251111/jamaica-import-eggs-select-fruits-and-vegetables-amid-devastation-caused#google_vignette

Attachments:

No Attachments.