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Puerto Rico Loses \$159 Million Worth of Crops as Hurricane Fiona Destroyed Fields of Plantains, Bananas and Other Goods

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A plantain crop field in Guánica, Puerto Rico damaged by Hurricane Fiona, which impacted the island on Sept. 18, 2022. By. GETTY IMAGES

While it may have been only a category 1 hurricane, Fiona exacted catastrophic damage on Puerto Rico on Sept. 18, bringing historic rainfall and landslides and resulting in immense loss in the island's agriculture sector.

Damaging 90 percent of Puerto Rico's crops, Hurricane Fiona resulted in a \$159 million loss in agriculture output as the storm wreaked havoc on plantain, banana and other fields of crops, said Puerto Rico Agriculture Minister Ramón González on Tuesday.

“A lot of us underestimated the phenomenon,” said Manuel Cidre, secretary of Puerto Rico’s Department of Economic Development and Commerce, according to the Associated Press. “It was much more damaging to agriculture in the south than many people thought.”

Mr. González said coffee and vegetable plantations were also severely impacted by the storm, which became the latest setback for the agriculture sector in Puerto Rico as it had already been struggling to retain crop-picking workers. The demand for such employees led local leaders to seek workers from Mexico and the Dominican Republic to fill the gap.

Days following the storm, Mr. González announced a \$2 million aid package for farmers, and crews have been inspecting farms to assess damage.

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