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.1232:CUBAN SUGAR HARVEST WINDING DOWN:
HAVANA, MAY 27, REUTER -- AS THE FIRST RAINS FELL TO BREAK CUBA'S LONG DRY SPELL, THE ISLAND'S SUGAR HARVEST IS WINDING DOWN WITH A DISAPPOINTING, BUT PREDICTED, SHORTFALL IN CRUDE SUGAR PRODUCTION.

THE HARVEST HAS COME TO A HALT IN MOST OF CUBA'S MOST IMPORTANT SUGAR PRODUCING PROVINCE. CUBA'S CENTRAL BANK SAID IN A REORT LAST MONTH THAT CRUDE PRODUCTION IN THE 1985-86 HARVEST WILL NOT SURPASS 7.1 MILLION TONNES COMPARED TO 8.2 MILLION TONNES DURING THE PREVIOUS HARVEST.

BEFORE SEVERAL YEARS OF BELOW AVERAGE RAINFALL AND LAST NOVEMBER'S HURRICANE KATE WHICH DAMAGED LARGE AREAS OF THE NATION'S PLANTATIONS, THE CUBAN SUGAR INDUSTRY HAD PROJECTED AN 8.7 MILLION TONNE CRUDE PRODUCTION FOR THE PRESENT HARVEST. FOLLOWING HURRICANE KATE, ACCORDING TO OE CUBAN OFFICIAL, THE GOAL WAS REDUCED TO 7 MILLION TONNES.

THE END OF THE HARVEST WILL ALLOW CUBA'S SIZABLE AGRICULTURAL WORKFROCE TO CONCENTRATE ON THE SPRING PLANTING GOAL OF OVER 200,000 HECTARES WHICH IS NOW BEHIND SCHEDULE AND ON WEEDING WHICH HAS BECOME NECESSARY DUE TO THE RECENT RAINS.
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