
EARLY WARNING BULLETIN FOR FOOD SECURITY

No. 2018/11

IN THE GAMBIA

Period: August 11-20, 2018



Government of The Gambia

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Multidisciplinary Working Group

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1.0. SYNOPTIC SITUATION:

The mean surface position of the ITD has its western axis lying over southern Mauritania, stretching across northern positions of Mali, Niger and Chad.

The places to the north of the ITD were mainly dry and stable with records of dust haze over central Algeria, northern Mali and Libya during the period. Places to the south of the ITD were characterized by moderate to heavy rain showers and thunderstorms, occasionally associated with strong winds. The occurrences were mainly in the evening into the nights.

1.1. OUTLOOK FOR THE NEXT DEKAD (21st- 31st August 2018):

The atmosphere will be generally warm and humid during the period. Slight to moderate rain showers and thunderstorms; occasionally heavy and associated with strong winds is expecting during first half of the dekad from 23rd to 25th and 27th , 28th , 30th and 31st August 2018.

2.0 AGROMETEOROLOGICAL SITUATION

2.1 RAINFALL SITUATION

Rainfall intensity in this dekad is higher in the Eastern Third than the rest of the country. Dekadal totals ranging from 96.1mm to 69.2mm were recorded over Fatoto and Basse respectively in the Eastern Third. In the Middle Third rainfall ranging from 1.2mm to 29.6mm were recorded over Jenoi and Kaur respectively and in the Western Third dekad total ranging from 7.8mm to 64.5mm were recorded over Yundum and Sibanor respectively, (**Figure 1a**). However, this year's rainy season is characterized by periodic dry spells, among them is this period under review which adversely impeded the cultivation and production of crops across the country. The most affected regions are CRR/N, CRR/S, LRR, and the parts of the Sanjal District of the NBR. The regions of WCR, URR, the districts of Nuimi and Badibu of the NBR received substantial rains that supported good plant growth during the period. The production fields that are situated in upland ecologies suffered the most as lowland areas have moisture retention capacities from the inflow of run-off water. Even the lowland areas that used to be submerged by this time of the rainy season were found dry and inadequate to support healthy plant growth. The farmers that have sown their seeds prior to the protracted dry spells that occurred in the month of July have to reseed which incurred increase production cost on the affected farmers. Therefore availability of the rains in the month of September would be an important determinant of the success of the season because most of the crops will be in the critical phase of

flowering or maturity. The occurrence of such dry spells coupled with the biotic factors such as pest problems (fall army worm, birds, blister beetles etc) would have a devastating effect on the yield and the overall crop production.

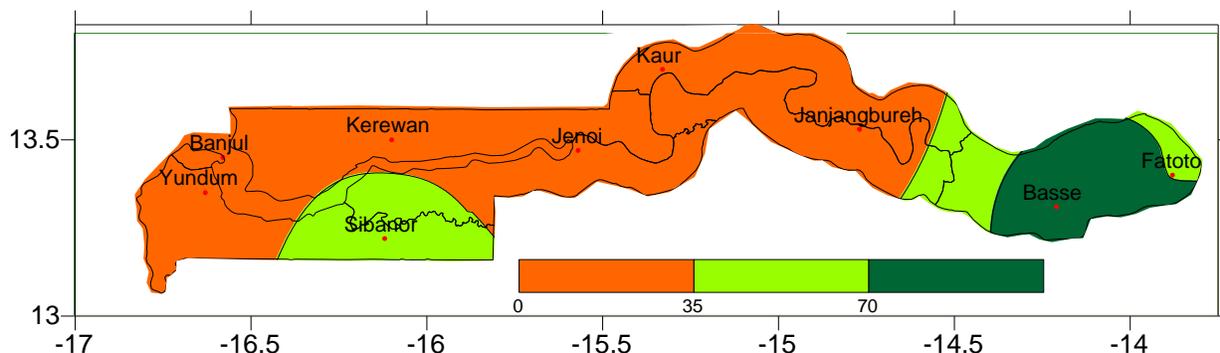


Figure 1a: Rainfall dekadal totals 11th–20th August 2018.

As at August 20th, 2018, seasonal rainfall totals are very low. Cumulatively, Sibanon in the Western Third recorded the highest amount of **519.1 mm**, whilst in the Middle Third, Janjangbureh recorded the highest of **332.0mm** and in the Eastern Third, Basse recorded the highest cumulative rainfall total of **477.1mm**. On the other hand, the lowest seasonal totals recorded in the Western Third as at this period under review is **382.0mm** recorded over Kerewan, in the Middle Third, **208.2mm** was recorded over Kaur and in the Eastern Third, Fatoto recorded the lowest of **359.0mm**, figure1b below.

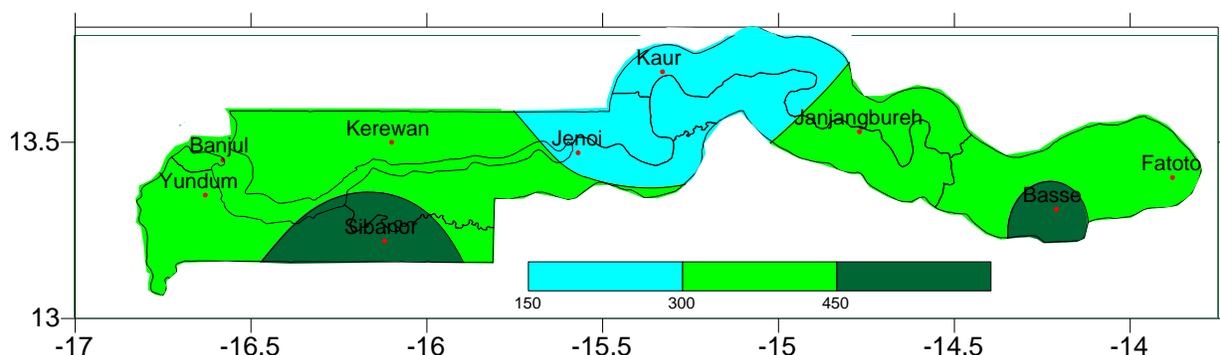


Figure 1b: Rainfall Seasonal totals from May 1st 2018– August 20th 2018.

The country average stood at **325.5mm** which is **236.6mm** less than last year (2017). Deficits were recorded across the country with wider margins of **736.6mm** over Jenoi in the Middle Third, **344.2mm** over Kerewan in the Western Third and **293.2mm** over Sapu in the Middle Third.

2.2 OTHER WEATHER PARAMETERS

Average temperatures across the country in this dekad increased as compared to last dekad, this can be denoted to the dry spell experienced in this dekad which thus increasing the temperature. Minimum temperature recorded was 19°C recorded over Jenoi in the Middle Third, whilst maximum temperature recorded was 35°C recorded over Janjanbureh and Kaur in the Middle Third of the country.

Average sunshine duration recorded across the country were between 5 to 7 hours.

Average relative humidity (RH) recorded was generally 80% countrywide which indicates high water content of the atmosphere.

3.0 AGRICULTURAL SITUATION:

West Coast Region:

The main agricultural engagement of farmers in this region is weeding and fertilizer application. The phenological stages of crops varied as maize is at tasseling, the early grown groundnuts are at flowering stages and rice is at tillering stage. Fall Army worm is continuing to be observed in some parts of the region.

North Bank Region:

Agricultural activities of farmers in this region are plowing of rice fields in the lowlands both mechanically and locally, rice transplanting and weeding. Some of the early grown early millet are at panicle initiation stage, groundnuts are flowering and pegging and maize is at tasseling and cubing stages. Fall Army worm has reduced as a result of farmers being sensitized as to their tackling.

Lower River Region:

In this region, some farmers are still busy weeding whilst others have completed weeding. In the lowland fields, most farmers are plowing using their local tools. The phenological stage of early millet is still at vegetative stages and rice is at nursery stage for transplanting to the lowlands. There is the presence of Fall Army Worm and the infestation is severe.

Central River Region North:

Farmers in this region are weeding, some are transplanting rice in the lowlands and others are busy harvesting dry season rice fields. Maize is at tasseling stage whilst some groundnut fields are at flowering stages. Fall Army worm is still present in the region.

Central River Region South:

Early millet in this region is promising but farmers are disappointed with groundnuts because of acute shortage of rainfall. Farmers who were engaged in rice production during the dry season are now harvesting their fields as well as scaring birds, whilst those who are now engage in the production are nursing them for onwards transplanting. Generally, early millet is at vegetative stage.

Upper River Region:

The main farming activity of farmers in this region is weeding. However, some groundnuts fields are flowering and maize is at tasseling stage. There is still the presence of Fall Army Worm in the region.

4.0 MARKET SITUATION:

Prices of major cereals commodities have been observed to be stable compared to the first and second week of August 2018, except for millet which has increase by 9 percent compared to the previous week.

Average prices of decorticated groundnuts is stable but have slightly increased, while beans prices are stable compared to the previous week.

Prices of major vegetables such as Tomatoes, Cabbage and Bitter Tomatoes have increased by 11 percent, 9 percent and 19 percent respectively; at the same time price of Hot Pepper have decreased by 13 percent, while imported onions are slightly stable.

Comparing the average prices of the first week of August and the second week, there has not been a significant change in the prices of meat & bones, beef steak and mutton.

5.0 LIVESTOCK SITUATION:

The Foot and mouth disease that was reported in CRR North has now been reported country wide. The highly contagious nature of the disease coupled with the large movement of livestock within the country and across the borders especially during the Holy feast of *Tobaski* aggravated the situation.

The water and feed situation is improving due to increase in rainfall, however, the situation is still not satisfactory. The grazing lands are largely dominated by *decreaser grasses*, which have low nutrient values.

Prices of livestock especially ram and cattle are very high, largely associated with the feast of *Tobaski*.

Banjul 27th August 2018

National MWG of The Gambia

Composition of MWG:

Department of Water Resources
Planning Services - Department of Agriculture (DOA)
Communication, Extension & Education Services - DOA
Department of Livestock Services
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