

EARLY WARNING BULLETIN FOR FOOD SECURITY

No. 2018/07

IN THE GAMBIA

Period: July 1-10, 2018



Government of The Gambia

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Multidisciplinary Working Group

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1. SYNOPTIC SITUATION:

The mean surface positions of the Inter-Tropical Discontinuity (ITD), a boundary layer that separates the dry and hot northeasterly from the moist and warm Southwesterly winds during this dekad fluctuates over northern Senegal, stretching across western Mali, central Niger and then slanting onto Chad. Thus, the ITD continued with its northwards journey.

To the north of the ITD, dust haze was reported over Algeria and northern parts of Mali and Mauritania. The atmosphere over this region was generally dry, warm and stable.

South of the ITD, moderate to heavy rains and thunderstorms, occasionally accompanied with strong winds affected much of the countries in West Africa and Gulf of Guinea States.

1.1 OUTLOOK FOR THE NEXT DEKAD (July 11th to 20th, 2018)

The saturation of the atmosphere will continue to increase as we progress into the rainy season. Consequently, moderate to widespread rains and thunderstorms occasionally associated with strong winds will prevail. However, rains and thunderstorms are expected in the country on the 12th, 14th and 18th/19th July 2018.

2. RAINFALL SITUATION

Rainfall situation in this dekad has further improved significantly across the country. In the Western Third, dekadal rainfall amounts ranged from 80mm to over 170mm (with Sibanon recording the highest of 172.8mm). In the Middle and Eastern Thirds, dekadal totals ranged from 30mm to over 120mm with the highest (121.1mm) recorded over Jenoi and 80.2mm over Basse (Figure 1a).

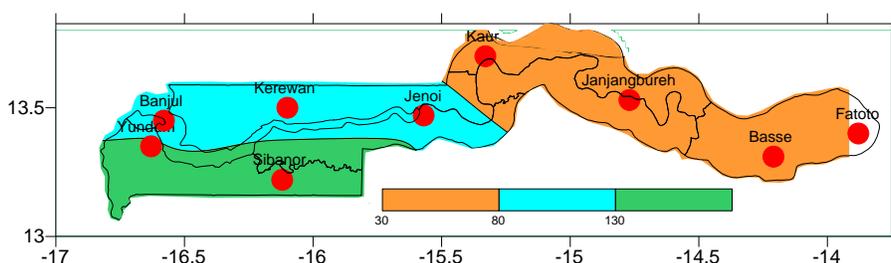


Figure 1a: Dekadal rainfall totals from 01st –10th July, 2018.

The lowest seasonal rainfall total as at this period under review is over Kaur in the Middle Third with 61.7mm, whilst the highest seasonal total is over Sibanon in the Western Third with 220.3mm (figure 1b).

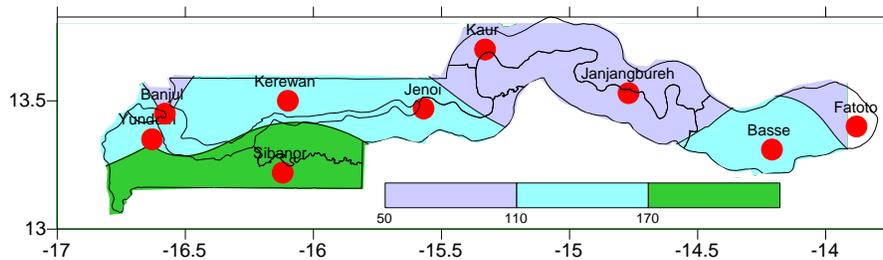


Figure 1b: Rainfall seasonal totals as at 10th July, 2018.

As at July 10th 2018, only Yundum and Sibanon in the Western Third as well as Kaur in the Middle Third recorded surpluses, all the other stations across the country recorded significant deficits ranging from 3.2mm to 133.3mm as compared to the same period last year (2017). Comparing it further with the long term mean, it shows a better scenario with all the stations in the Western Third and Jenoi in the Middle Third that recorded surpluses but all the other stations recorded deficits.

3. AGROMETEOROLOGICAL SITUATION

Average temperatures across the country during this dekad ranged between 19.1°C to 28.1 °C in the Western Third, 27.7°C to 29.1 in the Middle Third and 28 °C in the Eastern Third of the country. This indicates generally a drop in the average temperatures as compared with the previous dekad which can be attributed to the influence of the rainfall received in this period.

Winds were light to moderate in speed during most of the period. However, strong wind of 36km/hr accompanied by thunderstorm and rainfall was also recorded over places during the dekad.

Average sunshine duration recorded during the dekad ranged between 6 hours to 7 hours over the Western Third, 4 hours to 5 hours in the Middle Third and 5 hours in the Eastern Third of the country. This generally indicates a further drop in the number of sunshine duration compared with the previous dekad which is continued to be the influence of the cloud coverage which impeded the sunshine.

Average relative humidity varied between 67% to 83% over the entire country. This shows that all stations across the country recorded above 60%, which is normal as relative humidity is expected to increase as we progress into the rainy season.

4. AGRICULTURAL SITUATION

The Agricultural situation during the period under review can be classified in the different regions across the country as follows:

West Coast Region

In this region, farmers are busy sowing cereals such as Maize, Millet and Findi in the upland. Few Farmers are still clearing their farmlands.

North Bank Region

In this region, sowing of cereals (early millet and maize) is almost completed. Cereals that were sown during the early rains are now in early stage of growth and farmers are on weeding. The nursing of rice for onward transplanting to the lowland fields are also ongoing.

Lower River Region (LRR)

The Agricultural situation in this region during this dekad shows that sowing of major crops has now started in earnest in all communities in LRR, especially in the Jarras where inadequate moisture for has hampered the sowing of groundnut. However, sowing of millet and findi is completed.

Fertilizer distribution is ongoing, as Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) project is supporting the farmers with seeds and fertilizers for effective crop production. The extension agents are on their routine activities reaching to the farmers to deliver these inputs and disseminating information in connection to production.

Central River Region

Farmers' main engagement in this region is sowing of major crops (maize, early millet and groundnuts) and weeding. Transplanting of rice from nursery fields to lowland fields is also in progress.

Upper River Region

In this region, cereals such as early millet and maize are in their early vegetative stages of growth and development. Some farmers are facing groundnut seeds scarcity and are awaiting for FAO to assist them with seeds. If this is prolong any longer, it can cause a setback in the production of groundnut in this region.

5. PESTS AND DISEASES SITUATION

The presence of Army worms was reported in Tumana in the Upper River Region, but no major destruction was reported during this reporting period. However, attention should be given as this Alien Invasive Pests species have been accidentally introduced to the Gambia in recent years.

These pest species originated from countries outside the Gambia hence the name "alien". They invade countries and cause a lot of havoc on crops thereby threatening food security. Such pests include: Fall armyworm, white flies, scales, mealybugs. These pests attack a wide range of crops: cereal, vegetables, fruit trees and ornamentals.

The Plant Protection Services of the Ministry of Agriculture has since put in a lot of effort to combat these pests. These efforts are being supported by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nation. Several trainings on the Biology, Identification and Management of these alien invasive pest species have been carried out for extension and research staff as well as farmers. The most serious of these pests is the Fall armyworm.

- **Fall Armyworm - Introduction**

Fall armyworm (FAW) *Spodoptera frugiperda* (photo 1) is an invasive moth native to tropical and subtropical regions of the Americas - which was detected for the first time on the African continent in 2016. It is an alien to the continent.



Photo 1: The Fall Armyworm

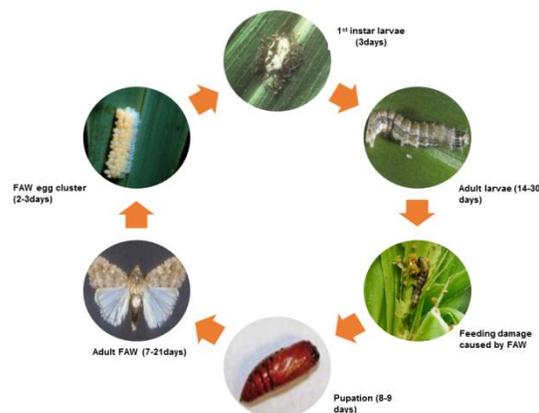
- **Host plants of the FAW**

Although the fall armyworm feeds on many kinds of food, with a host range of more than 80 plant species, it prefers to feed on grassy plants, in particular economically important crops such as maize, millet, sorghum, rice, wheat and sugarcane.

Other crops of major agricultural importance attacked by the pest include cowpea, peanut, potato, soybean and cotton.

- **Life cycle of the FAW**

The figure below shows the life cycle of the fall armyworm.



- **Damage caused by the fall armyworm**

The larvae feed inside whorls on young maize plants (photo 2) and actively feed early in the morning or late in the afternoon. A definite symptom as to the presence of FAW in any commodity are small shot holes "window pane" to large ragged and elongated holes found in the leaves emerging from the whorl. The caterpillars leave behind large amount of moist sawdust-like frass near the whorl and upper leaves.



Photo 2: *S. frugiperda* damage on maize plant. A). window pane damage on leaves. B). caterpillar feeding in the whorls. C). caterpillar feeding on maize cobs

- **Control Measures**

Systemic Pesticides: Effective when used correctly
 Alternate different types of pesticide to reduce risk of resistance developing
 Spray early or late in the day

Spray young larvae: Monitoring needed

Monitoring

Visual survey (scouting)

Pheromone traps (Now on trial)

Early detection

Botanicals

Commercial products (example Neem) and plants with insecticidal features

Cultural control methods mainly including: plant early, use early maturing varieties, intercrop maize and beans, remove weeds, remove/destroy crop residues, rotate with non-hosts,

6. SITUATION OF CEREAL MARKETS

The price of maize has drop slightly in the rural markets from 12.96 Dalasis per kilo in the last dekad to 12.00 Dalasis per kilo in this one. However, this commodity was sold in Bakau for 35.26 Dalasis per kilo in this dekad.

The price of imported rice (broken) remained the same, D20.00/kg in some rural markets compared with the last dekad. However, the product is sold as high as D30.00/kg in Jareng in the same rural area which may be due to the scarcity or the demand for the commodity in this area.

The price of beef remained the same D 150.00/kg, D 175.00/kg in all the provincial markets but in the urban area, beef is sold at D200.00/kg.

7. LIVESTOCK SITUATION

During this dekad, livestock situation in the country continued to be slightly impressive as compared to the preceding dekads, due to the rainfall received thus increasing the drinking points across the country. However, pastures are also in their early stages of germination for livestock to be able to consume.

Banjul July 13th 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
Plant Protection Services - DOA
National Environment Agency

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