

# EARLY WARNING BULLETIN FOR FOOD SECURITY

No. 2018/09

## IN THE GAMBIA

Period: July 21-31, 2018



Government of The Gambia

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Multidisciplinary Working Group

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### 1.0. SYNOPTIC SITUATION:

The average surface position of the Inter-Tropical Discontinuity (ITD) for the dekad oscillated over north-central Senegal, southern Mauritania, and northeastern Mali onto northern Niger.

The north of the ITD experienced dry and stable atmosphere, with dust observed over central Mauritania, Algeria and northern Mali and Libya. Whereas to south of the ITD, the atmosphere was characterized by general instability and continuous convective activities producing thunderstorms and rain showers over the Gulf of Guinea States, much of the Sahel up to south-eastern Senegal. These were occasionally moderate to heavy, widespread and with strong winds. The Gambia and northern Senegal experienced periods of dry spells, generally humid and warm.

### 1.1. OUTLOOK FOR THE NEXT DEKAD (01<sup>st</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> August 2018)

Variable cloudiness, humid and warm conditions expected to prevail during the first part of the dekad, with occasional thunderstorms and rain showers (moderate to heavy, scattered, may be widespread accompanied by strong winds will prevail over the country during the dekad, during late afternoon onwards morning. The second part of the dekad generally will be marked with scattered to widespread thunderstorms and showers of rain.

### 2.0 RAINFALL SITUATION

Daily rainfall intensities ranging from 2.0mm to 18.1 were recorded in the Western Third, whilst in the Middle and Eastern Thirds of the country it ranged from 1.2mm to 41.1mm and 2.8mm to 39.8mm respectively. The number of rainy days ranged from 2 to 4 days resulting to end-of-dekad totals to range from 10.6mm to 30.7mm in the Western Third, 23.0mm to 57.4mm in the Middle Third and 9.1mm to 52.5mm in the Eastern Third of the country (fig. 1a).

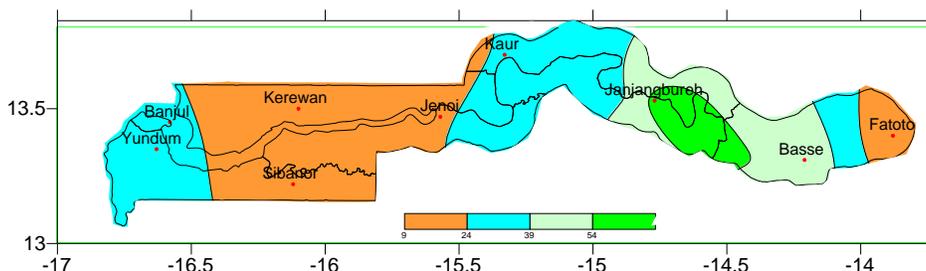
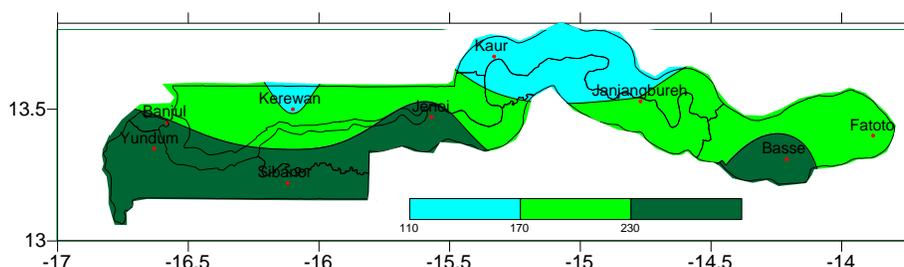


Figure 1a: Dekadal rainfall totals from 21<sup>st</sup> –31<sup>st</sup> July 2018.

Despite the low ten-day total rainfall recorded, it has further slightly increased the seasonal rainfall totals to range between **162.3mm** over Kerewan to **249.9mm** over Yundum in the Western Third, **120.2mm** over Kaur to **254.3mm** over Jenoi in the Middle Third and **174.7mm** over Fatoto to **251.2mm** over Basse in the Eastern Third of the country (**Figure 1b**).



**Figure 1b: Seasonal Rainfall totals as at July 31<sup>st</sup> 2018.**

In comparison with the same period last year (2017) and the long term mean (1981 – 2010), all the stations across the country recorded deficits, the highest of which were **388.0mm** over Kerewan and **259.5mm** over Jenoi, both in the Western Third of the country.

### 3.0 AGROMETEOROLOGICAL SITUATION

Average temperatures across the country have generally increased compared to the previous dekad with all stations recording above 30°C. Minimum temperature recorded was 18°C over Kerewan in the Western Third, whilst maximum temperature recorded was 36°C over Kaur in the Middle Third of the country.

Winds were generally light to moderate in speed across the country but a maximum gust of 26.6 km/h was also recorded over Basse in the Eastern Third of the country.

Average sunshine duration in this dekad was between 6 to 7 hours across the country.

Average relative humidity during this dekad was above 70% across the country. This has continued to indicate high rate of water content in the atmosphere.

### 4.0 AGRICULTURAL SITUATION

#### West Coast Region

Major activities of farmers in this region are weeding and fertilizer application. However, some farmers are still busy sowing late maturing crops. Plowings in the lowland fields is ongoing and some early sown rice fields are at tillering stages. In the upland fields, maize, early millet and groundnuts are at their early vegetative stages of growth.

The presence of *hairy caterpillars* is reported in Kombo Central whilst *Fall Army Worms* is reported in Kombo South.

#### North Bank Region

In this dekad, farmers in this region are busy weeding in the upland fields. Early millet, maize and groundnuts are also at early vegetative stages. Despite the inadequate rains, early sown groundnuts are flowering. Rice is at nursery preparation stage for onward transplanting to the lowlands fields.

*Fall Army Worms* and *hairy worms* are also reported in Upper and Lower Nuimies as well as Upper Badibu.

### Lower River Region

In this region, farmers are busy weeding. However, there are some pockets in the region where some farmers are still sowing due to inadequate rain. The crops that were sown earlier are at their vegetative stages and with the intervention of The Gambia Government and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), fertilizer and groundnuts are being distributed in the region. For rice production, farmers are busy nursing them for planting in the lowland fields.

### Central River Region - North

Early millet and maize are at their early vegetative growth stages, but are wilting due to insufficient rain. Weeding is ongoing but some farmers are yet to sow some of their crops due to inadequate rain. In the lowland fields, transplanting as well as harvesting of rice fields are in progress.

### Central River Region - South

In this region, a similar situation as that of Central River Region - North has occurred. Weeding is being undertaken by farmers under a dry situation. Crops are in their vegetative stage but rainfall is not forthcoming. Some farmers are still with some seeds to sow when there is rain.

### Upper River Region

Despite the inadequate rainfall widely experienced by farmers in this region, few groundnut fields that were sown earlier are flowering. Some farmers have resorted to sowing cowpea which is an early maturing crop to try and adapt to the insufficient rainfall situation. Replanting is also taking place in some areas where poor germination occurs. However, crops that were sown during the early rains are at vegetative stage and weeding is ongoing but under dry environment.

### Pests and diseases situation

There are reports of Fall Army Worm in both Kombo north and the Foni, West Coast Region. It was also reported earlier in the Upper River Region and is still in existence. The crop being attacked is maize and the damages this pest can cause are shown in the **Photos below**. The presence of *fruit flies* on mangoes in most of the Kombos and on papaya, banana and oranges in Bakau and Farato have been reported.

In combating the *fall army worm*, the Plant Protection Unit of the Department of Agriculture is promoting Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and training was done for farmers and field staff. They are also doing trapping using Timaye and Succes A pat against fruit flies.



Window pane damage on leaves



Caterpillar feeding in the whorls.



Caterpillar feeding on maize cobs

## 5.0 MARKET SITUATION

The price of maize in the rural markets in this dekad defers from one market to the other. The commodity was sold at 12.00 Dalasis per kilo in Bwiam, 14.00 Dalasis per kilo in Jareng to as high as 20.00 per kilo in Fass Njaga Choi. In the same vein, maize was sold in the urban markets at varying prices of 26.25 Dalasis per kilo in Serekunda, 29.63 Dalasis per kilo in Banjul and as high as 33.35 Dalasis per Kilo in Bakau.

The price of imported rice (broken) has increased in this dekad from D20.00/kg to D24.00/kg and D25.00/kg in the provincial markets compared with the last dekad. It remained the same (D30.00/kg) in Jareng in the same rural area.

Beef price in the provincial markets varies from D 150.00/kg to D 180.00/kg. It also varies from D200.00/kg to 225.00/kg in the urban markets.

## 6.0 LIVESTOCK

There are outbreaks of suspected *Foot and Mouth Disease* in almost all the regions across the country, affecting cattle. In Central River Region North, some deaths were reported.

Although few rains have been recorded causing grasses to grow but yet still livestock feed is scare. Grasses have started emerging but are not enough for cattle. However, temporal nomads have starting going back home.

Banjul August 03 2018

National MWG of The Gambia

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