

EARLY WARNING BULLETIN FOR FOOD SECURITY

No. 2018/13

IN THE GAMBIA

Period: September 01-10, 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) has its western axis lying over central Mauritania, stretching across northern positions of Mali, Niger and then slanting onto Chad.

The weather to the north of the ITD was characterized as dry and stable with observance of patches of dust haze over Algeria during the period. Places to the south of the ITD experienced moderate to heavy rain and thunderstorms, occasionally associated with very strong winds as a result well entrenched monsoon surge.

1.1. OUTLOOK FOR THE NEXT DEKAD (11th – 20th September 2018)

Warm and humid atmospheric conditions will persist during the period with outbreaks of slight to moderate rains and heavy thunderstorms, occasionally associated with strong winds. The expected rainy days include 11th, 13th and 18th September 2018.

2.0. RAINFALL SITUATION:

Rainfall situation in this dekad has further significantly improved with intensities higher in the Eastern Third recording dekadal amounts ranging from **205.5mm** to **207.2mm** then the Middle Third with rainfall amounts ranging from **160.5mm** to **193.9mm** and **70.2mm** to **97.0mm** recorded in the Western Third of the Country (**Figure 1a**). These rainfall amounts were recorded during a minimum period of five rainy days to a maximum period of ten rainy days with the highest daily rainfall amount of 139.8mm recorded over Janjanbureh in the Middle Third of the country.

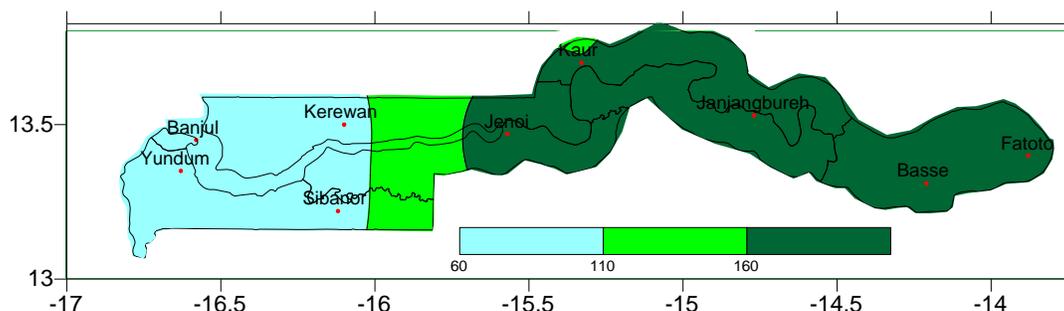


Figure 1a: Dekadal rainfall totals, 01 – 10 September, 2018.

The significant increase in the seasonal rainfall totals as at 10 September, 2018 has been greatly influenced by this period under review. The highest rainfall seasonal total of **785.4mm** was recorded over Sibanon in the Western Third, **635.2mm** over Sapu in the Middle Third and **804.2mm** recorded over Basse in the Eastern Third of the country, (**figure 1b**).

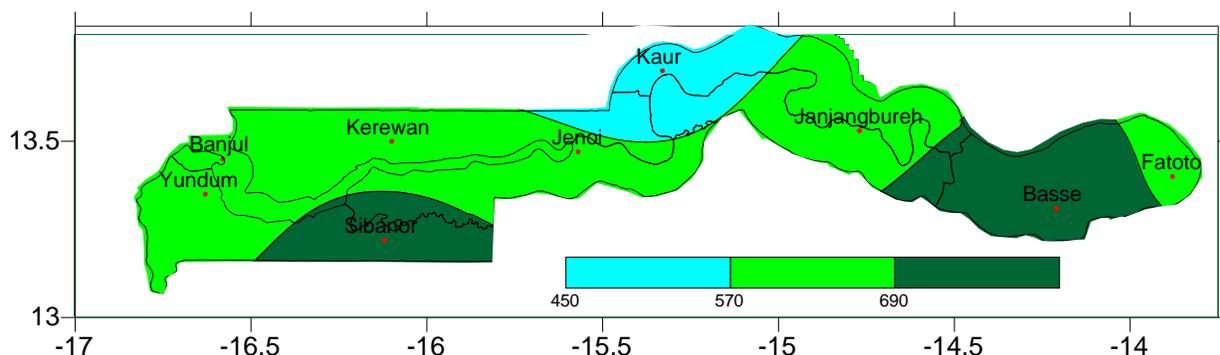


Figure 1b: Rainfall Seasonal totals from May 1st 2018– September10th 2018.

Rainfall deficits were recorded across the country as compared with last year except at Sibanon in the Western Third which recorded a surplus of 38mm. However, deficits are significantly narrowed during this period under review because of the high daily intensities recorded in this period.

3.0 AGROMETEOROLOGICAL SITUATION:

The average temperatures recorded in this dekad across the country have slightly decreased compared with the previous dekad. This is as a result of the persistence of rainfall during the period. Minimum temperature recorded in this dekad was 20°C recorded over Sibanon and Jenoi in the Western and Middle Thirds respectively, whilst maximum temperature recorded was 37.6°C recorded over Kaur in the Middle Third.

Winds were generally light to moderate in speed across the country.

Average relative humidity recorded during this dekad was 80% countrywide.

4.0 AGRICULTURAL SITUATION:

West Coast Region

In this region, the phenological stages of crops are in two categories namely, for those who sowed early and those who showed late”. Groundnuts: pegging, pod formation and flowering, Maize: booting, tasseling and some early shown fields have reached maturity stage, some rice: booting and tillering respectively. Cow pea is generally flowering. Fertilizer application is also on going for the crops that were sown late. Fall Army worm is still persisting in the region and has seriously affected the maize farms.

North Bank Region

The crops situation in this region generally is stable. Groundnuts are at pegging stage, early millet is at panicle initiation whilst maize is at tasseling to maturity stages. Transplanting of rice is also ongoing, however, in the Badibus, the dike were poorly constructed to retain water for rice cultivation. The main engagement of some farmers at this point in time is the growing of water melon. There are reported cases of blister beetles in millet fields and the Fall Army worm is still present but at a minimal rate.

Central River North

In this region, rainfall was not impressive initially that caused farmers to grow their crops late. Crops performance around the Sami are better but elsewhere in the region are facing problems of poor germination and as a result, many resorted in growing cowpea which is an early maturing crop. The early planted maize fields are tasseling and cubing but the lately planted ones are in their vegetative stages. Upland rice is mostly grown in the Sami area and is at tillering stage. For lowland rice, the fields looks very good, however some lowland rice submerged during these recent rains. Fall Army Worm in this region has reduced greatly because of the heavy downpour that washed them away.

Upper River Region

Many farmers in this region resorted in cultivating cowpea because of the inadequate rainfall as well as the late supply of groundnut seeds. The cowpea grown in this area are in their flowering stage as well as the early millet. Maize is tasseling and at maturity stage whilst sorghum which is widely grown in the area is at stem elongation. In this region also, one single farmer in Ndimbo lost six donkeys as a result of heavy downpour that washed them away. The Fall Army Worm has reduced because of the heavy downpour.

Lower River Region

Crops performance in this region generally is good, the only problem lies with the late grown ones which was due to inadequate rainfall. Maize fields that were cultivated early are in their cob development stage as well as maturity stage whilst the ones lately cultivated are booting. Groundnuts are at phonological stages ranging from flowering to pegging. Most of the early millet fields are also flowering. In the lowland fields, the demand for tractors is far higher than the availability and as a result, most farmers resulted in plowing their rice fields manually. Transplanting of rice has started in earnest in the region.

5.0. PESTS AND DISEASES SITUATION:

The most prevalent and worrying pest in all the regions still remain to be the fall armyworm (*Spodoptera frugiperda*) which affects mostly maize but also millet and sorghum. Majority of the maize plants are now at the advance stage of maturity hence there are no whorls for the larvae to hide in. In that regard, the parts of the plant where the larvae could be found are the leaf axil, the tassels and the cobs. The FAW attacks all stages of the phonological growth of the plant thus making it a serious pest. Therefore frequent observations should be made on these economic important parts of the plant in order to apply viable management options.

Another pest threatening household food security is the blister beetle. The insect feeds on flowers on the millet head thus leading to poorly filled or even empty grains. It insect overwinter on the weeds in

and around the millet field and then attack the heads. There was an earlier report of infestation in Fass Chamen in the Foni Bondali District of the West Coast Region. Now that most of the early millets are at head formation and maturity, the pest infestation has also been reported in the various production zones in the regions.

The weaver bird (*Quelea quelea*) also continues on the rampage of the irrigated rice observed mostly in the CRR North and South where they are endemic and have caused economic loss to farmers over the past years.

Management of the Pest Problems

For the fall armyworm (*Spodoptera frugiperda*), still the integrated pest management (IPM) approach is being promoted. For effective treatment, each maize stand should be treated in the whorls using the following options;

- Neem or hyptis leave extract solution with 30g of detergent
- Salt solution
- Application of a mixture of wood ash, saw dust, or sand to suffocate the larvae in the whorls
- Close observation and hand picking to kill the larvae
- Good crop management practices (fertilizer application, field sanitation)

For the weaver bird (*Quelea quelea*), management also requires a holistic IPM approach. The methods used include explosives, mist nets, local long guns, and scaring. There are issues with the use of explosives and guns but mist nets can be used alongside scaring.

The effective control of the blister beetle also calls for IPM approach as follows;

- Use of long bristled varieties to limit attack
- Always keep the area on the perimeter and within the field free from weeds as they hide in the weeds during the day and attack as night approaches
- Regularly observe the millet stands for early detection and treatment
- Use cultural method such as smoking by burning using groundnut shells, clothes or moist wood etc to repel the insects
- Apply 2% dust pesticide on the perimeters to repel the pest from entry into the field
- Apply neem leave extract on the heads weekly to repel the insect
- As a last resort, apply contact insecticides such as Deltamethrin, Abamectin, Malathion to kill the insect.

6.0 LIVESTOCK SITUATION:

An assessment of the livestock situation revealed new outbreaks of Foot and mouth disease in most regions of the country. In the North Bank Region, 279 cases with a mortality rate of about 11 % were reported in the last two weeks. In Upper River Region, 48 new cases with one death were reported in Kumbija and Koina villages. The Foot and mouth disease (FMD) outbreaks have raised serious concern amongst livestock production communities to a level that some are contemplating selling their whole herd. Besides FMD, Lumpy skin disease (LSD) has also been reported in all the regions. Contagious Bovine Pleuronimonia (CBPP) was also reported but only in the Lower River Region. Two suspected cases were seen at the Soma Abattoir.

➤ Feed and Water Situation

The situation of the feed and water availability has much more improved during the period under review. With heavy down pours few days ago, water is available in the natural water bodies (ponds), which are the cattle drinking points. There may be lot of grasses, however, they are of poor quality. Moreover, accessing the grazing lands remains to be a challenge especially in West Coast Region (Kombos) as people continue to settle or cultivate crops in the access routes.

➤ Disease Control

Following the re-emergence of the Contagious Bovine Pleuropneumonia (CBPP) disease in 2012, the Department of Livestock Services tasked itself to once again eradicate the disease by conducting annual mass vaccination campaigns. The 2018 mass annual vaccination campaign is one of the key activities that the Department of Livestock Services is conducting during the period under review. Table 1 shows the number of cattle vaccinated in some of the regions.

Table 1: Number of cattle vaccinated against CBPP in some regions

Region	No. Vaccinated
Central River Region-North (CRR-N)	35,895
Central River Region-South (CRR-S)	17,455
Upper River Region (URR)	36,000
West Coast Region (WCR)	13,000
Lower River Region	17,839

Note: Vaccination campaign is still on-going

Banjul 12th September 2018

National MWG of The Gambia

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