

# EARLY WARNING BULLETIN FOR FOOD SECURITY

No. 2017/14

## IN THE GAMBIA

Period: September 11 - 20, 2017



Government of The Gambia

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Multidisciplinary Working Group (MWG)

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## 1 SYNOPTIC SITUATION

The mean surface position of Inter-Tropical Discontinuity (ITD) centered over central Mauritania, stretching towards northern Mali, Niamey and onto Chad. Places far north of the ITD were dry and stable with dust haze observed over Mauritania and Algeria. To the South of the ITD, the weather was characterized with rain and thunderstorms over the Gulf of Guinea states and the Sahel including Nigeria, Ghana and Burkina Faso.

### 1.1 OUTLOOK FOR THE NEXT DEKAD (21<sup>st</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup> September 2017)

High humidity couple with thunderstorms with or without rain showers sometimes squally is expected to affect the country from the 22<sup>nd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> September.

## 2 RAINFALL SITUATIONS

The rainfall situation in this dekad was characterized by prolonged dry spells and significant variations in dekadal totals recorded over the entire country. The entire Eastern Third and parts of the Middle Third (Central River Region South) experienced dry spells during the period under review, with dekadal totals amounting to less than 2mm in some cases. However, Jenoi also in the Middle Third recorded a total of over 75mm of rain in one day towards the end of the dekad, whereas in the Western Third dekadal totals range between 21 to 36mm, figure 1a.

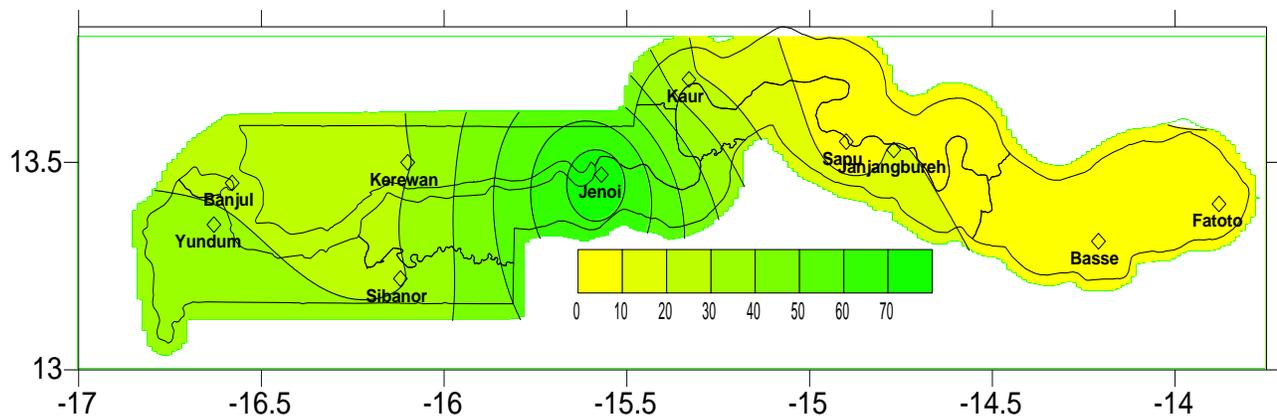
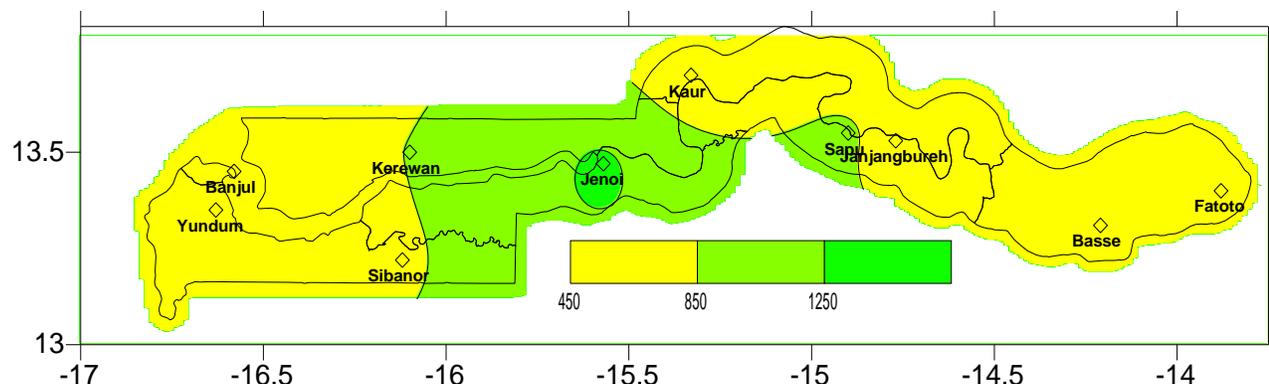


Figure 1a: Dekadal rainfall totals from September 11 - 20, 2017.

Seasonal rainfall totals in the country as at 20<sup>th</sup> September 2017 also showed significant variations ranging from above 1000mm in the Middle Third to less than 500mm in the Western Third. The uneven spatial distribution in the rainfall pattern explains the variations in recorded rainfall totals across the country as well as variations in some agricultural activities. Figure 1b shows seasonal cumulative totals across the country.



**Figure 1b: Rainfall Seasonal totals from May 1<sup>st</sup> 2017– September 20<sup>th</sup> 2017.**

In comparisons, the country average as at 20<sup>th</sup> September 2017 stood at **790.5mm**, which is **6%** above last year’s amount (**743.0mm**) and **9%** above the long term mean (30 year period) of **725.3mm**,

### 3. AGROMETEOROLOGICAL SITUATION

Recorded average temperatures during this dekad have slight variations ranging from 27°C in the East to 28 °C in the rest of the country. Minimum temperature reached 22°C over the Western and Eastern Thirds, whilst maximum temperature reached 35°C over the entire country.

Average relative humidity (RH) recorded during the dekad was above 70% across the country. Winds were light to moderate in speed (11km/h to 23km/h) but instances of squally situations occurred during the dekad with maximum gust of about 34 km/hr recorded in the Western and Eastern Thirds of the country. Average sunshine duration recorded in during the dekad was 7 hours to 8 hours across the country.

### 4. AGRICULTURAL SITUATION

#### 4.1 Crop

Overall crop performance in terms of growth and development is progressing satisfactorily across the country. However, because of varying onset and intensity of rains, the phenological state of crops varied across the country.

Maize fields ranged from tasseling/cob formation to full maturity. Harvesting is in progress in some fields and the products could be seen in all markets. The growth stages of early millet across the country ranged from flowering to grain formation/ maturity. Certain fields have reached full maturity, but harvesting is hampered by the continuous rains. Late millet is generally at jointing stage of development in both the Western (West Coast Region) and Eastern Thirds (Upper River Region). Sorghum is also at jointing stage of development.

Upland rice across the country is growing as expected and most of the crop is at the tillering and booting phases. In the swamp rice fields, the cultivation of rice is hampered by flood waters. Most planted fields submerged after the heavy downpour that occurred last month. Farmers are waiting for the water to subside before continuing transplanting of rice nurseries.

Groundnut fields across the country are at different growth stages ranging from pegging to full maturity depending on the variety and date of sowing. The late maturing groundnuts (73/33) is at phenological stages ranging from pegging to pod formation, whilst the early maturing Philippine type has reached full maturity and harvesting has begun in most places.

## 4.2 Pests and Diseases

The dekad is characterized by proliferation of blister beetles (*Cylindrothorax kulzeri*, *Psalydolytta fusca* and *Mylabris sp.*) on early millet, particularly the lately planted fields in the North Bank and Central River Regions of the country.

The village weaver birds (*Ploceus cucullatus*) have been problematic on rice and early millet in some regions of the country during the dekad. Scaring them away stands to be the most effective and common method of control.

During the period under review, Army Worms (*Spodoptera furgiperda*) were discovered in certain parts of the country. The pest which is a Lepidopteran is the larvae of a moth that originated from the USA. The larva is the damaging stage.

## 4.3 Livestock

The livestock situation in all the six Agricultural regions is impressive as nearly all the grazing fields are green with succulent grasses and shrubs and ponds full with water which is key for the promotion and enhancement of Livestock production and productivity. However, observations revealed that the hills between Balangarr and Jahawurr Mandinka CRR-N and that of Jarumeh Koto in the Sami district were sparsely covered with grasses and the current projections are that bushfires and feed shortage may be experienced earlier in these areas due to the rapid lignifications of grasses. The above highlighted scenario might also lead to a rise in clinical cases particularly during the transition from the warm to the cold season and animal productivity may slightly decline due to an increased in the infective capacity of some predatory diseases such as *Salmonellosis* among others. It was also reported that a number of small ruminants and poultry were lost in the flood that hit Kuntaur in August 2017.

Clinical figures as of September, 20<sup>th</sup> 2017 are as follows. CRRS 105 heads of cattle, 116 Sheep 134 goats, 32 donkeys and 52 horses. In CRRN 161 heads of cattle 118 sheep 157 goats, 46 donkeys and 70 horses. LRR 144 heads of cattle, 110 Sheep, 112 goats, 54 donkeys and 37 horses. NBR, 167 cattle, 158 Sheep, 139 goats, 48 donkeys and 83 horses. URR 234 heads of cattle, 271 Sheep, 193 goats 62 donkeys and 87 horses. WCR 236 heads of cattle 146 Sheep 192 goats 63 donkeys and 65 horses.

**Composition of MWG:**

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Communication, Extension & Education Services - DOA  
Department of Livestock Services  
Plant Protection Services - DOA  
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