
EARLY WARNING BULLETIN FOR FOOD SECURITY

No. 2008/01

IN THE GAMBIA

Period: May 1 - 10, 2008



Government of The Gambia

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Working Group of the AGRHYMET Regional
Programme

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AGRHYMET Regional Programme

1. SEASONAL PROGRESS

Rainfall in The Gambia and its seasonal distribution is mostly the result of the northward movement of moist air masses from the South (source of the rainfall). At the northernmost extent, the moist air masses meet with drier air moving southwards from northern Africa, creating a boundary called the Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ).

The rains follow some distance south of the ITCZ, so tracking the ITCZ through the season provides a quick evaluation of the seasonal movement and extent of the rains.

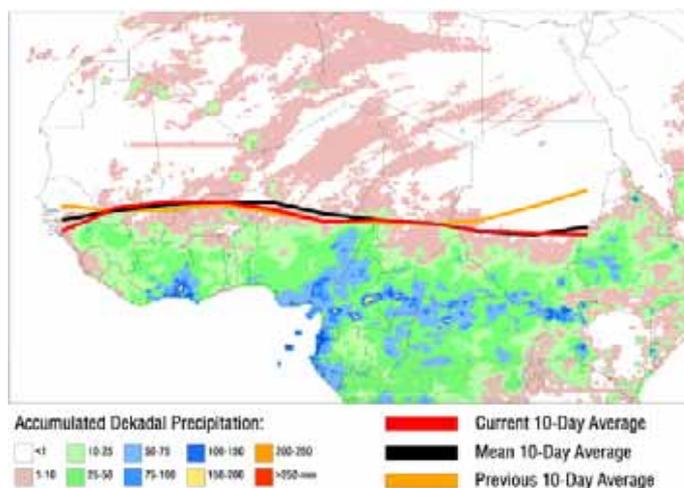


Figure 1 displays the current position of the Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone compared to the normal during the period May 1 - 10, 2008.

The ITCZ is currently very close to the normal from Mali to Sudan, with only minor variations. Along the extreme western half of Africa, the ITCZ was located at 13.7°N compared to the 1979 - 2006 mean of around 13.8°N, thus manifested by the dry and cool weather condition during the night and early morning, becoming sunny and warm in the daytime.

Fig. 1: Mean Position of the ITCZ over Africa from 1 - 10 May 2008, background is a rainfall estimation map (Source: CPC-FEWS Net)

2. RAINFALL SITUATION

During this dekad, measurable rainfall was only recorded in Basse (10.1mm) in the eastern part of the country. Other stations (Jar Kunda, Sutukoba, Sare Soffie and Naudeh) in the surroundings recorded only traces (un-measurable rainfall) of rain.

During the same period last year, no rainfall was recorded across the entire country. However, compared to the long-term mean (1971 - 2000) cumulative rainfall during the same period, deficits ranging from 0.1mm to 1.0mm could be observed.

3. AGROMETEOROLOGICAL SITUATION

Temperatures remained high during this dekad, particularly in the Eastern and Middle Thirds of the country and to a lesser degree in some parts of the Western Third. Highest temperatures remained above 40.0°C in almost all stations except those near the coast (Jambanjelly, Yundum and Banjul), where the highest maximum temperatures were below 34.0°C.

The lowest minimum temperatures follow the same trend as the maximum temperatures; ranging between 18.4°C at Kerewan in the Western Third to 24.5°C at Basse in the Eastern Third.

Relative humidity (RH) followed a reverse in trend to that on the temperatures, as the Western and Middle Thirds recorded the highest RH ranging from 74% to 93%, whilst the Eastern Third recorded the lowest of 67%.

Winds during the dekad were generally moderate to light in speed (42km/hr maximum).

4. AGRICULTURAL SITUATION

The major on-field activities by farmers are field clearing, acquisition and preparation of seeds and the repair of farming implements.

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