

EARLY WARNING BULLETIN FOR FOOD SECURITY

No. 2008/12

IN THE GAMBIA

Period: August 21 - 30, 2008



Government of The Gambia

Produced and Published by the Multidisciplinary
Working Group of the AGRHYMET Regional
Programme

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AGRHYMET Regional Programme

1. PROGRESS OF RAINY SEASON

The average position of the Inter-Tropical Discontinuity (ITD) during the dekad was located at 8° latitude above the Gambia that is at 21°N, allowing further inflow of moisture bearing winds into the sub-region.

Moderate to heavy rains and thunderstorms (sometimes squally) affected the country and most parts of West and Central Africa. However, over some parts of the Gulf of Guinea States (southern parts of Liberia, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Togo Benin and Nigeria) dry spells were observed during the period.

The Azores High Pressure Cell centred over the north Atlantic had core values ranging from 1028 Hectopascals (hpa) to 1030 hpa whilst the St. Helena High Pressure Cell centred over the south Atlantic had core values of 1028 hpa to 1033 pha. The latter had strengthened by 3 hpa over the former, facilitating the continued inflow into the sub-region of moisture-laden winds hence resulting to the rains that occurred during the period.

2. RAINFALL SITUATION

During this dekad significant rainfall both in terms of frequency and intensity was recorded across the country. Highest daily records were 108.0mm at Yundum in the Western Third, 73.3mm at Fatoto in the Eastern Third and 56.6mm at Kuntaur in the Middle Third of the country. Number of rainy days ranged from 4 to 11 days with dekadal totals ranging from 62.3mm at Janjanbureh to 322.6mm at Yundum.

The seasonal (May 1 to August 30) rainfall total ranged from 572mm at Kaur in the Middle Third to 1115mm at Yundum in the Western Third of the country (fig. 1).

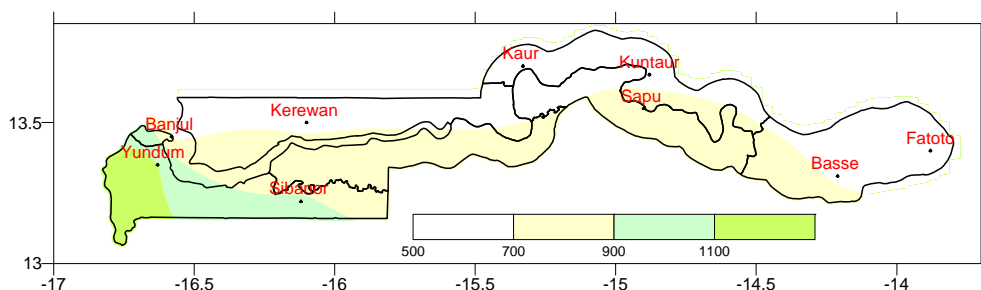


Figure 1. Total rainfall from May 1 – August 30, 2008

A comparison of this year to last year (2007) shows the entire Eastern Third and part of the Middle Third of the country recording deficits ranging from 73.3mm at Sare Sofie to 349.7mm at Basse. The rest of the country recorded surpluses ranging from 9.0mm at Janjanbureh to 659.9mm at Yundum (fig. 2).

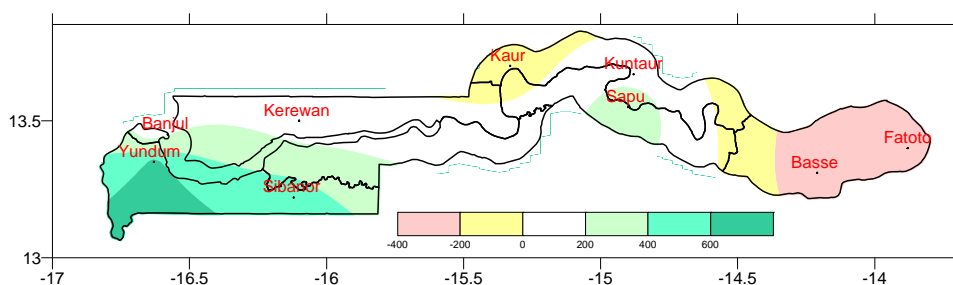


Figure 2. Comparison of 2008 to 2007 rainfall

As at August 31, 2008 the country average stood at 710.0mm, which is 19% above the last year's (2007) mean and 32% above the long-term mean (30-year mean) at the same period.

3. AGROMETEOROLOGICAL SITUATION

Average maximum temperatures were generally above 29°C across the country, whilst minimum temperatures also remained above 20°C. This situation remained virtually unchanged compared to the previous dekad due to high cloud cover throughout the two periods.

Daily average relative humidity remained generally above 95%, whilst the minimum relative humidity also remained above 60% throughout the country.

Daily average pan evaporation varied between 1.1 mm to 9.6 mm across the country. Winds were generally low (7km/h) to moderate (33km/h) in speed.

4. AGRICULTURAL SITUATION

Crop and Pest Situation

Groundnuts

The early maturing groundnut (Philippine pink) is at maturity in some places and harvesting has started, whilst in other places it is at advanced stage of pegging. The other groundnut varieties, Senegal 206 and 73-33 are at ramification and flowering/pegging stages.

There have been isolated reports on the incidence of aphids. Farmers were advised to avoid using sine hoes, which may cause injury to pegs (gynophores) to prevent *Aspergillus flavus* infections. Farmers were also advised to remove tall weeds in groundnut fields to prevent harboring of pests and diseases.

Cereals

Generally, maize is flowering and in some places the crop has reached maturity and harvesting has started. The early millet crop is at advanced stage of heading in many regions. In the Western Region, late millet is at tillering stage. Farmers were advised to monitor their fields for blister beetles and earworm for early warning and intervention. Sorghum is at vegetative stages and no outbreak of pests is reported. The early maturing rice, Nerica is at booting stage in certain areas. This particular variety is put under large area and the crop is promising.

Grain legumes

The grain legumes particularly cowpeas are doing well and are generally at flowering stage. Farmers in certain areas are planting sesame and watermelon.

5. Market prices

The table below shows prices of agricultural products from selected markets and production sites for the week of 28th August to 4th September 2008.

Table 1: Average cereal prices in Dalasi/kg.

Market	Millet	Maize	Sorghum	Imported Whole Rice	Local Rice Milled	Imported Broken Rice	Findo	Groundnut
Banjul	14.03	12.12	13.75	21.66	Na	20	60	Na
Serekunda	14.47	12.9	14.47	21.33	18	20	Na	24.94
Latrikunda Sabiji	16.84	19.08	12.31	20	Na	20	Na	Na
Brikama	16.37	19.3	12.9	19.2	Na	20	Na	25.81
Bakau	16.18	16.96	15.66	21.5	Na	21.5	Na	30
Ndugukebbeh	7.03	7.03	Na	18	Na	18	Na	20.5
Kerr pateh	9	7.66	Na	19	Na	19	Na	24
Farafenni	8	8	Na	20	Na	20	Na	20
Soma	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na
Bureng	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na
Kaur	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na
Wassu	11	11	2	20	17.5	20	Na	13.33
Brikamaba	9	9	Na	19	14	19	Na	20
Sarre Ngai	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na
Basse	15	15	20	22	Na	25	75	20
Average	12.45	12.55	13.01	20.15	16.5	20.23	67.5	22.06

Source: Department of Planning, NADA

Composition of MWG:

Department of Water Resources
 Department of Planning - NADA
 Department of Extension Services - NADA
 Department of Veterinary Services - NADA
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