

EARLY WARNING BULLETIN FOR FOOD SECURITY

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IN THE GAMBIA

Period: May 11 - 20, 2009



Government of The Gambia

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Working Group of the AGRHYMET Regional
Programme

Focal Point: Department of Water Resources
TEL: (+220) 4227631 / 422 28 72/ 4224122
FAX: (+220) 422 50 09 / E-MAIL: dwr@gamtel.gm



AGRHYMET Regional Programme

1. WEATHER SITUATION

The mean surface position of the demarcating boundary between the dry and moist region over West Africa (Inter-Tropical Discontinuity - ITD) was located as follows: 15°W 15.5°N, 10°W 16°N, 05°W 15°N, 00° 15.5°N, 05°E 14°N, 10°E 12.5°N, 15°E 12°N and 20°E 12°N. Thus, indicating a northwards shift when compared to the last dekad.

A stable and dry atmosphere with occasional dust haze patches prevailed over north of the ITD, whereas, the south was generally unstable and humid with the formation of convective clouds during the afternoon which resulted in frequent isolated/scattered thunderstorm and/or rain particularly over eastern sectors of Senegal and The Gambia.

2. RAINFALL SITUATION

During this dekad, rainfall was recorded in the country during the middle part of the dekad, being most significant in the extreme Eastern Third. Daily totals ranged from 0.3mm in Kuntaur to 32.4mm in Fatoto (fig. 1). In the Western Third, only Kerewan recorded some measurable amount of 1.2mm.

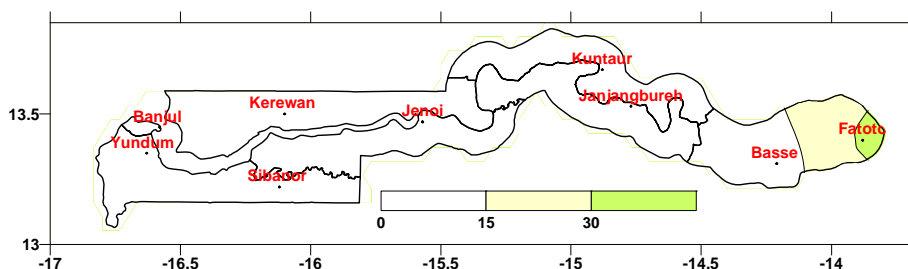


Figure 1: Rainfall intensity during May 11- 20, 2009

The first rainfall event this year, came earlier than last year and the normal. Meanwhile, this situation may favour livestock in the extreme Eastern Third more than crop farming, as it will enhance the early growth of animal long term feed, whilst for crop farmers; initial farming operations may be hampered by weeds.

3. AGROMETEOROLOGICAL SITUATION

As in the preceding dekad, temperatures remained high during this dekad, particularly in the Eastern and Middle Thirds of the country where they ranged from 41.5 to 43.5°C. The Western Third recorded values

ranging from 34°C in Banjul to 41.5°C in Kerewan. Meanwhile, compared to the previous dekad, maximum temperatures decreased slightly country wide except in the coastal areas.

Minimum temperatures followed the same trend as the maximum temperatures; decreasing gradually towards the west.

Relative humidity showed a reverse trend of the temperatures, as the Western and Middle Thirds recorded the highest values ranging from 72% to 92%, whilst the Eastern Third recorded the lowest ranging from 67% to 72%.

Total evaporation during the dekad was highest in the Middle and Eastern Thirds following the temperature trend and reached a maximum of 94mm at Kaur.

4. AGRICULTURAL SITUATION

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

In the Western Third, women are still engaged in vegetable gardening in the low lands.

5. Situation of Cereal Markets

The situation of cereal markets is satisfactory and is characterized by a general availability of stocks in households and products in retail and weekly markets.

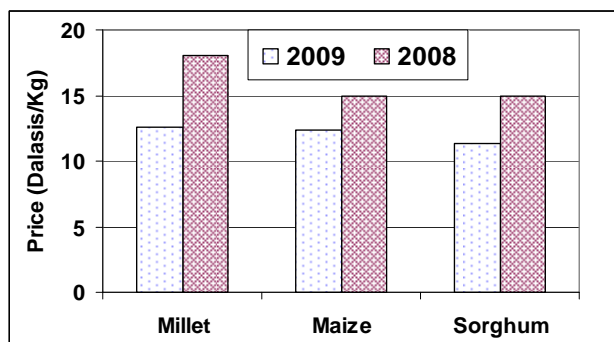


Figure 2: Evolution of Cereal prices (Source: Department of Planning)

Average prices at the cereal markets continued to fluctuate depending on the volume of the commodities supplied and the demand at the markets. In the Greater Banjul Area, the average price of coarse grains (maize, millet and sorghum) ranged from D12/kg to D15/kg whilst the price of the same commodities in the rest of the country ranged from D8/kg to D13/kg.

However, compared to last year the price of coarse grains has remained relatively lower this year (fig. 2).

<p>Composition of MWG: Department of Water Resources Department of Planning - NADA Department of Agricultural Services - NADA Department of Veterinary Services - NADA National Environment Agency</p>	<p>Direct your comments and questions to: The Director Department of Water Resources 7 Marina Parade, Banjul The Gambia Tel: (+ 220) 422 76 31/422 28 72/ 422 41 22 Email: dwr@gamtel.gm</p>
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