

EARLY WARNING BULLETIN FOR FOOD SECURITY

No. 2009/05

IN THE GAMBIA

Period: June 11 - 20, 2009



Government of The Gambia

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Working Group of the AGRHYMET Regional
Programme

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AGRHYMET Regional Programme

1. PROGRESS OF RAINY SEASON

The Azores High Pressure Cell centered over the north west Atlantic Ocean had a mean core value of 1023 hectopascal (hpa), thus maintaining the same value as in the last dekad, whilst the St. Helena High Pressure Cell centered over the south Atlantic Ocean had a mean core value of 1028 hpa, intensified by 1.25 hpa as compared to the past dekad. This pressure configuration thus, allowed moisture influx into the West African sub-region, hence the rain and thunderstorms observed over the Gulf of Guinea States and the Sahel, including the Gambia.

The Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ), demarcating boundary between the dry and moist region over West Africa is located north of The Gambia. Thus the ITD continued with its northward movement.

2. RAINFALL OUTLOOK FOR JUNE 21 - 30, 2009

Warm and variable cloudiness will prevail with rain and/or thunderstorms over most places by the beginning (22nd, 23rd and 24th) and the end (26th and 29th) of the third dekad of June 2009.

3. RAINFALL SITUATION

Significant rainfall was recorded with improved frequency throughout the country during the middle and latter parts of the dekad. Rainfall intensities ranged from 1.0mm to 60.0mm in a day. The number of rainy days varied from 2 to 4, resulting in dekadal totals ranging from 14.7mm at Janjangbureh in the Middle Third, to 69.6mm at Fatoto in the Eastern Third of the country (fig. 1a).

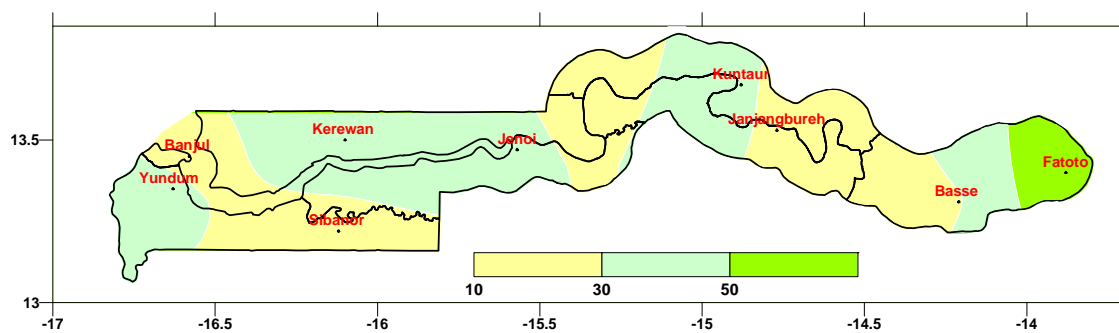


Figure 1a: Rainfall intensity during June 11 - 20, 2009

The cumulative rainfall from May 1st to June 20th varied between 19.3mm at Sibanor and 103.1mm at Fatoto. As at June 20, this season's country average rainfall stood at 39.9mm, which is 64% below last year (62.0mm) and almost equal to the long-term mean (40.0mm).

When compared to last year, only Fatoto recorded a surplus of 55.2mm. The rest of the country recorded a deficit ranging from 9.7mm at Banjul to 52.9mm at Sibanor both in the Western Third of the Country. However, when compared to the long-term mean, only the Eastern half of the country recorded a deficit with the exception of Fatoto, whilst the Western half recorded a surplus.

4. AGROMETEOROLOGICAL SITUATION

This dekad saw a decrease in mean temperatures from 30.1°C during the preceding dekad to 29.7°C. This drop could be attributed to the increased cloud cover and rainfall observed during the period. Thermal distributions within the country show the Eastern and Middle Thirds remained warmer than the Western Third.

Extreme maximum temperatures were 39.0°C at Sibanor in the Western Third, 42.0°C at Sapu in the Middle Third and 39.5°C at Fatoto in the Eastern Third. Meanwhile, compared to the previous dekad, extreme temperatures decreased slightly throughout the country. Minimum temperature ranged from 20.0 °C in Banjul to 22.4 °C at Kaur in the Middle Third of the country.

Maximum relative humidity increased slightly compared to the previous dekad. The highest recorded was over 90% around the coast, reducing gradually to a minimum of 78% in the Eastern part of the country.

Winds during the dekad were generally moderate to light in speed (50km/hr maximum).

5. AGRICULTURAL SITUATION

Following the rains received during the middle and latter parts of the dekad, some farmers in the North Bank, Central River and Upper River Regions have started sowing food crops (cereals). In the Upper River Region, the crops have germinated and are at seedling stages.

Elsewhere, in Lower River and Western Regions, preparation of farmlands and implements constitute the major farming activities.

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Department of Extension Services - NADA
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