

EARLY WARNING BULLETIN FOR FOOD SECURITY

No. 2009/07

IN THE GAMBIA

Period: July 1 - 10, 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

During this dekad, the Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ), separating the moist and dry regions over northern Africa, continued its northward movement, especially along its central axis, whereas the western and eastern axis maintained its position as in the last dekad. The mean position of the ITCZ during the period 1 to 10 July 2009 was located north of the Gambia.

The prominent high-pressure cell centred over the north west Atlantic Ocean (Azores) had a mean core value of 1022 hectopascal (hpa), thus intensified by 1.1 hpa from its value in the previous dekad, whereas the St. Helena High Pressure Cell centered over the south Atlantic Ocean had a mean core value of 1030 hpa thus weakened by 1.4 hpa as compared to the past dekad. This pressure configuration thus, allows moisture influx into the West African sub-region.

Warm and partly cloudy conditions prevailed over most parts of West Africa during the dekad, resulting to isolated to scattered rain and thunderstorm over places within Gulf of Guinea States and the Sahel including The Gambia. However, rising sand and dust hazy prevailed over Mauritania and northern Senegal, Mali and Niger.

2. RAINFALL OUTLOOK FOR JULY 11 - 20, 2009

Warm and variably cloudiness will prevail with rain and/or thunderstorms (sometimes squally) over most places during the period 12 to 16 July 2009.

3. RAINFALL SITUATION

This dekad has seen an improvement in the rainfall intensity as compared to the previous dekad. The number of rainy days ranged from 2 to 5. Rainfall intensities ranged from 0.3mm to 78.0mm in a day and resulted in end-of-dekad totals ranging from 23.2mm at Banjul in the Western Third to 126.4mm at Fatoto in the Eastern Third of the country (Fig. 1a).

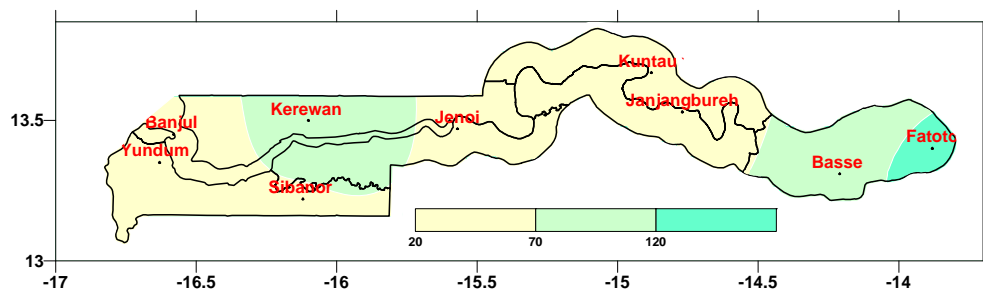


Figure 1a: Rainfall intensity during July 1 - 10, 2009

The seasonal rainfall (May 1st to July 10th) recorded in the country varied between 48.5mm at Banjul in the Western Third and 241.2mm at Fatoto in the Eastern Third of the country (Fig. 1b).

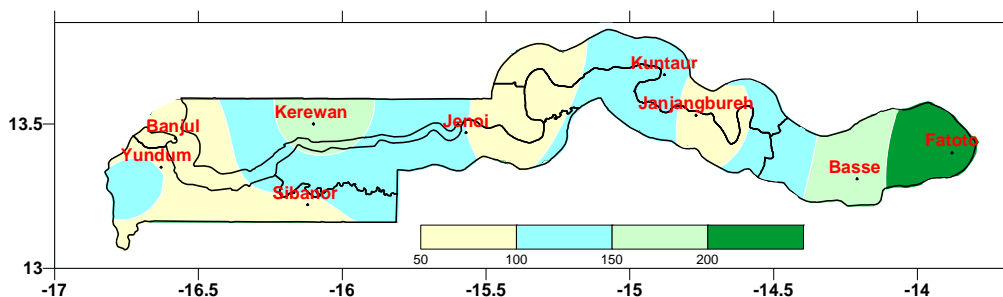


Figure 1b: Seasonal total from May 1 to July 10, 2009

As at July 10, this season's country average rainfall stood at 120.7mm, compared to 154.9mm in 2004, 176.2mm in 2005, 157.1mm in 2006, 94.5mm in 2007 and 189.5mm in 2008.

4. AGROMETEOROLOGICAL SITUATION

Like in the previous dekad, mean temperatures continue to decrease due to the increased cloud cover and rainfall observed during the period. Average temperature during this dekad was 28.3°C whilst that of the preceding one was 29.2°C.

Maximum temperature was highest at Kaur (43.3°C) in the Middle Third, and the lowest at Yundum (33.5°C) in the Western Third. Thermal distributions within the country show the Eastern and Middle Thirds remained warmer than the Western Third.

Minimum temperature followed the same trend like the maximum temperature. It was highest at Sapu (23.0°C) in the Middle Third and lowest at Yundum (19.4°C) in the Western Third of the country.

Maximum relative humidity remained above 90% throughout the country with the exception of Banjul (83%).

Highest wind speeds across the country ranged from 7 km/hr to 64 km/hr during the period, the latter indicating the passage of a line squall on the 1st and 2nd July 2009. ***This heavy storm caused severe devastation to house holds in several communities resulting to demolition of houses, damage to stored food and clothing among others.***

These incidences were reported in the following regions of the country:

- ✓ Central River Region (CRR) - Janjangbureh, Sankuley Kunda and Nana
- ✓ Lower River Region (LRR) - Soma , Jarra Kani Kunda , Barro kunda and Demati
- ✓ North Bank Region (NBR) - Jokadu and Central Badibu districts

However several unreported cases were observed in the Western Region (WR) and the Upper River Region (URR) North.

5. AGRICULTURAL SITUATION

Sowing of early millet is almost completed across the country and weeding is in progress. The crop has reached a phenological stage ranging from seedling to tillering.

Sowing of maize, late millet, sorghum and groundnut are ongoing across the country. In most parts of the country planting of these crops have reached over 50% except in Lower River and Western Regions where planting has just started.

In the North Bank, Central River and Upper River Regions, sowing of upland rice is in progress. The crop is at various phenological stages ranging from germination to seedling. In the lowland rice fields, nursery and land preparation are the major farmer activity across the country, notably in North Bank, Central River, Lower River and Upper River Regions. Elsewhere, in the Western Third, these activities are yet to gain momentum, whilst vegetable gardening is continuing in some places.

6. SITUATION OF CEREAL MARKETS

Average prices at the cereal markets continued to fluctuate depending on the volume of the commodities supplied and demand at the markets. At Kaur, the price of coarse grains (millet, maize and sorghum) varied between D10.00 / kg and D15.00 / kg whilst the same commodities at Banjul varied between D16.00 / kg and D20.00 / kg (table 1).

Prices of coarse grains (maize, millet and sorghum) during this dekad have slightly increased as in the preceding dekad. Meanwhile, compared to last year, prices this year remained lower for all the cereals.

Table 1: **Evolution of commodity prices** (Source: Department of Planning)

Market	Maize	Millet	Sorghum	Imported Rice		Local rice	Findo	Groundnut
				Whole	Broken			
Banjul	19.15	19.35	16.15	15.00	14.00	Na	48.50	26.66
Serekunda	17.59	17.59	16.38	16.00	15.00	19.33	45.70	25.55
Latrikunda	17.35	17.35	15.26	16.00	16.00	20.00	Na	25.62
Brikama	19.68	16.14	13.25	16.00	15.00	20.00	58.00	25.22
Bakau	17.46	16.37	17.14	16.00	16.00	20	56.69	28.28
Ndugukebbeh	14.86	14.94	Na	16.35	17.00	Na	Na	Na
Kerr Pateh	14.55	15.55	Na	16.55	17.00	Na	Na	Na
Farafenni	14.45	15.45	11.15	16.65	17.55	Na	Na	25.55
Soma	14.82	15.82	Na	16.82	17.85	Na	Na	26.33
Bureng	13.12	14.11	Na	16.75	17.75	Na	Na	26.33
Kaur	13.19	14.11	10.00	16.67	17.85	18.00	Na	26.24
Wassu	13.73	14.43	12.66	16.25	17.75	18.75	Na	26.20
Brikamaba	14.5	15.90	12.10	16.35	17.35	14.00	Na	26.25
Sarre Ngai	Na	14.77	Na	17.10	18.00	Na	Na	26.55
Basse	14.65	15.85	12.55	17.00	17.95	Na	Na	26.25
Average	15.65	15.85	13.66	16.37	16.80	18.58	52.22	26.23

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