

# EARLY WARNING BULLETIN FOR FOOD SECURITY

No. 2009/09

## IN THE GAMBIA

Period: July 21 - 30, 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 prominent high-pressure cell centred over the North West Atlantic Ocean (the Azores) had a mean core value of 1025.5 hectopascals (hpa), thus weakened by 2.2 hpa as compared to the last dekad, whereas the St. Helena High Pressure Cell centred over the south Atlantic Ocean had a mean core value of 1033.1 hpa thus intensified by 1.9 hpa as compared to the preceding dekad.

This pressure configuration thus, favored the northward movement of the demarcating boundary between the dry and moist region over West Africa (Inter-Tropical Discontinuity - ITD) at its western and central axis, whereas the eastern axis maintained its position as in the last dekad. Thus, the ITD was located over Podor (Senegal), Tidjikta (Mauritania), Gao (Mali) and Agadez (Niger).

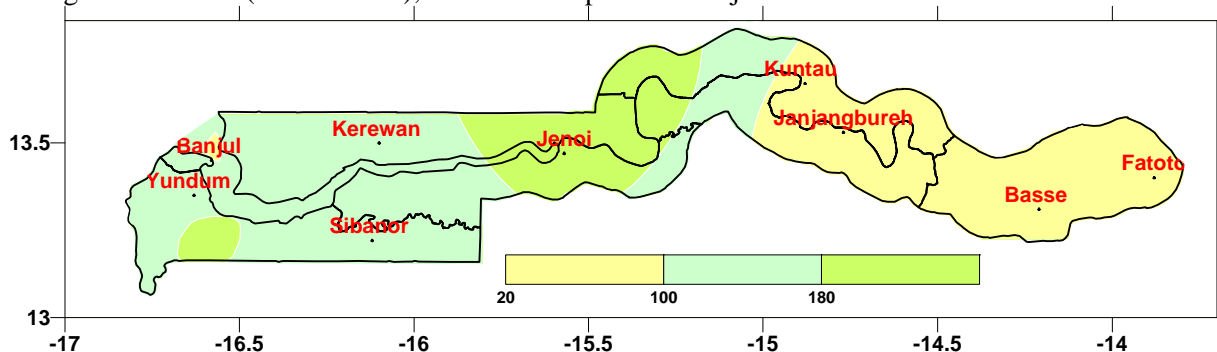
### 2. RAINFALL OUTLOOK FOR AUGUST 1 - 11, 2009

Warm, humid and variably cloudy conditions will continue to prevail during the 1<sup>st</sup> dekad of August, whilst rain and/or thunderstorm will be experienced over most places by the beginning (02<sup>nd</sup>, 03<sup>rd</sup> and 04<sup>th</sup>) and the end (06<sup>th</sup>, 09<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>) of the dekad.

### 3. RAINFALL SITUATION

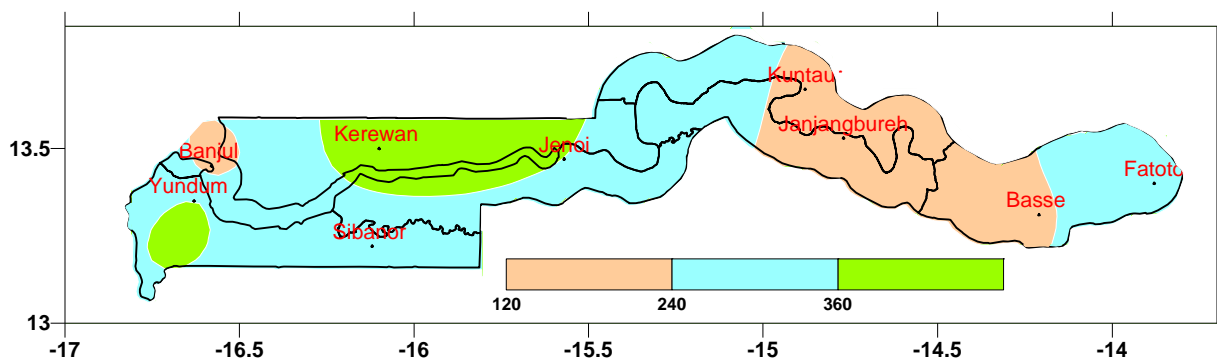
In the Western and Middle Third of the country, rainfall during the dekad has improved, particularly in daily amounts and the number of rainy days as compared to the previous dekad. Highest daily downpours of over 70.0mm were record at Banjul (76.4) and Yundum, both in the Western Third, and Kaur (91.0mm) and Jenoi (73.4mm) in the Middle Third of the country. Meanwhile, the number of rainy days increased to a maximum of 8 compared to 5 during the preceding dekad.

End-of-dekad totals ranged from 21.3mm at Basse in the Eastern Third to 236.9mm at Kaur in the Middle Third of the country. Figure 1a shows the distribution of rainfall intensities during this dekad, with the middle and western part recording more rainfall (over 100mm), with the exception of Banjul.



**Figure 1a:** Rainfall intensity during July 21 - 31, 2009

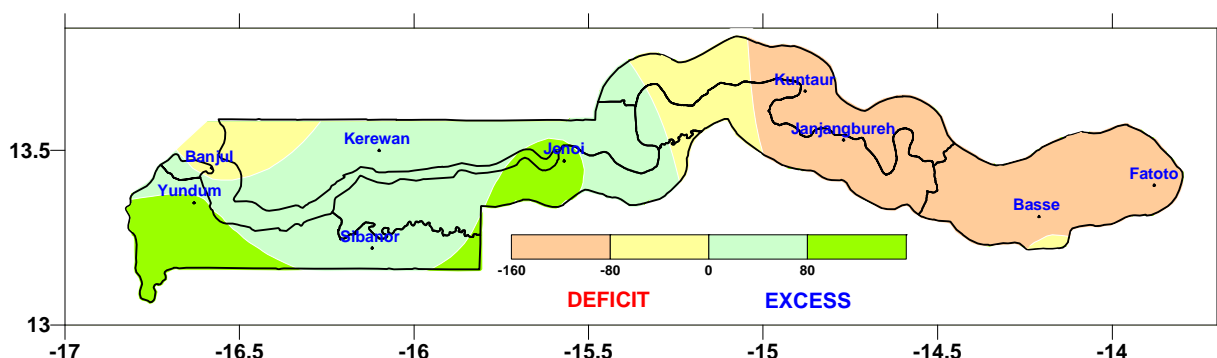
As at July 31, the seasonal total rainfall amount in the country ranged from 119.6mm at Janjangbureh in the Middle Third to 454.7mm at Kerewan in the Western Third of the country (figure 1b). The distribution in space shows that the Western Third continued to lead in rainfall intensities than the Middle and Eastern Thirds.



**Figure 1b:** Seasonal total from May 1 to July 31, 2009

In general, average rainfall from May 1 to July 31 remained below that of last year during the same period. Only Kerewan in the Western Third recorded a surplus of 160.0mm, whilst the rest of the country recorded deficits ranging from 11.0mm at Fatoto to 289.0mm at Sibanon.

When compared to the long-term mean (normal), deficits occur in Banjul and the eastern half of the country (Figure 1c).



**Figure 1c:** Comparison of 2009 to the Normal

*The country average as at July 31, 2009 was 286.1mm, compared to 372.7mm recorded during the same period last year. However, this year's country average (286.1mm) is slightly above the long-term mean (249.0mm) during the same period.*

#### 4. AGROMETEOROLOGICAL SITUATION

With increased atmospheric moisture during this dekad, both mean and maximum temperatures dropped slightly from their values in the previous dekad. Highest temperatures ranged from 33.0°C at Yundum to 38.5°C at Fatoto. The trend remains the same for the minimum temperature with the highest of 23.0°C recorded at Basse and the lowest of 18.3°C at Banjul.

Maximum relative humidity (RH) continued to remain above 90% throughout the country except in Banjul where it remained at 87%.

Winds during the period were generally light to moderate in speed, with the passage of a line squall on the 28<sup>th</sup> July 2009. The highest wind speed recorded was 50km/hr at Sapu in the Middle Third of the country.

## 5. AGRICULTURAL SITUATION

Farmers are mainly engaged in weeding both cereal and groundnut fields, and fertilizer application to cereal fields in parts of the country is also in progress.

Phenological development of crops varied in different areas across the country. In the Middle and Western Thirds (Central River north and south and North Bank Regions) early millet and have reached an advanced phenological stage of tillering. Development of late millet in parts of the Eastern Third (Upper River Region) and the western Third (Western Region) varied from seedling to tillering.

Groundnuts are on flowering or ramification in some parts of the Middle and Eastern Thirds, whilst in the Western Third the crop is at seedling stage.

Ploughing and sowing in the up-land rice fields are ongoing. In other areas, the crop has also reached tillering stage. In the low-land rice fields, transplanting is yet to begin. In the Western Third, vegetable gardening is continuing in some places.

Hairy grass hoppers were reported at Pirang in the Western Third.

## 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. The price of sorghum (D13.00/kg) is lowest compared to other commodities, whilst the highest is Findo (D50.00 / kg).

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.

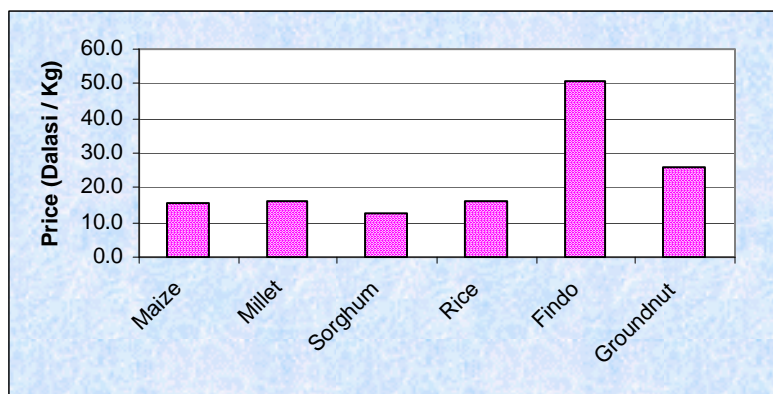


Figure 2: Evolution of commodity prices (Source: Department of Planning Services)

<p><b>Composition of MWG:</b>            Department of Water Resources            Department of Planning Services            Department of Extension and Communication Services            Department of Plant Protection Services            Department of Animal Health and Production Services            National Environment Agency</p>	<p><b>Direct your comments and questions to:</b>            The Director            Department of Water Resources            7 Marina Parade, Banjul            The Gambia            Tel: (+ 220) 422 76 31/422 28 72/ 422 41 22            Email: <a href="mailto:dwr@yahoo.com">dwr@yahoo.com</a></p>
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