

EARLY WARNING BULLETIN FOR FOOD SECURITY

No. 2009/15

IN THE GAMBIA

Period: September 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 Azores High Pressure Cell centred over the North Atlantic had a mean core value of 1026 Hectopascals (hpa) whilst the St. Helena High Pressure Cell centred over the South Atlantic had a mean core value of 1023 hpa. The latter had weakened by 3 hpa over the former, allowing the Inter Tropical Discontinuity (ITD), demarcating boundary between the dry and moist region over West Africa to continue with its south wards movement. This configuration commend to favour the inflow into the sub-region of moisture-laden winds. This resulted to the rains that occurred during the period.

2. RAINFALL SITUATION

Despite the southwards journey of the Inter Tropical Discontinuity (ITD), the entire country experienced an increase in both frequency and intensity as compared to the preceding dekad. Dekadal totals recorded within 2 to 6 rainy days ranged from 53.3 to 135.0mm compared to the previous dekad's total rain fall ranged of 28.4mm to 73.8mm.

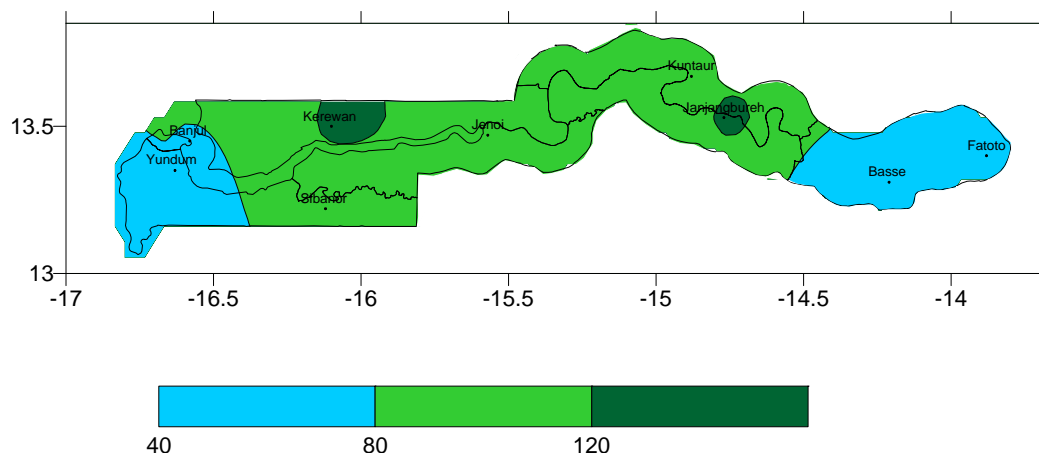


Figure 1a: Rainfall intensity during September 20 - 30, 2009

The cumulative rainfall (May 1 to September 30, 2009) ranged from a minimum of 641.8mm at Janjangbureh to a maximum of 1500.0mm at Kerewan (figure 1a). During the same period last year, the cumulative rainfall ranged

from a minimum of 598.7mm at Naudeh to a maximum of 1338.8mm at Yundum. This indicates higher rainfall this year in most of the western and central part, while Eastern part had lower rainfall than last year.

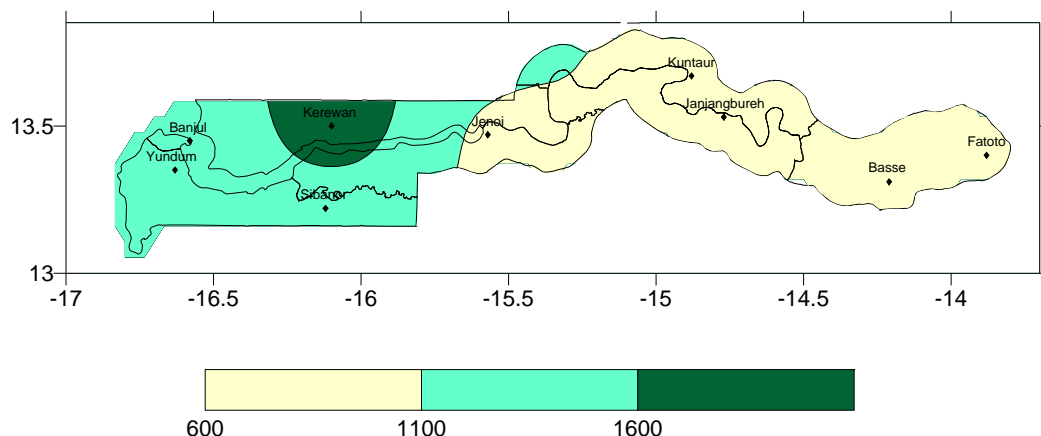


Figure 1b: Seasonal total from May 1 to September 30, 2009

As at September 30, 2009 the country average stood at 1026mm which is about 24% more than last year’s average rainfall (827.0mm) and 39% above the long-term mean (736.8mm).

3. AGROMETEOROLOGICAL SITUATION

During this dekad, mean temperatures remained generally unchanged compared to the previous dekad, except in the Middle Third where they dropped by 1°C or more. Likewise extreme temperatures did not change much compared to the previous dekad. Highest recorded are 32.8°C at Yundum in the Western Third, 36.0°C at Janjanbureh in the Middle Third and 36.2°C at Fatoto in the Eastern Third, whilst minimum temperature also ranged from 18.5°C to 22.0°C.

Maximum relative humidity remained generally above 90% and the minimum also remained above 60%.

Winds speeds across the country ranged from light (8km/h) to high (50km/h), the latter indicating the passage of a line squall.

4. AGRICULTURAL SITUATION

Generally, the agricultural situation across the country remained impressive, as most crops, are about to complete their cycles.

Harvesting of maize is almost completed except the late sown fields in Western Region and other isolated areas in the country. Sorghum is generally heading/flowering in the Upper River Region and in some parts of Central River Region where it is predominant. Meanwhile, in the Western Third (areas such as North Bank Region and Lower River Region) the crop has reached its maturity stage.

Harvesting of early millet is in progress in most parts of the country. Late millet is generally at heading/flowering stages in Upper River Region and in some parts of Western Region (WR), where the majority of the fields are still at vegetative stage (jointing).

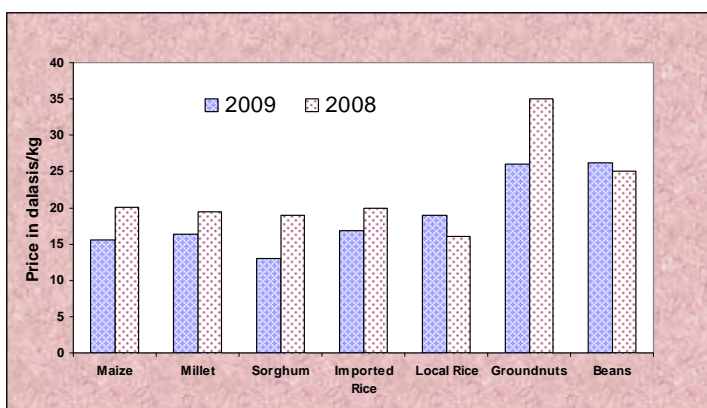
Groundnut fields across the country are at different growth stages ranging from pegging to full maturity depending on the variety and date of sowing. Harvesting of the Philippine pink varieties is continuing. In some places, groundnuts have reached full maturity but farmers are waiting for the rains to subside before harvesting.

Most upland rice fields have reached maturity and harvesting is well in progress in URD, CRD, LRD and NBD. However, in most parts of Western Division, upland rice fields are at vegetative growth stages. In the swamp rice fields, transplanting of rice nurseries is still in progress.

5. SITUATION OF CEREAL MARKETS

The prices of cereals at weekly markets continued to fluctuate depending on the volume of the commodities supplied and demand at the markets. Average prices for coarse grains during period under review ranged from D10.00/kg to D18.00/kg. The price of imported rice varied from D14.00/kg to D18.00/kg, whilst *Findo* varied from D38.00/kg to D55.00/kg remaining the highest in all markets.

Compared to last year during the same period, this year's prices of coarse grains (maize, millet and sorghum) are slightly lower. Only local rice registered an increase when compared to the preceding year.



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