

EARLY WARNING BULLETIN FOR FOOD SECURITY

No. 2010/09

IN THE GAMBIA

Period: July 21 - 31, 2010



Government of The Gambia

Produced and Published by the Multidisciplinary Working
Group of the AGRHYMET Regional Programme

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AGRHYMET Regional Programme

1. PROGRESS OF 2010 RAINY SEASON

The mean surface position of the demarcating boundary between the dry and moist regions over West Africa (Inter-Tropical Discontinuity - ITD) was located over Podor (Senegal), Tidjikta (Mauritania), Gao (Mali) and Agadez (Niger). Thus, the ITD continued with its northward movement at the central and western axis, whereas the eastern axis maintained its position as in the last dekad.

Convective clouds development, rain and thunderstorms (sometimes squally) characterized the weather to the south of the ITD, particularly over Gulf of Guinea States and southern Sahel. However, to the north, warm, dry and sunny afternoons characterized the weather with occasional hazy conditions notably over northern Mauritania, Mali and Niger.

2. RAINFALL OUTLOOK FOR AUGUST 1 - 10, 2010

Warm and variably cloudy conditions will prevail with moderate rain accompanied with thunderstorms over most places during most part of the dekad.

3. RAINFALL SITUATION

The number of rainy days has reduced as compared to the preceding dekad. Meanwhile, rainfall intensity, particularly in daily amounts has increased significantly during this dekad as compared to the previous one. Heavy rainfall (in less than 24 hours) was recorded in most stations in the Middle and Eastern Thirds of the country with Jenoi recording the highest of over 100mm.

End-of-dekad totals ranged from 24.3mm at Banjul in the Western Third to 240.4mm at Jenoi in the Middle Third of the country. Figure 1a shows the distribution of rainfall intensities during this dekad, with the middle and Eastern Thirds recording more rainfall (over 100mm), whilst the Western Third recorded less than 100mm.

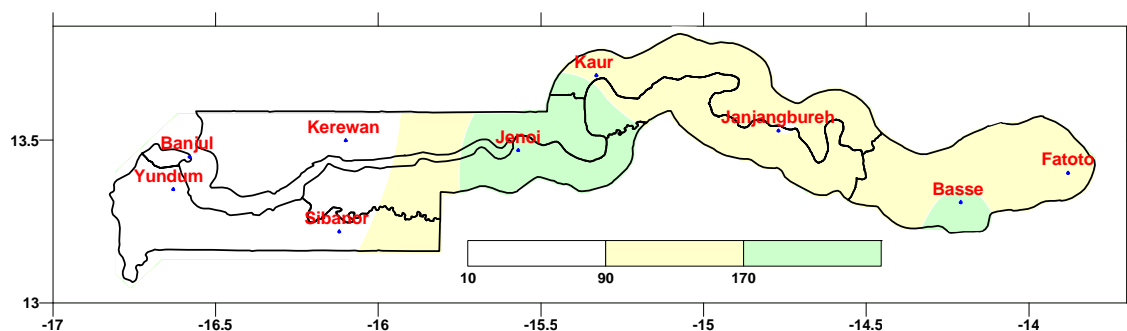


Figure 1a: Rainfall intensity during July 21 - 31, 2010

The seasonal total rainfall amount in the country (May 1 to July 31) ranged from 243.9mm at Serekunda to 606.2mm at Jenoi (details in fig. 1b). During the same period last year, the seasonal rainfall ranged between 119.6mm at Janjangbureh and 454.7mm at Kerewan.

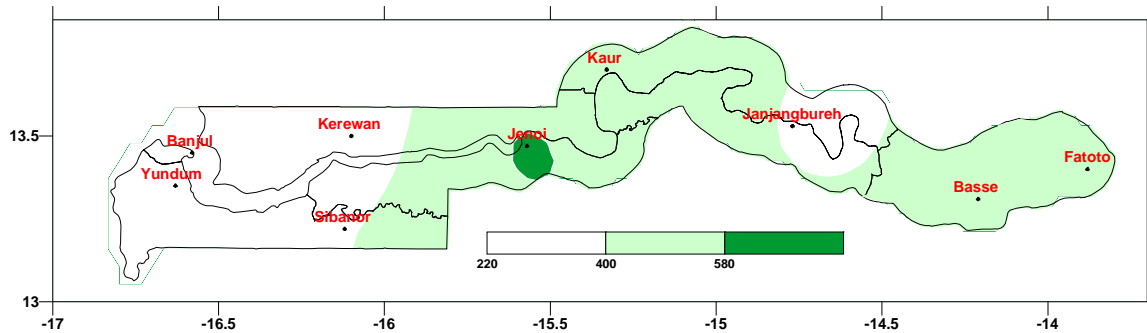


Figure 1b: Cumulative rainfall as at July 31, 2010

In general, average rainfall from May 1 to July 31 remained above that of last year during the same period. Only Serekunda, Yundum and Pirang in the Western Third recorded a deficit ranging from 49 to 130.0mm, whilst the rest of the country recorded surplus ranging from 23.0mm at Kerewan to 317.0mm at Sapu.

When compared to the long-term mean (normal), deficit was only recorded in Yundum.

4. AGROMETEOROLOGICAL SITUATION

Temperatures during this dekad remained high throughout the country especially in the central and eastern parts. Meanwhile, compared to the preceding dekad, mean temperatures decreased slightly except in Kerewan and Janjangbureh where temperatures reduced by more than 1 °C and at Fatoto by 0.3 °C.

Extreme temperatures recorded were 35.0 °C at Kerewan in the Western Third, 34.4 °C at Janjangbureh in the Middle Third and 37.5 °C at Fatoto in the Eastern Third of the country.

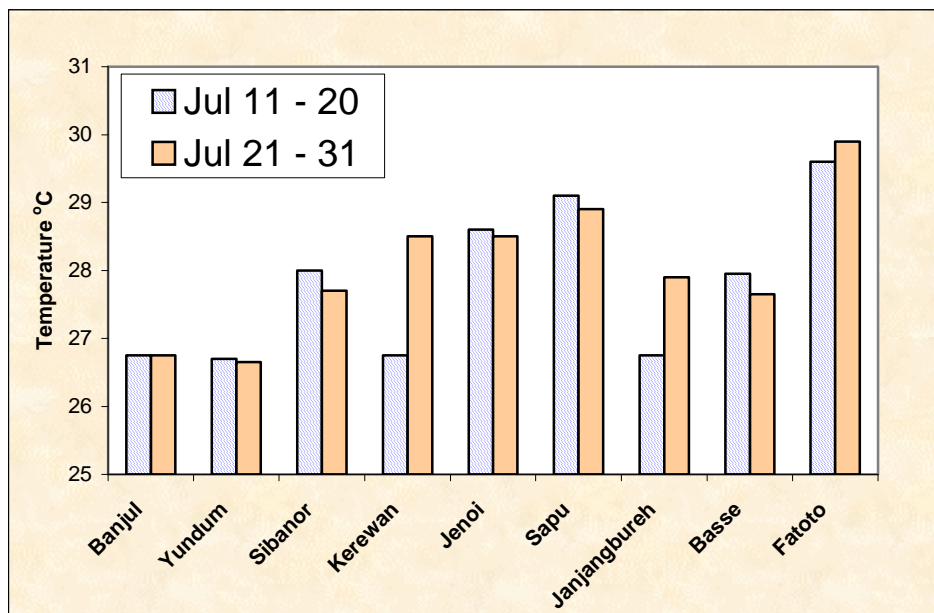


Figure 2: Evolution of temperature

Maximum relative humidity (RH) has increased slightly by 0.3% and varied from 81% to 97% across the country.

Winds across the country were generally light to moderate in speed. However, a line squall producing a wind gust of 50km/hr was recorded on the 29th July 2010. *This heavy storm caused severe devastation to house holds in a number of villages resulting to demolition of houses, toilets and wells; damage to stored food and death of small ruminants and submerging of rice fields.*

These incidences were reported in the following villages in the Central River Region:

- ✓ Wassu Madina
- ✓ Nyangen
- ✓ Kuntaur Wharf Town
- ✓ Kuntaur Fula Kunda
- ✓ Faraba Wuriyol and
- ✓ Pallang Madina

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 stages of late millet in parts of the Eastern Third (Upper River Region) and the Western Third (Western Region) varied from seedling to tillering.

Ploughing and sowing in the up-land rice fields are ongoing, whilst in the lowland rice fields, transplanting is yet to begin. In the Western Third, vegetable gardening is continuing in some places.

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