

EARLY WARNING BULLETIN FOR FOOD SECURITY

No. 2010/14

IN THE GAMBIA

Period: September 11 - 20, 2010



Government of The Gambia

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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 region over West Africa (Inter Tropical Discontinuity - ITD), has reached its maximum limit, lying well over north of Cape Verde islands, inclining gently onto the northern Mauritanian and southern Algeria and gently sloping into Niger/Chad.

2. RAINFALL OUTLOOK FOR SEPTEMBER 21 - 30, 2010

Thunderstorm and or rain (sometimes squally) is expected to traverse the country during the period.

3. RAINFALL SITUATION

The improvements in the rainfall situation experienced during the last dekad continued into the current one. Heavy downpour of more than 50mm in a day was recorded in almost all stations in the Western and Eastern Thirds of the country with Banjul recording the highest of 145.4mm. In the Middle Third, only Jenoi and Kaur recorded more than 50mm of rainfall. The number of rainy days varied from 7 to 10 days as in the preceding dekad, leading to end-of-dekad totals to range from a minimum of 36.3mm at Janjangbureh in the Middle Third to a maximum of 340.5mm at Banjul in the Western Third of the country (fig. 1a).

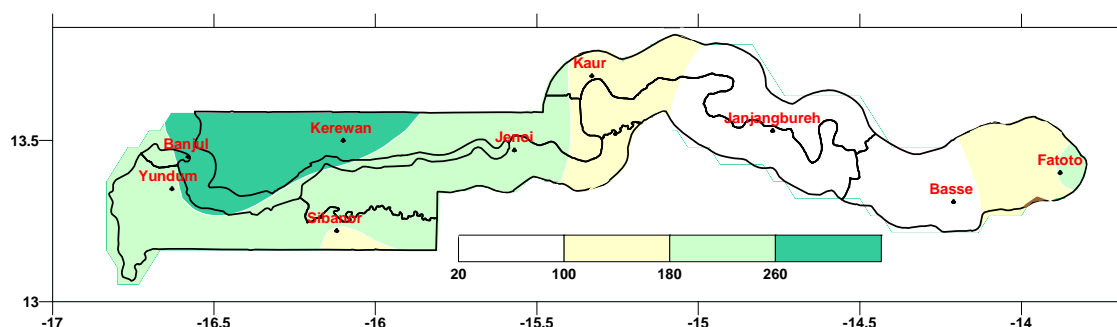


Figure 1a: Rainfall intensity during September 11 - 20, 2010

The seasonal (May 1 to September 20) total rainfall in the country ranged from 749.0mm at Janjangbureh in the Middle Third to 1419.4mm at Fatoto in the Eastern Third of the country (details in fig. 1b).

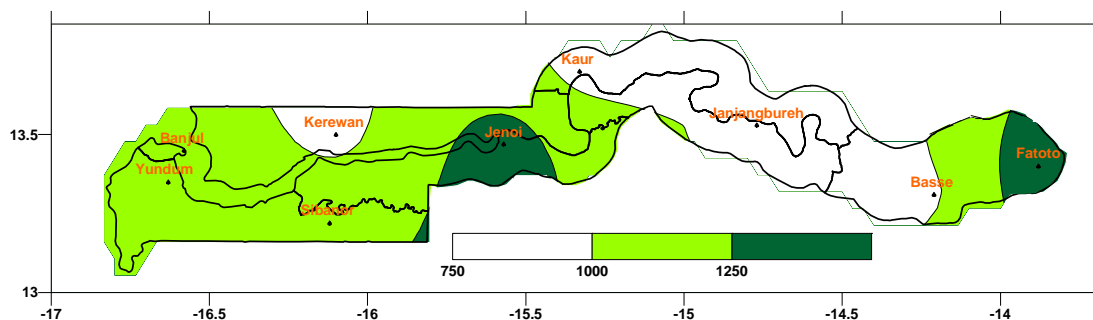


Figure 1b: Cumulative rainfall as at September 20, 2010

During the same period last year, the seasonal total rainfall ranged from 506.8mm at Janjangbureh in the Middle Third to 1250.1mm at Yundum in the Western Third of the country. Thus, when compared to the same period last year, deficits were recorded at Serekunda, Yundum and Kerewan in the Western Third and Kaur in the Middle Third. The rest of the country recorded a surplus.

The country average rainfall as at September 20, 2010 stands at 1078.3mm, which is 14% above last year (945.5mm) and 56% above the normal (690.8mm) during the same period.

4. AGROMETEOROLOGICAL SITUATION

Generally, average temperatures during this dekad virtually remained unchanged as compared to the preceding dekad. However, when compared to the 30-year average (normal) this year had registered slightly higher temperatures.

Extreme temperatures recorded were 34.5°C at Kerewan and Basse in the Western and Eastern Thirds and 39.5°C at Sapu in the Middle Third of the country.

Maximum relative humidity (RH) varied from 90% to 99% throughout the country except in Banjul where it dropped to 89%, while the minimum RH generally remained above 65%.

Winds were generally light to moderate in speed but instances of squally situations occurred this dekad with a maximum wind gust of over 52 km/hr recorded at Sapu on the 19th July 2010.

5. AGRICULTURAL SITUATION

Crops

Overall crop performance in terms of growth and development is progressing satisfactorily across the country.

Harvesting of maize is continuing nationwide and the products could be seen in all the markets. Most early millet fields have reached full maturity and harvesting is in progress in both the Western (Lower River and North Bank Regions) and Middle Thirds (Central River Region) of the country. However, this is hampered by the continuous rains.

Upland rice across the country is growing as expected and most of the crop is at tillering and booting phases. The *NERICA* rice variety is flowering in all the regions. In the swamp rice fields, transplanting of rice nurseries is ongoing in the Western Third (Lower River and North Bank Regions) of the country.

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 in progress in all the regions. In some places, groundnuts have reached full maturity but farmers are waiting for the rains to subside before harvesting.

Pest Situation

No report on pest infestation was received during this period.

6. 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 D13.00/kg to D14.00/kg (fig. 3a). Compared to last year during the same period, this year's prices of coarse grains are slightly lower except for sorghum.

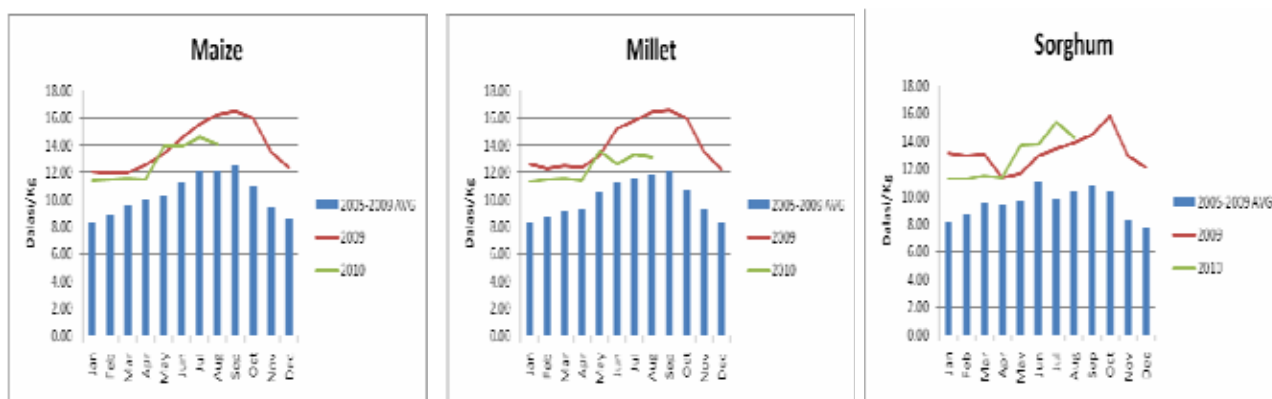


Figure 3a: Evolution of cereals (coarse grains) prices – Source: Planning Services, Department of Agriculture

The price of imported and local rice varied from D15.00/kg to D18.00/kg. Only long grain rice (imported) registered an increase in comparison to the preceding year (fig. 3b).

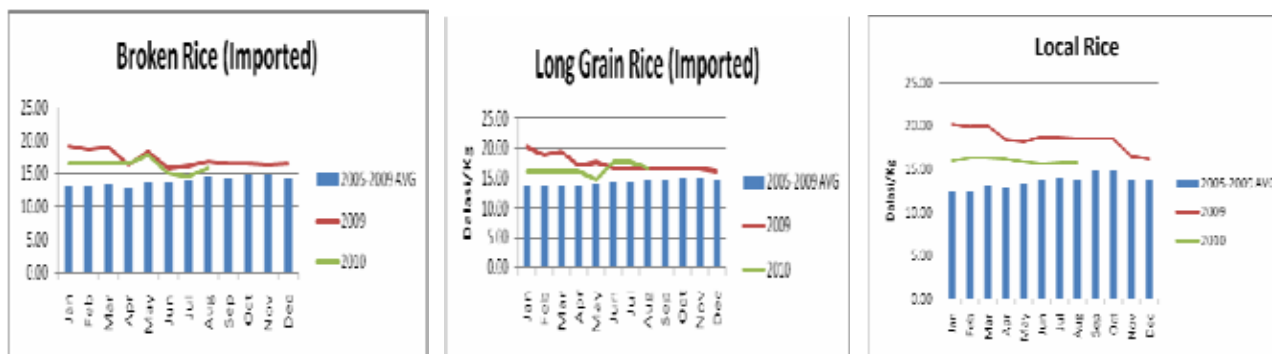


Figure 3b: Evolution of rice (imported and local) prices – Source: Planning Services, Department of Agriculture

Composition of MWG:

Department of Water Resources
 Planning Services - Department of Agriculture (DOA)
 Communication, Extension & Education Services - DOA
 Animal Health & Production Services - DOA
 Plant Protection Services - DOA
 National Environment Agency

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