
EARLY WARNING BULLETIN FOR FOOD SECURITY

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IN THE GAMBIA

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Government of The Gambia

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AGRHYMET Regional Programme

1. PROGRESS OF RAINY SEASON

The Inter-Tropical Discontinuity (ITD), separating the moist and dry regions over northern Africa, has continued its slight northward movement but remained 1 degree latitude below the Gambia, positioning itself over southern Senegal and stretching towards northern Burkina Faso. By the end of the dekad the Azores and the St. Helena Pressure Centres had core pressure values of 1030 and 1025hPa respectively. This pressure configuration resulted in cool north-westerly winds been predominant over the Gambia during the dekad. The country was therefore without any significant rains and was characterized by dry and cool weather condition during the night and early morning, becoming sunny and warm during daytime.

2. RAINFALL OUTLOOK FOR MAY 21 - 31, 2011

The northward surge of the ITD is expected to continue during the period which will consequently favour the arrival of warm and moist south west winds over The Gambia. Therefore, isolated convective clouds development is expected over some places, especially in the eastern sector.

3. RAINFALL SITUATION

During this dekad, no significant rainfall was recorded across the country, meanwhile rainfalls of less than 1mm were recorded at Basse (0.7mm) and Fatoto (0.8mm) and some were also at Jenoi, Sapu and Janjangbureh. However, compared to last year during the same period, only the Eastern Third recorded surpluses, 0.7mm and 0.8mm, for the rest of the country the situation is almost the same.

Cumulative rainfall compared to the long-term mean (1981 - 2010) during the same period, deficits ranged from 0.3mm to 9.5mm were observed.

4. AGROMETEOROLOGICAL SITUATION

As in the previous dekad temperatures were high during this dekad, particularly in the Middle and Eastern Thirds of the country. Although a slight dropped was observed from a high of 44 °C in the last dekad to 43.5 °C in the present one. Highest temperatures recorded this dekad were 37.0 °C at Yundum in the Western Third, 43.0 °C at Kaur in the Middle Third and 43.5 °C at Fatoto in the Eastern Third of the country.

Lowest temperatures rose slightly by 0.3°C around the coastal areas in the Western Third compared to the previous dekad and dropped by 7.2 °C at Basse in the Eastern Third. Kerewan recorded the lowest minimum temperature of 17°C, whilst Fatoto recorded the highest minimum temperature of 23.5°C.

As in the previous dekad, daily average relative humidity (RH) were highest around the coastal areas this time with slight improvement, And again Yundum recording the highest maximum of 82% and Janjanbureh Basse recording the lowest maximum of 62%, an increment of 5%. Meanwhile, across the country minimum RH varied between 26% inland from 21% in the last dekad and 54% around the coast from 43% in the last dekad. This shows a progressive improvement of the moisture content in the atmosphere above the country.

Average daily sunshine hours varied between 7.3 to 9.1, a slight drop compared to the previous dekad due increase in clouds appearance. Average daily evaporation of water bodies remained high ranging from 5.1to 10.1mm. Winds during the dekad were generally moderate to light in speed (9 to 43km/hr).

5. AGRICULTURAL SITUATION

The major on-field activities by farmers continued to be field clearing, acquisition and preparation of seeds and the repair of farming implements.

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