
EARLY WARNING BULLETIN FOR FOOD SECURITY

No. 2011/06

IN THE GAMBIA

Period: June 21 - 30, 2011



Government of The Gambia

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AGRHYMET Regional Programme

1. UPDATE OF THE SEASONAL CLIMATE FORECAST FOR 2011

The Department of Water Resources is pleased to present the update of the climate forecast for this wet season (2011) over The Gambia.

The prediction was based on the relationship between El Nino/ Southern Oscillation (ENSO) and Sea Surface Temperature (SST) anomalies over the Central Pacific Ocean (Nino 3.4 region) and Tropical North Atlantic Ocean and the rain bearing systems over The Gambia.

However, the warm anomalies that extended over the coast of Senegal in December did not continue up to mid-May and thus the following:

• 2011 Rainfall Prediction

For the coming July-August-September (JAS) period, the expected rainfall values would be **Near-Normal** (most likely) to **Above normal** (likely).

2. PROGRESS OF THE RAINY SEASON

The prominent high-pressure cell centered over North West Africa (the Azores) was mostly quasi-stationary and had pressure values ranging from 1024 to 1032 hpa during the first part towards the end respectively. Whilst the St. Helena High Pressure cell was mostly over the south Atlantic and had pressure values ranging from 1032 to 1048 hpa.

This pressure configuration thus, favoured the slight northward movement of the demarcating boundary between the dry and moist regions over West Africa (Inter-Tropical Discontinuity – ITD). Thus, the ITD was located roughly over northern Senegambia and southern Mali, Niger and Chad during the dekad.

To the south of the ITD, convective clouds development, rain and thunderstorm characterised the weather, generally over the gulf of Guinea states, southern Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali and the Senegambia region. Over Mauritania (north of the ITD), dusty/hazy conditions prevailed during most part of the dekad.

3. RAINFALL OUTLOOK FOR JULY 1 - 10, 2011

Thunderstorm with rain-showers is expected over The Gambia and environs during the first two days of the 1st dekad of July. A dry spell will prevail thereafter until the mid of the dekad; whereas, occasional outbreaks of thunderstorm with rain-showers are expected shortly thereafter and towards the end of the dekad.

4. RAINFALL SITUATION

During this dekad, rainfall was recorded all over the rainfall monitoring stations. Intensities ranged from 0.3mm to 41.8mm in the Western Third, 2.1mm to 45.6mm in the Middle Third and 0.9mm to 23.0mm in the Eastern Third of the country.

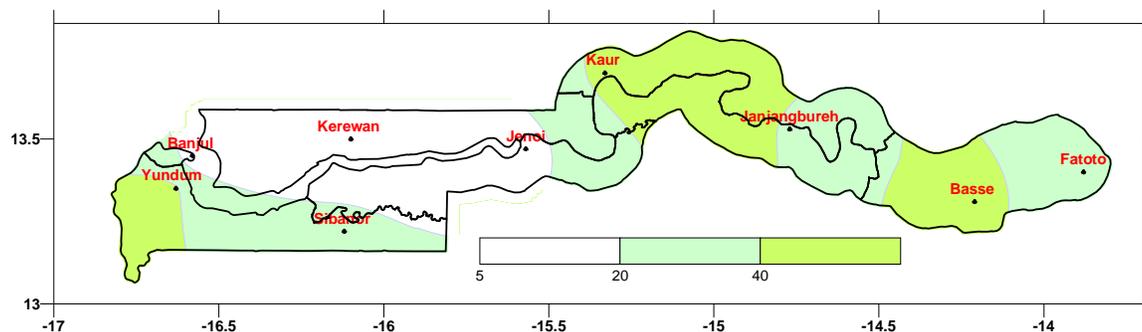


Figure 1a: Rainfall intensity during June 11 – 20, 2011

As at June 30, the seasonal total rainfall amount in the country ranged from 8.7mm at Banjul in the Western Third to 113.8mm at Sapu in the Middle Third of the country. Thus the distribution in space shows that the Middle Third has received more rainfall, followed by the Eastern Third and then the Western Third (Fig. 1b).

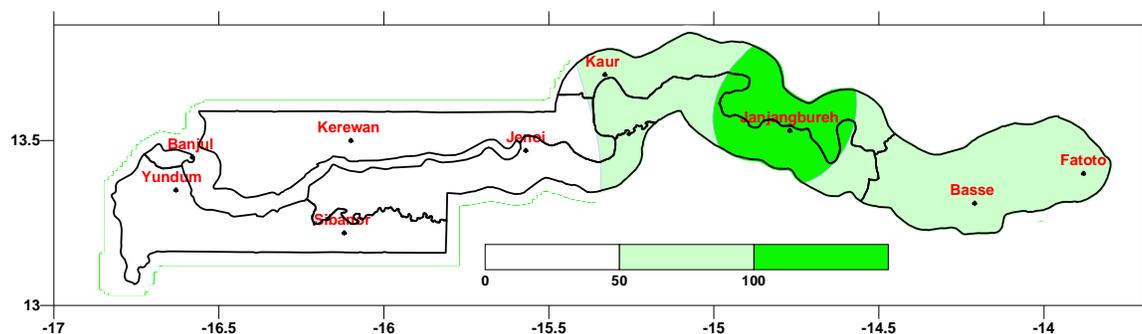


Figure 1b: Seasonal total from May 1 to June 20, 2011

When compared to the preceding year, all rainfall stations recorded deficits as shown in Fig. 1c below. The deficits ranged from 8.6mm to 147.0mm were recorded in the Western Third, from 2.6mm to 154.9mm in the Middle Third and from 35.7mm to 43.0mm in the Eastern Third.

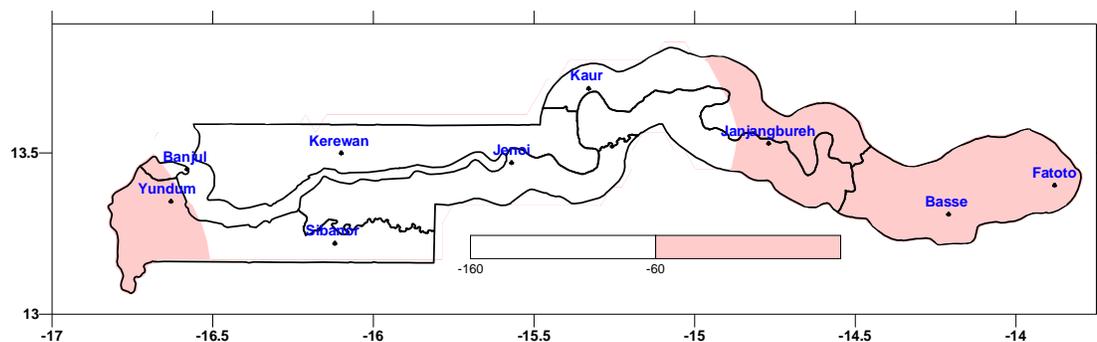


Figure 1c: Comparison of 2010 and 2011 seasonal rainfall as at June 30

5. AGROMETEOROLOGICAL SITUATION

Temperatures during this dekad dropped throughout the country as compared to the last dekad. Mean temperature dropped by 0.7 °C in the Western Third, 0.5 °C in the Middle Third and 2.5 °C in the Eastern Third of the country. Maximum temperatures ranged from 31.6 °C in Banjul in the Eastern Third to 36.5 °C at Kaur in the Middle Third whilst minimum temperatures ranged from 19.0 °C at Kerewan to 24.3 °C both in the Western Third.

Relative humidity throughout the country were above 90% with the exception of Banjul, Kerewan, Kaur and Fatoto which recorded 86%, 85%, 88% and 89% respectively.

Winds were generally light to moderate in speed. Meanwhile, a line squall travelling at a maximum speed 65km/hr hit the country on the 27th June 2011.

6. AGRICULTURAL SITUATION

Sowing of food crops (cereals) and groundnut is continuing in the North Bank, Central River and Upper River Regions. The crops have germinated and are at seedling stages.

Elsewhere, in Lower River and Western Regions, preparation of farmlands and tools are the major farming activities. However, a few farmers in isolated areas have also started sowing cereals in these regions. Women in these regions are still engaged in vegetable gardening in the low lands.

7. SITUATION OF MARKETS

Cereal Prices

Average prices for coarse grains during the period under review were D15.03/kg for maize, D14.76/kg for millet and D15.33/kg for sorghum, thus registering a slight decrease when compared to the preceding dekad. However, when compared to the same period last year, a 2% increase was registered for millet and sorghum whilst maize registered an increase of 8% (Fig. 2a).

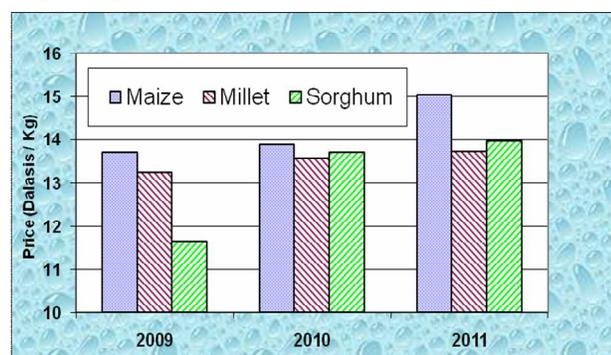


Figure 2a: Comparison of coarse grain prices
(Source: Planning Services - DOA)

Generally, the prices of rice registered a drop in 2010 as compared to 2009 (Fig. 2a), whilst in 2011 an increase was registered. The price of long grain rice is slightly higher than that of broken rice.

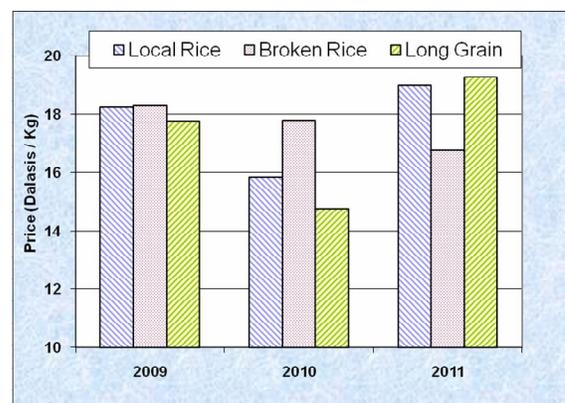


Figure 2b: Comparison of Cereal (rice) prices

Price of beef

The price of beef remained stable during the period under review. Average prices remained at D75.00/kg and D100.00/kg for meat & bone and steak respectively at retail markets, whilst at the weekly markets the price reduced to D65.00/kg for meat & bone and D85.00/kg for steak.

However, these prices have slightly increased by 4% for meat and bone 4% for steak when compared to the same period last year.

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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