

EARLY WARNING BULLETIN FOR FOOD SECURITY

No. 2011/07

IN THE GAMBIA

Period: July 1 - 10, 2011



Government of The Gambia

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Focal Point: Department of Water Resources

TEL: (+220) 4227631 / 4224122 / 8905229 - FAX: (+220) 422 50 09

E-MAIL: dwr@mofwrnam.gov.gm / WEB: www.mofwrnam.gov.gm



AGRHYMET Regional Programme

1. PROGRESS OF THE RAINY SEASON

The prominent high-pressure cell centered over North West Africa (the Azores) was mostly quasi-stationary, whilst the St. Helena High Pressure cell weakened during the period under review. This resulted to the persistent north to westerly wind regime into the Senegambian coast line, hence the dry spell experienced during the dekad.

The surface position of the Inter-Tropical Discontinuity (ITD), during the dekad oscillated over Northern Senegal, Southern Mauritania and stretching towards Central Mali, Niger and Chad. Convective cloud evolved leading to rain and thunderstorm over the gulf of Guinea states and the Sahel including The Gambia.

North of the ITD, dry and stable atmosphere prevailed with dust/haze patches spread over few places in Mauritania resulting to reduction of horizontal and vertical visibility.

2. RAINFALL OUTLOOK FOR JULY 11 - 20, 2011

Thunderstorm accompanied with rain showers are expected before the middle of the dekad, and shortly thereafter. The rest of the period will be generally warm, humid and variably cloudy.

3. RAINFALL SITUATION

During this dekad, the rainfall intensities were relatively higher as compared to the previous dekad particularly in the Western and Middle Thirds of the country. Daily intensities ranged from 0.2mm to 65.4mm in the Western Third, 0.4mm to 63.8mm in the Middle Third and from 1.5mm to 18.5mm in the Eastern Third.

The number of rainy days varied from 1 to 3 and occurred during the early part of the dekad, resulting in decadal totals ranging from 25.5mm at Kerewan to 101.1mm at Serekunda in the Western Third, 39.5mm at Jenoi to 70.2mm at Sapu in the Middle Third and from 5.9mm at Fatoto to 22.8mm at Basse in the Eastern Third of the country (Fig. 1a). However, the rainy days during the dekad were followed by rainless days ranging from 7 to 9 days.

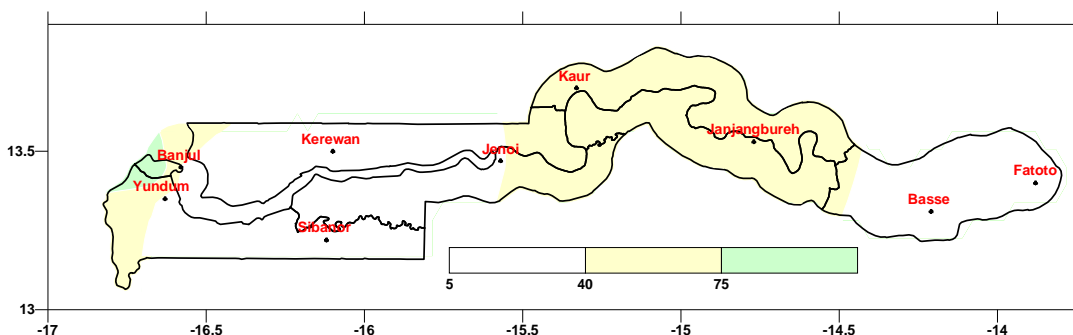


Figure 1a: Rainfall intensity during July 1 - 10, 2011

The seasonal (May 1 to July 10, 2011) rainfall varied from 41.9mm at Kerewan in the Western Third to 184.0mm at Sapu in the Middle Third of the country. The distribution in space shows that the Middle Third and parts of the Eastern Third recorded more than 100mm of rainfall (Fig. 1b). In the Western Third, only Serekunda recorded more than 100mm of rainfall.

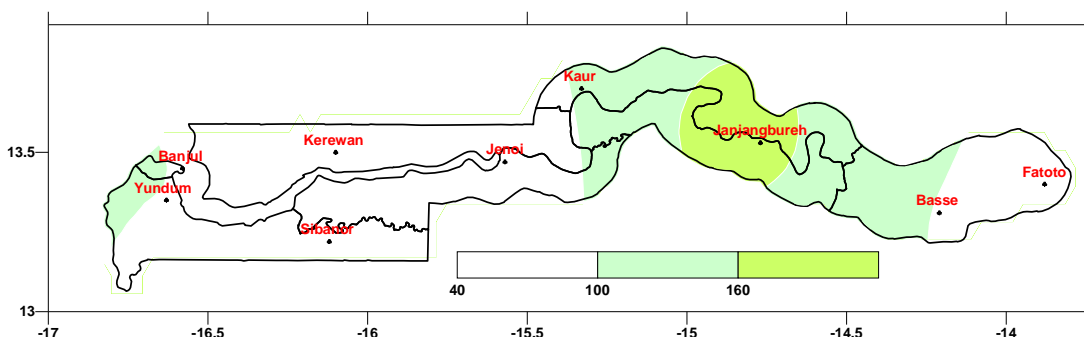


Figure 1a: Seasonal total from May 1 to July 10, 2011

During the same period last year, the seasonal rainfall ranged from 95.3mm at Yundum to 241.4mm at Jenoi. This indicates deficits ranging from 24.3mm to 187.4mm. Only Serekunda and Janjangbureh recorded a surplus of about 35mm. When compared to the long-term mean, only Sapu and Janjangbureh in the Middle Third recorded surplus of about 35mm. The rest of the stations recorded deficits ranging from 11mm to 100mm. **Thus, so far the 2011 season has received less rainfall than the previous year and the long term average.**

4. AGROMETEOROLOGICAL SITUATION

Mean temperatures (28.9°C) during this dekad were similar to the temperatures during the preceding dekad. Thermal distribution within the country shows that the Eastern and Middle Thirds remained warmer than the Western Third.

Maximum temperatures ranged from 32.9 °C at Yundum in the Western Third to 37.2 °C at Fatoto in the Eastern Third whilst minimum temperatures ranged from 19.0 °C at Kerewan in the Western Third to 23.6 °C at Kaur in the Middle Third.

Maximum relative humidity (RH) continued to remain above 90% throughout the country with the exception of Banjul, Kerewan, and Fatoto which recorded 85%, 87%, and 88% respectively.

Winds during the period were generally light to moderate in speed.

5. AGRICULTURAL SITUATION

The agricultural pattern across the country continued to be different due to the varied rainfall onset. Farmers in most parts of the country continued sowing of cereals and groundnut, except in the West Coast Region, where intense farming activity is yet to begin.

However, due to the dry spell experienced during this dekad, farmers in most parts of the country have stopped planting and compelled to start weeding even though sowing is yet to be finalized.

If the dry spell continue into the second dekad of July, the already germinated crops will experience severe water stress.

6. SITUATION OF MARKETS

Cereal Prices

Average prices at retail and weekly markets continued to fluctuate depending on the volume of the commodities supplied and the demand at the markets.

Average prices for coarse grains ranged from D13.15 / kg to D18.6 / kg at the retail markets. Whilst the price of these commodities remained lower at the weekly markets and ranged from D8.00 / kg to D10.00 / kg (Table 1).

Table 1: Evolution of cereal prices (Source: Planning Services - DOA)

	Retail Markets				Weekly Markets	
	Serrekunda	Latrikunda	Bakau	Brikama	Wassu	Brikamaba
Maize	17.89	18.60	15.78	17.89	10.00	9.70
Millet	14.90	18.60	13.15	14.90	10.00	8.83
Sorghum	14.90	18.60	13.15	14.90	10.00	8.00
Local Rice	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	16.00	15.55
Broken Rice	16.00	18.00	16.00	16.00	16.00	18.10
Long Grain Rice	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	16.00	18.10
Findo	37.50	100.00	120.00	60.00	N/A	N/A

The price of rice, Gambia's staple food varied from one market to the other. Like coarse grains, the price of local rice was higher at retail markets than at the weekly markets due to the volume supplied. The price of imported rice ranged from D16.00 / kg to D20.00 / kg at the markets.

As compared to the previous dekad, the prices of coarse grains this dekad has registered a drop of about D2.00/kg (Fig. 2). The price of local rice has also recorded a slight drop, whilst the price of imported rice remained stable during the period under review.

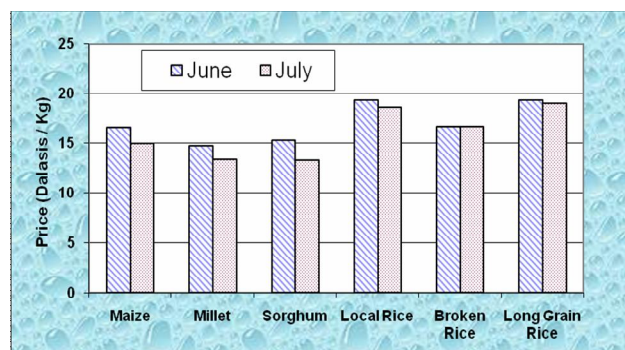


Figure 2a: Comparison of cereal prices (Source: Planning Services - DOA)

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

Direct your comments and questions to:

The Director
 Department of Water Resources
 7 Marina Parade, Banjul
 The Gambia
 Tel: (+ 220) 422 76 31 / 422 41 22 / 890 52 29
 Email: dwr@mofwrnam.gov.gm