

EARLY WARNING BULLETIN FOR FOOD SECURITY

No. 2011/16

IN THE GAMBIA

Period: October 1 - 10, 2011



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 THE RAINY SEASON

The Inter-Tropical Discontinuity (ITD) continues to move southwards with its current position located just one degree of latitude north of the Gambia, stretch across eastern Senegal and southern Mali.

Places to the south of this position experienced isolated to scattered convective activities which resulted to rain showers and thunderstorms at the beginning of the dekad. However, the precipitation shift was to the extreme south of West Africa towards the end of the dekad.

The Azores Sub-Tropical High Pressure System was squeezed and displaced by a mid-latitude depression into Western Europe with a core value of 1028 hectopascal. This system caused a change in the wind pattern to North-Easterlies giving rise to the intrusion of slight dust haze and warm weather condition over Sahel region.

The Azores Sub-Tropical High Pressure is expected to return to its original position over the North Atlantic Ocean in thirty-six hours time as it regains intensity.

2. RAINFALL OUTLOOK FOR OCTOBER 11 – 20, 2011

Warm weather accompanied by slight dust haze is expected, becoming humid and thundery with rain showers towards the mid of the dekad.

Dry, warm and stable atmosphere will prevail during the rest of the dekad.

3. RAINFALL SITUATION

Rainfall during this dekad has reduced both in terms of frequency and intensity through out the country. The number of rainy days ranged from 1 to 2 leading to dekadal totals to vary between 1.2mm at Kerewan in the Western Third and 134.4mm at Sapu in the Middle Third of the country (Fig. 1a).

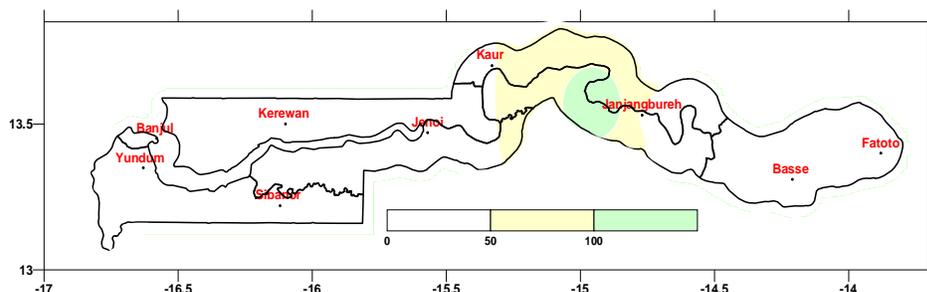


Figure 1a: Rainfall intensity during October 1 – 10, 2011

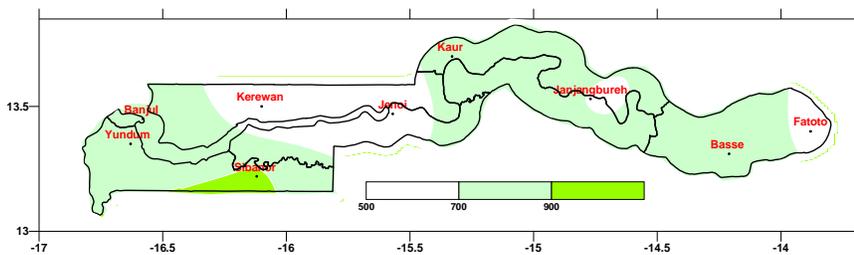


Figure 1b: Seasonal total from May 1 to October 10, 2011

Cumulative rainfall recorded still puts Sibanor, in the Western Third of the country to the lead, with over 900mm of rainfall and the lowest rainfall recorded was 514.7mm at Kerewan in the Western Third of the country (Fig 1b).

Comparing the rainfall situation this year to that of the same period last year, there has been deficits ranging from 146.6mm to 980.7mm were recorded across the country. In the same vein deficits ranging from 8.0 to 402.7mm were recorded in most parts of the country as compared to the long-term mean (30 years) (fig 1c). Meanwhile, surpluses of 66.0mm, 63.9mm and 106.9mm were recorded at Sapsu, Kaur and Banjul respectively.

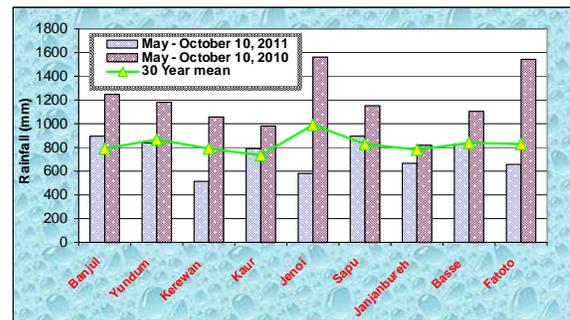


Figure 1c: Rainfall comparison as at September 30, 2011

4. AGROMETEOROLOGICAL SITUATION

Generally, mean temperatures were slightly higher as compared to the previous dekad. This may be due to the reduced cloud cover in the sub-region. Highest temperatures recorded during this dekad were 37.5°C at Kerewan in the Western Third, 42.0°C at Janjangbureh in the Middle Third and 37.4°C at Fatoto in the Eastern Thirds of the country.

Maximum relative humidity generally remained high with values of above 88% throughout the period, whilst minimum relative humidity also remained generally above 60% except in the Upper River Region of the country.

Winds during the period were light to moderate in speed.

5. AGRICULTURAL SITUATION

Harvesting of early millet is almost completed in most parts of the country. Late millet is generally at heading/flowering stages in both the Eastern (Upper River Division) and Western (in some parts of Western Division) Thirds of the country, but late sown fields in Western Division are still at vegetative stage (jointing).

Harvesting of maize is almost completed except the late sown fields in Western Coast Region and other isolated areas in the country. Sorghum is generally heading/flowering in the Eastern (URD) and Middle (in some parts of Central River Division) Thirds where it is predominant. Meanwhile, in the Western Third (areas such as North Bank Division and Lower River Division) the crop has reached its maturity stage.

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 is continuing in most parts of the country.

Most upland rice fields have reached flowering and maturity stages across the country. In the swamp rice fields, transplanting of rice nurseries has gained momentum in the Western (Lower River and North Bank Divisions) and Middle (Central River Division) Thirds of the country.

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