

EARLY WARNING BULLETIN FOR FOOD SECURITY

Nº. 2012/15

IN THE GAMBIA

Period: September 21 - 30, 2012



Government of The Gambia

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AGRHYMET Regional Programme

1. SYNOPTIC SITUATION

The surface position of the ITD during this dekad oscillates over southern Mauritania, stretching towards central Mali, Niamey and onto Chad.

The South Atlantic high Pressure system (The Saint Helena High) intensified with a mean core value of 1033 hpa whereas the North Atlantic high pressure system (The Azores High) has a central core value of 1028 hpa during the latter part of the dekad.

2. RAINFALL SITUATION

This dekad witnessed an increase in rainfall amounts both in intensity and frequency across the country as compared to the previous one (September 11 - 20). The number of rainy days varied between 7 and 9 days, thus an increase of 1 to 2 days over the previous dekad, whilst the daily totals of more than 100.0mm were recorded in Banjul and Serekunda, both in the Western Third of the country. End-of-dekad totals ranged from 22.7mm to 219.2mm in the Western Third, 74.5mm to 166.6mm in the Middle Third and from 43.1mm to 133.5mm in the Eastern Third (fig. 1a).

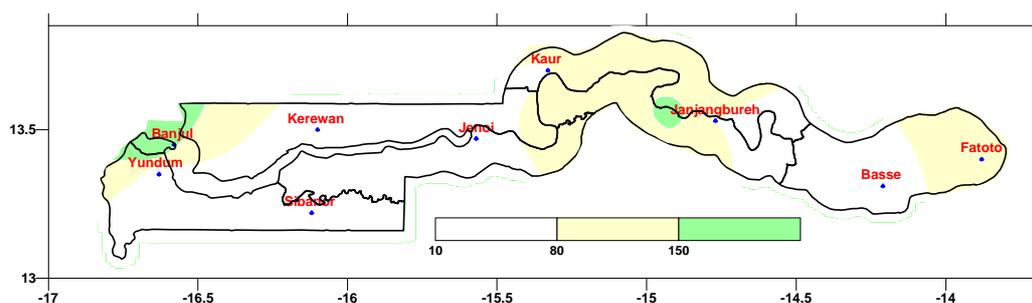


Figure 1a: Rainfall intensity during September 21 – 30, 2012

The cumulative rainfall (May 1 to September 30, 2012) ranged from a minimum of 702.0mm at Basse in the Eastern Third to a maximum of 1502.0mm at Serekunda in the Western Third of the country (fig.1b). In terms of annual distribution, the Western and Middle Thirds received more rainfall.

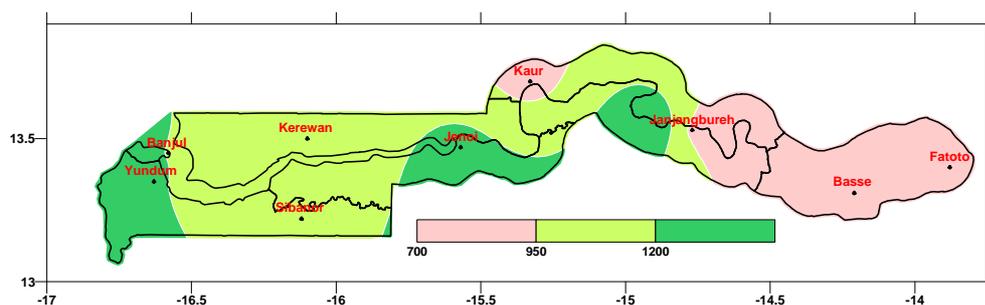


Figure 1b: Cumulative rainfall from May 1 – September 30, 2012

The country average as at September 31, 2012 stood at 1081.7 which is 35% above last year's (705.9mm) and 28% above the long term mean (775.3mm). Compared to the same period last year (2011), surpluses were recorded in all stations across the country, except at Basse (fig. 1c) and when compared to the long term mean (1981 – 2010) deficits were recorded only at Basse and Fatoto in the Eastern Third.

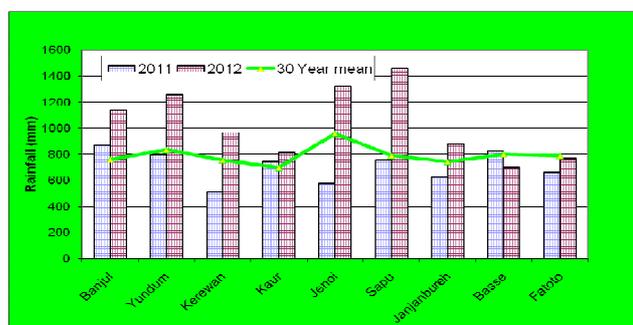


Figure 1c: Comparison of this year rainfall, against 2011 and the long-term mean

3. WEATHER OUTLOOK FOR THE NEXT DEKAD (1 – 10 October 2012)

Partly cloudy and humid atmosphere is expected to prevail with chances of thunderstorms and / or rain in places over the country during the early part of the dekad.

4. AGROMETEOROLOGICAL SITUATION

Average temperatures were between 27 and 28oC throughout this dekad. Meanwhile, maximum temperatures increased slightly in the Eastern Third between 0.6 to 1.1oC over the previous dekad. They ranged from 35.5oC at Kerewan, 35.8oC at Sapu to 36.5oC at Fatoto.

Average sunshine remained unchanged, compared to the previous dekad, values ranged from 2.4 to 6.8hrs across the country, whilst averagely daily evaporations fluctuated between 2.8 to 5.9mm.

Winds were generally light to moderate in speed, **however, line squalls at speeds of 64.4km/h, 76km/h and 83km/h, which can potentially cause damage to properties, were recorded at Sapu, Janjambureh and Yundum respectively.**

Average maximum Relatively Humidity remained above 90%, whilst the minimum also remained above 64% during the period.

5. AGRICULTURAL SITUATION

5.1 Crop situation

Agricultural situation across the country is generally satisfactory, harvesting of maize and groundnuts (Philippine type) have since started and that of millet has just begun. The 73/33 type groundnuts are about maturing. Also harvesting is taking place at some pockets of cultivated upland rice fields across the country, and transplanting of rice in the lowlands is continuing.

5.2 Pests situation

The dekad is characterised by continuous damage of blister beetles (*Psalydolytta fusca*) on some few upland rice fields in particularly North and West Coast Regions of the country. The scale of damage was, however, not quite high. Also, lately planted early millet and maize fields in Lower River and Central River Regions still mildly continued to suffer from attacks inflicted by the same species of blister beetles. Other species of blister beetles, such as *Mylabris sp.* were equally observed devouring flowers of maize and millet crops, although damages were insignificant.

Some upland rice fields in the West Coast Region have, during the reviewed dekad, undergone significant losses owing to the outbreak of an array of sucking bugs, for instance, the green bug (*Nezara viridula*). Few borers, such as rice stalk-eyed flies (*Diopsis thoracica*) have additionally inflicted slight damages on some few upland rice fields.

On the other hand, granivorous birds, e.g. the village weaver birds (*Ploceus cucullatus*) have, during the said period, caused a lot of damages on the upland rice fields and some lately planted early millet fields throughout the growing zones as the birds are found everywhere in the country.

For fields that were not properly cleaned, weeds continued to compete with crops for especially nutrients, space and light.

In all cases, farmer victims of these pest incidences were given some pieces of technical advice as regards management of their respective problems, by staff of the Department of Agriculture.

Composition of MWG:

Department of Water Resources
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Communication, Extension & Education Services - DOA
Animal Health & Production Services - DOA
Plant Protection Services - DOA
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