

EARLY WARNING BULLETIN FOR FOOD SECURITY

Nº. 2012/17

IN THE GAMBIA

Period: October 11 - 20, 2012



Government of The Gambia

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AGRHYMET Regional Programme

1. SYNOPTIC SITUATION

From October 11 to 20, 2012, the mean surface position of the demarcating boundary between the dry and moist regions (Inter-Tropical Discontinuity - ITD), remained relatively stationary across West Africa as compared to the first dekad of October 2012.

At the western segment, the mean position was centered approximately 2.3°N of The Gambia which is approximately 0.8° north of the long-term average position (fig. 1).

Southwesterly moist winds from the Gulf of Guinea caused isolated light to moderate rainfall in the sub-region including The Gambia.

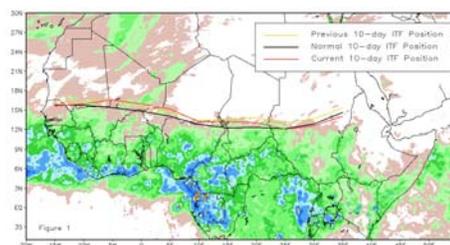


Figure 1: Position of the ITD (source: CPC African Desk)

2. RAINFALL SITUATION

As expected during this period of the season, rainfall intensity and frequency dropped significantly as compared to the previous dekads. Rainfall was recorded across the country, with amounts varying between 1.0mm to 88.1mm measured in not more than two rainy days (fig. 2a).

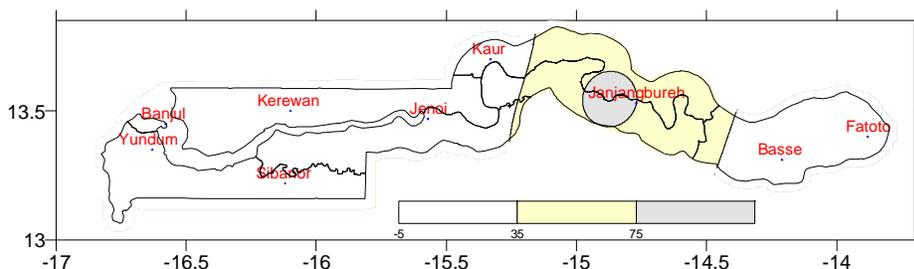


Figure 2a: Rainfall intensity during October 11 – 20, 2012

The seasonal totals as at this dekad (May 1 to October 20, 2012) ranged from 1049.9 mm to 1593.7mm in the

Western Third, 875.8mm to 1637.1mm in the Middle Third and from 750.0mm to 853.4mm in the Eastern Third of the country (fig.2b). This has shown that the Western Third continues to receive the highest rainfall followed by the Middle Third and then the Eastern Third.

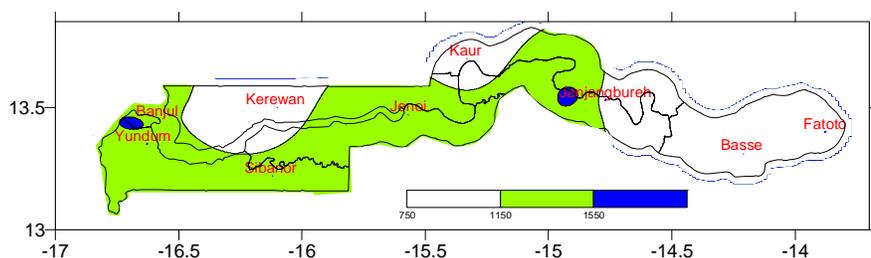


Figure 1b: Cumulative rainfall from May 1 – October 20, 2012

Similar to the previous dekads, this dekad under review recorded surpluses as compared to the same period last year (2011) and the long term mean (1981 – 2010) in all stations across the country except at Basse in the Eastern Third (fig. 2c).

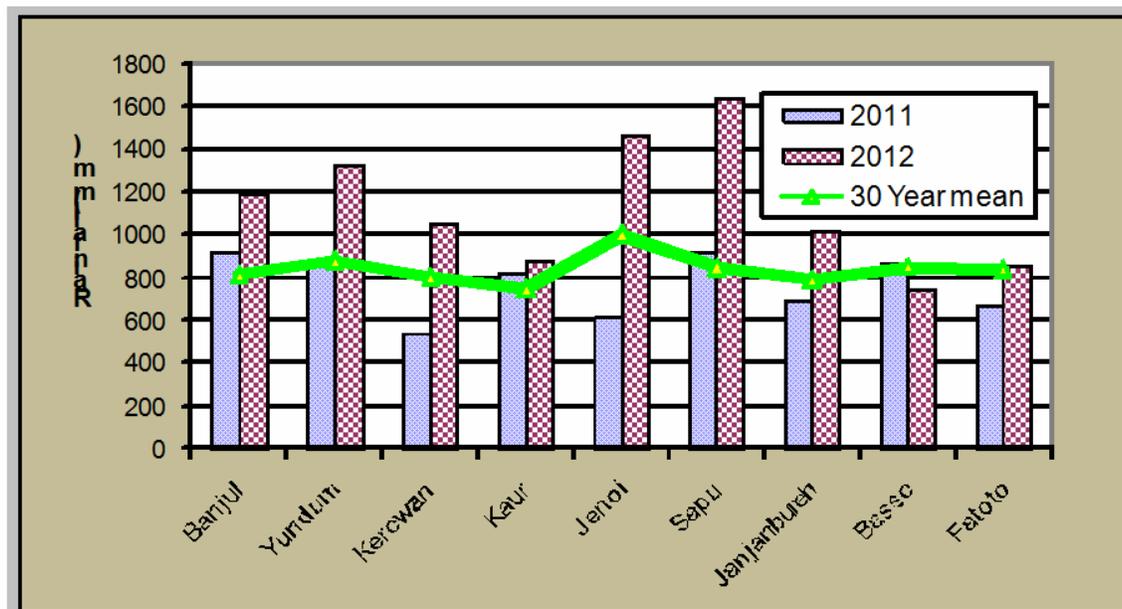


Figure 2c: Comparison of this year rainfall, against 2011 and the long-term mean

3. WEATHER OUTLOOK FOR THE NEXT DEKAD (21 – 31 OCTOBER 2012)

The St. Helena High Pressure Centre is expected to continue weakening while its counterpart to the north Atlantic Ocean (Azores High Pressure Centre) is expected to continue intensifying. However, South-westerly winds are expected to be dominant during the period over much of the country thus, isolated thunderstorms and / or rain showers is expected over places during the period.

4. AGROMETEOROLOGICAL SITUATION

Mean temperatures during this dekad have increased as compared to the previous dekad. Extreme temperatures were above 35.0°C in all stations except in the coastal areas (Banjul and Yundum). Minimum temperatures have also increased across the country.

Maximum Relative Humidity was above 90%, whilst the minimum was generally above 60% during the period.

Daily sunshine recorded this dekad ranged between 5.9hrs to 8.9hrs indicating an increase of 0.6hrs as compared with the previous dekad. Evaporation from water bodies ranged from 33mm to 66mm across the country.

Winds were generally south-westerly in direction and light to moderate in speed.

✓ Crop water requirement

Rains received during this dekad would help to strengthen soil moisture reserve, thus favouring late planted and long cycle crops (120 days) to reach complete maturity. However, these rains will have negative impact to already harvested early millet and groundnut that are left in the fields for drying.

5. AGRICULTURAL SITUATION

Generally, the agricultural situation across the country remained impressive, as most crops have completed or are about to complete their cycles.

Harvesting of maize and early millet is completed with the exception of isolated areas in the country. Late millet is generally at flowering/grain formation stages in Upper River and West Coast Regions. Sorghum is also flowering/grain formation in the Eastern Third and other parts in the Middle Third of the country.

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 of the Philippine pink varieties has gained momentum. In some places, groundnuts have reached full maturity but farmers are waiting for the rains to subside before harvesting.

Most upland rice fields have reached maturity and harvesting is in progress in most parts of the country. In the swamp rice fields, transplanting of rice nurseries is still in progress.

Composition of MWG:

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Communication, Extension & Education Services - DOA
Animal Health & Production Services - DOA
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