
EARLY WARNING BULLETIN FOR FOOD SECURITY

No. 2008/06

IN THE GAMBIA

Period: June 21 - 30, 2008



Government of The Gambia

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Working Group of the AGRHYMET Regional
Programme

Focal Point: Department of Water Resources
TEL: (+220) 4227631 / 422 28 72/ 4224122
FAX: (+220) 422 50 09 / E-MAIL: dwr@gamtel.gm



AGRHYMET Regional Programme

1. PROGRESS OF RAINY SEASON

The Azores High Pressure Cell centered at 1025 hectopascal (hpa) has weakened by 1 hpa and shifted towards the northwest as compared to the last dekad. The St. Helena High Pressure Cell had a mean core value of 1028hpa, thus strengthened by 2 hpa as compared to the past dekad.

This pressure configuration thus resulted to the ITD fluctuating over its mean position of 16°N over longitude 20°W, 18.1°N over north Senegal, 19.2°N over the extreme south of Mauritania, 18.3°N and 17.8°N over west and central Mali respectively, 17.8°N and 16.8°N over west and central Niger respectively and 17.5°N over extreme west of Chad.

Convective clouds development, rain and thunderstorms (sometimes squally) characterised the weather to the south of the ITD, particularly over the Gulf of Guinea States. However, to the north, warm, dry and sunny afternoons characterised the weather with occasional dusty/hazy conditions notably over Northern and Southern Mauritania, Northern Mali, Northern and Central Niger and Northern Chad.

2. RAINFALL OUTLOOK FOR JULY 1 - 10, 2008

The equatorial trough is shifting northward indicating that the ITD is expected to move northward to enhance convective activities over the Sahel including The Gambia. Temperatures will remain high while moisture is expected to increase and penetrate over several parts of the Sahel, including The Gambia.

Scattered thunderstorm with rain is expected by beginning (01st, 02nd and 4th) and the end (07th to 10th) of the 1st dekad of July. Estimated rainfall over the country during the dekad will be within the range of 150mm and 233mm.

3. RAINFALL SITUATION

As in the previous dekad, significant rainfall was recorded with improved frequency and intensities throughout the country. Daily rainfall amounts of above 50mm were recorded in many places in the Western, Central and Eastern Thirds of the country. The number of rainy days varied from 2 to 5, resulting in dekadal totals ranging from 4.7mm at Jambanjelly in the Western Third to 141.7mm at Yallal in the Central Third. Fig. 1a indicates that the extreme western and eastern parts of the country recorded rainfall of less than 80mm during the dekad, whilst the rest of the country received more.

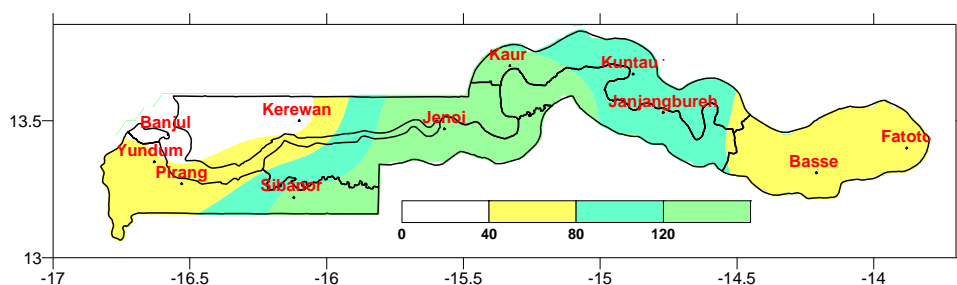


Figure 1a: Rainfall intensity during June 21 - 30, 2008

The seasonal (May 1st to June 30th) rainfall totals varied between 36.4mm at Banjul and 196.6mm at Sibanon, both stations in the Western Third of the country. The distribution shows that areas around Sibanon and Jenoï recorded more than 170mm of rainfall (fig. 1b).

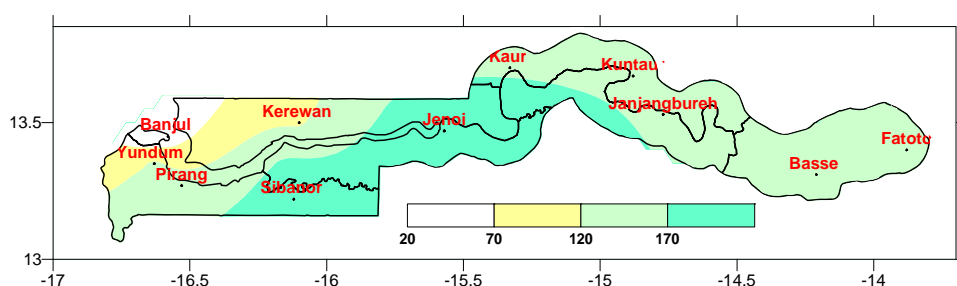


Figure 1b: Seasonal total from May 1 to June 30, 2008

As at June 30, this season's country average rainfall stood at 134.3mm, which is 90% above last year (70.5mm) and 88% above the long-term mean (71.3mm).

4. AGROMETEOROLOGICAL SITUATION

With increased atmospheric moisture during this dekad, both mean and maximum temperatures dropped slightly from their values in the previous dekad. Highest temperatures ranged from 33.4°C at Yundum to 40.2°C at Karantaba, whilst minimum temperatures ranged from 19.0 to 25.0°C at Kerewan and Yallal respectively.

Maximum relative humidity (RH) remained above 85% throughout the dekad, while the minimum RH also remained above 50% as in the previous dekad.

Generally, winds across the country were light to moderate in speed. On June 27, 2008, there was a line squall that produced a maximum wind gust of 64 km/hr.

5. AGRICULTURAL SITUATION

Sowing of early millet is complete across the country and weeding is in progress. The crop has reached a phenological stage ranging from seedling to tillering.

Sowing of maize, late millet, sorghum and groundnut are ongoing across the country. In most parts of the country planting of these crops have reached over 50% except in Lower River and Western Regions where planting has just started.

In the North Bank, Central River and Upper River Regions, sowing of upland rice is in progress. The crop is at various phenological stages ranging from germination to seedling. In the lowland rice fields, nursery and land preparation are the major farmer activity across the country, notably in North Bank, Central River, Lower River and Upper River Regions. Elsewhere, in the Western Third, these activities are yet to gain momentum, whilst vegetable gardening is continuing in some places.

6. FOOD SITUATION

6.1 Cereal Prices

The food situation is satisfactory and is characterized by a general availability of stocks in households. Large quantities of imported rice is evident in both retail and weekly markets all over the country.

Average prices at the cereal markets continued to fluctuate depending on the volume of the commodities supplied and demand at the markets. At Kerr Pateh, the price of coarse grains (millet, maize and sorghum) is about D9/kg whilst the same commodities at Serekunda cost about D19/kg (table 1).

Table 1: Agricultural commodity prices

Market	Millet	Maize	Sorghum	Imported Rice		Findo	Groundnut
				Long grain	Broken		
Banjul	14.96	14.92	NA	18.00	17.33	80.00	NA
Serekunda	20.00	19.05	19.40	19.30	18.00	NA	NA
Bakau	16.58	18.66	18.46	19.30	18.00	NA	40.25
Brikama	NA	15.30	18.48	18.50	18.00	50.0	40.50
Latrikunda	13.62	18.50	17.00	18.50	18.00	NA	40.50
Brikamaba	15.00	14.10	14.00	19.25	19.00	NA	28.12
Kerr Pateh	9.00	8.66	NA	18.50	18.50	NA	30.50
Wassu	10.00	12.50	12.50	19.00	19.50	NA	35.00

The price of coarse grains (millet, maize and sorghum) during this dekad is lower as in the preceding dekad. However, the price of imported rice has registered a slight increase as compared to the last dekad.

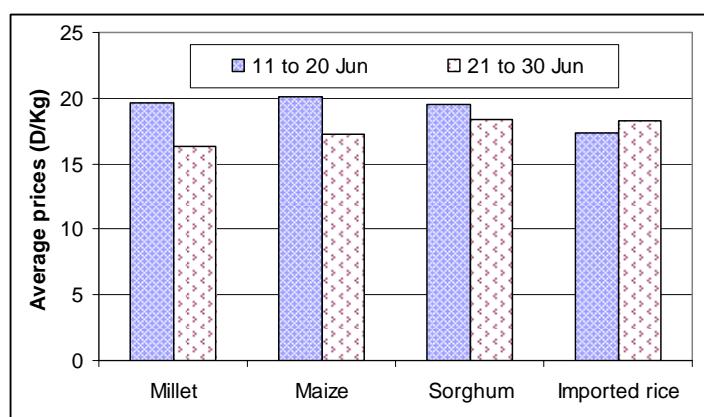


Figure 2: Cereal prices during June 21 to 30, 2008 (Source: Department of Planning)

6.2 Price of beef, mutton and milk

The price of beef (meat and bone) continued to remain stable during the period under review. In the Greater Banjul Area the price of beef (meat and bone) is D80.00/kg, except at Latri Kunda Sabiji and Banjul where the prices are D85.00 and D90.00 per kilogramme respectively. In the provincial areas (Farafenni and Ndugu Kebbeh) the price remained as low as D75.00/kg (fig. 3).

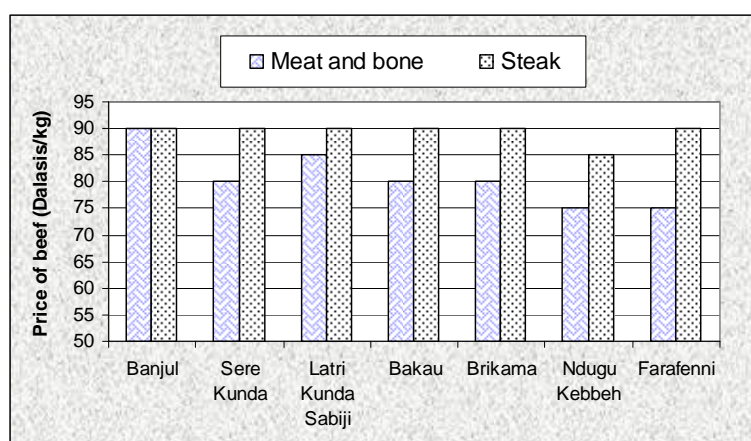


Figure 3: Price of beef during June 21 to 30, 2008 (Source: Department of Planning)

Composition of MWG:

Department of Water Resources
 Department of Planning - NADA
 Department of Extension Services - NADA
 Department of Veterinary Services - NADA
 Department of Technical Services - NADA
 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 28 72/ 422 41 22
 Email: dwr@gamtel.gm