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| EARLY WARNING BULLETIN FOR FOOD SECURITY No. 2013/11 IN THE GAMBIA Period: August 11 - 20, 2013 | | |
| Gambiaarms21 **Government of The Gambia** | Produced and Published by the Multidisciplinary Working Group of the AGRHYMET Regional Programme  **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 RAINY SEASON**

The surface position of the ITD (imaginary boundary separating warm and moist winds from dry northerly winds over West Africa) during the dekad, fluctuates between 22 and 24 degrees north in the West, and between 20 and 22degrees north in the east and consequently had a mean position of 23degrees north in the west and 21degrees north in the east. Thus the ITD had a northwards shift of 2 degrees compared to its position in the last dekad.

Weather to the south of this position was characterized by overcast skies with downpour of rain almost on a daily basis. Occurrences were mostly scattered and widespread ranging from slight to moderate in strength but was exceptionally heavy over The Gambia on the 12th.August. North of the ITD, by contrast, was relatively stable with clear skies and patches of haze/rising sand some places.

The winds flow at the low-level and mid-levels favoured a sustained inflow of moisture laden winds into the sub-region hence resulted to some of the heavy rains witnessed during the dekad.

**1.1 WEATHER SUMMARY FOR THE GAMBIA**

Moderate to heavy rain affected the country for the greater parts of the dekad.

**1.2 RAINFALL OUTLOOK FOR AUGUST 21 – 31, 2013**

General cloudiness with moderate to heavy rain and/or thunderstorm is expected to prevail during the next dekad.

**2. RAINFALL SITUATION**

This dekad has experienced an increased in rainfall events across the country compared to the previous dekad, both in amounts and frequency. The frequency of rain has increased significantly in some places (Banjul) up to 9 rainy days and the lowest 5 days at Basse. The second day of the dekad (12th) was a particular day in recording the heaviest rainfall in the dekad. The daily rainfall figures observed were 51.3 mm over Banjul, 115.9 mm over Yundum, 88.7 mm over Kaur, 31.1 mm over Jenoi, 62.5 over Sapu and 101.2 over Basses. This day was followed by a series of daily rains which varied between 20.8 mm to 75. 3 mm. This situation leads to flash flooding and structural damages over places in Kanifing Municipal Council and West Coast Region.

Dekadal totals varied from 69.4 mm over Kerewan to 186.5 over Yundum both in the Western Third (figure 1a), whilst the seasonal totals varied from the lowest of 247.1mm over Kaur in the Middle Third to 752.1mm over Sapu in the Middle Third (figure 1b).



*Figure 1a: Dekadal rainfall distribution*

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*Figure 1b: Seasonal rainfall distribution*

As at August 20, the country average stood at 453.2 mm, 16% below last year’s (538.0 mm) and 1% below the long term mean (456.0 mm) of 1981 to 2010.

**4. AGROMETEOROLOGICAL SITUATION**

Average temperatures fluctuated between 25oC (along the coast) and 27oC (inland areas) across the country, a drop of about 1oC compared to the previous dekad. The drop is due to the continued high humidity conditions experienced during the dekad. Highest temperatures were between 29oC and 30oC over the Western Third, 30oC and 31oC over the rest of the country, whilst minimum temperatures fluctuated between 20 oC (by the coast) to 24 oC (inland).

Average maximum relative humidity (RH) stood at 98%, whist the minimum stood at 56%. This shows the air is still humid, thus keeping the weather warm hence the continued need for cooling and refreshing, but equally disagreeable to asthmatic patients and household laundry.

Wind speeds during the dekad varied between light, moderate and strong in speed, ranging from 11 km/hr to 64km/hr across the country. This dekad was also marked by a lot of cloudiness resulting to sunshine duration varying between 3.2 to 4 .9 hrs across the country a drop of about 2 hours compared to the previous dekad.

**5. AGRICULTURAL SITUATION**

**5.1 Crops situation**

Across the country major field activities is mainly second weeding. Meanwhile, in most areas plant growth is at variable stages ranging from early vegetative stages (ground nuts, maize, sorghum) to early heading for millet.

This information is received from the following extension centres:

* **NBR: Bakindic, Njaba Kunda, Kuntair Circles**:-- Crops (groundnuts, maize, early millet) are doing fine, visually their prospects look good. For ground nuts most fields are at mid vegetative stages with flowering in progress, whilst most early millet fields have started heading. Back yard maize fields have started tasseling. In the low land rice cultivation fields, ploughing and transplanting are ongoing. No pest incidence was reported.
* **CRR-NORTH: Njau**:-- Farmers are generally busy on their second weeding. Crops like groundnut are at flowering stages, like wise early millet have started heading. Here also visually the prospects look good for crops. No pest incidence was reported.
* **CRR-South Dankunku and Mamut Fana Circles**:-- Generally farmers are on their final weeding on groundnut fields. Early Millet fields are very good at the moment. However, some farmers at Sinchu Alagie (Darusalam) have reported blister beetles on their early millet fields, but cause no serious damage. Here also visually the prospects look good for crops
* **WCR- KAMPANT (FONI KANSALA**):-- Crops are doing very well, but some farmers were late to start planting due to insufficient rainfall on time. Some farmers are having massive weeds problems in their fields. No pest incidence was reported.

**5.2 Phytosanitary situation**

No pest and disease outbreak of alarming and economic importance have occurred on field crops in the country during the dekad under review. However, some vegetables and fruit trees suffered attack by fruit flies and other insects and related pests. Late-maturing mango varieties particularly are currently being infested by the invasive fruit flies ***(Bactrocera invadens***) in the West Coast and North Bank Regions. Citrus and sour sop are also among the fruit trees to have been attacked by fruit flies. Despite the change in the pattern and amount of rainfall, many and various species of pests continued to attack some plants. For example, the red spider mites persisted in inflicting damages on especially solanaceous crops (bitter tomato, tomato and garden egg); fruit flies such as the Mediterranean fruit flies ***(Ceratitis capitata)*** continued to destroy pepper fruits, causing them to drop prematurely; while leaf-eating beetles like the ***Nisotra sp.*** also kept on to harm the okra, sorrel and spinach crops by perforating their leaves.

Major technical advice given to growers to manage these pests include the following:

* Pheromone traps against fruit flies;
* Sanitation, including destruction and spraying, or deep burying of infested fruits to mitigate population build-up of fruit flies;
* Timely covering of fruit bunches to prevent fruit flies from laying eggs on fruits;
* Spraying of other insects, including adult fruit flies;
* Use of botanical preparations to manage or reduce pest populations and or severity;
* Close and timely monitoring of pests to avoid eventual outbreaks and increase in pest population or severity;
* Integration of suitable control methods where and when possible.

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| **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 DirectorDepartment of Water Resources7 Marina Parade, BanjulThe Gambia Tel: **(+ 220) 422 76 31 / 422 41 22 / 890 52 29**  Email: [dwr@mofwrnam.gov.gm](mailto:dwr@mofwrnam.gov.gm) |