

EARLY WARNING BULLETIN FOR FOOD SECURITY

No. 2009/06

IN THE GAMBIA

Period: June 21 - 30, 2009



Government of The Gambia

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Working Group of the AGRHYMET Regional
Programme

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AGRHYMET Regional Programme

1. PROGRESS OF RAINY SEASON

The Azores High Pressure Cell centered over the north west Atlantic Ocean had a mean core value of 1021 hectopascal (hpa), thus weakening by 2.25 hpa as compared to the last dekad, whilst the St. Helena High Pressure Cell centered over the south Atlantic Ocean had a mean core value of 1028 hpa, thus intensifying by 1.25 hpa as compared to the past dekad. This pressure configuration thus favoured the continued northward movement of the Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ) reaching locations such as Diourbel (Senegal), Gao (Mali), Gouré (Niger) and Mao (Chad).

Warm and partly cloudy to cloudy conditions prevailed over most part of West Africa during the dekad, resulting to isolated to scattered rain and thunderstorms over places within the Sahel and the Gulf of Guinea States. However, rising sand and dust haze prevailed over Mauritania, northern Mali and Niger.

2. RAINFALL OUTLOOK FOR JULY 1 - 10, 2009

Warm and variably cloudiness will prevail with rain and/or thunderstorms over most places by the first (2nd, 5th) and second halves (9th, and 10th) of the 1st dekad of July 2009.

3. RAINFALL SITUATION

Significant rainfall amounts were recorded in most parts of the country during the first half of the dekad. Rainfall intensities ranged from 0.6mm to 36.3mm in a day. The number of rainy days varied from 2 to 3, resulting in dekadal totals ranging from 3.3mm at Banjul in the Western Third, to 37.1mm at Sapu in the Middle Third of the country (fig. 1a).

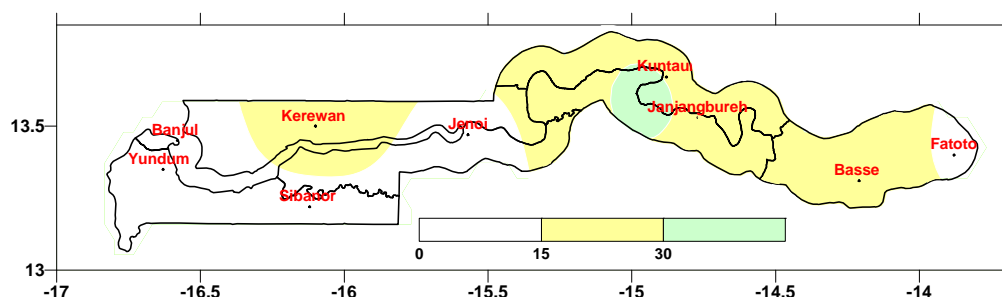


Figure 1a: Rainfall intensity during June 21 - 30, 2009

The seasonal rainfall (May 1st to June 30th) amount in the country varied between 25.3mm at Banjul in the Western Third and 114.8mm at Fatoto in the Eastern Third of the country (fig. 1b).

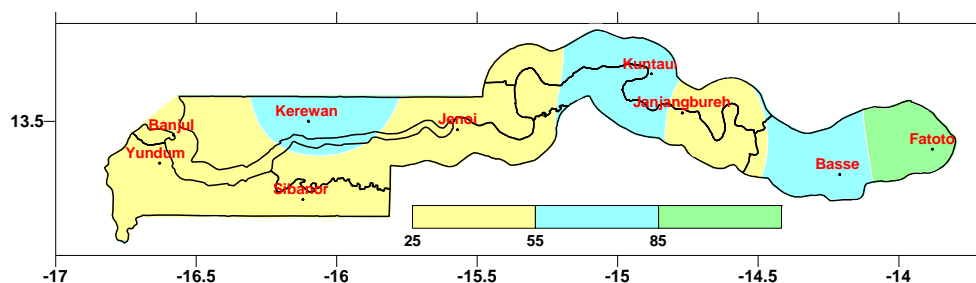


Figure 1b: Seasonal total from May 1 to June 30, 2009

As at June 30, this season's country average rainfall stood at 54.8mm, which is 59% below last year (134.3mm) and 23% below the long-term mean (71.3mm).

When compared to last year, the entire country recorded a deficit ranging from 1.1mm at Fatoto in the eastern Third to 181.6mm at Sibani in the Western Third of the Country (fig. 1c). Also, when compared to the long-term mean, the entire country recorded a deficit ranging from 10.9mm at Yundum to 43.7mm at Janjangbureh.

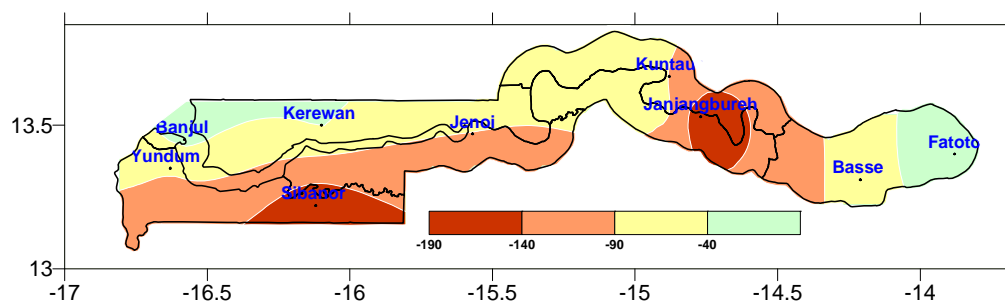


Figure 1c: Comparison of 2009 to 2008 rainfall

4. AGROMETEOROLOGICAL SITUATION

Like the previous dekad, this one saw a decrease in mean temperatures from 29.7°C during the preceding dekad to 29.2°C. This drop could be attributed to the increased cloud cover and rainfall observed during the period. Thermal distributions within the country show the Eastern and Middle Thirds remained warmer than the Western Third.

Extreme maximum temperature was highest at Kaur (40.5°C) in the Middle Third, and lowest at Banjul (40.0°C) in the Western Third. Minimum temperature ranged from 18.5 °C in Banjul to 23.3 °C at Sapu in the Middle Third of the country.

Maximum relative humidity remained above 85% throughout the country. The highest recorded was over 96% at Sibani, whilst the lowest of 42% was recorded at Sapu in the central part of the country.

Generally, winds across the country were moderate to light in speed with the occurrence of a line squall with a maximum wind gust of 50km/hr causing damages to houses in most parts of the country.

5. AGRICULTURAL SITUATION

Following the rains received during the last two dekads, most farmers in the North Bank, Central River and Upper River Regions have continued sowing food crops.

Some of the crops have germinated and are at seedling stages. Meanwhile, ongoing field activities include weeding and harrowing in the planted areas. Sowing of groundnut has also started in the North Bank, Central River and Upper River Regions.

Elsewhere, in Lower River and Western Regions, preparation of farmlands and implements constitute the major farming activities.

6. SITUATION OF CEREAL MARKETS

The situation of cereal markets is satisfactory and is characterized by a general availability of stocks in households and products in retail and weekly markets.

Commodity prices during this dekad remained the same as in the preceding dekad. Meanwhile, compared to last year, prices this year remained lower for all the cereals (fig. 2).

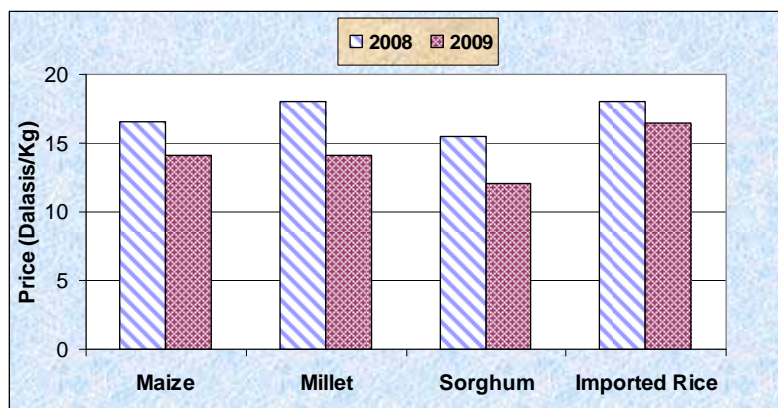


Figure 2: Evolution of Cereal prices (Source: Department of Planning)

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

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