

EARLY WARNING BULLETIN FOR FOOD SECURITY

No. 2009/16

IN THE GAMBIA

Period: October 1 - 10, 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 prominent High-pressure Cell centered over the north west Atlantic Ocean (Azores) had a mean core value of 1022.0 hectopascals (hpa) thus weakened by 4.4 hpa as compared to the 3rd dekad of September. Whereas the St. Helena high-pressure cell centred over the south Atlantic Ocean had a mean core value of 1025.3 hpa thus intensified by 1.5 hpa as compared to the past dekad and shifted northwards at 28°S/10°W.

Despite this pressure configuration the mean surface position of the demarcating boundary between the dry and moist region over West Africa (Inter-Tropical Discontinuity - ITD) continued with its southwards journey, and resulted to the reduced moisture influx into the West African sub-region.

2. WEATHER OUTLOOK FOR 11TH – 20TH OCTOBER 2009

The ITD will continue to shift southwards, thus reducing the moisture influx into the country. However, slight to moderate thunderstorm with rain is expected towards the end of the dekad.

3. RAINFALL SITUATION

Rainfall during this dekad had reduced both in terms of frequency and intensity through out the country. The number of rainy days ranged from 1 to 2 leading to decadal totals to vary between 0.7mm at Mankamang in the Eastern Third 46.3mm at Yundum in the Western Third of the country (Fig. 1a).

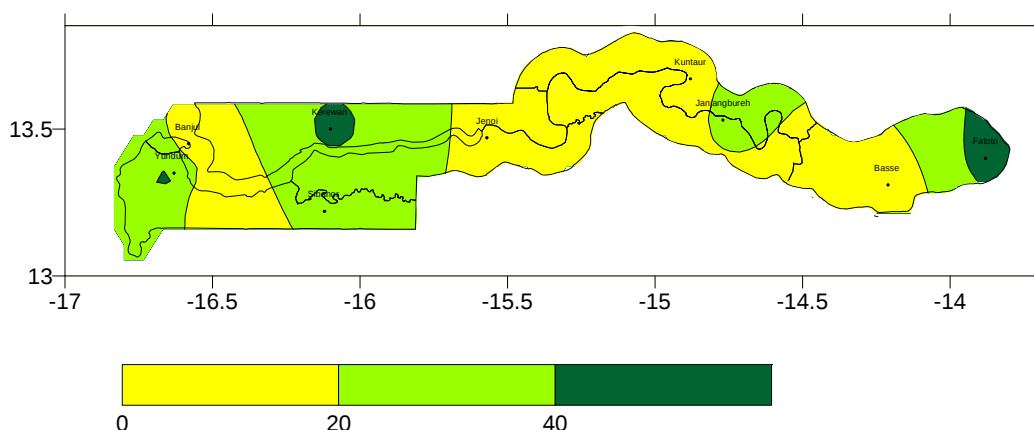


Figure 1a: Rainfall intensity during October 1 - 10, 2009

Cumulative rainfall recorded still puts Kerewan, in the Western Third of the country to the lead, with over 1300mm of rainfall and the lowest rainfall recorded was 667.3mm at Mankamang in the Eastern Third of the country. Figure 1b indicates that the entire Western Third, and parts of the Middle Third and the extreme Eastern Third had recorded rainfall of over 1000mm.

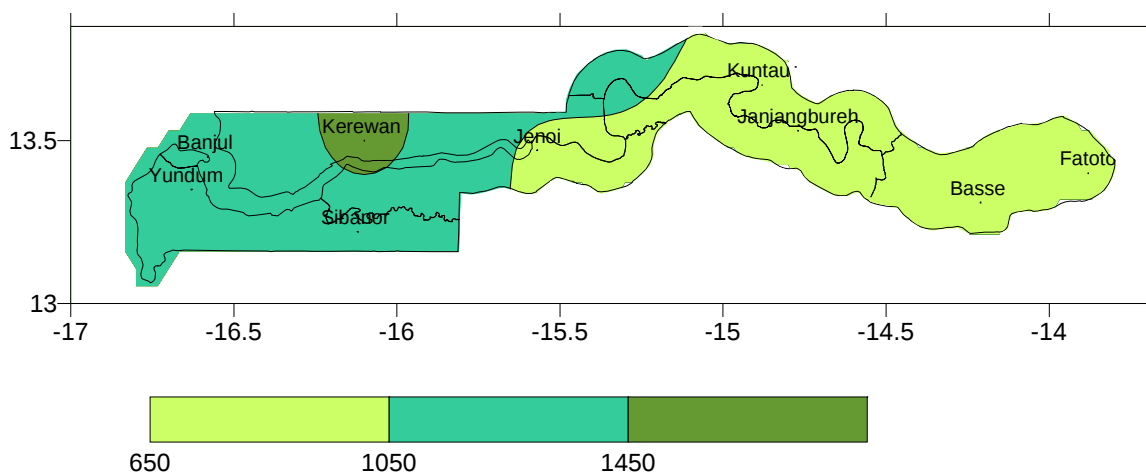


Figure 1b: Seasonal total from May 1 to October 10, 2009

As at October 10, the country average stood at 1062mm which is more than last year's average rainfall (899.8 mm) and the long term mean (769.4).

4. AGROMETEOROLOGICAL SITUATION

During this dekad, mean temperatures generally increased by 1°C and above except in the Western Third where it remained the same as compared to the previous dekad. Extreme temperatures did not change much compared to the previous dekad. Highest temperature recorded was 36.5°C at Fatoto in the Eastern Third, whilst the minimum temperature recorded was 21.7°C at Kaur in the Middle Third of the country.

Relative humidity remained generally above 90% except in Banjul, which recorded 88%.

Winds were generally light in speed ranging from 1km/hr to 3km/hr.

5. AGRICULTURAL SITUATION

Harvesting of early millet is completed in most parts of the country. However, most farmers are yet to transport their harvests at home. Late millet is generally at heading/flowering stages in Upper River Region (URR) and pockets of Western Region (WR), where the majority of the fields are still at vegetative stage (jointing).

Harvesting of maize is also completed with the exception of isolated areas in the country. Sorghum is generally heading/flowering in the Eastern Third and other parts of 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 is underway. In

some places, groundnuts have reached full maturity but farmers are waiting for the rains to subside before harvesting.

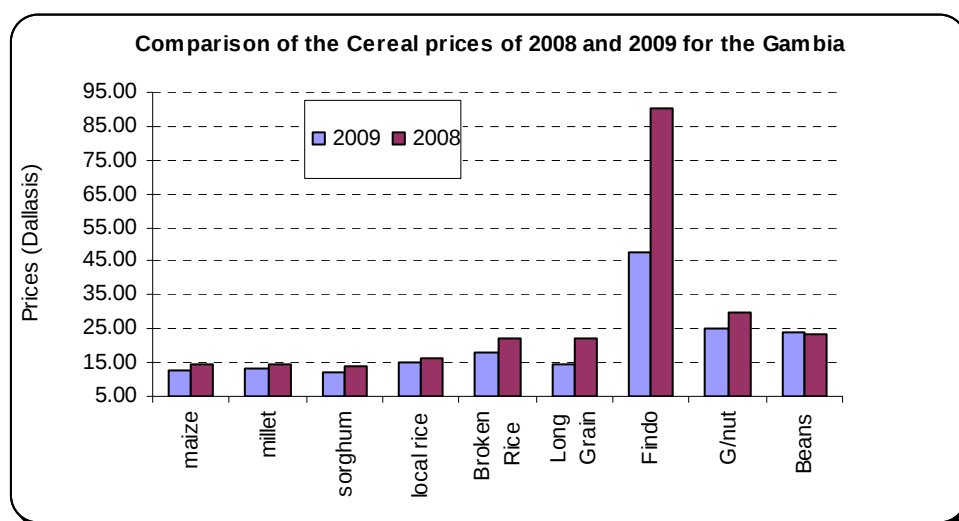
Most upland rice fields have reached maturity and harvesting is in progress in most parts of the country. In the swamp rice fields, transplanting of rice nurseries has gained momentum.

5. SITUATION OF CEREAL MARKETS

The prices of cereals at weekly markets continued to fluctuate depending on the volume of the commodities supplied and demand at the markets. Average prices for coarse grains during period under review ranged from D7.00/kg to D18.00/kg and have registered a decrease as compared to the preceding dekad.

The price of imported rice remained the same as in the last dekad and varied from D14.00/kg to D18.00/kg, whilst **Findo** varied from D38.00/kg to D54.00/kg remaining the highest in all markets.

Compared to last year during the same period, this year's prices of coarse grains (maize, millet and sorghum) are slightly lower. Only local Beans registered an increase when compared to the preceeding year.



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