

EARLY WARNING BULLETIN FOR FOOD SECURITY

No. 2011/03

IN THE GAMBIA

Period: May 21 - 31, 2011



Government of The Gambia

Produced and Published by the Multidisciplinary Working Group of the AGRHYMET Regional Programme

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AGRHYMET Regional Programme

1. SEASONAL CLIMATE FORECAST FOR THE YEAR 2011 OVER THE GAMBIA

The Department of Water Resources is pleased to present the climate forecast for this wet season (2011). As in the past years, this product is the result of collaboration with the National Meteorological Services within the sub-region and beyond.

• 2011 Rainfall Prediction

For the coming July-August-September (JAS) period, the expected rainfall values would be **Above Normal** (most likely) to **Near-normal** (likely). Meanwhile, considerable variations in the amount of rainfall would be experienced over places in the country, with parts of Central River Region expected to receive around 600mm to 670mm, the Western regions (including Kanifing Municipal Council and Banjul), receiving more than 820mm and elsewhere between 670 and 820mm during the JAS period (Fig. 1).

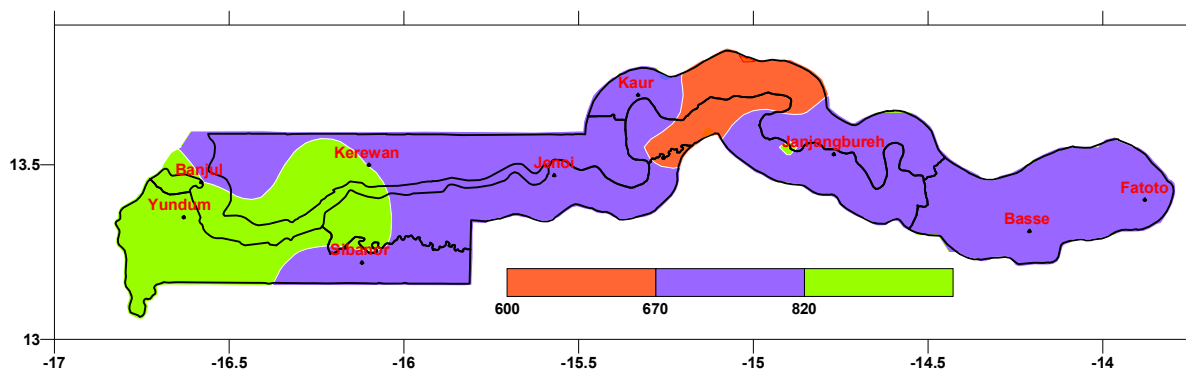


Figure 1: Expected rainfall during the combined period of July-August-September 2011

However, it is important to note that the 2011 rainfall season is expected to see more variability than the 2010 season with events like late onset, early withdrawals and wet/dry spells.

The expected rainfall in association with floods could increase the incidence of malaria and other water borne diseases. Farming is highly encouraged.

2. PROGRESS OF RAINY SEASON

The Inter-Tropical Discontinuity (ITD), imaginary line separating the moist and dry regions over northern Africa, was over the Gambia by the end of the dekad, thus facilitating the arrival of rain bearing clouds resulting to the rainfall recorded over some places within the country. Meanwhile, the two pressure centres that influence

the migration of the ITD, the Azores in the north Atlantic and the St. Helena in the south Atlantic had core values of 1034 and 1027 hectopascals (hpa) respectively. This pressure configuration resulted in cool north-westerly winds dominating the regions north of The Gambia and warm moist winds dominating the south.

3. RAINFALL OUTLOOK FOR JUNE 1 - 10, 2011

Thunderstorm and/or rain are expected over places particularly over the central and eastern parts of the country.

4. RAINFALL SITUATION

During the last day of this dekad, rainfall was recorded in certain parts of the country. The heaviest of 63.0mm and 34.4mm were recorded in Janjangbureh and Sapu respectively, both in the Middle Third of the country. Basse in the Eastern Third recorded 4.9mm, whilst Kerewan and Sibanor both in the Western Third recorded 4.3mm and 1.6mm respectively (Fig. 2).

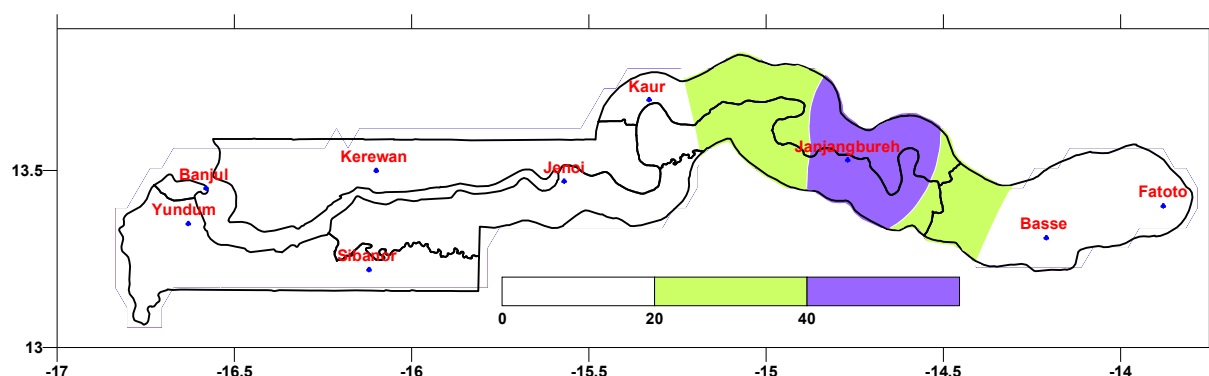


Figure 2: Rainfall intensity during May 21 – 31, 2011

As at May 31, 2011 the country average stood at 12.5mm, compared to 3.0mm recorded during the same period last year and 7.0mm recorded during the long-term (1981 – 2010). However, only Basse recorded a deficit of 15.5mm when compared to the long term mean.

5. AGROMETEOROLOGICAL SITUATION

Temperatures as in the previous dekad remained high, particularly in the Middle and Eastern Thirds of the country. Highest temperatures were 43.0°C at Basse in the Eastern Third, 41.6°C at Janjangbureh in the Middle Third and 38.3°C at Sibanor in the Western Third of the country.

Minimum temperatures also rose slightly across the country, ranging from 17.0°C at Kerewan to 24.8°C at Basse. This shows a gradual intrusion of moist winds into the country since the previous dekad, thus favouring convective cloud formations and subsequent rainfall.

Generally, maximum average relative humidity (RH) was above 70% across the country, whilst the minimum RH was also above 20%. Evaporation of water bodies was highest in the central and eastern parts of the country (maximum of 10.9mm) and lowest around the coastal areas (7.0mm).

Average daily sunshine hours varied between 8.5 and 9.9 hours, whilst winds during the dekad were generally moderate to light in speed (29km/hr maximum).

6. AGRICULTURAL SITUATION

The major on-field activities by farmers continued to be field clearing, acquisition and preparation of seeds and the repair of farming implements.

7. SITUATION OF MARKETS

Cereal Prices

The coarse grains (i.e. millet, maize and sorghum), as well as rice and “hungry” rice locally called *Findi* are available in both retail and weekly

markets. Average prices at cereal markets continued to fluctuate depending on the volume of the commodities supplied and the demand at the markets. Prevailing price of coarse grains remains lowest (D8.66 to D10.50 per kg) at the *Lumos* (weekly markets) and highest (D13.24 to D18.60 per kg) at the retail markets. However, the average prices of these grains have slightly increased ranging from D0.80 to D2.60 per kg as compared to the prices during the same period last year, whilst when compared to the year 2009, these commodities remained stable except for millet which registered a significant decrease (Fig. 3).

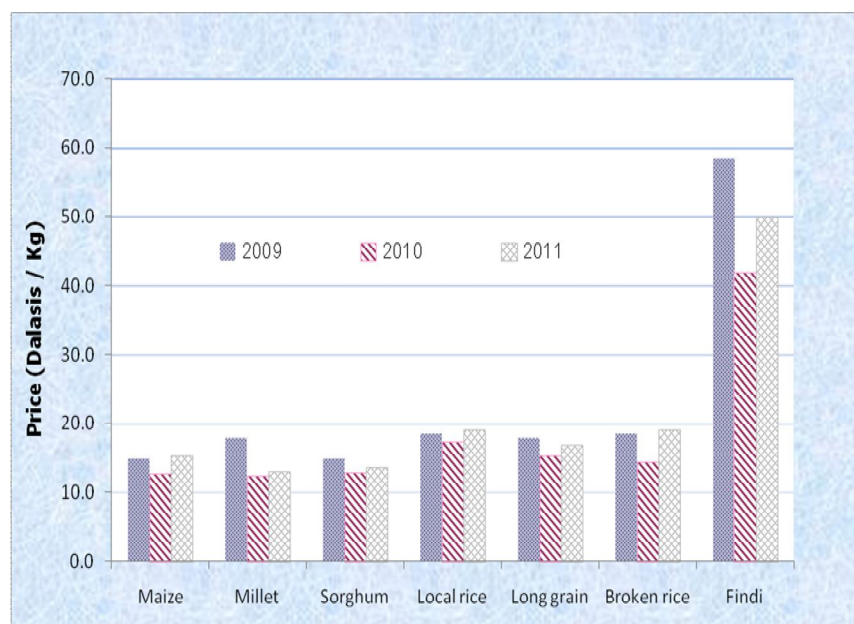


Figure 3: Evolution of Cereal prices during May 20 – 26, 2011 (Source: Planning Services - DOA)

The average price of *Findi* (D50.00/Kg), stands higher than all the cereals.

Price of beef

The price of beef remained stable during the period under review. Average prices remained at D75.00/kg and D100.00/kg for meat & bone and steak respectively at retail markets, whilst at the weekly markets the price reduced to D65.00/kg for meat & bone and D85.00/kg for steak.

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

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