

EARLY WARNING BULLETIN FOR FOOD SECURITY

No. 2011/18

IN THE GAMBIA

Period: October 21 - 31, 2011



Government of The Gambia

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AGRHYMET Regional Programme

1. PROGRESS OF THE RAINY SEASON

During the dekad, the Inter-Tropical Discontinuity (ITD) oscillated over The Senegambia region stretching to Southern Mali and Burkina Faso. Isolated thundery showers characterized the weather over the Gulf of Guinea States while on the contrary the Sahel was warm, dry and hazy over Mali, eastern Senegal and Mauritania. The Azores high pressure steadily weakened to a core value of 1023hpa. The St. Helena high pressure cell had a core value of about 1035hpa and drifted eastwards.

This marks the end of this year's rainy season, as no more rains are expected after this dekad.

2. RAINFALL SITUATION

A significant reduction in rainfall occurred during this dekad, both in terms of intensity and frequency as compared to the previous dekad. The number of rainy days ranged between 1 and 2. The highest rainfall recorded was 10.8mm at Kaur in the Middle Third whilst the lowest recorded was 3.3mm at Sibanor in the Western Third of the country (Fig. 1a).

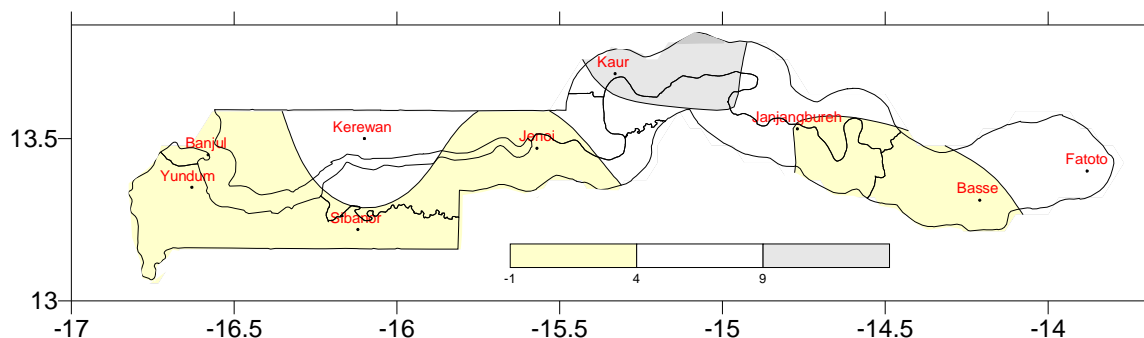


Figure 1a: Rainfall intensity during October 21 - 31, 2011

Cumulative rainfall from 01st May to 31st October 2011 shows Serekunda recording the highest amount of 1043.9mm, whilst Kerewan recorded the lowest amount of 543.3mm, both stations in the Western Third (Fig. 1b). The Western and Eastern Thirds of the country have taken the lead in terms of rainfall intensities during the whole season.

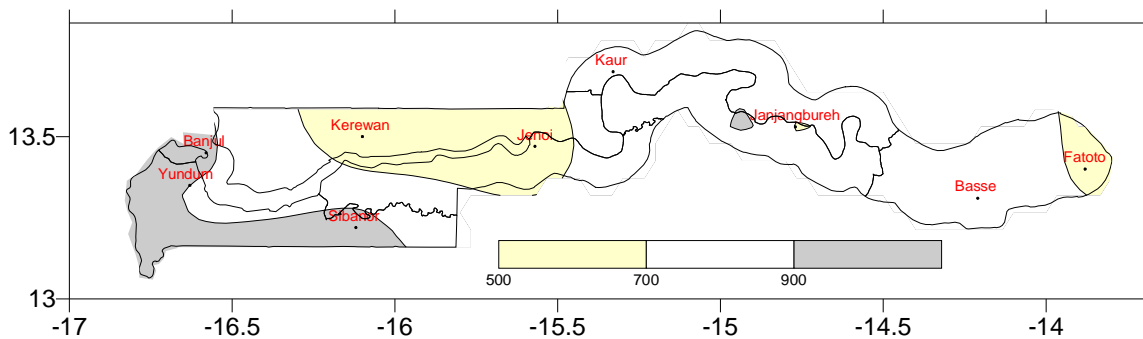


Figure 1b: Seasonal total from May 1 to October 31, 2011

The country average rainfall as at October 31, 2011 rose to 816.9mm which is 46% below last year (1258.8mm) and 4% below the normal (852.5mm) during the same period. Figure 1c below indicates that all the network of stations recorded deficits when compared to last year. However for the long term period (30yrs), Banjul, Kaur, Sapu and Basse recorded surpluses.

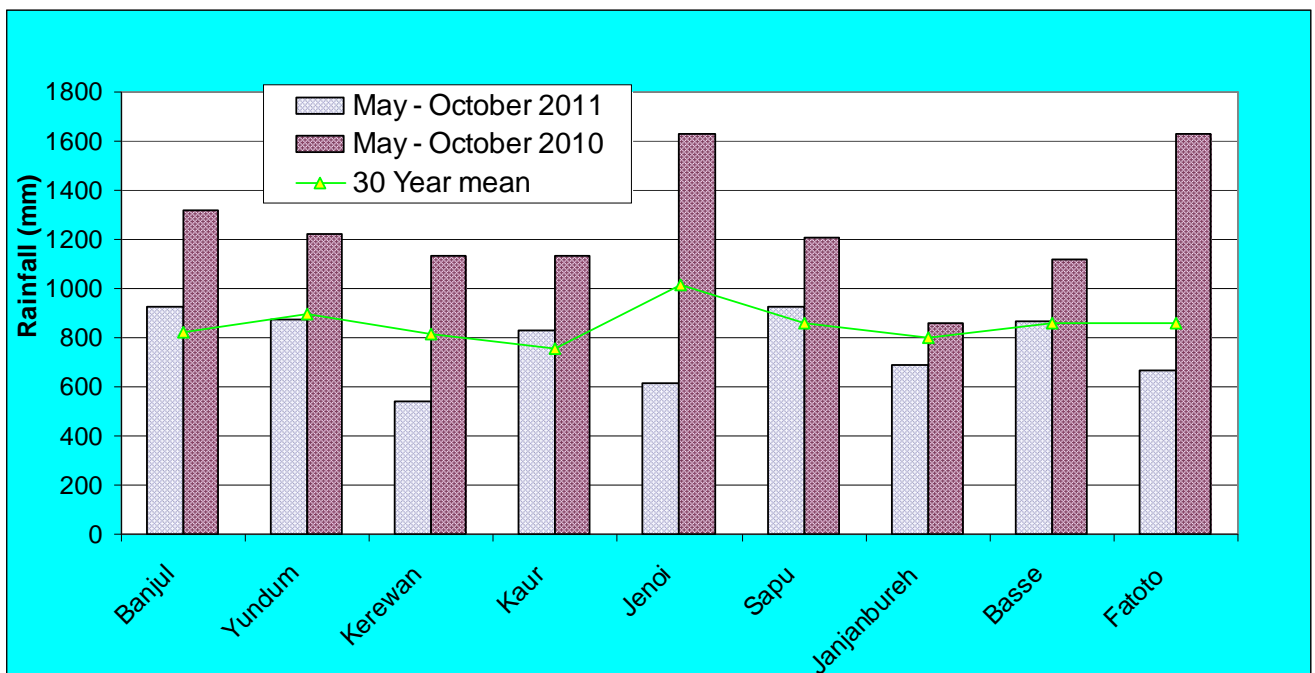


Figure 1c: Rainfall comparison as at October 31, 2011

3. AGROMETEOROLOGICAL SITUATION

Temperatures remained to be high during this period. Maximum temperature of 35.7 °C was recorded at Sapu in the Middle Third, whilst the lowest temperature of 20.8°C was recorded at Kerewan in the Western Third. The thermal distribution shows that the Middle and Eastern Thirds are hotter than the Western third.

Maximum Relative Humidity remained to be above 90% throughout the country, whilst Minimum Relative Humidity was below 60%.

Winds were generally light to moderate in speed.

4. AGRICULTURAL SITUATION

Crop Situation

Harvesting of maize is almost completed across the country. The yield for this crop is satisfactory this year as compared to other crops.

Harvesting of early millet is almost completed and stocked in the fields. Meanwhile late millet and sorghum are at grain formation stages in most fields in the Upper River and West Coast Regions.

Most upland rice fields particularly the *Nerica* variety has reached maturity and harvesting is in progress in most parts of the country. However, due to the dry spell at the reproduction stage of this crop, it is believed that the production will significantly drop. In the lowland rice fields, transplanting is still on going in isolated areas.

Groundnut fields across the country are at different growth stages ranging from early to full maturity. Harvesting of the Philippine type groundnuts is almost completed and that of the 73/33 type has started. The yield of groundnuts this year would be low as their pegging generally coincided with the dry spell and as a result of which its productivity would reduce. This would lead to a poor quality of seeds for the next season, thus the need to acquire high quality seeds for the next season should be explored.

No serious outbreaks of pests were reported during the period under review. However, blister beetles were reported in some places especially on rice in the Lower River Region, and the earlier cases on early millet in parts of the Central River Region. Spraying was done satisfactory.

Vaccination exercise was conducted on livestock and small ruminants for diseases such as Black Quarter (BQ) and Peste des Petite Ruminants (PPR) in the Central River Region where it was reported.

5. HYDROLOGICAL SITUATION

Saline estimated to be at 100.7 km below Tendaba from Banjul as 31st October, 2011.

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