

EARLY WARNING BULLETIN FOR FOOD SECURITY

Nº. 2012/09

IN THE GAMBIA

Period: July 21 - 31, 2012



Government of The Gambia

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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 THE RAINY SEASON

The surface position of the ITD (rain bearing winds limit) during this dekad was over northern Senegal and slightly over southern Mauritania, stretching towards over central Mali and over Niamey. High humidity couple with heavy rainfall and severe thunderstorms affected the Senegambia region, Guinea Conakry, Sierra Leone, Mali and Ghana during the middle and latter parts of the dekad. Dust patches were reported over few places in Mauritania, northern Mali and Algeria.

The Pressure Cells that control the inflow of moisture into the west African subregion, the Azores centered in the north Atlantic and the Saint Helena centered in the south Atlantic both intensified during the latter part of the dekad.

2. RAINFALL OUTLOOK FOR AUGUST 1 - 10, 2012

Humid atmosphere, severe thunderstorms with rain (sometimes Squally) are expected over the entire country during the period.

3. RAINFALL SITUATION FOR THE DEKAD JULY 21 –31, 2012

During the dekad, daily rainfall intensities ranged from 0.7mm to 40.0mm in the Western Third, 0.2mm to 63.4mm in the Middle Third and from 0.5mm to 17.3mm in the Eastern Third of the country. The number of rainy days have generally decreased as compared to the previous dekad resulting in dekadal totals ranging from 19.1mm at Basse in the Eastern Third to 155.8mm at Kerewan in the Western Third of the country (fig. 1a).

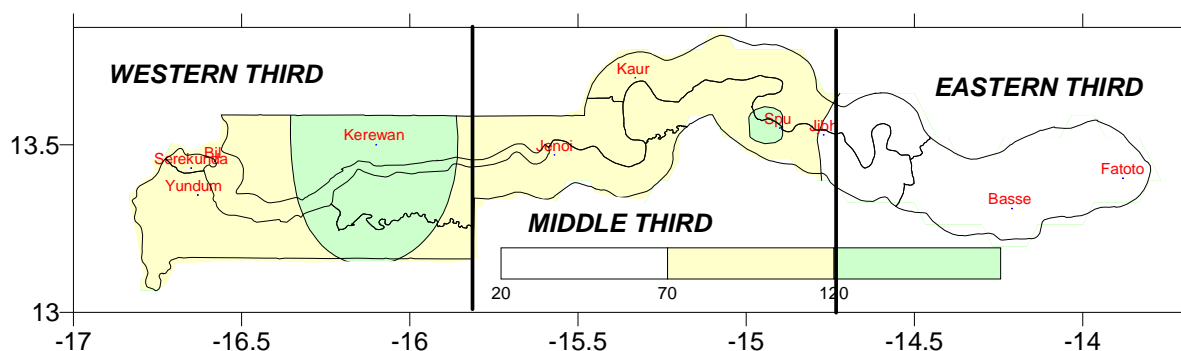


Figure 1a: Rainfall intensity during July 21 – 31, 2012

The seasonal totals as at the end of this dekad, ranged from 264.7mm to 500.4mm in the Western Third, 330.4mm to 594.9mm in the Middle Third and from 249.4mm to 285.2mm in the Eastern Third of the country (fig.1b).

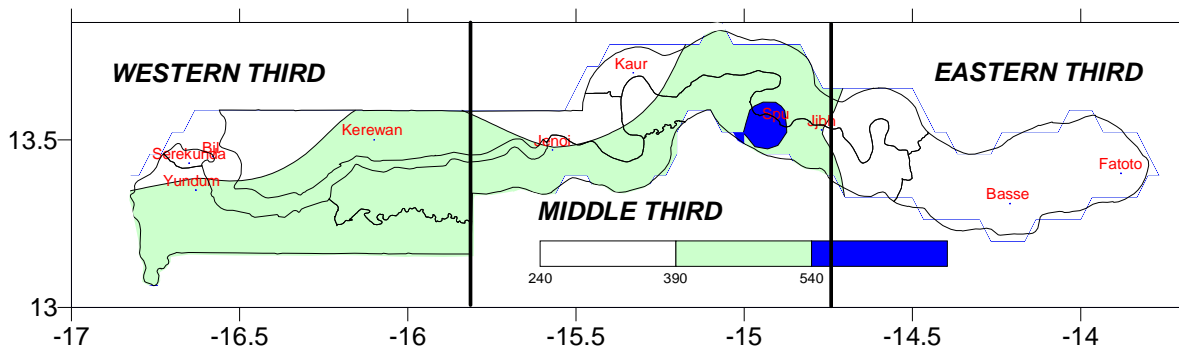


Figure 1b: Cumulative rainfall from May 1 – July 31, 2012

As compared to the same period last year (2011), no deficit was recorded through out the country. However, deficits ranging from 18.0mm to 122.8mm were recorded across the country compared to the long-term mean.

3. AGROMETEOROLOGICAL SITUATION

The thermal situation during this dekad remained generally unchanged compared to the previous two dekads due to continued cloud cover and rains. Average minimum temperatures remained between 27 and 28 °C, whilst maximum temperatures also remained between 32 and 35°C across the country, meanwhile registering a slight drop compared to the previous dekads. Average sunshine duration remained generally at 6hrs, a drop of 1.9hrs compared to last dekad. Winds were generally light to moderate in speed, however squall lines were reported at Sapu and Yundum at speeds of 49km/hr and 50km/hr respectively.

Average maximum relative humidity remained above 90% throughout the period and the minimum relative humidity also remained above 65%. Average daily potential evapotranspiration (PET) varied between 3.1 to 3.6mm across the country, favouring prolong soil moisture content, thus facilitating crop growth and on-farm operations.

4. AGRICULTURAL SITUATION

Across the country, the general agricultural situation continues to look good. Field crops are continuing their development in earnest. No large-scale alarming incidences of pests and diseases have so far been observed or reported on field crops during the dekad under review. However, due to the pattern of the rains, a lot of weeds were able to survive and flourish in several lands cultivated by farmers. In addition, armyworms (*Spodoptera sp.*) have broken out at about five insects/m² in some upland rice and maize fields, particularly in the West Coast Region of the country. Farmers affected were advised to treat their fields.

On the other hand, fruit trees, including mango, soursop, pear and citrus are still under attack by diverse fruit flies, more importantly, the invasive fruit flies (*Bactrocera invadens*). The mango industry still suffers from an additional mango mealy bug (*Rastrococcus invadens*) problem, although most of the early maturing varieties are currently out of fruiting. Many

citrus plants have additional problems of mistletoe (*Viscum album*) and pink hibiscus mealy bug (*Maconellicoccushirsutus*) occurrence. In all these cases, growers were previously advised to treat the individual problems accordingly.

As regard to vegetables, the major pest problems during the dekad in question include:

- ∅ Thrips on onions;
- ∅ Red spider mites on solanaceous and other vegetables;
- ∅ Leaf-eating beetles, e.g. *Nisotra sp.* on especially okra, spinach and sorrel;
- ∅ Diamondback moth and cabbage looper on cabbages; and
- ∅ Fruit flies on pepper.

5. SITUATION OF MARKETS

Cereals

Markets average prices of coarse grains (sorghum) remained high and varied from D15.78 at Latrikunda, Bakau and Brikama to D18.60 per kilogramme at Serrekunda, whilst the prices of local and long grain rice remained at D24.00 per kilogramme and broken rice remained at D20.00 per kilogramme in the Greater Banjul Area. Findo cost D60.00 at Latrikunda, D75.00 at Bakau and Brikama and D62.50 at Serrekunda equally in the Greater Banjul Area

Compared to the same period last year, average prices for sorghum have risen by 14%, local rice by 38%, long grain and broken rice by 21% and Findo by 16% (fig. 2).

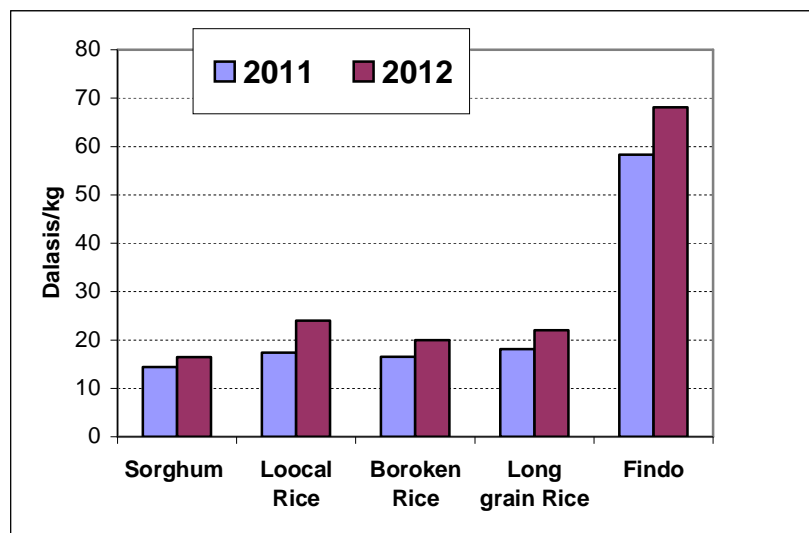


Figure 2: Evolution of cereal prices (Dalasis/kg) - (Source: Planning Services - DOA)

Price of beef

Price of beef (meat & bone) is D100.00/Kg during the period under review, whilst steak beef varied from D115.00 at Bakau to D130.00/kg at Latrikunda and Brikama. During the same period last year the average price of meat & bone and steak beef was D73 and D1101.25/kg respectively.

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 Director
Department of Water Resources
7 Marina Parade, Banjul
The Gambia
Tel: (+ 220) 422 76 31 / 422 41 22 / 890 52 29
Email: dwr@mofwrnam.gov.gm