

EARLY WARNING BULLETIN FOR FOOD SECURITY

No. 2018/12

IN THE GAMBIA

Period: August 21-31, 2018



Government of The Gambia

Produced and Published by The Gambia National
Multidisciplinary Working Group

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



1.0. SYNOPTIC SITUATION:

The mean surface position of the ITD has its western axis lying over Mauritania, stretching across northern positions of Mali, Niger and Chad.

The places to the north of the ITD were mainly dry and stable with pockets of dust haze over Algeria and its environs during the period.

Places to the south of the ITD were characterized by moderate to heavy rain and thunderstorms, occasionally associated with strong winds. The occurrences were mainly in the evening and nights.

1.1. OUTLOOK FOR THE NEXT DEKAD (1st – 10th September, 2018)

Generally warm and humid saturated atmosphere will persist during the period with occurrence of slight to moderate rains and thunderstorms, occasionally associated with strong winds through the dekad, especially from the 01st – 08th September 2018.

2.0. RAINFALL SITUATION:

In this dekad, rainfall situation has significantly improved across the country in terms of frequency and intensity. All stations across the country recorded rainfall for a period of five days and above, thus giving a substantial dekadal totals to range between **118.1mm** to **169.3mm** in the Western Third, **108.2mm** to **155.0mm** in the Middle Third and **93.1mm** to **119.9mm** in the Eastern Third of the country. (Figure 1a).

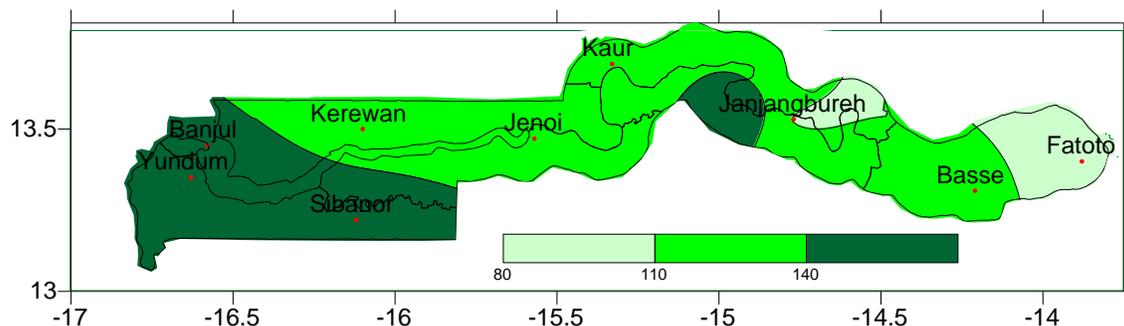


Figure 1a: Dekadal rainfall totals 21st – 31st August 2018.

Seasonal rainfall totals as at 31 August 2018 has been significantly augmented by this period under review. Rainfall amounts ranging from 93.1mm to 169.3mm were in addition to the seasonal amount giving the seasonal amount to range from **500.1mm** to **688.4mm** in the Western Third, **331.0mm** to **405.2mm** in the Middle Third and from **452.1mm** to **597.0mm** in the Eastern Third of the country, (figure 1b).

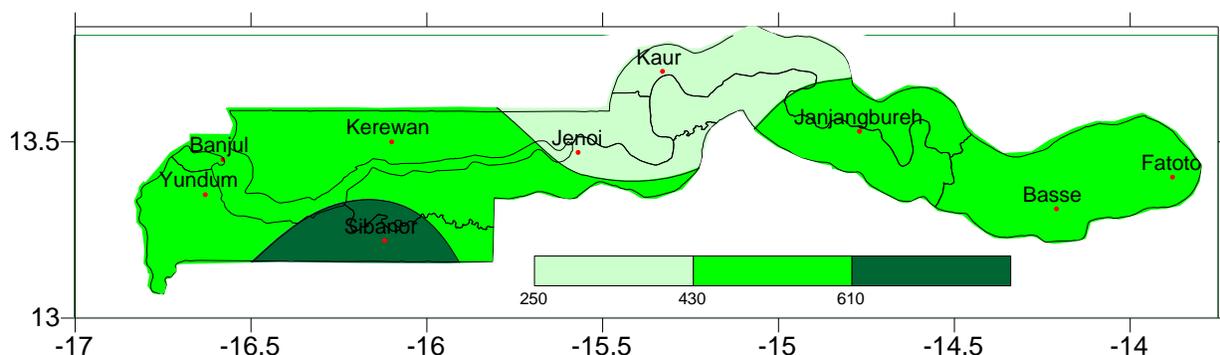


Figure 1b: Seasonal rainfall totals from May 1st – August 31st, 2018.

The country average as at 31st August 2018 stood at **491.7mm** which is **208.3mm** less than last year (2017). Significant deficits are continued to be recorded across the country indicating shortfall of rainfall compared to last year.

3.0 AGROMETEOROLOGICAL SITUATION:

Average temperatures recorded in this dekad across the country indicate a decrease as compared to the previous dekad. This can be attributed to the frequencies and intensities of rainfall received during this period. Minimum temperature recorded was 19°C recorded over Jenoi in the Middle Third, whilst maximum temperature reached 34°C also recorded over Jenoi in the Middle Third.

Winds were generally light to moderate in speed but a maximum gust of 44km/h was recorded in some places of the country.

Average sunshine duration varied between 5 and 6 hours across the country.

Average relative humidity recorded during this dekad was between 70% to 80% countrywide.

4.0 AGRICULTURAL SITUATION:

West Coast Region

Farmer's engagement in this region is fertilizer application for those who can afford it. The groundnuts that were sown earlier are generally in pod formation, whilst maize is at tasseling stage but badly affected by Fall Army Worm. Cowpea is also grown in this region and the stages range from vegetative to flowering. Early sown rice fields are tiling.

North Bank Region

In this region, crops are doing very well especially with the improvement of rains during this dekad. 90% early millet fields are in their grain formation stages, maize is generally at tasseling stage, and groundnuts is at its reproductive stage ranging from pegging to pods formations. The problem of Fall

Army Worm in this region is tackled now as a result of farmers utilizing the advices from Agricultural workers.

Lower River Region

Maize fields in this region looks good as generally they are in their cubing stage, groundnut fields are pegging whilst early millet has also entered its reproductive stages. Most farmers cultivate rice in the lowlands in this area and are in their advance stage of nursing them for onward transplanting to the fields.

5.0. PESTS AND DISEASES SITUATION:

Outdoor production of crops is faced with numerous pest problems however as of the time of the data collection, few pest problems were observed or reported. The most important pest is the fall armyworm (*Spodoptera frugiperda*) which affects mostly maize and occasional millet and sorghum. It is already spreading like wild fires in all the regions. The specie of grasshoppers (*Zonocerus spp*) is also found in all the regions but they also have a sporadic behavior appearing mostly during vegetative phase of the crops to feed on the leaves.

There has been a recent report of blister beetle (*Psalydolytta fusca*) infestation in Fass Chamen in the Foni Bondali District of the West Coast Region. The community is renowned for early millet production in large hectares of crop fields. The insect feeds on flowers on the millet head thus leading to poorly filled or even empty grains. It insect overwinter on the weeds in and around the millet field and attack the heads when night falls. Therefore it is important to maintain field sanitation at all times. The region of URR had an incidence of the African armyworm (*Spodoptera exempta*) in potato fields in Tumanna District. This pest appears during long dry spells but the caterpillars were washed off by heavy downpour that followed the infestation. The Sara Kunda community in the NBR reported incidences of squirrels which dug the soil to remove sown seeds. This incurs additional labour and production cost to the producers.

A potential and major pest of rice in the horizon is the weaver bird (*Quelea quelea*) which are currently causing economic damage to the irrigated rice and also awaiting the rain-fed rice to mature. They are observed mostly in the CRR North and South where they are endemic and have caused economic loss to farmers over the past years.

Management of the Pest Problems

For the fall armyworm (*Spodoptera frugiperda*), still the integrated pest management (IPM) approach is being promoted. For effective treatment, each maize stand should be treated in the whorls using the following options;

- Neem or hyptis leave extract solution with 30g of detergent
- Salt solution
- Application of a mixture of wood ash, saw dust, or sand to suffocate the larvae in the whorls
- Close observation and hand picking to kill the larvae
- Good crop management practices (fertilizer application, field sanitation)

The African armyworm (*Spodoptera exempta*) is an occasional pest which walks on the ground in groups feeding on the plant leaves as they go. But they are easily be destroyed by runoff water during heavy rains.

For the weaver bird (*Quelea quelea*), management also requires a holistic IPM approach. The methods used include explosives, mist nets, local long guns, and scaring. There are issues with the use of explosives and guns but mist nets can be used alongside scaring.

The management of grasshoppers (*Zonocerus spp*) involves the use of botanicals such as neem extract solution to prevent attack or systemic insecticides for example Dimethoate to kill those that feed on the leaves.

The effective control of the blister beetle (*Psalydolytta fusca*) also requires calls for IPM approach as follows;

- Use of long bristled varieties to limit attack
- Always keep the area on the perimeter and within the field free from weeds as they hide in the weeds during the day and attack as night approaches
- Regularly observe the millet stands for early detection and treatment
- Use cultural method such as smoking by burning using groundnut shells, clothes or moist wood etc to repel the insects
- Apply 2% dust pesticide on the perimeters to repel the pest from entry into the field
- Apply neem leave extract on the heads weekly to repel the insect
- As a last resort, apply contact insecticides such as Deltamethrin, Abamectin, Malathion to kill the insect

6.0 MARKET SITUATION:

CEREALS: Average prices of major cereals commodities have been observed to be stable as compared to the second and third period of August 2018, except for millet and maize which have slightly decrease by 3 and 5 percent respectively.

NUTS & PULSES: The average prices of decorticated groundnuts and beans were noticeable to be stable in the market.

VEGETABLES: During this period, slight price increases were noticeable. In contrast to this price increase, we have seen a slight decrease in prices in other commodities.

MEAT PRODUCTS: There has not been a significant change in the prices of meat & bones, beef steak and mutton during the last three decades.

7.0 LIVESTOCK SITUATION:

Following the reported outbreak of Foot and mouth disease in Central River Region North, all the other regions also reported the presence of the disease during the period under review. There were 4,805 cases reported; Central River Region North (1140), West Coast Region (861), Upper River Region (861), Central River Region South (454), North Bank Region (297) and Lower River Region (12). Of the total reported cases, 313 animals died. Table 1.1 represented the number of reported cases and deaths by district.

Table 1.1. Reported cases and deaths by district

Region	District	Reported Cases	No. of Deaths
CRR-South	Niamina East	298	46
	Niamina West	150	0
	Upper Fuladu	6	0
	Lower Saloum	157	3
CRR-North	Sami	1195	6
	Nianija	235	34
	Upper Saloum	60	6
	Niani	394	3
WCR	Foni Bondali	430	10
	Foni Jarol	65	2
	Kombo Central	60	2
	Kombo East	490	11
	Kombo North	30	0
	Kombo South	65	2
URR	Fuladou East	86	1
	Kantora	265	43
	Sandu	69	9
	Tumana	1	0
	Wuli East	368	95
NBR	Wuli West	72	5
	Sabach Sanjal	120	9
	Upper Niumi	177	23
LRR	Jarra Central	12	3

Vaccinations:

Following the re-emergence of the Contagious Bovine Pleuropneumonia (CBPP) disease in cattle in 2012, the Department of Livestock Services started annual vaccination campaigns to try to eradicate the disease once again. The 2018 vaccination campaign against CBPP started during the period under review and is expected to last for 2 months.

Banjul 04th September 2018

National MWG of The Gambia

<p>Composition of MWG: Department of Water Resources Planning Services - Department of Agriculture (DOA) Communication, Extension & Education Services - DOA Department of Livestock Services Plant Protection Services - DOA National Environment Agency</p>	<p>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</p>
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