

EARLY WARNING BULLETIN FOR FOOD SECURITY IN THE GAMBIA

No. 2018/14

Period: September 11 - 20, 2018



Government of The Gambia

Produced and Published by The Gambia National
Multidisciplinary Working Group (MWG)

Focal Point: Department of Water Resources

TEL: (+220) 4227631 / 4224122 / 8905229

E-MAIL: lmtouray@yahoo.co.uk / WEB: www.ccews.com



1.0 SYNOPTIC SITUATION:

The mean surface position of the ITD has reached its maximum northward position with its western axis oscillating over central Mauritania, stretching across northern parts of Mali, Niger and then slopping onto Chad.

The weather to the north of the ITD was characterized by dry and stable atmosphere with occurrence of dust haze over few portions of Algeria and Libya during the period. Places to the south of the ITD were characterized by moderate to heavy rain and thunderstorms, occasionally associated with very strong winds.

1.1 OUTLOOK FOR THE NEXT DEKAD (21st - 30th September 2018)

Warm and humid atmospheric conditions will prevail during the period with chances of isolated slight to moderate rain showers, most likely on the 23rd and 24th September 2018. Not much rain is expected during this dekad.

2.0 RAINFALL SITUATIONS:

The rainfall situation in this dekad has indicated daily intensities ranging from as low as 0.3mm to as high as 81.6mm, thus giving dekadal totals to range from 16.4mm to 129.9mm in the Western Third, 12.6mm to 88.0mm in the Middle Third and from 58.3mm to 75.1mm in the Eastern Third of the country, (**figure 1a**). Apart from Sibanon in the Western Third which has four rainless days, all the stations across the country have less than four rainless days which enables the soil to maintain the required moisture content for effective growth of crops.

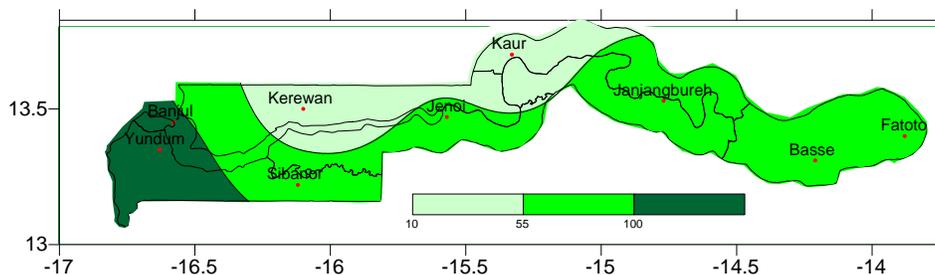


Figure 1a: Dekadal rainfall totals from September 11 - 20, 2018.

The seasonal rainfall totals across the country as at 20th September 2018 continue to increase significantly with the recording of additional rainfall amounts in this period under review. The highest seasonal total of 879.3mm was recorded over Basse in the Eastern Third, followed with 868.6mm recorded over Sibanon in the Western Third of the country. On the other hand, the lowest seasonal total of 504.1mm was recorded over Kaur in the Middle Third and then followed by Kerewan which recorded a seasonal total of 612.7mm (figure 1b). This

shows a significant difference of 375.2mm between the highest and lowest amount of rainfall recorded so far during this season.

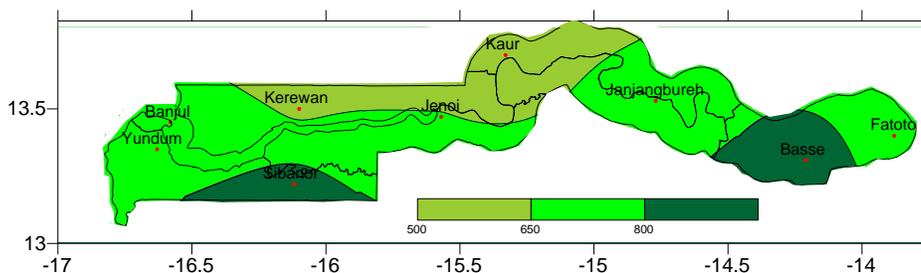


Figure 1b: Seasonal rainfall totals from 1st May 2018 - 20th September 2018.

The country average as at 20th September 2018 stood at **712.0mm**, which is **60.7mm** less than last year's amount (**772.7mm**). This has narrowed the wide margin that was recorded during the months of June and July this year.

3.0 AGROMETEOROLOGICAL SITUATION

During this dekad, the average temperatures recorded shows generally an increased compared with the previous dekad. Average temperatures ranging from 26°C to 28°C were recorded across the country in this dekad as compared to 25°C to 27°C during the last dekad. Minimum temperature reached 19°C over Jeno in the Middle Third, whilst maximum temperature reached 35°C over most of the stations in the country.

Average relative humidity (RH) recorded during the dekad was 80% across the country, indicating high water content in the atmosphere. Winds were generally light to moderate in speed. Average sunshine duration recorded during this dekad was between 4 hours and 7 hours across the country.

4.0 AGRICULTURAL SITUATION:

West Coast Region

During this period under review, groundnuts in this region are in their pod formation for the fields that were sown late and at maturity stage for the ones that were sown early. Harvesting of maize is also on going for the early sown maize fields whilst the situation with the lately sown fields is booting. Cowpea which is also grown in this region has reached maturity stage.

North Bank Region

In this region, early millet is at grain formation and the panicles are drying up signaling full maturity. Maize harvesting is also in progress in most places in this region, whilst groundnuts generally in this area are pegging.

Central River Region South

Harvesting of maize has started in this region and early millet fields that were earlier sown are almost ripping. Despite the lack of rainfall at the beginning of this season that led to most farmers sowing their groundnuts late, the crop has reached reproductive stage. In the lowland fields, farmers are still transplanting rice. This delay was due to inadequate plowing materials. Upland rice is at tillering stage.

Upper River Region

Philippine groundnuts and maize have reached maturity and harvesting is in progress. These products can be seen in the weekly and daily markets. Early millet is at grain formation and blister beetles are seen around them but no major damage is reported so far. Cowpea that many farmers in this region resorted in sowing due to low rainfall at the start of the season is at flowering stage.

Lower River Region

In this region, the situation is similar to many other regions in the country. Maize has reached maturity stage and harvesting is in progress. Groundnuts fields generally are pegging and transplanting of rice in the lowlands is ongoing.

Generally crop performance varied from region to region depending on the rainfall situation during this season. Early millet in some areas has almost reach maturity stage and can soon be harvested whilst in other areas will need little longer time to reach this stage. The fear is that if maturity is reached and harvesting starts when rain continues can cause damage to the yields. However, it is indicated in the synoptic situation above that the ITD has reached its maximum position and has started its southwards motion, which may lead to a reduction of rains.

5.0 LIVESTOCK SITUATION:

Disease Outbreaks:

Cattle owners continue to report new cases of Foot and mouth disease (FMD), however, the morbidity and mortality rates are subsiding. In the Central River Region North, new cases are reported in Upper Saloum and Sami districts, but no mortalities were reported. In the Lower River Region, few cases with mortalities are reported in the Jarra Central district. The low mortality is associated with feed availability, a situation that improves animal condition and health. In the Upper River Region and Central River Region south, the FMD outbreak has very much subsided.

Vaccination:

The vaccination campaign against the re-emerged Contagious Bovine Pleuropneumonia (CBPP) is almost coming to an end in most of the regions. In the Upper River Region, Lower River Region and Central River Region South, inoculators are on mopping exercise now.

Feed and Water Situation:

Access to feed and water is relatively very easy as of now in all the regions. However, in the Wuli West of the Upper River Region, there is a loud cry from cattle owners complaining of an invasive weed dominating the grazing lands. According to farmers, this weed is not palatable and livestock particularly cattle do not like it.

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

Direct your comments and questions to:

The Director
Department of Water Resources
7 Marina Parade, Banjul
The Gambia
Tel: (+ 220) 4227631 / 4224122 / 8905229
Email: dwr@mofwrnam.gov.gm