
EARLY WARNING BULLETIN FOR FOOD SECURITY

No. 2009/11

IN THE GAMBIA

Period: August 11 - 20, 2009



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. PROGRESS OF RAINY SEASON

The mean surface position of the demarcating boundary between the dry and moist region over West Africa (Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone- ITD) was located over Nouakchott (Mauritania), Tidjikta (Mauritania), Timbuctou (Mali) and Agadez (Niger). Thus, the ITD maintained its position as in the last decade.

Humid and partly cloudy to cloudy conditions prevailed over most part of West Africa during the decade, resulting to scattered to widespread rain and thunderstorm over places within Sahel and Gulf of Guinea States.

The prominent high-pressure cell centred over the North West Atlantic Ocean (the Azores) had a mean core value of 1023.2 hectopascals weakened by 4.4 hPa compared to the 01st decade of August. Its mean position was located at about 39°N/22°W, whereas the high-pressure cell centred over the South Atlantic Ocean (St. Helena) has a mean core value of 1021.25 hectopascals weakened by 7.35 hPa compared to the past decade and shifted northwest at 29°S/07°W. This pressure configuration resulted to moderate monsoon influx into the West African sub-region, hence the rain and thunderstorms observed over the Gulf of Guinea States and Sahel, including The Gambia.

2. Rainfall outlook for 21st – 31st August 2009

Warm, humid and variably cloudiness condition will prevail with rain and/or thunderstorm over most places by the beginning (21st to 25th) and the end (27th, 28th, 30th and 31st) of the 3rd decade of August 2009.

3. RAINFALL SITUATION

This dekad has also witnessed another continuation of the rainfall situation experienced over the previous dekad, in terms of frequency and amounts of rainfall. Although, daily intensities have dropped slightly in pockets across the country as compared to the previous dekad. The highest single day rainfall recorded was 111.8mm at Kaur compared to 240mm recorded at Kerewan during the last dekad. The number of rainy days have increased and varied between 4 and 9. Total rainfall during the dekad ranged from 62.9mm at Sapu in the Middle Third to 208.5mm at Serekunda in the Western Third of the country (figure 1a).

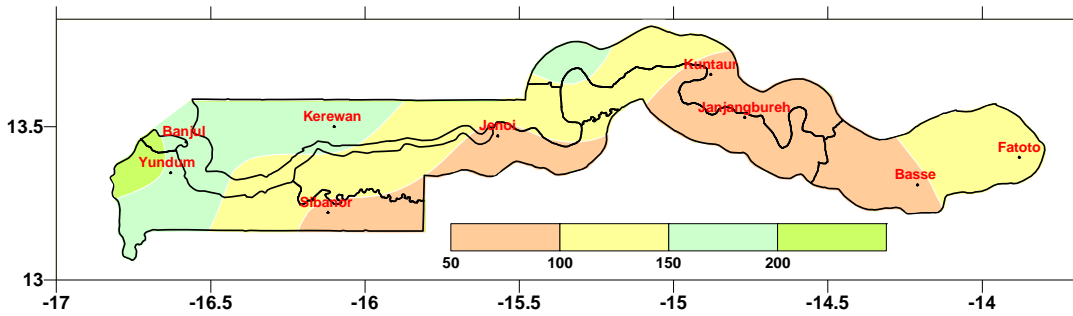
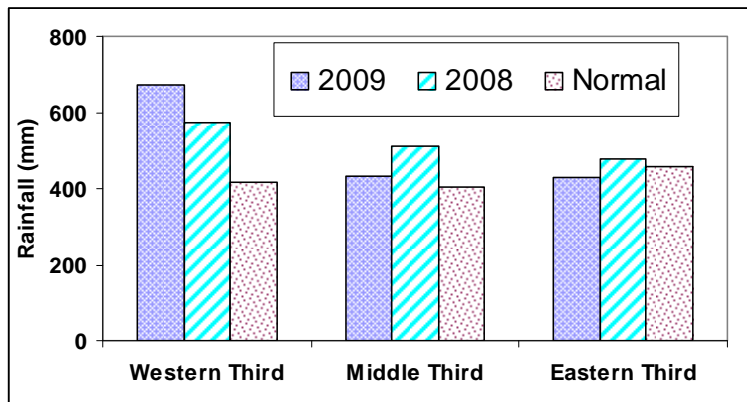


Figure 1a: Rainfall intensity during August 11 - 20, 2009

So far from May 1 to August 20, 2009 the seasonal total rainfall amount in the country ranged from 218.6mm at Janjangbureh in the Middle Third to 1017.8mm at Kerewan in the Western Third of the country (figure 1b).

Figure 1b: Seasonal total from May 1 to August 20, 2009

During the same period last year, the seasonal rainfall ranged from 304.7 at Naude to 848.7 at Serekunda. This indicates deficits in both the Middle and Eastern Third of the country (figure 2). In the Western Third, rainfall recorded this year is higher than that recorded last year and the long-term (1971 – 2000) during the same period.



The country average as at August 20, 2009 was 511.9mm, compared to 522.0mm and 425.1mm recorded during the same period last year and during the long-term mean respectively.

4. AGROMETEOROLOGICAL SITUATION

Mean temperatures (28.1 °C) during this dekad were similar to the temperatures during the preceding dekad. Thermal distributions within the country show that the Eastern and Middle Thirds remained warmer than the Western Third.

Highest temperatures ranged from 32.4°C at Banjul to 38.0°C at Janjangbureh. The trend remains the same for the minimum temperature with the highest of 22.7°C recorded at Fatoto and the lowest of 20.2°C at Banjul.

Maximum relative humidity (RH) continued to remain above 90% throughout the country.

Winds during the period were generally light to moderate in speed.

Composition of MWG:

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