
EARLY WARNING BULLETIN FOR FOOD SECURITY

No. 2010/15

IN THE GAMBIA

Period: September 20 - 30, 2010



Government of The Gambia

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Group of the AGRHYMET Regional Programme

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AGRHYMET Regional Programme

1. PROGRESS OF 2010 RAINY SEASON

The surface position of the Inter Tropical Discontinuity (ITD) on average during the period lies over central Mauritania, stretching across central Mali, central Niger and then gently sloping into central Chad, indicating a southward retreat of about 2 degrees latitude.

Warm, humid and convective activities were enhanced during the period which occasionally resulted to rain showers and thunderstorms and in some instances, they are accompanied by strong winds.

The St. Helena High Pressure cell remained intense and was varying between 1030 hectopascal (hpa) and 1035hpa. It's relative position and magnitude during the period constitute a favorable moisture influx into the country which aided the deepening of the equatorial low and hence the wet condition over the Sahel including the Gambia.

2. RAINFALL OUTLOOK FOR OCTOBER 1 - 10, 2010

Rain showers and moderate to heavy thunderstorms occasionally associated with strong winds will affect the country during the early and middle parts of the dekad. Slight to moderate intermittent rain showers will also affect places especially at the beginning of the dekad.

3. RAINFALL SITUATION

Despite the southward retreat of about 2 degrees latitude of the ITD, substantial amounts of rainfall were recorded across the country during this dekad, particularly in the Western and Middle Thirds. However, both the frequency and intensity of rains have dropped compared to the preceding dekad, thus the number of rainy days dropped from a minimum of 7 in the previous dekad to 3 in this current one, and a maximum of 10 in the previous dekad to 7 in the current one. As in the previous dekad, heavy daily down pours of more than 50mm were recorded in some stations particularly in the Western and Middle Thirds of the country (Banjul, Serekunda, Kerewan, Sapu).

Dekadal rainfall totals recorded during this period ranged from 42.4mm at Fatoto to 176.0mm at Jenoi (figure 1a). The cumulative rainfall (May 1 to September 30, 2010) ranged from a minimum of 811.3 mm at Janjangbureh to a maximum of 1562.0mm at Jenoi (figure 1b). Compared to last year during the same period, deficits of 132mm were recorded at Yundum, 141mm at Serekunda, 160mm at Kaur and 219mm at Kerewan.

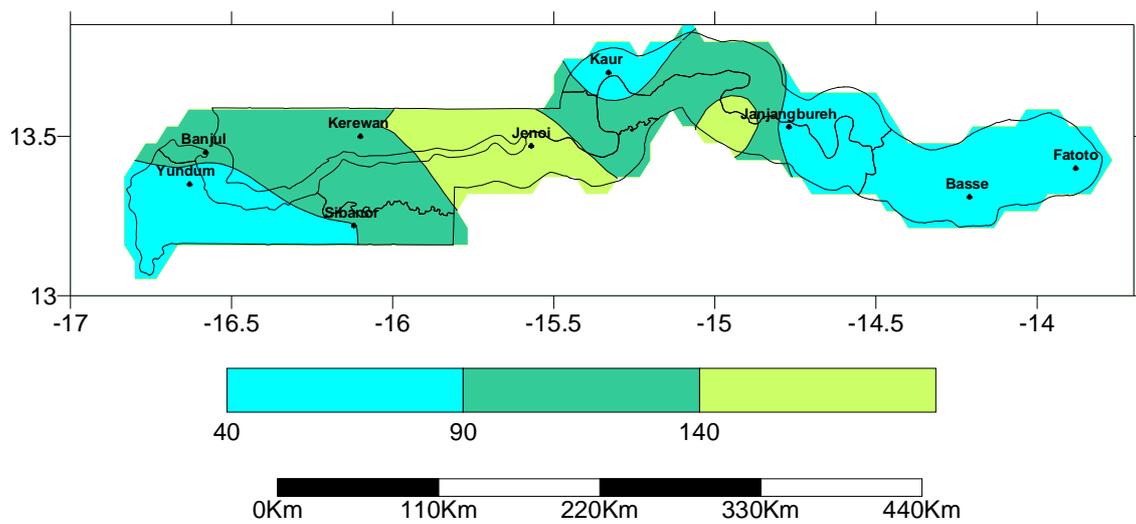


Figure 1a: Rainfall intensity during September 21 – 30, 2010

As at September 30, 2010 the country average stood at 1174.2mm which is 14% above last year's average rainfall (1026 mm) and 59% above the long-term mean (736.8mm).

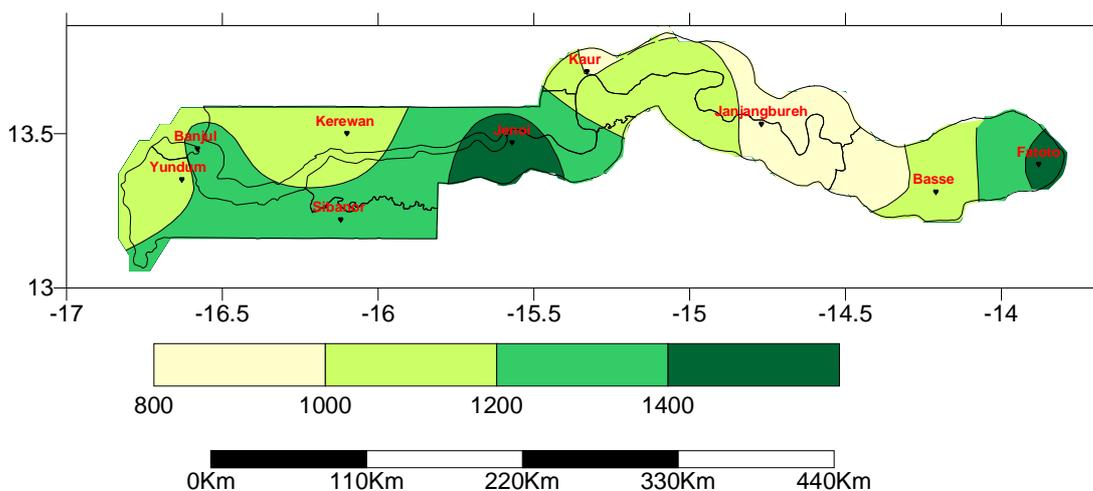


Figure 1b: Cumulative rainfall as at September 30, 2010

4. AGROMETEOROLOGICAL SITUATION

Generally, during this dekad, temperatures rose slightly across the country. Extreme temperatures remained above 34°C across the country and rose by 0.1°C to 1.5°C compared to the previous dekad and remained slightly above the 30-year average (normal) for the same period last year.

Mean maximum relative humidity (RH) remained above 90% throughout the country except at Banjul and Kaur where it remained at 82% and 88% respectively. The mean minimum relative humidity also remained above 50%.

Winds were generally light to moderate in speed. Recorded speeds varied from 15 to 65 Km/h with one squally situation registered in the interior of the country.

5. AGRICULTURAL SITUATION

Harvesting of maize is almost completed except the late sown fields in Western Region and other isolated areas in the country. Sorghum is at flowering/early maturing stage in the Upper River Region and in some parts of Central River Region where it is predominant. Meanwhile, in the Western Third (areas such as North Bank Region and Lower River Region) the crop is at early maturity stage.

Harvesting of early millet is in progress in most parts of the country. Late millet is generally at heading/flowering stages in Upper River Region and in some parts of Western Region (WR).

Groundnut fields across the country are at different growth stages ranging from pegging to maturity, depending on the variety and date of sowing. Harvesting of the Philippine pink varieties is in earnest. In some places, early sown groundnuts have reached maturity but continuing rains are hampering harvesting.

Most upland rice fields have also reached maturity and harvesting is in progress in URR, CRR, LRR and NBR. However, in most parts of Western Region, upland rice fields are at advance vegetative growth stages.

6. SITUATION OF CEREAL MARKETS

The prices of cereals at weekly markets continued to fluctuate depending on the volume of the commodities supplied and demand at the markets. Average prices for coarse grains during the period under review ranged from D13.00/kg to D14.00/kg (fig. 3a). Compared to last year during the same period, this year's prices of coarse grains are slightly lower except for sorghum.

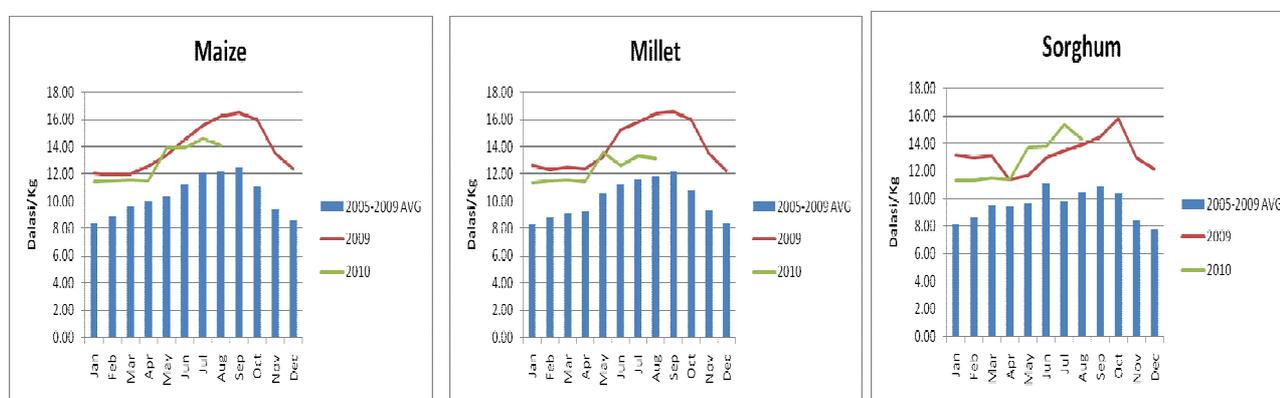


Figure 3a: Evolution of cereals (coarse grains) prices – Source: Planning Services, Department of Agriculture

The price of imported and local rice varied from D15.00/kg to D18.00/kg. Only long grain rice (imported) registered an increase in comparison to the preceding year (fig. 3b).

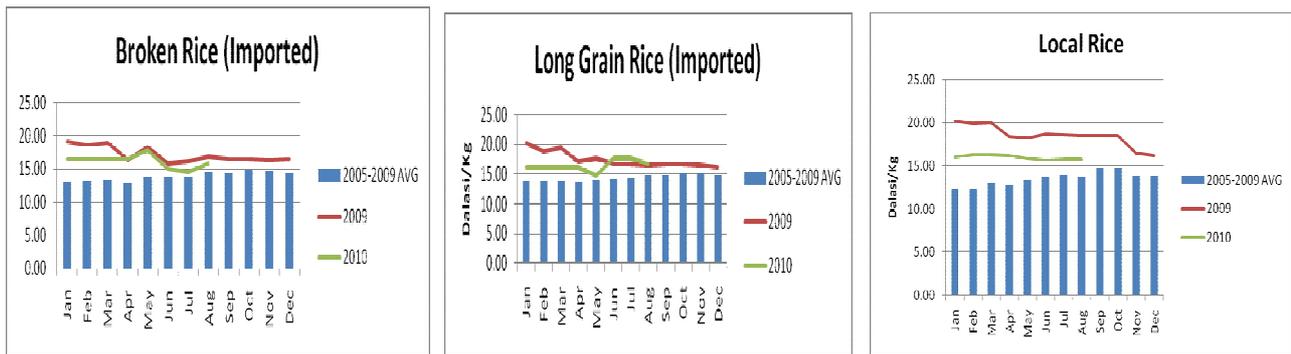


Figure 3b: Evolution of rice (imported and local) prices – Source: Planning Services, Department of Agriculture

<p>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</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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