

EARLY WARNING BULLETIN FOR FOOD SECURITY

No. 2011/14

IN THE GAMBIA

Period: September 11 - 20, 2011



Government of The Gambia

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AGRHYMET Regional Programme

1. PROGRESS OF THE RAINY SEASON

During this dekad, the position of the ITD oscillated over Southern Mauritania stretching on to Northern Mali and Central Niger.

Both the Azores and St. Helena High Pressure Cells intensified during the later part of this period with central core values of 1025hpa and 1023hpa respectively.

Periodic heavy rain and squally thunderstorms characterized the weather over the Senegambia sub region, causing the increase in rainfall amounts on the Eastern, Central and Western Third of the country during the first part of the dekad.

2. RAINFALL OUTLOOK FOR SEPTEMBER 21 – 30, 2011

Warm and humid conditions resulting in thunderstorm and/or rain occasionally squally are expected over the country during the early and later part of the dekad.

3. RAINFALL SITUATION

Rainfall intensity reduced significantly during this dekad as compared to the previous dekad. The highest daily rainfall intensity was 50.1mm recorded in Kaur compared to 126.0mm recorded at Banjul during the preceding dekad. Meanwhile, the number of rainy days increased from a maximum of 4 days during the previous dekad to 8 days during the current one. Thus, end-of-dekad totals ranged from 69.2mm at Janjangbureh in the Middle Third to 121.9mm at Banjul, in the Western Third of the country (fig. 1a).

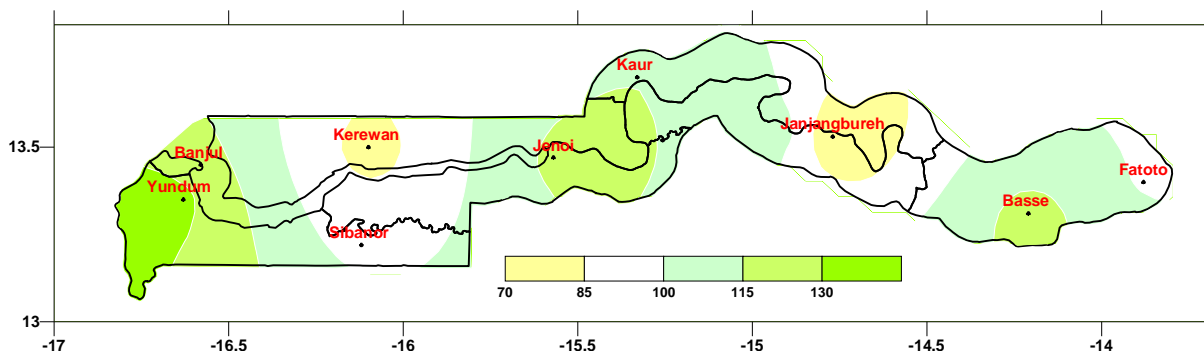


Figure 1a: Rainfall intensity during September 11 – 20, 2011

The seasonal total rainfall amount in the country (May 1 to September 20) ranged from 431.9mm at Kerewan to 876.5mm at Sibanor both in the Western Third of the country (fig. 1b). The distribution in space shows that the North Bank Region and parts of Lower River, Central River-south and Upper River Regions continued to record the lowest rainfall intensities.

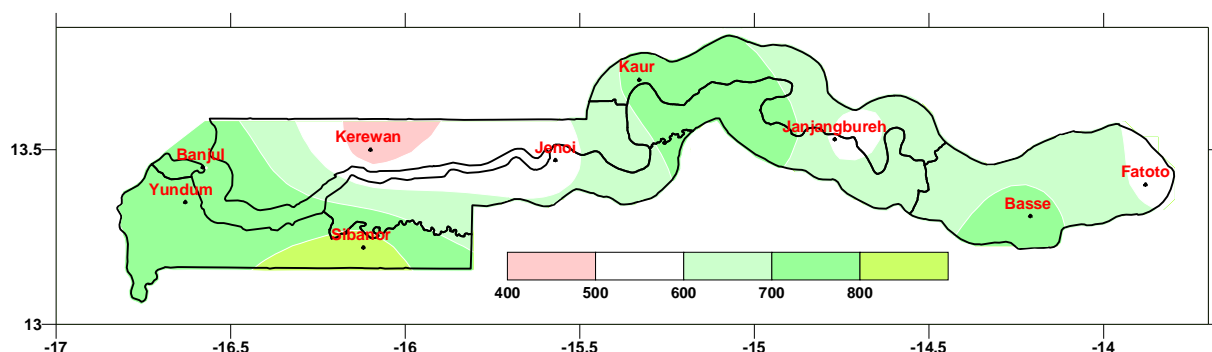


Figure 1b: Seasonal total from May 1 to September 20, 2011

In general, average rainfall from May 1 to September 20 remained below that of last year and the long-term mean during the same period. Meanwhile, surpluses were recorded in Banjul (94.4mm), Kaur (81.9mm) and Sapu (0.6mm) as compared to the long-term mean during the same period.

4. AGROMETEOROLOGICAL SITUATION

Generally, mean temperatures were higher during this dekad. This may be attributed to the reduced rainfall and cloud cover. Thermal distributions within the country show that the Eastern and Middle Thirds remained warmer than the Western Third.

Highest temperatures recorded were 33.5°C at Kerewan, 35.5°C at Jenoi in the Middle Third and 34.0 °C at Fatoto in the Eastern Third of the country. The trend remains the same for minimum temperature with the highest of 21.8°C recorded at Fatoto and the lowest of 18.0°C at Kerewan.

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

Winds during the period were generally light to moderate in speed with the passage of a line squall (maximum gust of 50.0km/hr) on September 18th 2011.

5. AGRICULTURAL SITUATION

Crop situation

Generally crop performance is satisfactory through the country. However because of varying onset of rains, the phenological state of crops varied across the country.

Groundnuts (73/33) is at phenological stages ranging from pegging to pod formation, whilst the early maturing Philippine type has reached full maturity and harvesting has began in most places. Early millet has reached full maturity but most farmers are delaying the harvesting because of the continuous rains. Maize have reached their maturity stage and harvesting is also ongoing in all regions of the country. Sorghum is heading in most fields around the Central River Region where it is mostly grown, and at vegetative stage in the West Coast Region.

Pest Situation

The dekad is characterized by proliferation of blister beetles (*Cylindrothorax kulzeri*, *Psalydolytta fusca* and *Mylabris sp.*) on early millet, particularly the lately planted fields. In the North Bank Region of the country, smoking among other control methods was administered to control or drive them out of the millet fields.

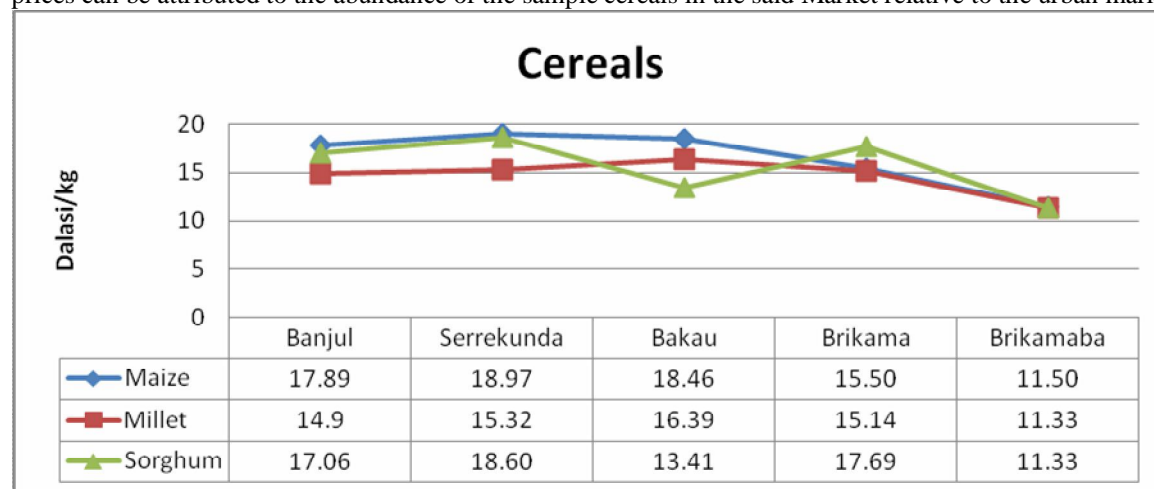
The village weaver birds (*Ploceus cucullatus*) have been problematic on rice and early millet in some regions of the country during the dekad. Scaring them away stands to be the most effective and common method of control.

The purple witch weed (*Striga hermonthica*) has emerged in some maize and millet fields, although currently it is posing no threat of economic importance. Sedges (*Cyperus spp.*) continue to cause great trouble in many and diverse crop fields, including vegetable gardens.

Crazy head or raster head, better known as downy mildew (*Sclerospora graminicola*) has been observed during the dekad in question in some millet fields in Lower River Region of the country but not quite severe.

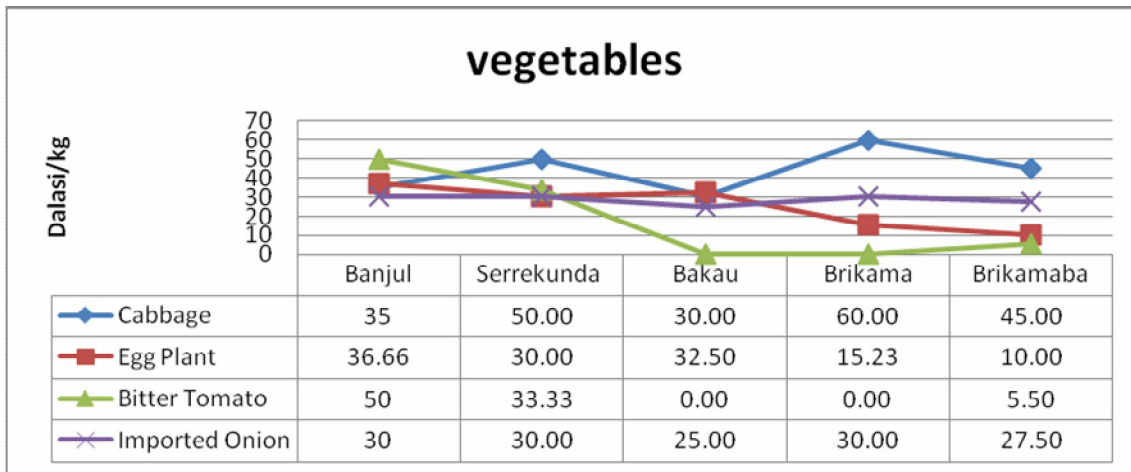
6. SITUATION OF THE MARKETS

It can be observed that the cheapest market for Cereals is Brikamaba, and the most expensive being Serrekunda, the lower prices can be attributed to the abundance of the sample cereals in the said Market relative to the urban market centers.



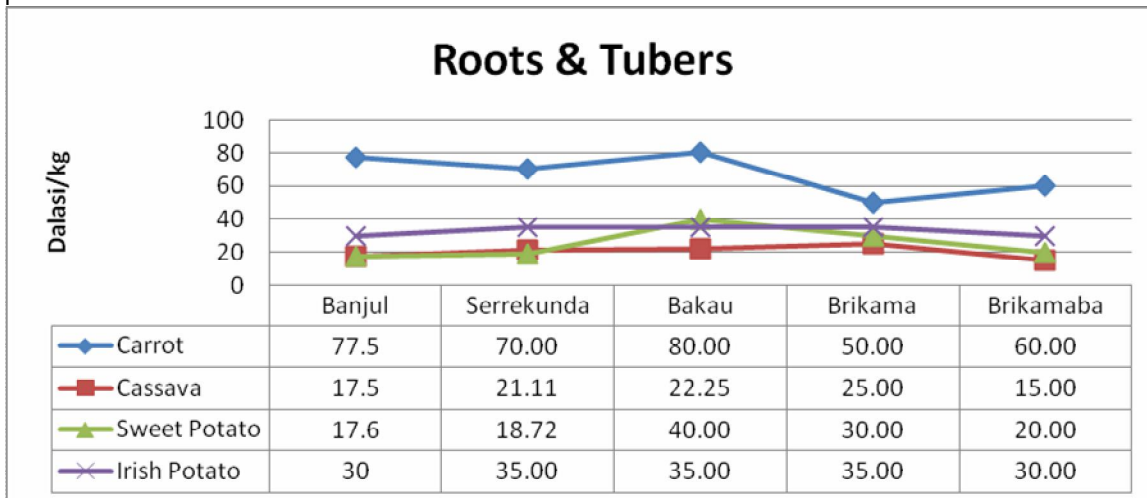
AVERAGE MARKET PRICE OF HORTICULTURAL COMMODITIES (DALASI/KG)

Bakau being the major market for vegetables equally records the cheapest prices for Vegetables with the exception of eggplant, relative to the other markets.



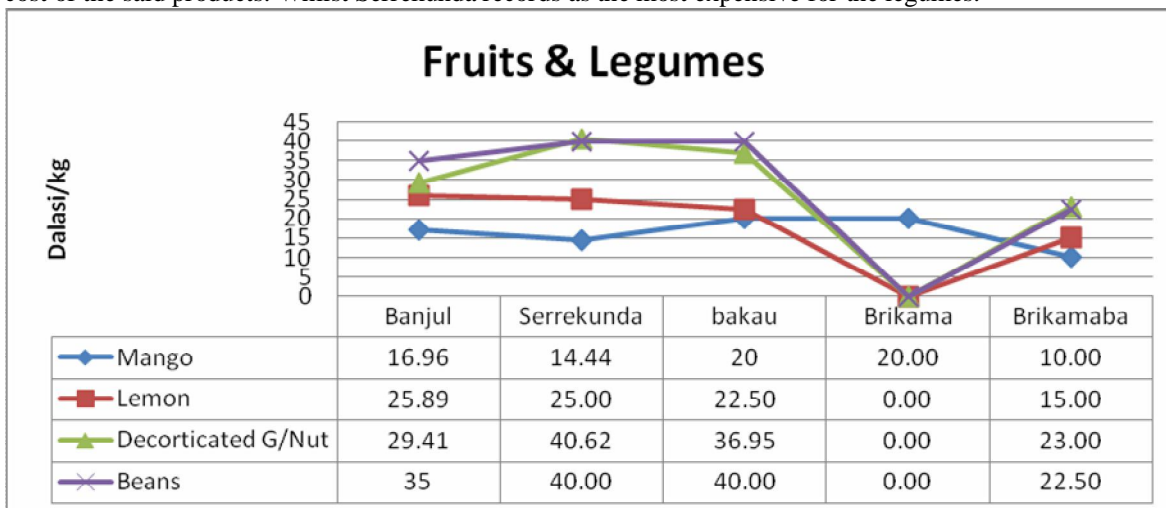
AVERAGE MARKET PRICE OF ROOTS AND TUBERS

With the exception of sweet potatoes, Brikamaba can be seen as the cheapest Market for the above captioned product relative to other market centers.



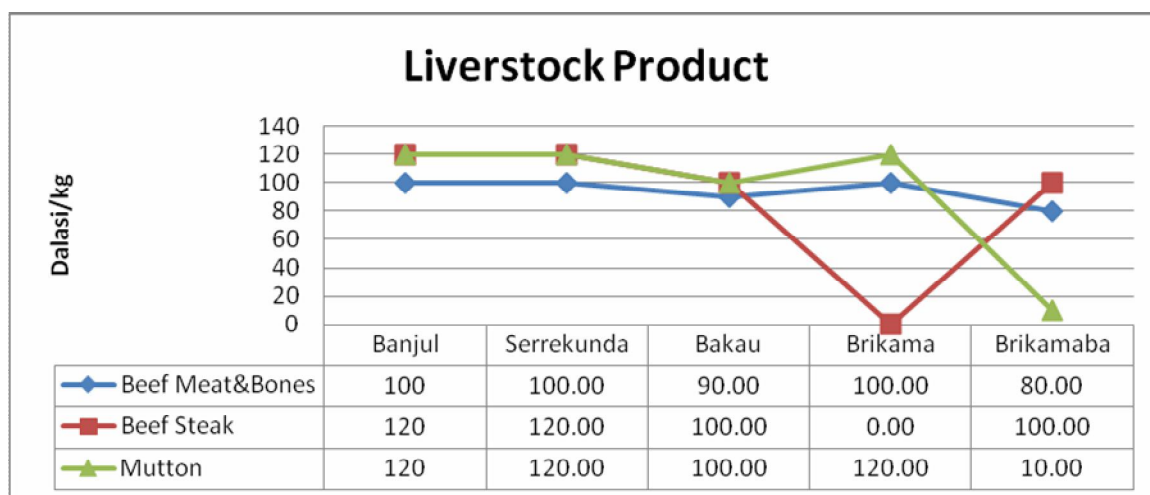
AVERAGE MARKET PRICE OF FRUITS AND LEGUMES (DALASI/KG)

Banjul records the highest prices for fruits this could be seen as a result of traders adding a profit margin on the original cost of the said products. Whilst Serrekunda records as the most expensive for the legumes.



AVERAGE MARKET PRICE OF LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION (DALASI/KG)

Livestock generally exhibits consistent prices over the various markets, as can be seen below. Prices are expected to be uniform with this product most often than not, very little price differences are observed over time.



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