

EARLY WARNING BULLETIN FOR FOOD SECURITY

No. 2019/12

IN THE GAMBIA

Period: August 21 - 31, 2019



Government of The Gambia

Produced and Published by The Gambia National
Multidisciplinary Working Group

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1. SYNOPTIC SITUATION

During this dekad, the Inter-Tropical Discontinuity (ITD), demarcating boundary between the dry and moist region over West Africa have its western axis oscillating over northern Senegal, southeastern Mauritania, stretching across northern Mali and then sloping onto Niger and Chad. The regions to the north of this position experienced dry and stable atmosphere, with dust haze observed over parts of Morocco and Algeria during the period. On the other hand, heavy rainfall and thunderstorms affected the Gulf of Guinea States and the Sahel including The Gambia.

2. WEATHER OUTLOOK FOR THE NEXT DEKAD (01ST - 10TH SEPTEMBER 2019)

The saturated atmosphere will generally remain humid with persistence of wet condition throughout the period. A cyclonic vortex associated with strong winds, rain and thunderstorms is expected to develop over the Coastline of The Gambia from the late evening of Wednesday 04th September 2019 into early afternoon of 05th September 2019. The system will generate torrential rain and possible flash flooding over the Coastal areas. **The general public and fishermen are advised to observe maximum terrestrial and sea safety regulations respectively.**

3. RAINFALL SITUATION

The rainfall situation during this dekad has significantly improved for all the stations. Dekadal rainfall totals were above 100 millimeters across the country. In the Western Third, highest dekadal totals of 255.8mm and 250.0mm were recorded over Yundum and Banjul respectively. Elsewhere in the Middle Third Janjanbureh recorded the highest of a little over 200mm; whereas in the Eastern Third Basse recorded the highest dekadal total (218.4mm) as shown in figure 1a, below.

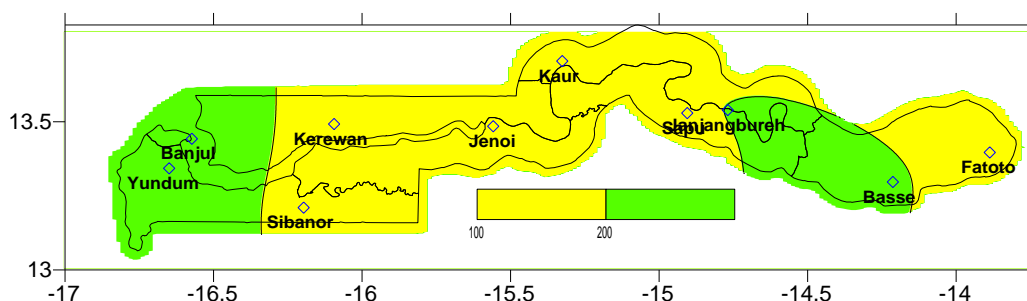


Figure 1a: Dekadal rainfall totals from 21st – 31st August 2019

Table 1: Dekadal rainfall totals and extremes rainfall of over 50mm

Station Name	Dekadal Total (mm)	Daily rainfall extremes ≥ 50 mm	
		Amount in mm	Date Recorded
Western Third			
Yundum	307.6	78.6/91.7/51.8/51.8	21 st ,27 th ,28 th ,29 th
Banjul	250.0	60.2/125.0	26 th /27 th
Sibanor	174.9	62.8	21 st
Kerewan	199.1		
Middle Third			
Kaur	100.3	53.6	22 nd
Jenoi	162.1	72.0/53.4	26 th , 29 th
Janjanbureh	205.6	50.1	26 th
Sapu	143.2	52.9	26 th
Eastern Third			
Basse	218.4	53.2/75.2	21 st , 29 th
Fatoto	117.0		

Seasonal cumulative totals also continued to improve significantly from the last dekad. In the Western Third, Sibanor recorded the highest cumulative total of 632.1mm, in the Middle Third Kerewan recorded the highest (598.1mm); while in the Eastern Third, the highest was recorded over Fatoto (647.7mm), highest countrywide (figure 1b).

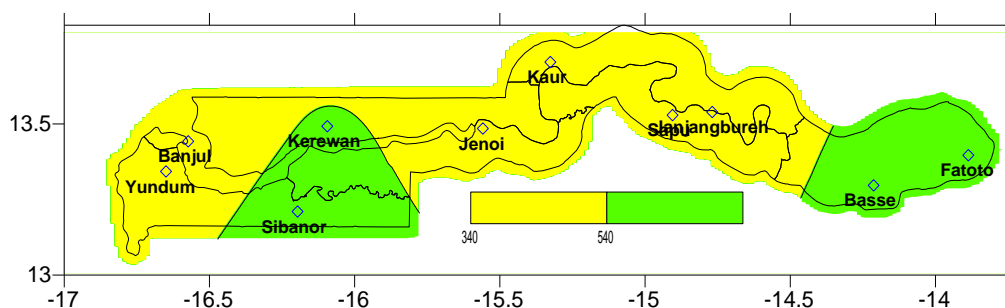


Figure 1b: Seasonal rainfall totals 1st May – 31st August 2019.

In comparison, this year’s country average as at 31st August 2019 stood at **494.2mm**, which is **10%** above last year same period (**448.5mm**), and **13.2%** below the country average (1981_2010), which is **569.9mm**.

4. AGROMETEOROLOGICAL SITUATION

Recorded average temperatures during the dekad under review varied between 26°C over Fatoto in the Eastern Third to 30°C over the rest of the country. Minimum temperature also varied between 19°C over the Eastern Third rising to 26°C over the Middle Third; whilst maximum temperature varied between 30°C over the Western Third to 35°C over the Middle Third the country. Extreme temperatures reached a minimum of 16°C in the Eastern Third and maximum temperatures of 36°C over the Middle Third of the country.

Winds were light to moderate in speed during the dekad, with maximum wind gust of 64km/h recorded over the Middle Third of the country. Average sunshine recorded during this dekad reduced significantly due to increased cloud coverage particularly over Fatoto that recorded the lowest sunshine duration of about 1 hour on average during the dekad; the rest of country recorded between 4 hours to 6 hours. Minimum Relative Humidity

(RH %) recorded across the country was above 50%, whereas Maximum RH recorded was above 90% to 100% in some cases due to enhanced moisture content in the atmosphere during the dekad.

5. AGRICULTURAL SITUATION

Generally, crop performance across the country is not very impressive in terms of growth and development. The phenological development of crops varied across the country which is attributed to the different dates of sowing, caused by varying rainfall onset followed by long dry spells in the months of June, July and August. Due to this erratic rainfall, there is a reduction in the area planted as compared to the preceding year for most of the major crops (groundnut, rice, maize and sorghum). However, sowing of groundnut, maize and cowpea is extended up to the end of August in most parts of the country despite less than two months of the season remains. The low rainfall has also delayed crop development particularly for millet, maize and sorghum.

West Coast Region

In this region, farmers are mainly engaged in weeding and the application of fertilizer. Weeds have enhanced in most fields due to increase in rainfall during this dekad thus reducing the number of hours farmers spent on the field for weeding. Earlier sown crops continue to dominate, some of which like groundnut have started flowering, whilst some upland rice crops are at tillering stage. Activities on lowland fields vary as some farmers are engaged in rice nursery raising, others transplanting whilst some are harvesting vegetable crops,

North Bank Region

In this region, some farmers are still weeding and fertilizer application. Some cereals (early millet and maize) as well as groundnut that were sown during the first rains are at reproductive stages. The crop situation in this region is promising particularly for crops that were sown first and survived the prolonged dry spells that occurred at the beginning of the rainy season.

Lower River Region

The Agricultural situation in this region is similar to other regions. Farmers are mainly occupied with weeding and fertilizer application. Most crops are at advanced vegetative stages and some few have entered reproductive stages, (early millet heading and groundnut flowering and pegging).

Central River Region - North

In this region Agricultural situation depicts a similar scenario to the rest of the regions, farmers are mainly engaged in weeding for upland crops, harvesting for dry season rice production has been completed since July this year and nursery raising as well as ploughing for the rainy season rice production is in progress. Crops phenology is at varying stages, from early vegetative stages for late sown crops to maturity at various stages for the earlier sown crops. Groundnuts are at flowering, whilst cereals like maize are tasseling and early millet is booting. The recent dry spell triggered the emergency of isolated pest and diseases such as the fall army worm particularly in Bakadargi; but due to heavy downpours during the dekad, the situation is unfavorable for them to cause significant damage. Agricultural officers on the ground are strengthening their collaboration with experts at the plant protection services Unit of the Department of Agriculture to monitor and remedy the situation.

Central River Region - South

In this region, there is variation in the agricultural situation, weeding is in progress especially for late planted fields. Crops are at advanced vegetative stages especially in the Upper Fukadu and Niamina, unlike in the Lower Fuladu where the situation is less impressive. In the Jahally Pacharr fields, harvesting is in progress for dry season rice production, whereas nursery rising is in progress for the rainy season production.

Upper River Region

Agricultural situation in this region does not vary much from the other regions. Farmer's main activity is weeding, due to enhanced rainfall, weeds are growing at a very fast rate and farmers have to weed up to four times in some cases to avoid these weeds choking their crops. Most of the crops are at reproductive stages: early millet is heading, some maize crops are at cob formation whilst groundnut crops is flowering. Even though some fields were planted late, they are also doing well and there is hope that if the rainy season ends well, these crops would also reach to full maturity.

Banjul, September 02, 2019.

National MWG of The Gambia

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