
EARLY WARNING BULLETIN FOR FOOD SECURITY

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IN THE GAMBIA

Period: July 11-20, 2018



Government of The Gambia

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Multidisciplinary Working Group

Focal Point: Department of Water Resources

TEL: (+220) 4227631 / 4224122 / 8905229 - FAX: (+220) 422 50 09

E-MAIL: dwr@mofwrnam.gov.gm / WEB: www.mofwrnam.gov.gm



1.0 SYNOPTIC SITUATION

The surface position of the Inter-Tropical Discontinuity (ITD), a boundary layer that demarcates the dry northeasterly wind from the moist southwesterly during the dekad sloped over the coast of Senegal onto central Mauritania, becoming zonal over central Mali and finally sloping southwards onto Niger through Burkina Faso.

Weather to the south of this position was characterized by convective cloud development which gave rise to rain and thunderstorms over most places particularly Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and the Gulf of Guinea States. Senegal and The Gambia had heavy downpour only twice during the dekad. Occurrences were mostly widespread and confined to the afternoons and nights.

1.1 OUTLOOK FOR THE NEXT DEKAD (21st to 31st July 2018)

As the monsoon has started to set in, more downpour of rain is expected during the next dekad.

2. RAINFALL SITUATION

During this dekad, rainfall is heavier in the Middle Third and the Eastern Third than the Western Third of the country. Rainfall recorded in the Western Third ranged from a minimum of 1.5mm over Kerewan to 52.1mm over Yundum, in the Middle Third, it ranged from 32.1mm over Janjanbureh to 94.9mm over Jenoi and 63.3mm over Fatoto to 67.9mm over Basse in the Eastern Third of the country (**Figure 1a**). However, in this dekad, there is a dry spell that impeded the progress of some farming activities; no station across the country recorded more than four rainy days.

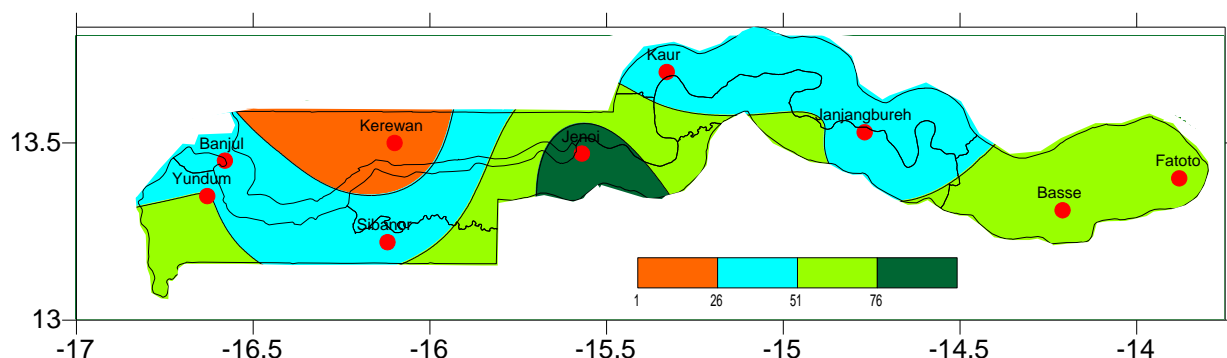


Figure 1a: Dekadal rainfall totals from 11th – 20th July 2018.

As at July 20, 2018, seasonal total is lower over Kaur in the Middle Third recording 95.3mm and higher over Sibanon in the Western Third recording 265.3mm, (**Figure1b**). The frequency of the rainfall across the country since the beginning of this year’s rainy season is between 7 to 13 number of rainy days.

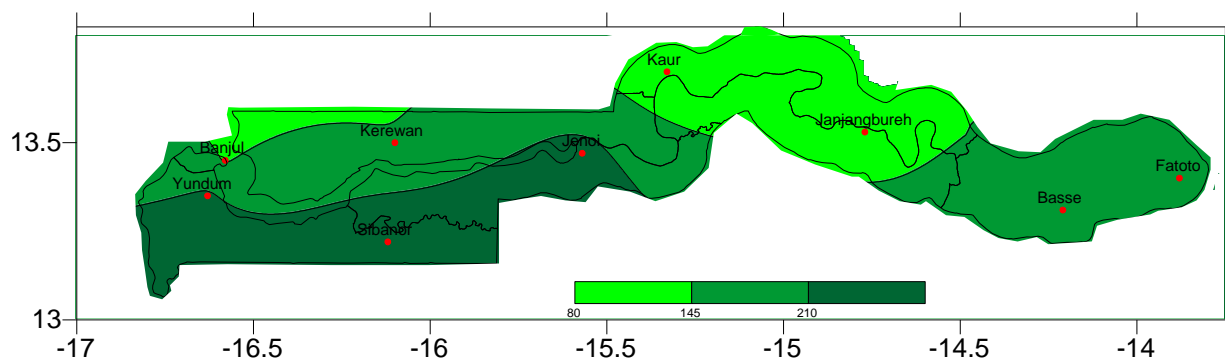


Figure 1b: Rainfall seasonal totals as at July 20th 2018.

Comparing this period under review with the same period last year (2017), the highest deficit recorded is increasing significantly with Kerewan in the Western Third recording a deficit of 265.4mm. However, Banjul and Sibanon in the Western Third and Kaur in the Middle Third recorded surpluses but the margin recorded on deficits across the country is far greater than the surpluses. If this trend continues as we progress into the rainy season, the rainfall this year will be less than last year.

3.0 AGROMETEOROLOGICAL SITUATION

Average temperatures recorded in this dekad indicate a slight drop in the Western Third and generally increases in the Middle and Eastern Thirds of the country compared with the previous dekad. The lowest average temperature was recorded over Banjul in the Western Third, of which can be attributed to its proximity to the Atlantic Ocean. Maximum temperatures recorded across the country were over 30°C and minimum temperature recorded is 15.2°C over Kerewan in the Western Third of the country.

Winds were generally light to moderate in speed throughout the country but a maximum speed of 36km/hr. was recorded over Sapu in the Middle Third during a heavy downpour.

Sunshine duration across the country in this dekad varied from a minimum of 4 hours to a maximum of 7 hours.

As the rainy season is progressing, relative humidity recorded in this dekad is increasing compared to the preceding dekads. Relative humidity recorded across the country ranged between above 60% to above 80%, indicating a high rate of water content in the atmosphere.

4.0 AGRICULTURAL SITUATION

WEST COAST REGION

In this region, major crops such as early millet and maize are at their vegetative stage. Tractors for ploughing are limited which impedes the progress of land preparation for cultivation. Groundnut seeds is available at the regional directorate for distribution to the farmers. If farmers in this area are solely waiting for this distribution for cultivation, it may cause delay in the production of groundnut as the rainy season has gone this far.

NORTH BANK REGION

Most farmers in this region have completed sowing of early millet, maize and groundnuts and are now weeding. All these major crops (maize, early millet and groundnuts) that were sown in the early rains are at early vegetative stages. The nursing of rice in the uplands for onward transplanting to the lowland fields are also ongoing. Some farmers are awaiting rainfall for fertilizer application.

LOWER RIVER REGION

In this region, with the limited tractors available, ploughing is ongoing as well as fertilizer distribution. Although farmers are faced with difficulties regarding the tractors as they are old and are only operational in the upland fields. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) project is continuing to give support to the farmers with seeds and fertilizers for effective crop production. Some farmers in this region are yet to sow groundnuts due to lack of rain. However, some maize and early millet fields are at early vegetative stages and farmers are busy weeding.

CENTRAL RIVER REGION NORTH

Cereals (maize and early millet) that were sown earlier are at their early stage of growth and weeding is in progress, other farmers are waiting for the rain to complete sowing. In the low land fields, some farmers are engaged in harvesting rice others are planting as in this area, rice production is a year round thing. Land preparation for cultivation was a problem due to limited tractors for the exercise.

CENTRAL RIVER REGION SOUTH

In this region, is a mixed situation, some farmers in the low land fields are transplanting, some farmers who were engaged in rice cultivation during the dry season, have harvested their rice and their produce are still at the rice fields. Land preparation in this region is impeding cultivation because of limited farming implements. Major cereal crops are at their early vegetative stages of growth and weeding is ongoing but some farmers are yet to sow their groundnuts due to the lack of rainfall.

UPPER RIVER REGION

Land preparation for cultivation in this region is a problem as limited tractors are available to cover the region. Late millet and maize that are widely grown in this area are seen at their vegetative stage and weeding is ongoing. Many farmers in this region who are expecting groundnut seeds supply from Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to cultivate their farm lands are yet to receive them. This late supply of groundnut seeds to farmers in this region may cause the production of the commodity to be low.

5.0 Crop Protection

Fall Army Worm (FAW) infestation is still in existence in Upper River Region (URR) and is also reported in West Coast Region (WCR) during this period (**photo 1**). The Infestation at West Coast Region is not as serious as URR and no major damages is reported in either of the regions. This could be because of just the beginning of the rainy season.



Photo 1 Fall Army Worm

6.0 MARKET SITUATION

The minimum price of maize in this dekad has remained the same (12.00 Dalasis per kilo) compared with the previous dekad. However, the price of this commodity dropped in Bakau in the urban area from 35.26 Dalasis per kilo in the last dekad to D33.63 in this one.

Imported rice (broken) also remained the same D20.00/kg in some provincial markets compared with the last dekad. It is also continued to be sold as high as D30.00/kg in Jareng in the same rural area.

In the provincial markets, the price of beef remained the same D 150.00/kg, D 175.00/kg and as well as the urban area, D200.00/kg compared with the last dekad.

7.0 LIVESTOCK

In this dekad, animal feed has further improved due to the rainfall that causes grasses and drinking points available for livestock consumption. With regards to livestock diseases, it is still a challenge, since CBPP is still in existence with livestock. Farmer's organizations and livestock organizations

have done well in minimizing disputes that used to erupt between livestock owners and other farmers about farmlands and grazing lands.

Banjul July 24, 2018

National MWG of The Gambia

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) 422 76 31 / 422 41 22 / 890 52 29 Email:
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