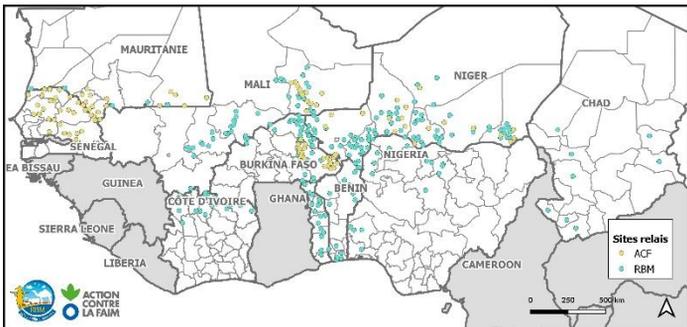


The monitoring system set up by ACF and RBM to measure the economic impacts of COVID-19 on pastoral communities is based on the optimisation of existing systems, in particular the pastoral monitoring systems established by the two organisations. As designed, this monitoring system provides information on the situation of pastoral households on a weekly basis, through a public analysis platform. [Link to the Dash Board](#)



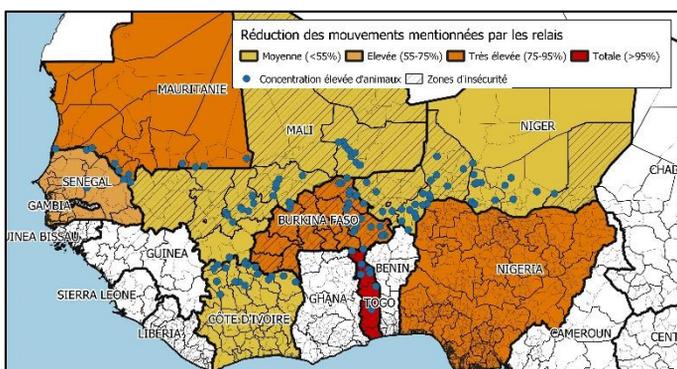
Geographical coverage of the monitoring system (each point represents the location of a pastoral relay)

TRENDS AND CONTEXT

Generally reduced livestock movements resulting in high concentrations

Border closures and restrictions on internal movement have reduced the movement of livestock to access pastoral resources (water and pasture) but also to flee conflict-prone areas, according to **60% of the Relays**. This reduction in livestock mobility results in concentrations of animals depending on (i) the availability of strategic pastoral resources, (ii) the existence of large livestock markets and (iii) the presence of opportunities linked to the proximity of urban centres. These concentrations result in a **shortage of water and pasture** and also **increase the risk of people congregating**, which runs counter to the health measures designed to curb the spread of the virus.

The trend towards reduced livestock movements is highly variable from one country to another, reaching a maximum in Togo with 95% of the Relays indicating a reduction in movements and a minimum in Mali with "only" 48% of the Relays reporting a reduction in movements. The map below illustrates the areas of main concentrations of animals, reduction of movements and problems.



Project coverage area

It includes the ACF and RBM intervention areas. These are pastoral sub-areas in 9 countries: Mali (TASSAGHT), Niger (AREN), Burkina Faso (CRUS, RECOPA), Senegal (ADENA), Mauritania (GNAP), Togo (PAT-Togo), Benin (ANOPER), Nigeria (BILPAN), Côte d'Ivoire (OPEF) with the support of the technical services of Mali, Niger and Burkina-Faso.

According to a MAPAH report, Togo had planned to receive 50,000 heads of cattle but because of the COVID-19 pandemic, about 10,370 head were registered at the entry points. With the closure of borders, transhumant herders are forced to take new transhumance routes to avoid controls, leading to increased tensions with indigenous populations.

In Mauritania, herds are concentrated near the Senegalese/Mauritanian border at the river level where there is a serious shortage of pasture.

In Nigeria, 80% of the Relays report a decrease in mobility. This has forced Nigerian transhumant herders to enter Benin illegally. They find themselves in a difficult situation since their stay in this country is illegal.

In Burkina Faso, the data collected show a reduction in livestock movements, according to about 77% of the Relays. Hence a concentration of animals in certain areas characterized by: (i) the availability of strategic pastoral resources (notably the lake located in the commune of Beli, the ponds of Oursi and Tin Edjar, Lake Higa); (ii) the existence of large livestock markets (Seytenga Centre and Fada Ngourma); and (iii) the presence of opportunities linked to the proximity of urban centres or cross-border areas (Botou, Yamba, Partiaga, Gayeri and Dori city). This influx of animals into areas with strategic pastoral resources, assembly markets or other opportunities encourages the growth of informal activities and the development of commercial transactions.

In Mali, the livestock mobility reduction reported by 48% of the relays has led to the gathering of large numbers of animals in several localities in the regions of Segou (Cinzana, Baroueli Konobougou, Macina, Boky-were), Mopti (Konna, Ourbe-doube, Niacongo, Sio) and Gao

(Bagnadji, Djebock, Taboye, Tarkini, Bourem and Termera).

In Niger, 51% of the Relays reported a reduction in livestock movements. Most of the animals are concentrated in about ten zones (Sayam Forage, Gueskerou, Weltouma, Kello, Tessaoua, Guidan Sori, Roumbou, Dankassari, Yelou, Bankilare, Torodi and Bermo).

During the current transhumance campaign, 970 transhumant herds were recorded in these areas, led by 6,790 herders. These herds come from certain regions of Niger, but also from several neighbouring countries, namely Mali, Nigeria, Chad and Burkina Faso. While they wanted to pass through Niger to go to the coastal countries, many transhumant herds were unable to cross the borders of Nigeria and Benin.

In Senegal, herds with reduced mobility, according to 68% of the Relays, are concentrated in the areas of Diama, Bokhol, Galoya, Orkodjere, Moudery, Gabou, Balla, Kothiary, Sinthiou Malem and Darou Mousty.

Finally, in Côte d'Ivoire, 55% of the Relays reported that livestock mobility has decreased. This change is observed mainly in the northern part of the country.

Decline in the economic activities of pastoral and agro-pastoral households

The cross-border trade limitation has led to a **decline in the economic activities of pastoral and agro-pastoral households**, according to 37% of the relays. This has resulted in the closure of some livestock markets, making it impossible for pastoralists to sell their animals to buy the provisions they need. In addition, the decrease in commercial transactions has negatively affected the selling price of animals and has led to the unemployment of actors whose income depends exclusively on related activities carried out in livestock markets. With regard to the functioning of livestock markets, two groups can be distinguished: (i) a first group where markets have been kept open: Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Togo and Nigeria; and (ii) a second group where markets have been closed: Senegal (with 62% of the Relays reporting market closures) and Mauritania).

In countries where markets have remained open, however, there has been a decrease in livestock export flows (Burkina Faso) and a slowdown in activities (particularly in connection with the disruption of activities), disruptions in livestock prices and a deterioration in the terms of trade to the detriment of pastoralists (Niger).

Increased sale of animals

As a general rule, it is the sale of animals that enables herders to buy the provisions needed to feed the family, but also to cover health expenses, to cope with the difficulties encountered during transhumance, etc. The type of animal sold (male sheep, cull cow, bull calf, etc.) is often related to the amount of expenditure to be made.

The increase in livestock sales observed in all the areas covered by the monitoring may be explained by the need for families to buy food, but also to resolve the difficulties encountered in areas where herds are concentrated. The increase in animal sales is largest in Nigeria, with 80% of the Relays mentioning it, followed by Togo, with 68% and ending with Senegal, with 46%.

Box: Elements of market price information

In several countries, the data collected show an increase in the selling price of sheep on the markets, particularly in Benin (45% of the relays) and Mauritania (16%). A similar trend is observed for goats in markets in Nigeria (25% of the relays) and Burkina Faso (66%). On the other hand, in Mali, Niger and Senegal, the Relays report relative price stability for these two species.

Livestock sales strategies essentially involve the marketing of small ruminants, in line with the logic of strategic destocking, which consists of protecting large ruminants as much as possible, particularly breeding nuclei. A follow-up of livestock sales is necessary to better understand the evolution of the strategies that will be developed by livestock breeders in the coming months, depending on whether or not economic activities resume.

During the period under consideration (four weeks in May 2020), prices for animal feed (cottonseed cake) remained at almost the same level, as stocks were depleted.

With regard to foodstuffs, price stability was observed throughout the area covered by the monitoring mechanism, with a few exceptions: increase in rice and millet price in Burkina Faso, increase in the price of rice in Benin and decrease in the price of the same commodity in Côte d'Ivoire.

In general, the terms of trade for livestock/cereals are favourable to livestock farmers. In addition, feedstuffs are sold at relatively accessible prices in Benin, Togo and Côte d'Ivoire, which are production basins for these food inputs.

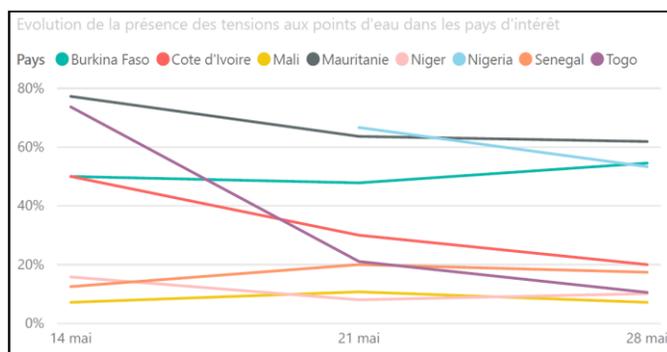


It is worth underlining the severity of the problems linked to the relaunch of the conflict, which had experienced a certain lull. The recent terrorist attacks that targeted livestock markets (the case of the Kompienbiga market in the eastern region of Burkina Faso) are likely to create a psychosis amongst livestock traders; which could lead them to desert the markets.

Access to water is a major factor in social tensions during the lean season.

The water point is the backbone of the pasture exploitation system, particularly in the dry season, as part of the operation of the pastoral livestock farming system. The main reason for mobility is to find water for the animals to drink. At this time of the year, the water points (temporary surface water) are dried up and the herders have recourse to the underground water table, which they exploit thanks to the installation of several types of hydraulic infrastructure (traditional wells, cemented wells, artesian wells and pumping stations).

The drying up of surface water is causing high concentrations of animals around modern water points, with the result that 23% of the relays reported an increased risk of conflict. This situation is all the more worrying as the maintenance of the curfew restricts the possibility of watering the animals during the night, while the crowd around the water points during the day makes it difficult to respect the mechanisms for regulating access to water. Added to this are the problems posed by the continued closure of borders as we enter the period of return to the home areas of previously transhumant herds.



The resurgence of conflicts

On top of the tensions around pastoral water points, a new phenomenon has emerged as a result of growing insecurity and the adoption by terrorist groups of new targets, in this case livestock markets.

- The attack on 30 May 2020 on the weekly livestock market in Kompienbiga in the eastern region of Burkina Faso resulted in the death of at least 25 people. It was preceded by the abduction and murder of 12 people at the livestock market of Penkiangou (a village in the municipality of Fada Ngourma), as well as the murder of 2 people at the livestock market of Namoungou (Gourma province);
- Similar acts were committed in Sollé in northern Burkina Faso, with the assassination by terrorist groups of 15 traders from the livestock market;
- An attack in Tillia (Tahoua department, Niger) resulted in the kidnapping and murder of 5 pastoralists.
- Violent and deadly community-based clashes are taking place in central Mali, which is currently one of the main theatres of operations for terrorist groups. The attacks perpetrated by these groups in central and northern Mali directly affect the civilian population and destabilize their activities, including pastoral mobility and trade.

Finally, it should be pointed out that the return of transhumant animals to their home areas, following the onset of the rainy season in the coastal countries, sometimes takes place under difficult conditions. Thus, conflicts have been recorded in some areas, including clashes between farmers and herders in the locality of Goungoun (commune of Malanville, Togo) which resulted in the death of 4 people and the slaughter of many cattle on 30 May 2020.

RECOPA counted 890 transhumant herders who went to Togo because they were unable to access Beninese territory. In the Eastern region as a whole, the number of transhumant herders is estimated at 1,772 (statistical data compiled by RECOPA and coming from the Regional Directorate in charge of livestock).

Faced with this situation, in the eastern region of Burkina Faso, RECOPA's pastoralist leaders have become fully involved in efforts to reduce tensions related to the management of water points and to mitigate vulnerabilities arising from civil insecurity.



A severe shortage of animal feed

The functioning of the feed chain is highly disorganized during this pandemic period due to several factors: slowdown of commercial activities and tensions on imported raw materials (soybean meal and wheat bran) which are used by factories specialized in the sale of animal feed. In normal times, pastoral areas are at a disadvantage compared to agro-pastoral and peri-urban areas in the competition for access to feed. Currently, the difficulties are aggravated by the constraints arising from the health crisis and many pastoral areas are facing an early shortage of feed (79% of the Relays in Gao (Mali) mentioned this, 53% in Niger, 33% in Senegal and 48% in Mauritania).

Generally speaking, these shortages are significant in areas where transhumant herds retreat.

- In Mali, 79% of the Relays mentioned the lack of feed inputs in local markets, particularly in the Gao region;
- In Burkina Faso, severe feed shortages are noted in the commune of Logobou, the sectors of Tansarga and Gounderé, as well as in the pastoral zone of Deou;
- In Niger, 54% of the Relays reported a critical feed shortage in several areas where herds are concentrated and where the feed input supply system is no longer functional (Dosso, Diffa, Bankilare and Mangayze);
- In Northern Nigeria, feed shortages are observed in areas of animal concentration;
- In Senegal, 33% of the Relays reported that feed stocks are depleted in areas where transhumant herds are retreating.

The only exception to this overall picture is the situation in Benin, where there are unsold stocks of animal feed due to the start of the rainy season, which has favoured the emergence of pasture. This shows the relevance of promoting the regional integration of the livestock feed market

Population gatherings continue

Despite the prohibition measures and the intensification of awareness-raising actions whose implementation is mentioned by 77% of the Relays, 55% of the Relays indicate that rallies are still organised. This situation raises questions about the effectiveness of these awareness-raising campaigns. 46% of the Relays consider that they are ineffective and unsuited to pastoral realities.

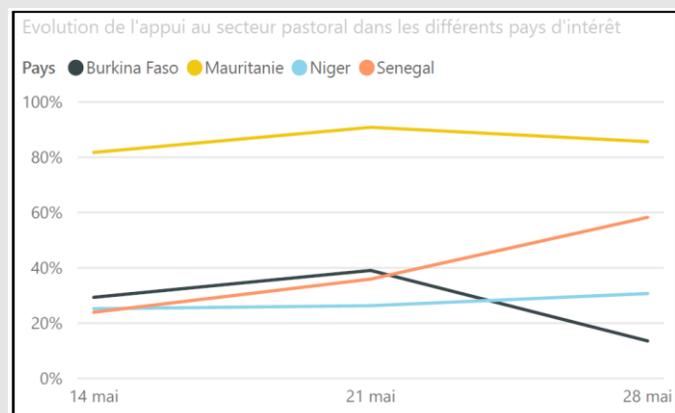
ALERTS

Keeping the focus on the security issue

The security threat remains very high in several Sahelian countries. Consequently, the mobilization of energies in the context of the response to COVID-19 must not lead to a reduction in the attention and priority given to the issue of conflict prevention and insecurity. This is all the more important since the return of transhumants in a context where animal movements are strongly disrupted by insecurity could lead to an increase in conflicts between the various users of rural areas.

Better inclusion of the livestock sector in COVID-19 national response plans

Several countries in the Sahel and West Africa have developed national response plans to COVID-19 and have put in place mechanisms for mobilizing their own and external financial resources. In general, these plans include a specific component to support the livestock sector. However, the following graph shows that apart from Mauritania where the majority of the Relays reported support to the livestock sector, **support remains limited or even absent** in most of the areas monitored. Thus, 74% of the Relays consider that support for the pastoral sector by public authorities and cooperation agencies is absent.



RECOMMENDATIONS

This is a concern in view of the warning signs on the difficult pastoral lean season, the impacts of which will be amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic. The exploitation of the data collected leads to drawing attention to:

- The need to alleviate the shortage of animal feed in Mauritania where the national pandemic response programme is being implemented;
- The need to provide more consistent and better targeted support to Senegalese livestock farmers in the context of the implementation of the programme developed by the government;

Facilitation and support for transhumant herders seeking to leave coastal countries

With the closure of borders due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the measures taken by some States to prohibit the entry of transhumant herders into their territories, transhumant herders have developed bypass strategies to access fallback areas, using illegal routes. This fraudulent practice has enabled many transhumant herders to evade payment of taxes. It is essential that the public authorities of coastal countries facilitate the exit of all transhumant herders by offering them the possibility of passing through official exit gates, while exempting them from the payment of the tax.

Alert on increased sale of animals

Faced with the difficulties they encounter, pastoralists have developed market access strategies, including increasing the sale of animals, as evidenced by the data provided by 53% of the Relays. This increase is explained by the need for families to buy food and to overcome the difficulties encountered in areas where herds are concentrated. The increase in sale of animals is highest in Nigeria with 80% of the Relays mentioning this, followed by Togo with 68%. This results in a **strong pressure on productive capital** which can be analysed as an option in favour of **strategic destocking, but also as a sign of a difficult pastoral lean season**, taking into account the fact that livestock mobility is declining.

- The public authorities should pay close attention to the increased health risks to which livestock farmers are exposed as a result of the reduced mobility of livestock and the concentration of large numbers of people in areas where animals are concentrated, which creates conditions for the virus to spread. At the same time, the persistence of insecurity results in the disruption of health services in large areas that are neglected by the public authorities, where livestock farmers and their families cannot benefit from the necessary preventive and curative measures. The security threat also leads to massive displacement of populations who are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 because of the unhealthy conditions in the areas where displaced persons and refugees are concentrated;

- Regional and national policy-makers should carry out coordinated interventions and initiate bilateral consultations aimed at facilitating the return of transhumant herders to their home areas. To this end, humanitarian corridors and mechanisms to facilitate the mobility of livestock should be set up, particularly in countries through which transhumant herders will transit, such as Burkina Faso;

- The public authorities of Senegal, Mauritania and Mali should set up a mechanism to facilitate cross-border livestock flows, with a view to promoting the proper supply of the Senegalese consumer markets with sheep during the period preceding the Tabaski festival. In the short term, the Regional Economic Communities should make a strong and convincing case for a coordinated reopening of borders, with a view to encouraging the resumption of cross-border pastoral mobility;

- Regional and national decision-makers should support the consolidation of the monitoring and analysis systems that are currently in place, so that they can continue to provide updated data on the situation prevailing in pastoral and agro-pastoral areas.

Project supported by :



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