

The monitoring system set up by ACF and RBM to measure the economic impacts of COVID-19 on pastoral populations is based on the optimization of existing systems, particularly the pastoral monitoring systems established by the two organisations. This specific monitoring system has been designed to provide, on a weekly basis, information on the pastoral situation in this era of coronavirus via a public analysis platform. The present document, which is the third issue of the monitoring report, provides a comparative analysis of the data collected during the months of July and August 2020.

The dashboard is available [here](#).

KEY ALERT MESSAGES

The rainy season is now well established in the West Africa sub-region including in the Sahel countries where overall rainfall was heavy in August. Pastures have regenerated and ponds are filling up well. The body condition of livestock has improved as their diet is now adequately provided.

Livestock farmers are emerging from the lean season. This may lead them to forget the hard times they have suffered and leave behind those who have been severely affected in recent months by the shortage of fodder, feed and water on the roadside.

During the past period, prolonged fodder shortages and movement restrictions have hindered the mobility of pastoralists to access areas with natural resources, as well as their feed supply. A large number of pastoralists in **Chad** and **Niger** have lost animals or witnessed a deterioration in the body condition of their herds during the lean season.

These pastoralists with reduced livelihoods should receive immediate support to feed their families and livestock. Measures should also be implemented to revitalize their economies through support for livestock rebuilding.

The lifting of the restrictions that were imposed by the States to control the spread of the COVID 19 pandemic is increasingly effective (cancellation of the ban on organising ceremonies and meetings, reopening of schools, places of worship and recreation, free movement of people within countries); this is likely to increase the number of public and private gatherings.

The low level of attendance at health care centres could lead people to believe that the pandemic is not yet affecting the rural world. In fact, there are no data to measure the prevalence of COVID-19 in the countryside simply because tests are not carried out there.

Project coverage area

It includes the ACF and RBM intervention zones. These zones are pastoral sub-areas located in about ten countries. Information is collected and reported in each of these sub-areas by RBM member organisations, namely: TASSAGHT in Mali; AREN in Niger; CRUS and RECOPA in Burkina Faso; ADENA in Senegal; GNAF in Mauritania; PAT-Togo in Togo; ANOPER in Benin; BILPAN in Nigeria; OPEF in Côte d'Ivoire; COPAFIB in Chad. This monitoring effort is supported by the decentralised technical services in Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso.

The effectiveness of the awareness campaigns has not improved significantly. It is clear that more and more people in both urban and rural areas remain incredulous about the coronavirus pandemic, even though the virus is actively circulating, at least in urban centres. Now that rural people can travel to the cities, they are at risk of becoming infected and returning to spread the disease within their communities..



Figure 1: Cattle swept away by run-off water, Konni, NIGER, August 2020

The return of a very wet rainy season

In April 2020, the World Meteorological Organisation published seasonal forecasts announcing that the coming rainy season would be globally wet. According to these forecasts, rainfall amounts greater than or equivalent to the 1981-2010 seasonal averages are expected over the entire Sahelian strip. This is confirmed by the abundant rainfall recorded since the start of the rainy season. Moreover, August was marked in several Sahelian countries by heavy rains.

While the rains helped regenerate pastures and fill the ponds, they also caused significant damage.

The large amounts of rainfall that fell within a few hours had disastrous consequences, including the death of animals weakened by the long lean season and floods resulting in loss of life, destruction of homes, infrastructure and crops.

By way of illustration, the floods in **Oly** in the northern Maradi region of Niger caused **934 victims** belonging to **300 families**. These families lost **650 head** of livestock and **145 granaries**. Such a disaster further weakens the resilience of communities that are already suffering from the long dry season.

It also highlights the need to strengthen the consideration of disaster prevention and risk mitigation requirements in public policies.

Reduction in herd movements, most of which have now been stabilized.

From **60%** in May 2020, at the peak of the pastoral lean season, the percentage of Relays observing a reduction in livestock movements fell to **49%** in August, an average drop of **11%** over the entire observation zone.

This decline appears to be relatively small as it is over a four-month period. Moreover, the average mentioned hides large disparities between countries.

Thus, herd stabilization has become widespread in **Togo**, with **100%** of the Relays noting a reduction in animal movements.

Herds are almost entirely stable in **Côte d'Ivoire** where the percentage of Relays noting a reduction in movements has gone from **89** to **98%**.

At the opposite extreme, the Beninese herd remains highly mobile within the national borders. In August, no Relay reported a reduction in livestock mobility.

In **Nigeria**, restrictions on livestock movements have decreased sharply: only **13%** of the Relays reported a reduction in animal movements in August, compared to **40%** in May.

Reduced feed requirements and alleviation of stock shortages

The good rainfall recorded this year improves the situation of the pastures whose abundance reduces the need for animal feed.

After reaching its peak in May and June, with a perception rate of **44%**, the shortage of livestock feed is now less acute (perception rate of **35%** in August).

At the regional level, the perception of feed shortages has thus declined by **9%**. In Mali, where pastoralists were hard hit at the peak of the pastoral season, only **8%** of the Relays reported a shortage of feed in August. The same trend is observed in **Chad**, where the proportion of Relays reporting a shortage of feed decreased from **67%** in June, to **37%** in July and **0%** in August.



Figure 2: Cattle herd in pasture, municipality of Sio, cercle of Mopti, August 2020

Sharp drop in tension around the water points: a sign of clearly improved surface water availability

Only **11%** of the Relays reported the existence of tension around water points. This suggests that there is a clear improvement in the availability of surface water, which would help to reduce competition for access to drinking water.

At the regional level, **27%** of the Relays reported conflicts around water points in May, **23%** in June and **19%** in July. There has been a constant decrease since May and a **16%** reduction between May and August 2020.

Even in **Burkina Faso**, where high tensions were reported in July around pastoral water points (**59%** of the Relays), the situation has changed favourably, since the proportion stood at only **30%** in August, i.e., a drop of **29%** within one month.

Other significant improvements are also noted in several other countries: (i) **Mauritania**, where the proportion fell from **40%** to **24%**, a drop of **16%**; (ii) **Nigeria**, which recorded a drop of **22%** (**5%** in August, compared to **27%** in July); and (iii) **Chad**, where no Relays reported tension around water points (a drop of **22%** compared to July).

Support for pastoralists remains at the same level

Due to the smooth running of the pastoral campaign, the support provided to pastoralists as part of the pastoral lean season and the COVID-19's pandemic response strategies stabilized from May to June, and remained around **25%** in July.

Overall, this support remained at the same regional average in August (**23%**). A decline in the perception of support was noted in the two countries where pastoralists have benefited the most from support from public authorities and cooperation partners.

Thus, in **Mauritania**, the proportion fell from **77%** in July to **60%** in August, i.e. **-17%**. In Senegal, it fell by **6%** (**56%** in July, compared to **50%** in August).

In **Burkina Faso**, where the rate was already very low in July (**16%**), it fell further and stood at only **5%** at the end of August. In **Côte d'Ivoire**, **Chad**, **Mali** and **Togo**, livestock farmers receive almost no support, according to the testimonies of the Relays.

Economic activities almost completely recovered

The average rate of Relays reporting a cessation of economic activity is steadily and gradually declining all over the entire observation area.

It fell from **46%** in May, to **30%** in June, **21%** in July and **17%** in August, a significant drop of **29%** within four months.

As in July, no cessation of economic activities was reported by the Relays of **Côte d'Ivoire** and **Togo**. Low rates with a negative gap between July and August were recorded in several countries: in **Benin**, the rate fell from **11%** to **8%** (**-3%**), in **Burkina Faso**, from **3%** to **1%** (**-2%**) and in **Chad**, from **4%** to **0%** (**-4%**). The situation in **Mauritania** is characterised by a good improvement in the rate, which fell from **44%** to **28%** (**-16%**). The rate remains below average in **Senegal**, with **41%** in August compared to **43%** in July.

In the current period, the COVID-19 pandemic no longer seems to have an impact on the opening of markets. The market opening rate has improved by 2 points, from **95%** in July to **97%** in August.

As noted in July, **100%** of the Relays reported that markets are open in **Benin**, **Côte d'Ivoire**, **Mali**, and **Chad**. The situation is almost similar in **Burkina Faso** and **Niger** (**97%**), **Senegal** (**96%**), and **Mauritania** (**95%**). In **Nigeria**, market opening rate also improved from **68%** to **100%**, **32%** better than in July.

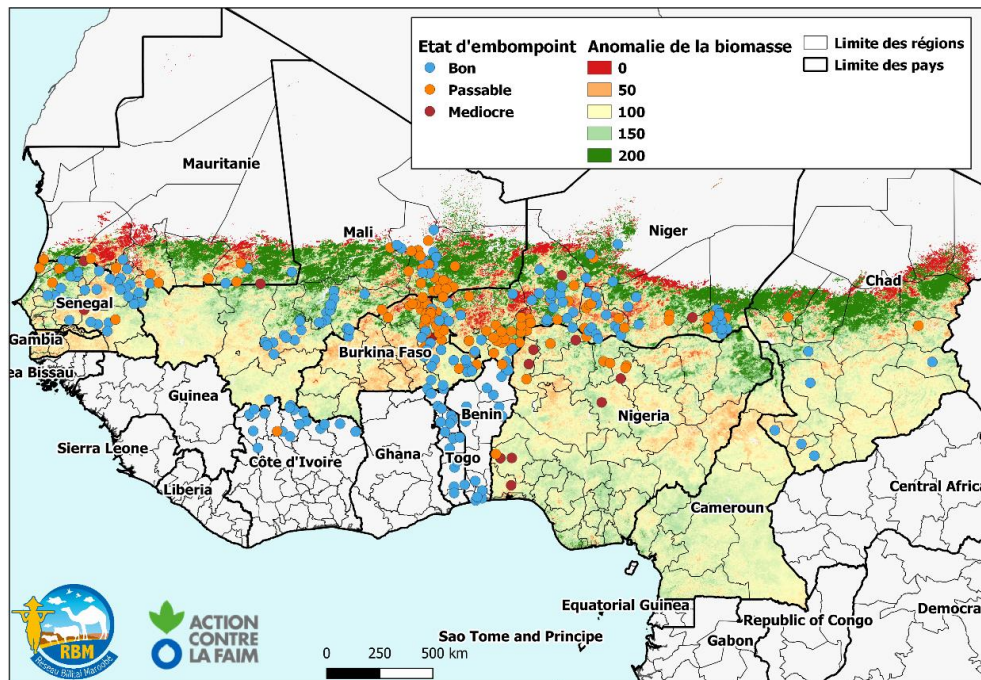
After the good deals that the pastoralists achieved in July due to the increase in sales and prices of small ruminants on the eve of the Tabaski festival, the average regional rate of increase in sales fell by **8%**, from **79%** to **71%**. After the peak of the Tabaski period, **Senegal** recorded the largest drop in sales.

Indeed, the rate of increase in animal sales dropped from **88%** to **55%**, i.e. **-32%**. It is followed by **Côte d'Ivoire** (**-28%**) and **Togo** (**-26%**). On the other hand, in **Nigeria** there was a clear increase in sales of **34%** (**92%** in August, compared to **57%** in July).

This is due to the acquisition of animals to compensate for the important destocking of livestock during the Tabaski period. Another explanatory factor is the increase in sales, in order to avoid livestock theft, which has become a critical phenomenon due to the growing insecurity prevailing in the **North-Western** and **North-Central** States. **Chad** also recorded a **19%** increase in sales (**67%** in August, compared to **48%** in July).

Improved livestock body condition

The good progress of the rainy season has improved the body condition of the livestock. On a regional average, the "good body condition" rate increased from **28%** in July to **49%** in August. There are almost no more animals in critical or poor condition. The best fed livestock with **100%** "good body condition" are found in coastal countries, such as **Benin, Côte d'Ivoire** and **Togo**. In the Sahel, the general body condition of the animals also improved in **Mali (64%), Senegal (62%)** and **Mauritania (46%)**..



Map 1: Livestock body condition and biomass anomaly

Decline in livestock prices

Livestock selling prices are not better. At the regional level, the average price of goats fell by **3,000 CFA francs** and that of sheep by **10,800 CFA francs** between July and August.

While Senegalese goat breeders are doing well with a relatively stable price (around **32,000 CFA francs** per head), they are getting a bad price for sheep (price drop of more than **27,000 CFA francs** per head). The drop in prices is even more pronounced in **Côte d'Ivoire**, where pastoralists are losing **35,700 F CFA** per sheep.

This is due to the fact that, at this time of the year, transhumant pastoralists have to move up north.

Therefore, they sell animals to cover the expenses related to the movement of the herds. Data collected in **Benin** and **Mauritania** show a slight increase of **9%** and **5%** respectively.

The increase in animal sales in **Benin** is linked to two main factors: (i) increased consumption of ruminant meat by households, due to the outbreak of an avian disease; and (ii) increased demand for meat following the reopening of school canteens.

With regard to **Mauritania**, it should be noted that the good progress of the pastoral campaign and agricultural prospects encourage the acquisition of animals with a view to rebuilding or increasing the herd.

PRIX CAPRIN			
PAYS	JUILLET	AOUT	Delta
Benin	28 569	26 615	- 1 954
Burkina Faso	29 279	28 433	- 846
Cote d'Ivoire	32 200	24 125	- 8 075
Mali	28 905	24 225	- 4 680
Niger	25 120	21 673	- 3 447
Senegal	31 735	32 423	688
Tchad	18 426	15 833	- 2 593
Togo	34 379	32 592	- 1 787
Regional	28 364	25 342	- 3 022

Table 1: Goat prices in July and August

PRIX Ovin			
PAYS	JUILLET	AOUT	Delta
Benin	45 833	42 354	- 3 479
Burkina Faso	59 877	60 496	619
Cote d'Ivoire	85 000	49 250	- 35 750
Mali	59 775	48 306	- 11 469
Niger	54 728	48 154	- 6 574
Senegal	104 421	77 333	- 27 088
Tchad	28 889	22 500	- 6 389
Togo	85 463	72 763	- 12 700
Regional	64 718	53 938	- 10 780

Table 2: Sheep prices in July and August

On a regional average, cereal prices rose very slightly from July to August (an increase of **20 CFA francs per kilogramme** for rice and **13 CFA francs per kilogramme** for millet).

However, this increase in the price of agricultural products is not likely to cause a deterioration in the terms of trade for livestock/cereals to the detriment of livestock farmers. Throughout the observation zone, the terms of trade are about one **he-goat/100 kg of millet**, except in **Chad**, where it is **2 he-goats/100 kg of millet**.

At first glance, the rural environment seems to be little affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, even if the state of the health crisis is poorly known due to the weakness of the means of screening.

As a result of the easing of restrictive measures imposed by the public authorities to contain the pandemic (reopening of places of worship and markets, authorisation of public and private gatherings), the Relays note an increase in the number of people attending weddings, baptisms and funerals.

From **49%** in June, the proportion of Relays reporting gatherings rose to **62%** in August, an increase of **13%** within one quarter.

As in previous months, it is in **Côte d'Ivoire** that gatherings are most frequent (**100%** of the Relays). The countries that follow in descending order are: (i) **Nigeria** where the proportion rose from **33%** in July to **93%** in August; (ii) **Togo (89%)**; and (iii) **Mauritania, Senegal** and **Chad** around **80%**.

The increase in the frequency of gatherings must be correlated with the impact of awareness campaigns.

The effectiveness of these actions stagnated at around **60%** (with a slight increase from **57%** in July to **58%** in August). A decrease is noted in **Burkina Faso**, where the proportion fell from **70%** to **63%** between July and August.

Data collected in **Côte d'Ivoire** show a drastic drop (**57%** in July, compared to **0%** in August).

As if to confirm the low spread of COVID-19 in the countryside, the attendance rate in health care centres remains stable with **17%** in June, **14%** in July and **16%** in August. The slight increase from July to August is mainly due to the resurgence of malaria and waterborne diseases related to the rainy season.

The lifting of state-imposed restrictions encourages the resumption of economic activities. Most markets are open and sales are rife, even in this post-tabaski period.

Livestock prices are on a downward trend, but remain at an acceptable level, thanks to the improvement in the livestock body condition, which is a sign of a good pastoral campaign (availability of green fodder and water). Cereal prices have begun an upward trend that usually occurs during the lean season and will continue until the next harvest.

For the time being, this increase in grain prices does not negatively affect the terms of trade for livestock/cereals.

The relaxation of public measures to combat the coronavirus, the communities' disbelief in the face of the pandemic, and the low effectiveness of awareness campaigns are all generating a complacency of the population.

Gatherings have become increasingly frequent in most of the countries covered by the monitoring system. While the number of medical consultations has slightly increased in rural areas, this is mainly due to the resurgence of malaria and waterborne diseases.

The data collected in August suggest that pastoralists are emerging from the lean season and that the resumption of economic activities has become effective.

However, this fact should not make us forget the situation of pastoralist families who have been severely affected by the long and difficult pastoral lean season of the year 2020.



Figure 3: Food distribution with the financial support of the SDC in Gadabegi, NIGER, August 2020

It should also be kept in mind that the virus responsible for COVID-19 continues to spread in urban centres. Therefore, pastoralists who go there could become vectors for the spread of the virus within their communities.

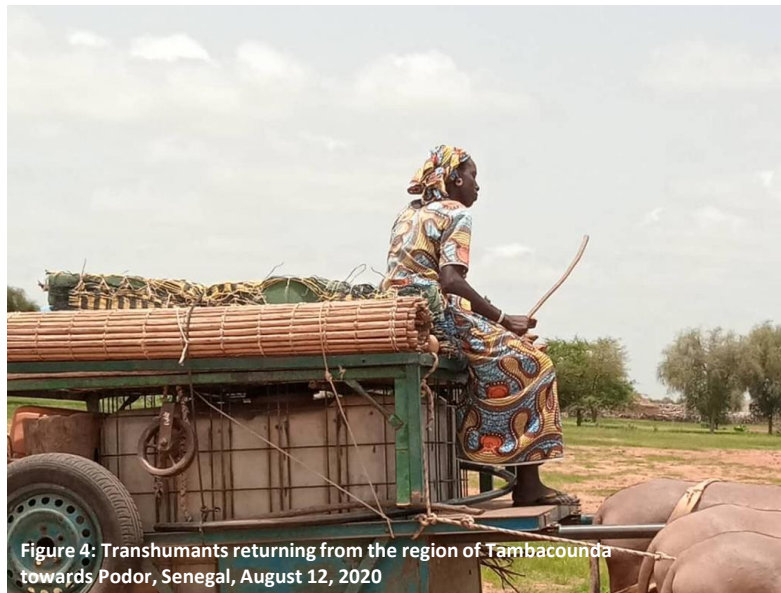


Figure 4: Transhumants returning from the region of Tambacounda towards Podor, Senegal, August 12, 2020

Recommendations

To States, TFPs and pastoralists' organisations

- Provide disaster-stricken pastoralists with an emergency assistance to meet two objectives: strengthen the application of health protection measures for these herders, in order to prevent their places of residence from becoming a coronavirus cluster and to support the revival of the economies of pastoral households, with emphasis on the distribution of cereals and feed, as well as vaccination and veterinary care;
- Improve the effectiveness of awareness campaigns on COVID-19, with an emphasis on broadcasting programmes in local languages by community radio stations, in order to reach the targets in pastoral areas;
- Strengthen the resources to ensure the continuity of the monitoring of the pastoral situation, in order to understand the socio-economic changes at the level of households that have been severely affected by the pastoral lean season, but also to have data to better anticipate and manage future lean seasons;
- Improve the consideration of the effects and impacts of climate change in existing monitoring systems, in order to improve the effectiveness of decision support tools;
- Ensure that the amount of energy mobilised in response to the COVID-19 pandemic does not lead to lower attention being paid to the assessment of the 2019-2020 transhumance campaign and the preparation of the next campaign.

Project sponsored by:



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