



## BI-MONTHLY BULLETIN ON INFORMATION WATCH AND IMPACT OF COVID 19 ON PASTORAL HOUSEHOLDS AGRO-PASTORAL



**FEBRUARY 2021**

The monitoring system set up by the Réseau Bilateral Marrobre (RBM) and Action Against Hunger (AAH) to measure the economic impacts of COVID-19 on pastoral populations is based on the optimisation of existing systems (information monitoring, alert/prevention/conflict, mapping of transhumance movements), established by pastoral organisations and key informants. This system has received additional support from the following technical and financial partners: IOM, CARE and the GIZ. The combined information systems provide, on a periodic basis: (i) information on the situation of pastoral households, (ii) mapping of herders and animals currently blocked in southern/Coastal countries (Benin, Togo, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire) due to sanitary and political measures in the context of the pandemic; (iii) identification of assembly points currently in use as a result of mobility restrictions.

This information can be viewed through several public analysis platforms. [Link to Dashboard](#); [Dashboard Alerts](#); [Dashboard Pastoral Watch, DTM](#)

## Areas covered by the monitoring systems

It groups together the intervention zones of RBM and AAH. These areas are pastoral sub-areas in 9 countries. The members of the RBM in the countries are as follow: Mali (TASSAGHT), Niger (AREN, GAJEL), Burkina Faso (CRUS, RECOA), Senegal (ADENA), Mauritania (GNAP), Togo (PAT-Togo), Benin (ANOPER), Nigeria (BILPAN), Ivory Coast (OPEF). The systems also receive the support of the decentralised technical services of Mali, Niger and Burkina-Faso

## Warnings

In total, 1.5 million animals and over 57,000 herders were identified during this exercise and are considered blocked along the central transhumance corridor. Of those blocked, 43% of the herders were blocked for security reasons (unsafe route), 30% for reasons related to COVID-19 (mobility restrictions) and 26% for other reasons such as unilateral decisions by states or lack of pasture and available grazing on the planned route.

## Warnings linked to specific events

Alerts on events mainly concern attacks by armed groups (35%), agro-pastoral conflicts (29%), inter-community tensions (6%) and natural disasters (10%) such as bushfires (linked to seasonality). The actors directly involved in conflict resolution are mainly pastoralist organisations (29%), community leaders (22%), traditional chiefs (20%) and local authorities (16%). The commitment of these actors to the management and peaceful negotiated resolution of these events has undoubtedly had an effect on the relatively low number of deaths (80% of informants claim that there were no casualties) and forced displacement (69% of informants claim that there were no displaced persons as a result of the conflicts).

[Some successful experiences worth replicating:](#)

[Agreement on "open grazing" between pastoralists and farmers in Kardi district \(Kebbi, Nigeria\) \(prevention alert\).](#)

Reacting to the resurgence of conflicts between farmers and pastoralists in Sabon Gari Town, Kardi District of Kebbi State, Nigeria, the authorities have organised a dialogue this year involving all stakeholders. Both farmers and herders shared their problems. The settlement reached required herders not to graze their cattle in harvested fields until a message was sent to them. Farmers are asked not to burn their crop residues but to enter into a mutually beneficial relationship so that the herders use the residues for the animals. Grazing hours were also agreed upon between 6am and 6pm. A committee has been set up to resolve any problems that may arise.

A herder-farmer conflict resolution committee in Sabon Garin Goru Birnin Kebbi, Kebbi State Local Government Area, has observed that young herders are grazing cattle in the lowlands, causing

destruction of dry season crops. A stakeholder meeting resulted in the adoption of negotiated rules of conduct for herders and farmers.

### Box: Boycott of a livestock market by transhumant herders

In a context marked by the exacerbation of competition between different groups of actors for access to natural resources and economic opportunities, herders seek to consolidate their capacity for action and to defend their interests, using several leverages, in particular the formation of alliances at strategic points of mobility and the boycott of livestock markets in hostile communes. The latter strategy, developed by herders to demonstrate their dissatisfaction with certain constraints, is known as 'Dangol'. It is a well-known system in the Fulani pastoral environment. Recently, the Cinkansé market in northern Togo was boycotted following a dispute over the sale of beef at the market by Burkinabe traders. Local people claimed ownership of the animal. After a judgement in their favour, the Burkinabe traders and transhumant herders created a competing livestock market just across the road on Burkinabe territory, which had the direct effect of considerably reducing the number of animals offered for sale at the Cinkansé market.

### Prevention Alert

- From these movement alerts, it was found that 43.2% of the registered herds are between 101 and 500 animals;
- Of these, a third, or about 33% of the herds, are guarded by a team of herdsmen with a staff of between 1 and 5. This number is lower than the norms required by Decision A/DEC.5/10/98 on the regulation of transhumance between ECOWAS member states, which is 1 shepherd for every 50 head of animals;
- The potential causes of conflict are climatic variability and apparently competing adaptation strategies (particularly around so-called natural resources), damage to fields, and the early crossing of borders by animals, with percentages of 26%, 22% and 21% respectively.

According to the information collected, the actors involved in the resolution of this type of conflict are farmers and herders (30%), pastoralist organisations (30%) and local authorities (27%).

## Transhumance herders blocked in cross-border areas

In February, around 57,000 farmers were stranded in cross-border areas.

In the framework of the internal transhumance, more than 24,000 herders accompanying about 667,000 head were blocked. In the framework of cross-border transhumance, 32,834 herders and 821,967 head of animals were blocked.

### Éleveurs transhumants bloqués le long du Couloir Central de Transhumance

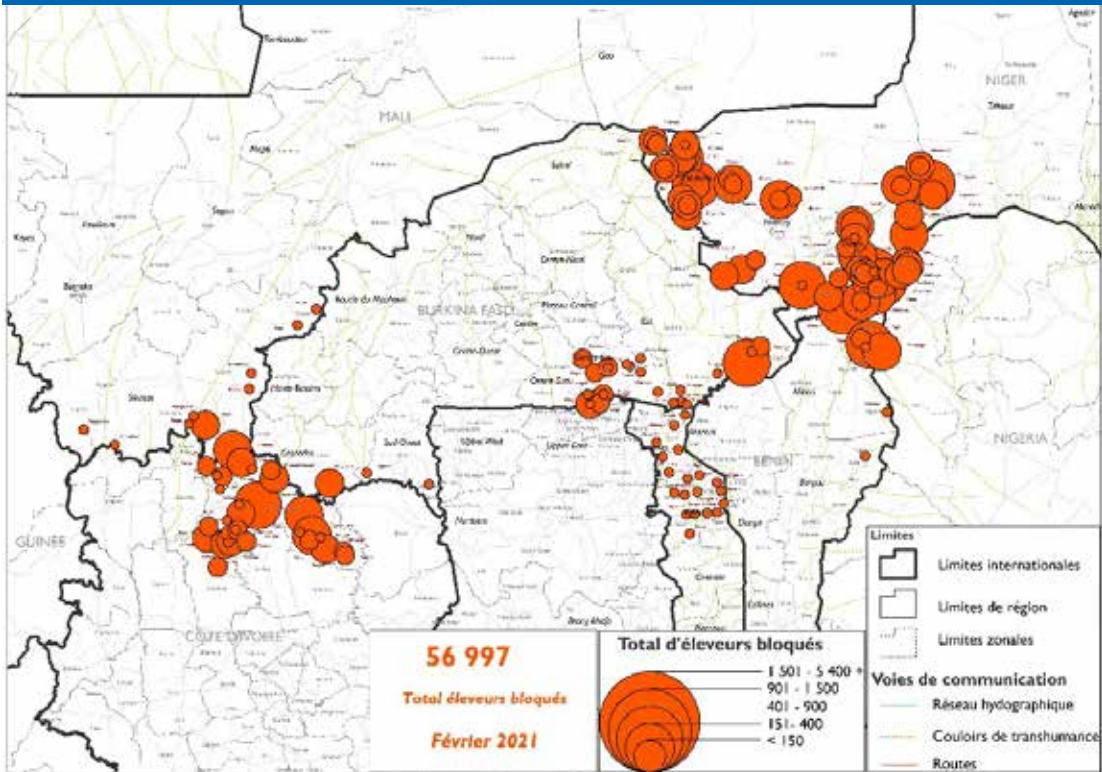
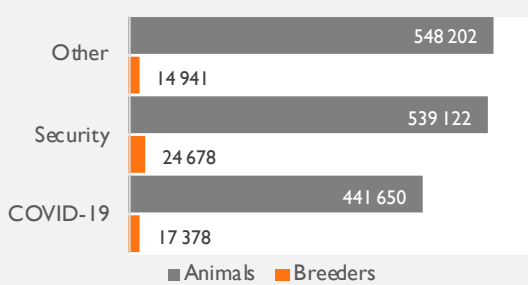
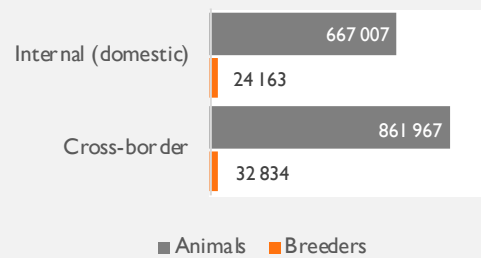


Chart 2. Reasons for blocking (# of animals)



Graph 1. Type of transhumance (# of animals)



## Focus on the main reasons for the blockage of animals and farmers

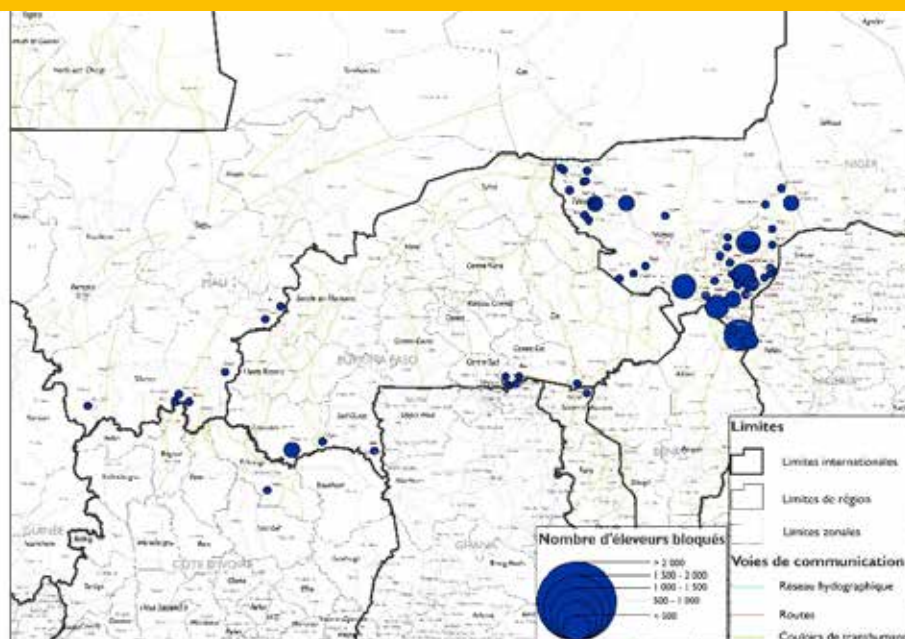
The blockage of herd movements is linked to several factors, including the implementation of policy measures adopted as part of the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, the deteriorating security situation and the lack of grazing land.

## On policy measures to combat the COVID-19 pandemic

Throughout the observation zone, the relays report that more than 17,000 herders and 450,000 heads of animals are blocked because of constraints related to the implementation of policy measures to combat the coronavirus pandemic. These transhumant herders are concentrated mainly in the regions

of Tillabéry and Dosso (in Niger) and, to a lesser extent, in the Mali/Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso/Côte d'Ivoire border areas. In Burkina Faso, blocked transhumant are mainly located in the cross-border areas of the Cascades, South-West, Centre-South and Centre-East regions.

### Transhumant herders blocked along the Central Transhumance Corridor – COVID-19



#### Box: Economic impact of the suspension of cross-border transhumance

The postponement by the Togolese authorities of the opening of the cross-border transhumance campaign, initially scheduled for 31 January 2021, has blocked the herds and considerably reduced the supply of livestock on the border market of Koundjoaré (Savanes region), which is located near the main entry point for transhumants into Togo. As a result, the selling price of an adult ox has increased by 10 to 25%, which has an impact on the price of beef.

Several related activities linked to transhumance are slowing down. For example, in the northern region of Togo, where ploughing is widely practised, farmers are finding it difficult to acquire or replace their draught oxen.

In addition to the loss of income for the commune due to the loss of taxes on the sale of animals, several other activities, such as the sale of salt, are in decline. During the transhumance, women obtain a high income by selling a large quantity of salt to the transhumants, who use this product to supplement the food of their animals. This year, women salt traders are left with large stocks that they are unable to sell.

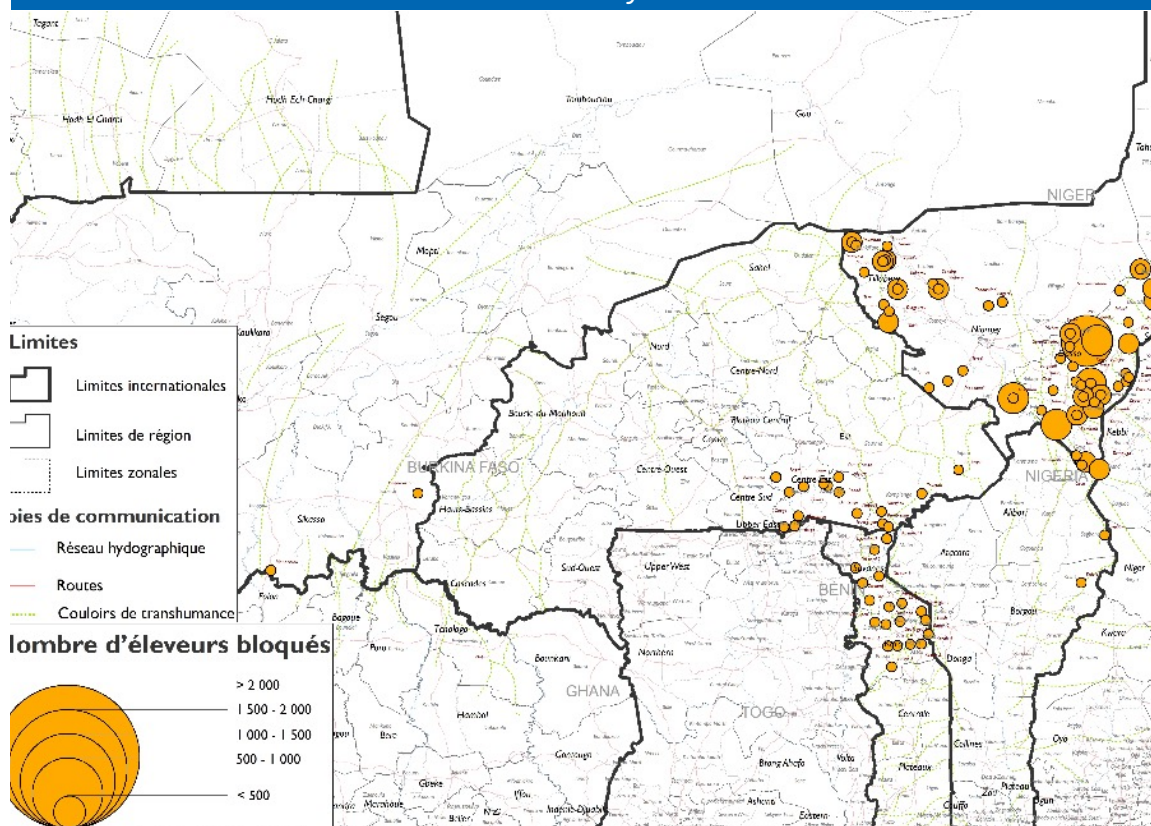
The restaurant owners in the livestock markets have seen their clientele, usually numerous at this time of year, decrease considerably. Similarly, private veterinarians have seen a drop in turnover due to their inability to offer services to transhumant animals.

According to some sources, more than a billion CFA francs are spent during each season by transhumant herders. These sums are spent mainly on the purchase of basic necessities (food, veterinary products and care) and the payment of various taxes.  
Sources: NZARA News, Togo

## On the security context

The monitoring of transhumance movements has also revealed areas of blockage due to security issues. This situation concerns more than 24,000 herders and 539,000 animals. These are mainly the Dosso and Tillabéry regions in Niger, the East and Centre-East of Burkina Faso and the Savanes region of Togo.

### Transhumant herders blocked along the Central Transhumance Corridor – Security



## On other factors

Other factors are responsible for the blockage of the herds. Overall, this situation concerns more than 14,000 herders and around 500,000 head. In the Poro and Tchologo regions of Côte d'Ivoire, for example, farmers are blocked because of difficulties linked to climatic conditions. In the eastern region of Burkina Faso, herders are forced to postpone the movement of their herds because of the closure of borders. The same is true in the Dosso region of Niger, where the interruption of livestock mobility is linked to border closures and other factors.

## Focus on the unusual displacement of Nigerian herders towards neighbouring Niger, in a context of worsening insecurity in the Maradi region

Unusual movements have been observed between northern Nigeria and the border regions of Niger. This is a massive displacement of herders from Nigeria who have deserted areas plagued by intercommunal and ethnic conflicts. These herder families have found refuge in Niger, in the regions of Maradi and Tahoua (Bangui and Illela communes, Madaoua department).

It is worth mentioning that some states in Nigeria are experiencing an escalation of violence due to increased attacks by terrorist groups and armed bandits. These are mainly Borno, Katsina, Zafara, Jigawa and Sokoto States. As a result of the growing security threat, there are increasing flows of refugees into Niger in the border communities with Nigeria. These refugees include a significant number of herders and agro-pastoralists. Currently, around 100,000 refugees are registered (77,000 of them Nigerian nationals) in the Maradi region. The rural commune of Bangui (Madaoua department in the Tahoua region) is hosting 885 refugees and displaced persons from several Nigerian localities (Goundoummi, Sabon Birni, Guidan Tcera, Garki, Téké, Zafara, Kogara, Tsamayé, Tara and Sanguerawa).

According to information from RBM's network members, a refugee and IDP site has been established in the Botsé area to accommodate pastoralists fleeing the prevailing insecurity in the Nigerian border states. In these areas, hostility and conflict between communities has reached such a high level that pastoralist communities feel persecuted.

At the same time, the security situation in the Maradi region of Niger is deteriorating, linked to the presence of groups of armed individuals in the southern part of the region (particularly in the departments of Madarounfa and Guidan Roudji). The recurrent attacks perpetrated by these armed bandits have created a climate of insecurity, affecting the living conditions of the populations in the affected areas (the communes of Gabi and Guidan Sori, in this case) and causing significant displacement of people. Pastoral communities are affected by this security crisis, which tends to increase cattle rustling, kidnapping for ransom and other forms of abuse.

Faced with armed violence, the victims chose to flee their home areas, abandoning their belongings, including animals, to save their lives. Some took refuge in the northern part of the region, more precisely in the department of Dakoro (Sabon Machi and Kornaka). Other families have retreated to the outskirts of the town of Guidan Roudji and the commune of Chadakori.

To date, the refugee and internally displaced pastoralists have not benefited from any humanitarian assistance. Those living in the countryside have created hamlets where they live in precarious conditions (e.g. Botsé site, south of Roundouna village). According to initial information collected, more than 1,000 households are currently grouped together in makeshift shelters built in the area.

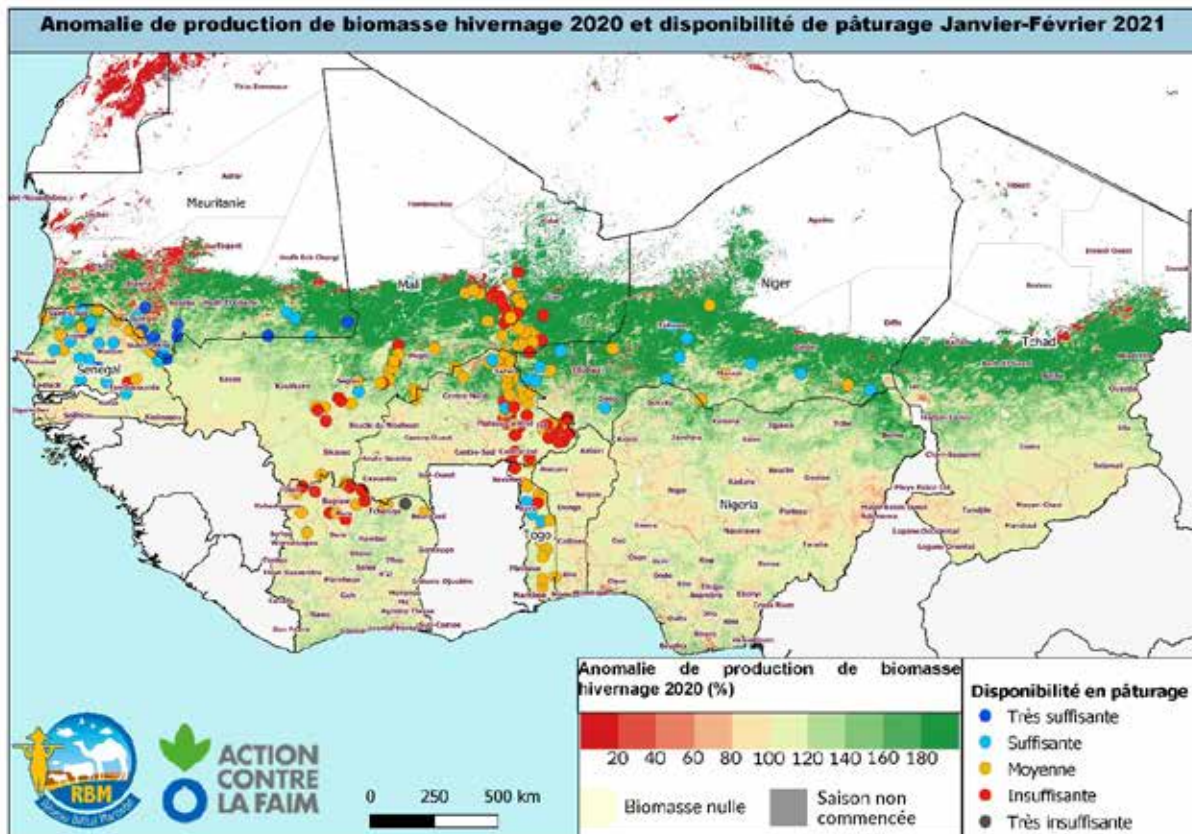
## Insufficient feed resources and reduced feed shortages

At the regional level, a decrease in feed shortages is recorded between the November-December 2020 period and the January-February 2021 period. The proportion of relays reporting a shortage fell from 23% to 14%, or -9%.

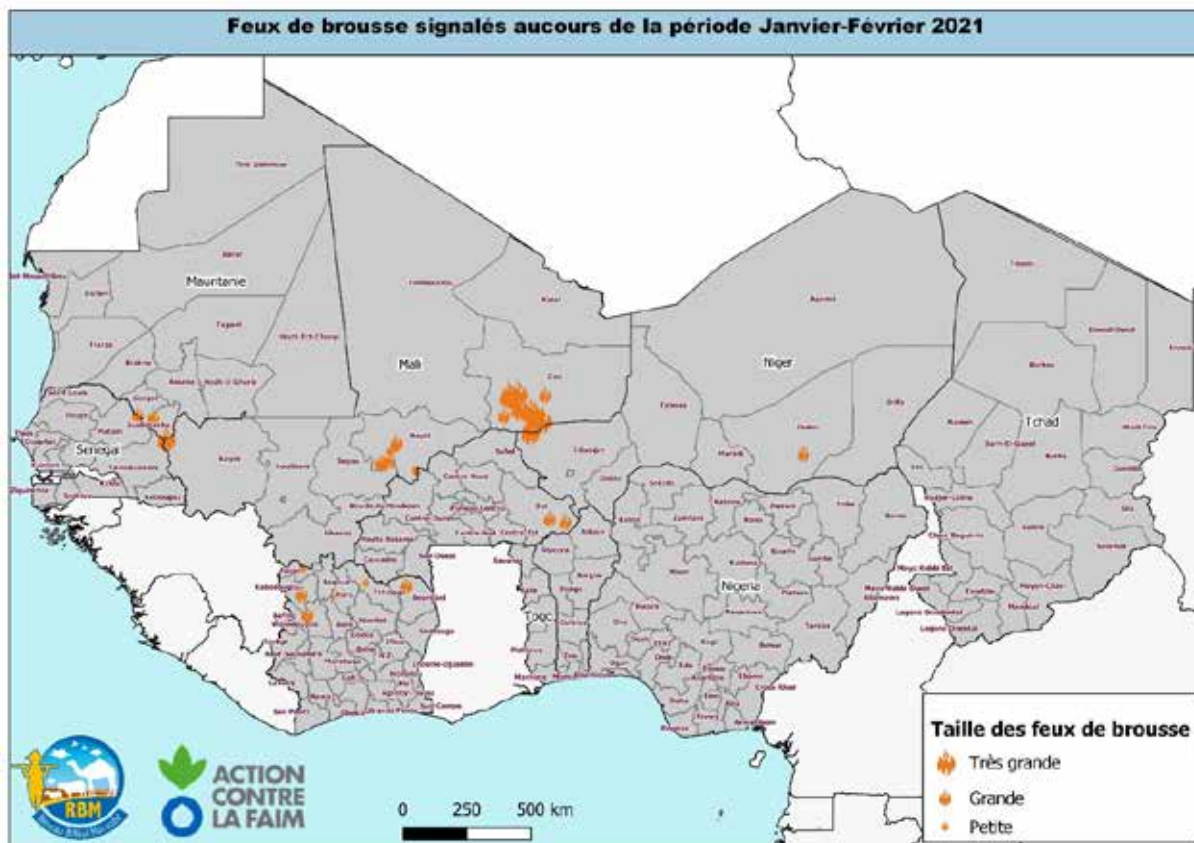
The countries where a significant shortage is reported are Côte d'Ivoire (65% of Relays, a proportion equivalent to that of the previous period) and Niger (29% of Relays, against 39% in the previous period).

In Nigeria, Relays did not report any shortage of feed. In Mali, shortage is reported by only 1% of Relays, against 3% during the November-December period. This situation is largely explained by the decline in demand, following a rather favourable winterage ("hivernage" in French).

According to 95% of the Relays, a large majority of transhumant herders have access to pasture in their current commune of residence. However, 94% of the relays consider that the available fodder resources are not sufficient to ensure the feeding of all animals in the locality (livestock belonging to indigenous herders and transhumant herds).







The map shows that during the January-February period, bushfires destroyed large areas of grazing land in several zones, including the Gao region and the area between Mopti and Ségou (Mali), the eastern region of Burkina Faso and the Guidimakha and Gorgol zones in Mauritania.

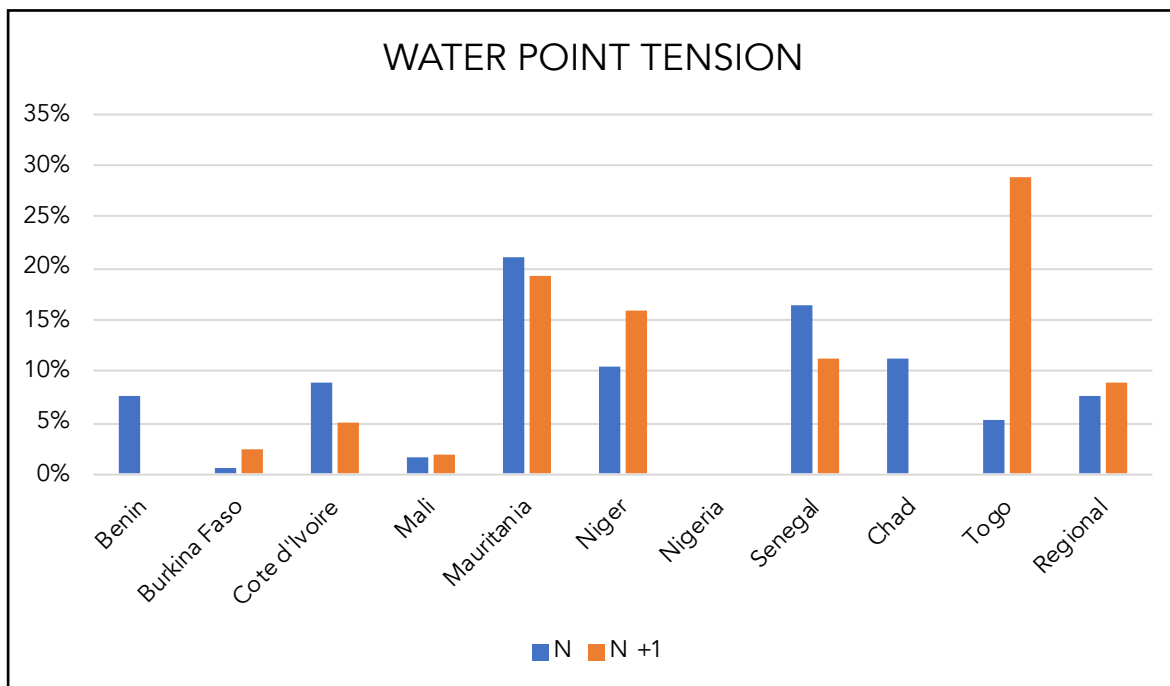
## Tensions around water points are decreasing

At the regional level, there is no significant change in the level of tensions around water points during the January-February period, compared to the previous period. Only 7% of the Relays reported conflicts around water points, against 9% in the previous months, a decrease of 2%.

The data collected show that almost all the farmers have access to water points in their current commune of residence. This is evident from the testimonies of 95% of the relays. **However, 98% of them consider that these water points are not sufficient to properly supply all the livestock currently present in the locality.**

The Relays reported the existence of tensions around water points in some countries. This is the case in Togo where the proportion of Relays who mention the existence of tense relations between users of water points has increased considerably, from 5% to 29% in the space of two months. An upward trend is also recorded in Niger: the proportion of Relays reporting this situation has increased from 10% to 16%.

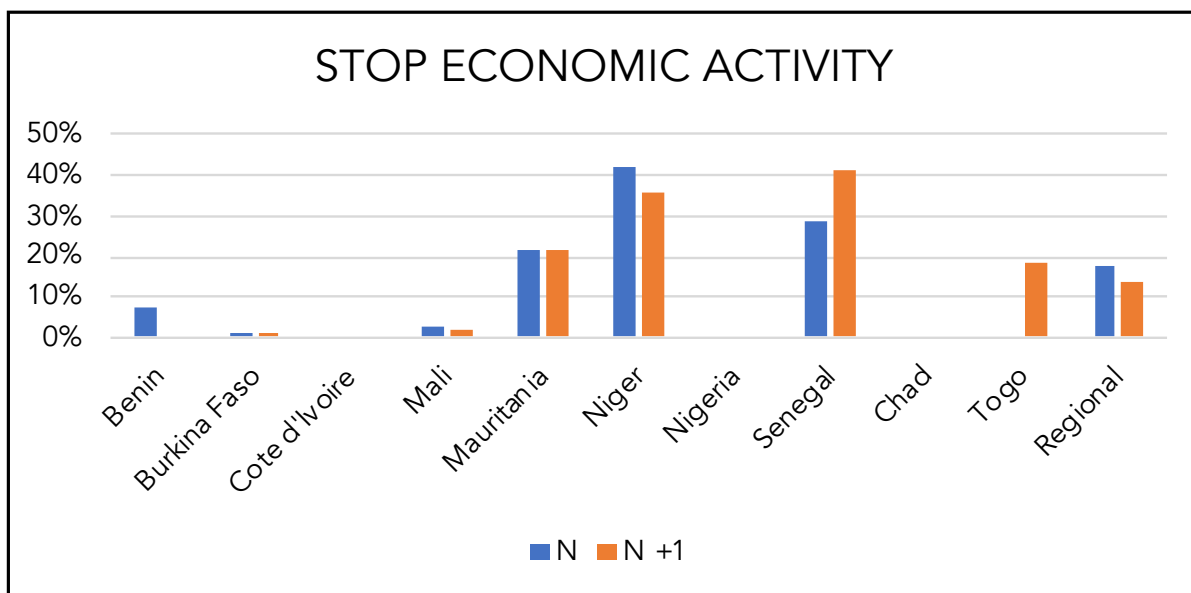
On the other hand, in Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire, the Relays report a lull which is reflected in a decrease in conflicts around water points (5% decrease in the proportion of Relays reporting it between the two periods).



The situation varies from country to country as regards the functioning of markets and economic activities

On a regional scale, in November-December 18% of relays mentioned a halt in economic activities. During the January-February period, this proportion was reduced to 14%.

Nationally, hardly any relays reported any suspension of economic activity in Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria.



Four countries (Senegal, Niger, Mauritania and Togo) are characterized by high and strongly increasing proportions of relays having reported a halt in economic activities.

Currently, at the regional level, the rate of market opening has returned to normal. The proportion of Relays who mention the good functioning of markets oscillates between 97% and 98% between November-December and January-February. During these two periods, the markets remained open

according to 100% of the Relays in Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger and Nigeria. In Burkina Faso and Togo, the proportion of Relays who noted the opening of markets increased by 5 to 6%, while it decreased by 9% in Senegal (86%, against 95%).

## A declining state of overweight of the animals

With the gradual onset of the hot season, which is accompanied by a decrease in the availability of natural resources (fodder and surface water resources), we note that at the regional level, the assessment of the state of body condition of animals has become less and less positive between the period November-December and January-February. In fact, the proportion of relays for whom the animals' state of fatness is satisfactory fell from 74% in November to 64% in December. In January, this proportion fell to 36%, then to 40% in February.

In countries of central Sahel and Nigeria, shortage of fodder resources at the beginning of the pastoral lean season is aggravated by the obstacles to mobility that result from insecurity. This is particularly the case in Nigeria, where analysis of the data collected reveals a rather worrying state of overweight. This condition is considered critical by 50% of the relays and poor by 50%.

## A slight increase in the price of goats and sheep

The analysis of the previous day's data shows a slightly upward trend in the price of goats and sheep.

At the regional level, prices increased by CFAF 1,742 for goats and CFAF 1,957 for sheep.

At the national level, this increase in goat prices is noted compared to November and December in Niger (2,330 FCFA) and Togo (3,747 FCFA). In Senegal, on the other hand, there was a decrease in price of 2,124 FCFA.

With regard to the price of sheep, a decrease is reported in Senegal, Mali and Burkina Faso. The largest decrease is recorded in Senegal, where the price fell by CFAF 8,773.

In Togo and Niger, a considerable increase in prices was noted, with a delta of 8,421 FCFA and 6,699 FCFA respectively.

CAPRIN PRIZE				COUNTRY
N	N +1	Delta		Burkina Faso
931	30 162	30 769	-	Ivory Coast
688	23 500	24 813		Mali
126	26 011	26 115	-	Niger
501	20 831	22 2 330		Senegal
193	30 069	28 2 124	-	Togo
245	28 991	31 3 747		Regional
206	25 948	26 1 742		

SHEEP PRIZE				COUNTRY
N	N +1	Delta		Burkina Faso
215	57 528	54 2 687	-	Ivory Coast
075	42 563	42 488		Mali
963	43 465	42 1 499	-	Niger
724	45 423	52 6 699		Senegal
070	72 297	63 8 773	-	Togo
498	53 919	61 8 421		Regional
904	48 861	50 1 957		

### Cereal price developments that benefit pastoral communities

At the regional level, in the areas covered by the system, the prices of several foodstuffs fell slightly in January and February: a kilogram of millet was sold at between 250 and 284 CFA francs, rice at between 375 and 402 CFA francs and sorghum at between 194 and 205 CFA francs. On the other hand, the price of maize, which is between 165 and 181 CFAfr/kg, has risen slightly compared to the November-December period.

Nationally, rice prices have decreased in most Sahelian and coastal countries, with the exception of Burkina (from 463 to 466 FCFA/kg), Senegal (from 303 to 308 FCFA) and Ivory Coast (from 354 to 376 FCFA). As regards millet and sorghum prices, a downward trend is observed in all countries covered by the monitoring system, with the exception of Mali (from 207 to 214 FCFA) and Burkina Faso (from 246 to 247 FCFA).

Maize prices increased throughout the observation zone, with the exception of Niger, where prices fell slightly from 206 FCFA/kg in November-December to 191 FCFA/kg in January-February.

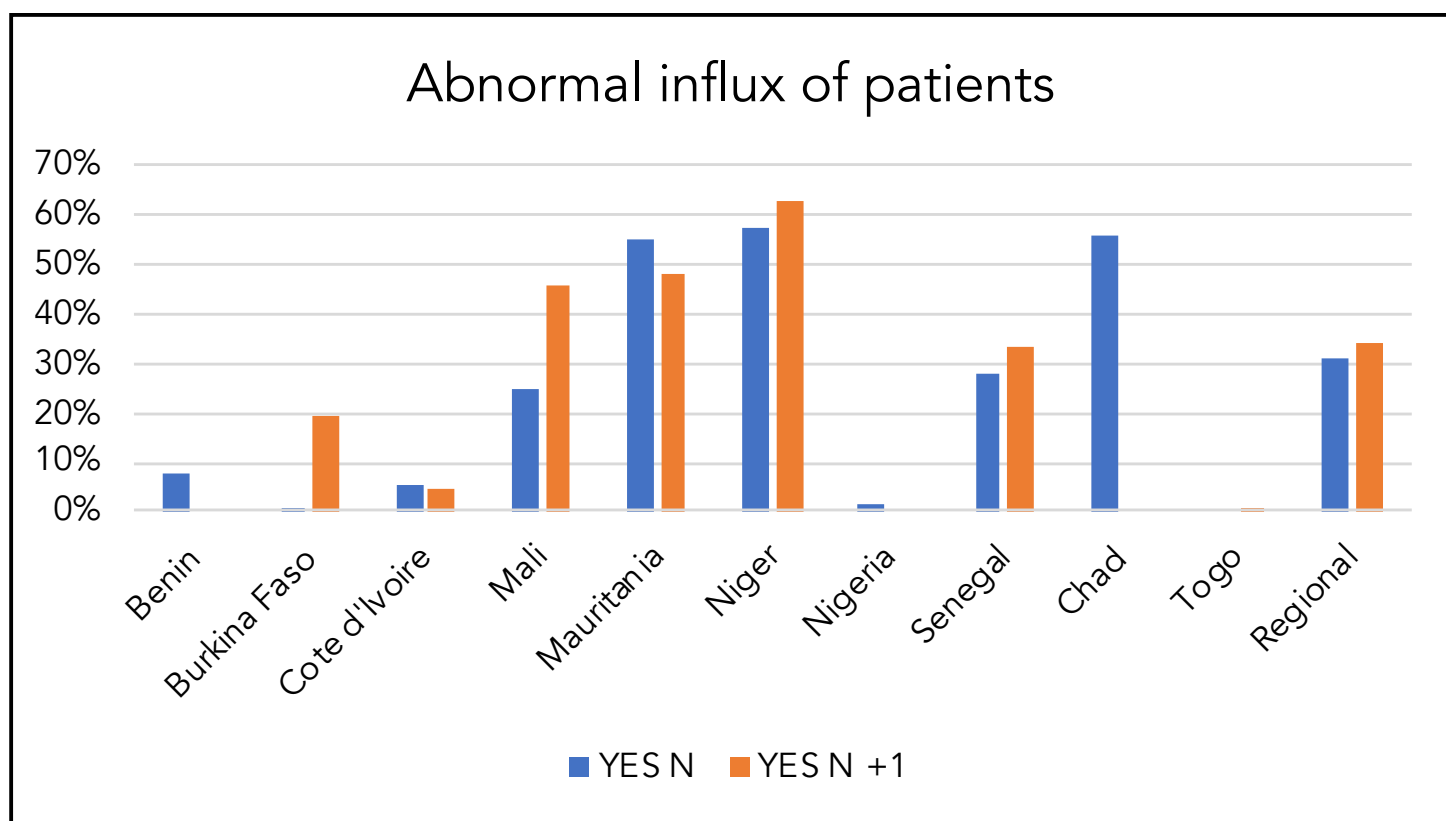
The comparison of prices between livestock and cereals shows a change in the terms of trade that is favourable to livestock keepers, with, for example, the price of an adult goat allowing the purchase of a 100 kg bag of millet throughout the region.

### Still large gatherings, high effectiveness of awareness campaigns and abnormal influxes

In all the countries covered by the monitoring system, abnormal patient flows to health centres are up by 3% compared to the previous period. The most significant increases are noted in Mali and Niger. In these two countries, the proportion of Relays who mention an increase in attendance at health centres and posts has increased by about 20%. Such a state of affairs could be explained by climatic factors, especially the drop in temperatures during the cold dry season which is accompanied by a resurgence of respiratory diseases, including COVID-19.

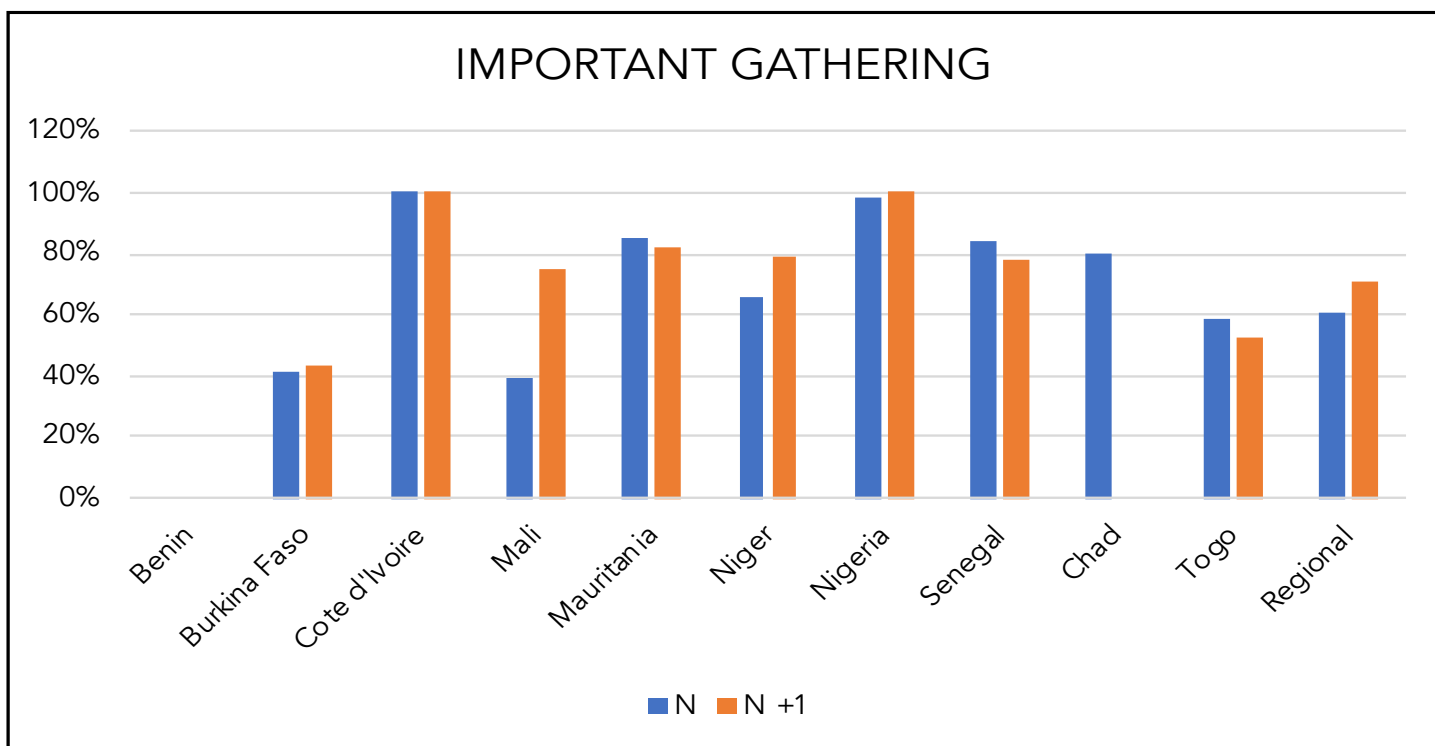
The proportion of relays reporting public and private gatherings of people increased regionally from 61% in November-December to 71% in January-February, an increase of 10%.

In Ivory Coast and Nigeria, 100% of the Relays indicate that there were significant gatherings. In Mali, Niger and Senegal, the proportions of Relays who report having observed the same trend has also increased.



The proportion of relays reporting gatherings increased by 10% regionally, from 61% in November-December to 71% from January to February.

In Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria, 100% of the relays testify that there have been large gatherings. In Mali, Niger and Senegal, these percentages have increased in the space of two months. This means that there are more and more important gatherings in these Sahelian and coastal countries.



At the regional level, 68% of the relays testify to the effectiveness of the awareness campaigns in their areas in January and February.

In Nigeria, 100% of the Relays affirm that the campaigns are effective. On the contrary, no Relays mentions such a result in Côte d'Ivoire.

In the opinion of the Relays, the effectiveness rate of awareness campaigns remains very high in Mauritania (83% of informants), Mali (86%) and Senegal (83%).

Niger is characterised by the lowest proportion of Relays who have a positive assessment of the effectiveness of the awareness campaigns in January-February (55%).

### Declining support for the pastoral sector

At the regional level, it can be seen that the support provided to the pastoral sector has dropped considerably. The proportion of Relays who insist on such a trend has dropped from 25% to 18% between the November-December and January-February periods.

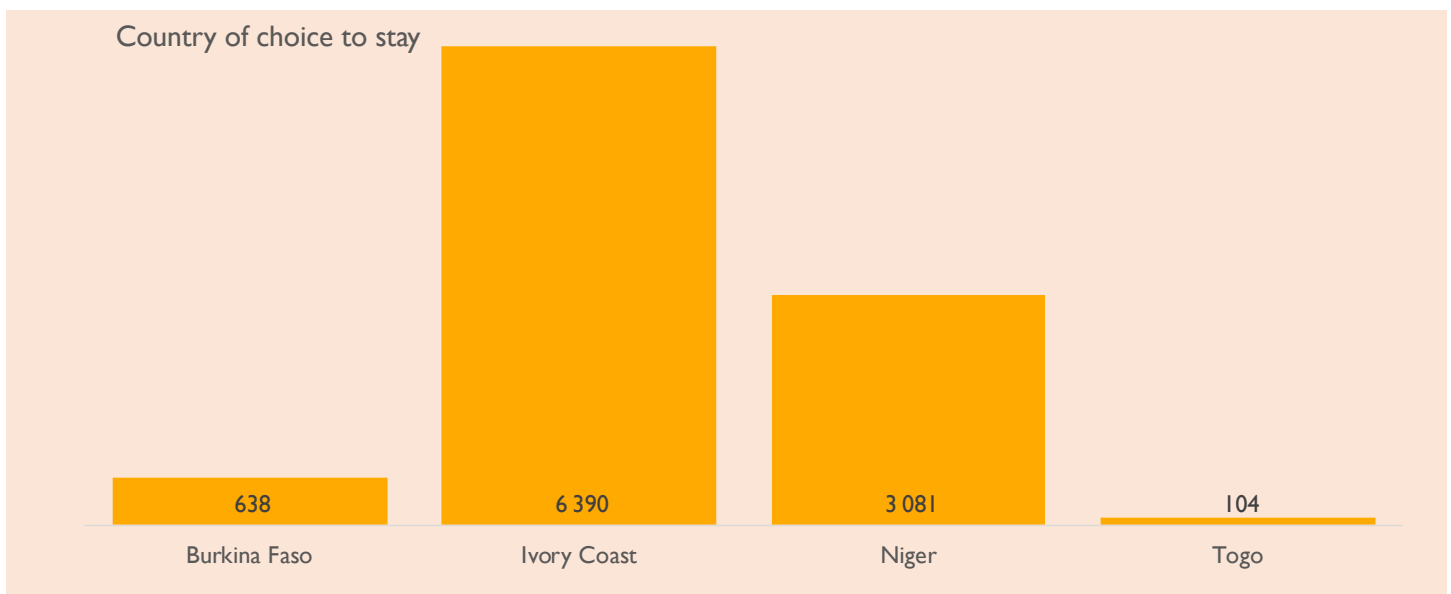
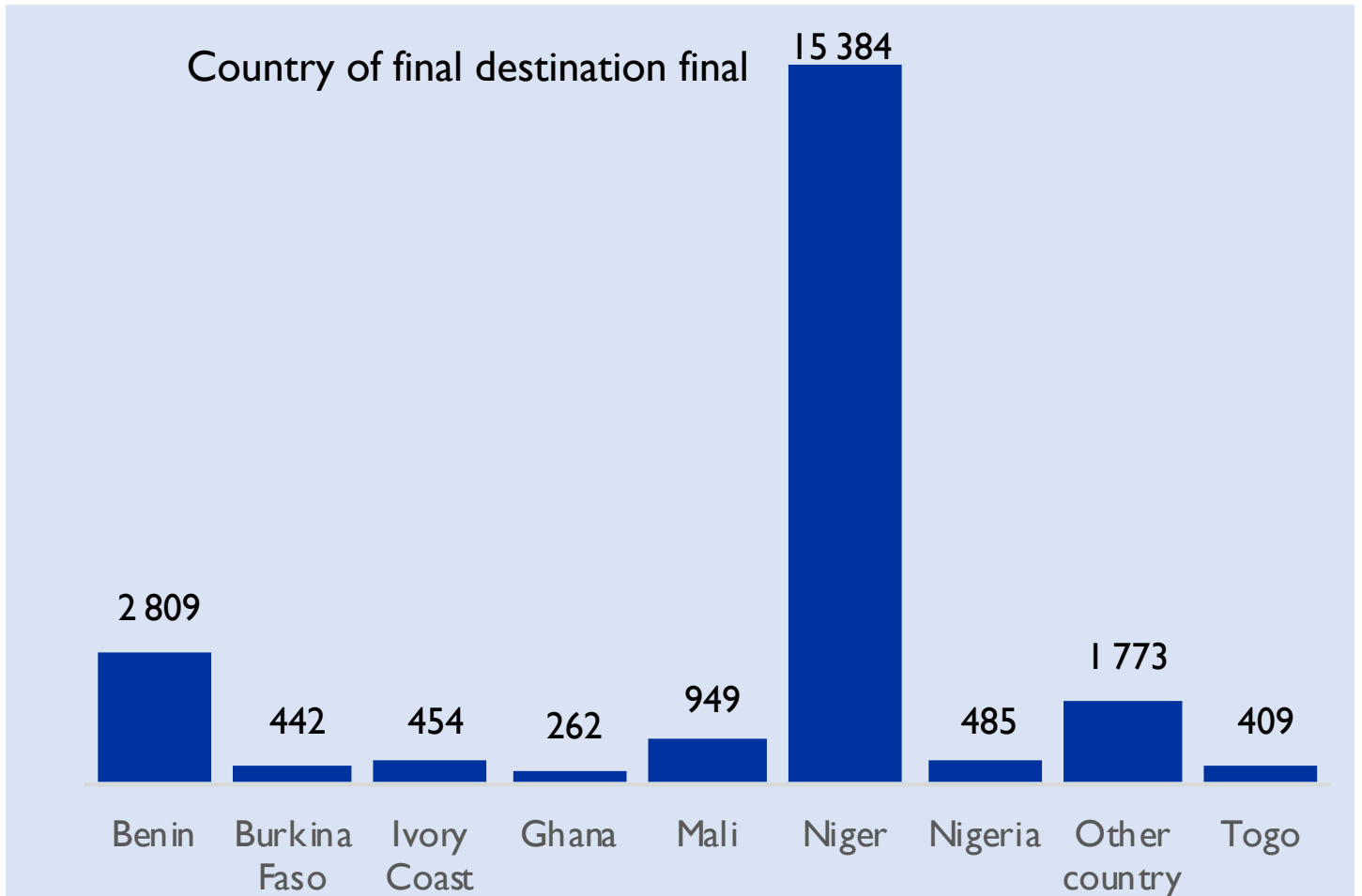
In Togo, between the two periods, the proportion of Relays who mention this regressive trend has decreased by 20%. The same is true in Mali.

The Relays in Ivory Coast unanimously mention the lack of support for the pastoral sector in their areas.

The highest proportions of Relays who highlighted the importance of support allocated to the pastoral sector are recorded in Mauritania (54%), Senegal (35%) and Niger (33%).

## Farmers' outlook for the coming period

The monitoring of farmers and animals currently stranded in the field has revealed their intentions over the next three months. 31% of the herders concerned plan to stay in the areas where they are, while 69% plan to leave. The final destination of the latter is Niger (15,384 herders) and Benin (2,809 herders). It should be noted that Niger is currently the country with the highest number of stranded herders. Of these, 3,081 intend to stay in the country, but change their area of retreat.



PARTIR			RESTER
... dans un autre pays	...dans une autre région	...retour dans le pays d'origine	
3 851 éleveurs (12%)	11 203 éleveurs (34%)	7 913 éleveurs (24%)	10 213 éleveurs (31%)

### Multiple impacts and risks

- In the opinion of the transhumant herders interviewed, the interruption of herd mobility has many detrimental consequences, including
- Overexploitation of available natural resources in areas where transhumant are blocked (21% of respondents);
- Increased animal damage in unharvested fields (20%);
- The exacerbation of conflicts between herders and farmers (19%).

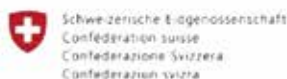
With regard to the impact of the interruption of mobility on the families concerned, the responses emphasise: (i) exposure to disease and the extent of mortality in the herds (22%); (ii) food insecurity (21%); and (iii) loss of income (20%). As for the impact on the host communities, the herders mention a reduction in natural resources (20%) and the aggravation of conflicts between users of rural areas (18%).



## Recommendations

- Facilitate access to protective equipment and raise awareness on COVID-19 among pastoral communities, using appropriate communication methods (community radio, information-awareness at livestock markets and water points, etc.);
- Inform, sensitise and mobilise cross-border consultation platforms so communities become involved in social dialogue, particularly negotiations between transhumant herders and sedentary agropastoral communities, in order to reach agreements on the conditions for extending the stay of transhumant herds or their return to their home areas;
- Facilitate animal vaccination campaigns and the establishment of a cross-border preventive prophylaxis system;
- Encourage the implementation of emergency social safety nets adapted to the specific situation of transhumant herders and the urgency of certain forced displacements such as in North Dakoro;
- Help transhumant herders to obtain civil status cards and documents required for transhumance (national identity cards, transhumance certificates, etc.);
- Concentrate efforts to prevent conflicts between farmers and herders in areas where herders are blocked against their will (see map);
- Ensure that information on the situation of stranded transhumants is widely disseminated and informs the decision-making processes of national actors involved in the Harmonised Framework exercise;
- Develop and implement a plan to respond to the situation of transhumant herders and flocks from Nigeria who are refugees in the Maradi region of Niger. This initiative is primarily aimed at Niger's technical services in charge of livestock and the environment, as well as cross-border consultation frameworks, in particular the one on transhumance between Katsina State (Nigeria) and the Maradi region (Niger).

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+227 20 74 11 99  
ADRESSE : DAR ES SALAM NIAMEY