



**BIMONTHLY BULLETIN
OF PASTORAL WATCH IN
TIMES OF COVID-19
NOVEMBER-DECEMBER
2021**



December 2021

The pastoral monitoring system set up by the Réseau Billital Maroobe and Action Contre la Faim, with the support of technical partners (see logos on the last page of the newsletter) to measure the economic impacts of COVID-19 on pastoral populations, is based on the optimisation of existing systems (information monitoring, conflict alert and prevention, counting and mapping of transhumance movements) that have been established by pastoral organisations and their partners using a network of key informants. The different information systems provide periodic : (i) alerts in case of disasters, conflicts or threats; (ii) information on the situation of pastoral households, the functioning of markets and the support received by the pastoral sector; (iii) a mapping of herders and animals currently blocked in the southern countries of the West African region (Benin, Togo, Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire) due to sanitary and political measures in the context of the coronavirus pandemic; (iv) the identification of transhumant animal assembly points currently in use as a result of mobility restrictions linked, at least in part, to the pandemic; and (v) a mapping of pastoralist movements along the central transhumance corridor, in order to better understand the dynamics and characteristics of internal (national) and cross-border transhumance movements.

The information collected can be viewed through several public access analysis platforms. Link to Dashboards: [Pastoral Watch Dashboard](#); [DTM](#)

Coverage area of standby systems

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

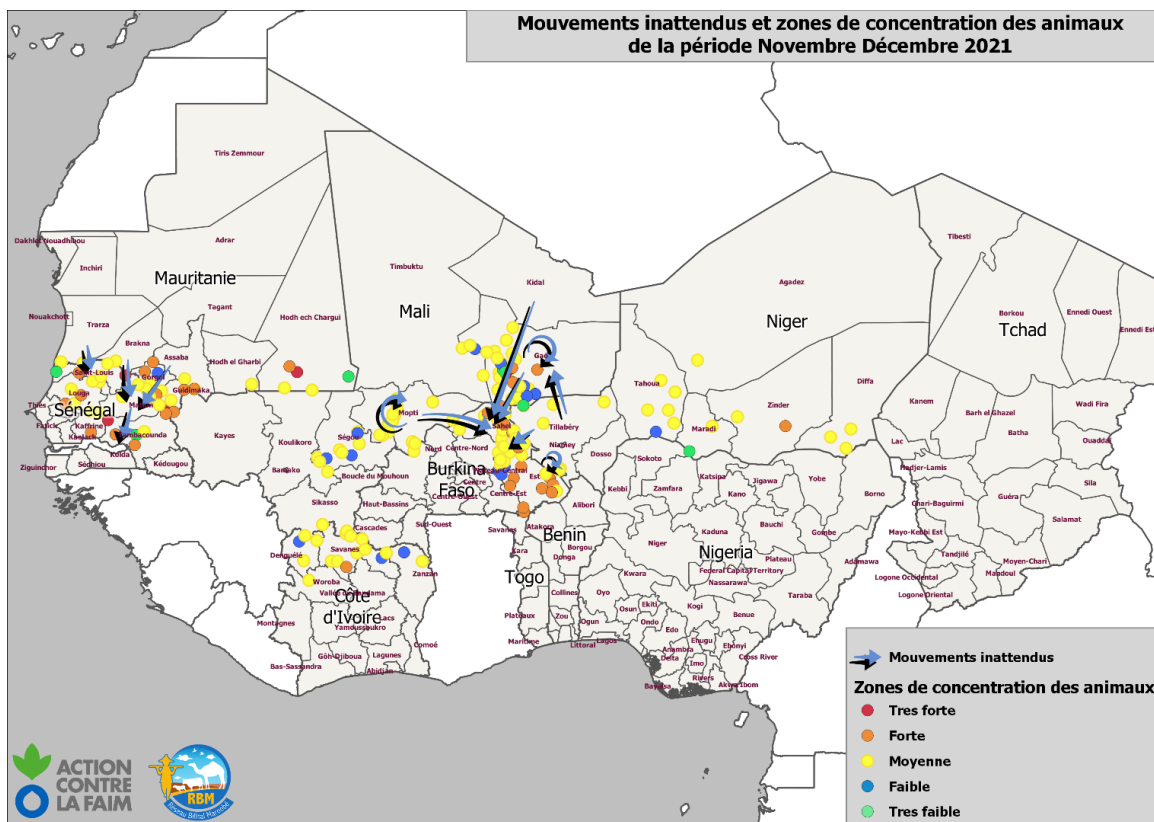
Highlights

- Livestock farmers are faced with the early arrival of the pastoral lean season, which results in a decrease in the availability of fodder and surface water resources for livestock feed.
- Numerous bush fires continue to destroy pastures, particularly in the southern part of the Ferlo area in Senegal, as well as in the Gao region in Mali.
- The concentration and movement of animals is dependent on the availability of natural resources, but also on the security risks that persist and intensify in the tri-border area, with a spillover to northern Benin bordering Burkina Faso and Niger.
- There is a growing tendency for herders to flee from highly insecure areas (Lake Chad Basin, Burkina Faso-Mali-Niger tri-border area) to seek refuge in more secure areas, even though pastoral resources are available in greater quantities in these insecure areas.



Shepherd leading a flock of sheep

- The decrease in natural resources and the inaccessibility of certain areas due to insecurity (Lake Chad basin, Christine borehole grazing area in the Sahel region of Burkina Faso, Tapoa-Boppo pastoral area in the eastern region of Burkina Faso, Banibangou pastoral area in the Tillabéry region of Niger and the Yani grazing area, which straddles the regions of Dosso and Tillabéry in Niger) have an impact on the animals' state of fatness, which is deteriorating.
- In addition, the ECOWAS sanctions against Mali with the closure of the borders will negatively impact the mobility of herds in the Sahel.
- Several areas are experiencing unusual animal movements, including (i) an early departure of Senegalese transhumants from the North to the South; (ii) a massive arrival of Mauritanian herds in transit in the Podor department of Senegal, before returning to the Ferlo interior; and (iii) an early departure of Nigerien transhumants from the Tillabéry region to the Sahel region of Burkina Faso.
- The spread of the more contagious Omicron variant does not encourage greater vigilance in the sub-region, where large gatherings are still observed.



Watering animals in Mali

Alerts issued during November and December 2021

Type of incidents / alerts	Pays	Region	Province	Municipality	Village	Date	Assessment of the incident	
Attack on the army	Bénin	Atakora		Tanguiéta	Pendjari Reserve	22/12/2021	One dead and 2 wounded on the Beninese armed forces side and 2 members of a NSAG killed.	
		Alibori		Banikouara	Bridge over Mékrou river	30/11/2021	One police officer killed.	
Attack on the army	Mali	Koulikoro	Nara	Nara	Nara	29/12/2021	A NSAG attacked a Malian armed forces unit, resulting in 8 dead and 7 injured.	
Army-led offensive		Bandiagara					12/12/2021	2 units of the Malian armed forces supported by the air force pursued and killed 17 NSAG and lost 2 soldiers
							13/12/2021	An armed forces unit was attacked by assailants who killed a soldier. On the other side, the death and injury toll is undetermined.
							31/12/2021	An offensive on the Sofara - Diangassagou-Bandiagara - route resulted in the death of 16 NSAG members.
Joint offensive by Barkhane and the Burkinabe army			Mopti	Douentza	Hombori	Hombori	28/12/2021	A joint Barkhane-army of Burkina operation in the border area between Burkina Faso and Mali resulted in the death of some 15 NSAG members
Livestock Removal		Gao	Ansongo	Tessit	Tinanor		11/17/2021	NSAG removed all small ruminants (sheep and goats) from the village of Famboulgou.
		Mopti	Mopti	Mopti	Jirima		19/11/2021	NSAG raided the entire village's livestock (sheep, goats and cattle).
Removal of livestock and eviction of the population		Gao	Ansongo	Tessit	Tinalame		23/11/2021	NSAG took away all the animals in the village, which numbered about one 600 head.
		Gao	Ansongo	Tessit	Tinalame		20/11/2021	NSAG raided all the animals in the village and made four 65 households towards Tessit.
Ambush by NSAG		Burkina	Nord	Loroum	Titao	You	23/12/2021	An ambush by NSAG resulted in the death of 41 civilians and Volunteers for the Defence of the Homeland (VDP). In response, a joint operation carried out in the border area by the armed forces of Burkina Faso and Niger resulted in the death of around 100 NSAG members between 25 November and 9 December 2021. During this operation, 4 Burkinabe soldiers were killed by an improvised explosive device and 13 soldiers from both countries were injured.
	Sahel		Séno	Seytenga	Seytenga		05/11/2021	The attack by members of a NSAG killed 2 people in the village of Seno-Tiondi. This security incident led to a displacement of 61 households who left with their 174 animals. Some returned to Seytenga centre, others continued to Dori.
Attack on a border post	Niger		Torodi	Makalondi	Makalondi	22/10/2021	NSAG attacked a police checkpoint and a customs weighing station killing 7 people (3 civilians, 2 customs officers, 3 policemen).	
Attack on an army position			Téra	Fantio	Fantio	04/12/2021	Unidentified armed assailants attacked a Nigerien armed forces position of the G5 Sahel mission killing 29 soldiers. The armed forces' response resulted in the death of 79 assailants.	
Ambush of self-defence forces			Ouallam	Banibangu	Adabda		02/11/2021	NSAG ambushed a column of a vigilance committee. They killed 69 people, including the mayor of Banibangu, before fleeing to Mali, taking their wounded and killed companions.

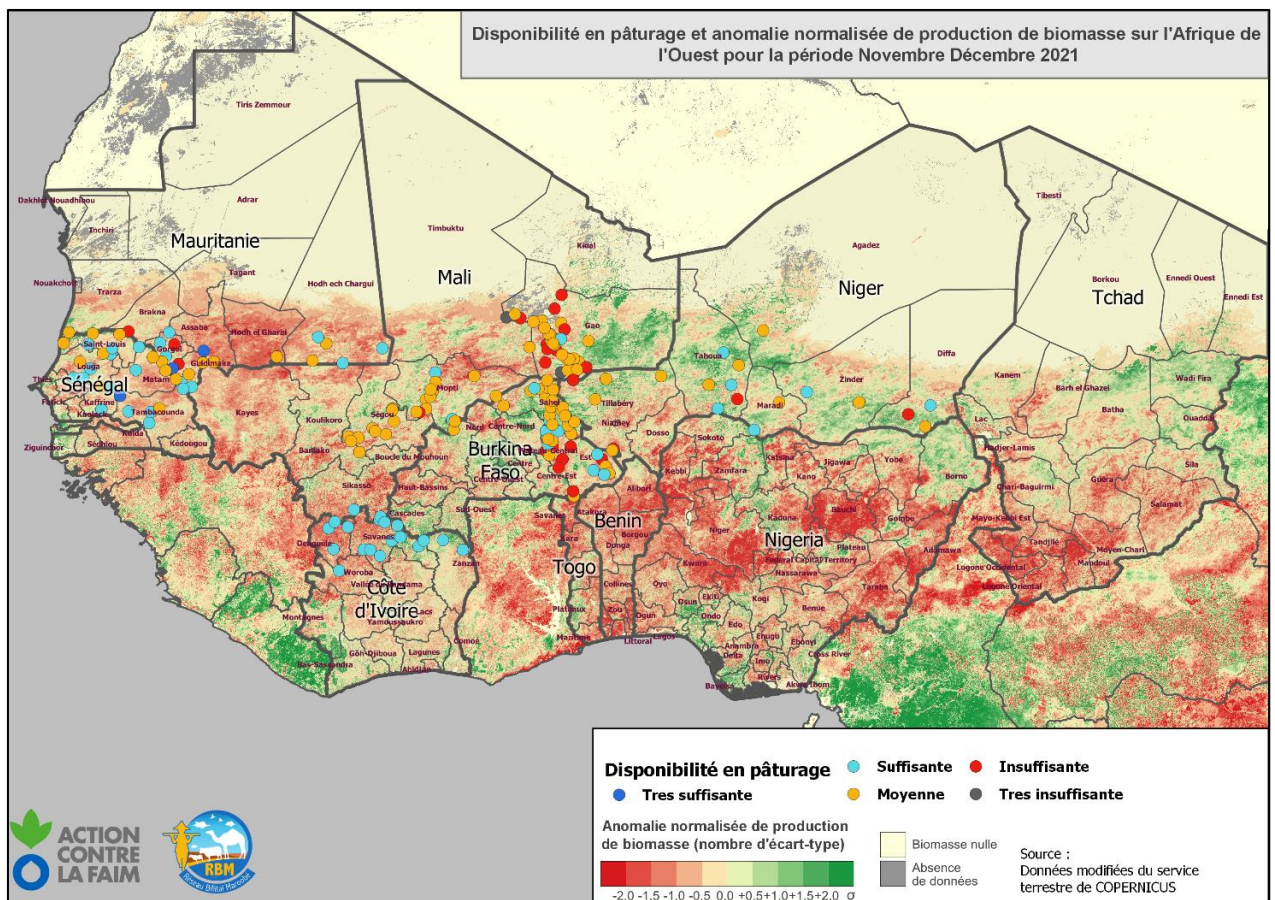
Pasture availability and feed shortages

At the regional level, there is a regression in the shortage of livestock feed in the countries covered by the pastoral watch. The proportion of relays reporting a shortage of livestock feed is 8% in November-December 2021, compared to 15% in September-October 2021.

However, in the Sahelian countries, the shortage of livestock feed is slightly on the rise. Thus, in Burkina Faso and Mali, the percentage of Relays reporting a shortage has increased from 1% to 5% respectively in November-December, while it was 0% to 2% between September-October 2021.

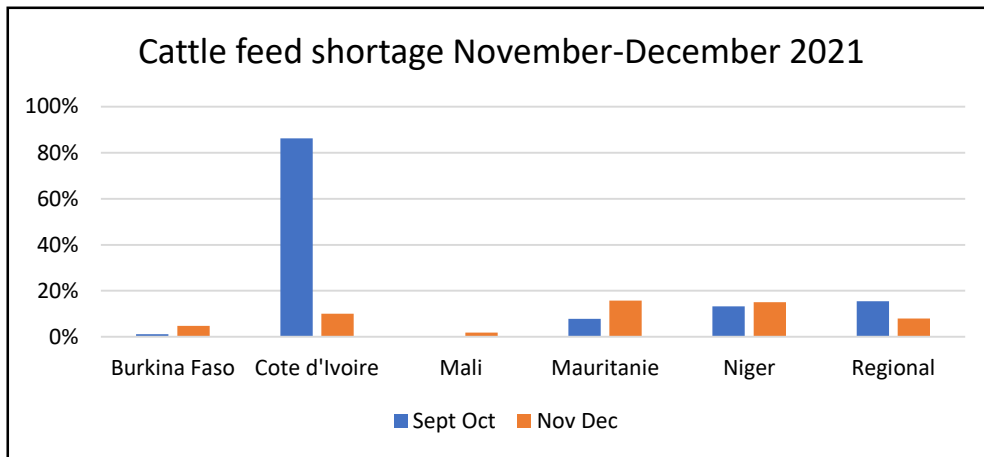
During the same periods, in Mauritania the shortage of livestock feed has increased, according to the relays whose percentage increased from 8% to 16%. Similarly, in Niger the rates have increased from 13% to 15%. In Senegal, there is a slight increase of +2% in the percentage of Relays who mention a shortage of livestock feed. This increase which is observed in the Sahelian countries could be an indication of a strategy of anticipation of a difficult pastoral hunger gap resulting in the constitution of stocks of food inputs by some herders. This hypothesis should be monitored and confirmed in the coming weeks.

There was a considerable drop in the rate of relays mentioning a shortage of feed in Côte d'Ivoire, which fell from 86% to 10% between the two periods due to the high availability of fodder.



With regard to fodder resources, Burkina Faso is characterised by a level of grazing that is average overall and deteriorating compared to the past period, with a drop in availability observed at the end of the rainy season. The concentration of herders and their animals at accessible sites increases the pressure on the small amount of available pasture with a negative impact on the availability of fodder.

The pastoral situation in December is considered difficult in all pastoral areas of the Gao region in Mali. The situation has deteriorated significantly compared to the same season last year, when pasture availability was considered average to adequate. The situation is likely to deteriorate further in the coming months, with the risk of an early pastoral lean season as early as next March in areas that have experienced poor pasture regeneration. The availability of fodder resources is generally sufficient in Senegal. However, at certain sites in the regions of Saint-Louis (Dodel, Niayagal Bokhol), Matam (Ranerou), Louga (Gande and Dolly) and Tambacounda (Balla), grazing resources remain average. This is illustrated by the existence of pockets of deficiency in these localities.



Intensification of bushfires in Senegal and Mali

Bushfires are one of the main causes of destruction of pastures and means of production, mainly in pastoral areas. In Senegal, the Centre de Suivi Écologique (CSE) detected 215 fires between 27 December 2021 and 02 January 2022. These cases of fire are mainly concentrated in the Kedougou region.

There are also a few cases in Bakel, Goudiry, Tambacounda, Koupentoum, Matam, Ranerou, Saint Louis, Foundiougne, Bounkiling, Kolda, Medina Yoro Fouta and Velingara. Protected areas were not spared: the Niokolo Koba Park recorded 51 cases of fire. The classified forests of Diambour, Panal, Paniates, North Tamba and the Ferlo Sud Wildlife Reserve also recorded cases of fire.

In the Ferlo reserve, the area burnt is estimated at 2,165 ha. During the period between October and December, the balance sheet is as follows: 2,700 ha affected by fires in the Moudery district, 5,500 ha in the Bélé district and 18,300 ha in the Kénieba district.

Neighbouring Mali also suffers from the damage caused to pastures by fires. Between 14 and 19 December 2021, bushfires devastated 22,000 ha between Tessit and Lellehoye in the Ansongo circle (Gao region). The area between Tarianda and Doro (commune of Intillit) was ravaged by fire.

Despite the relatively low rainfall recorded during the 2021 winter season and the spatio-temporal variability of rainfall, pasture resources are generally sufficient at the end of 2021 in Mauritania. However, in the Fom Gleita area in Gorgol, which is known for its high concentration of livestock, the relays report insufficient pasture availability.

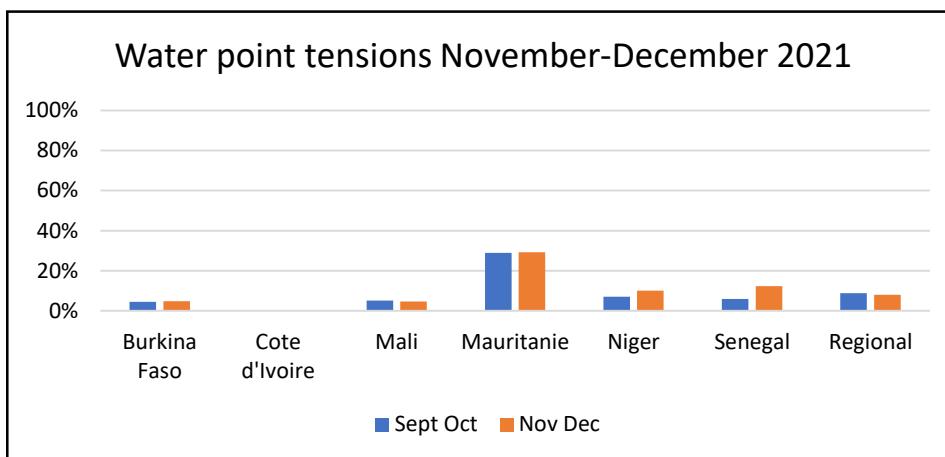
The situation is similar in the Ajar zone in Guidimakha. The agropastoral areas of the country are subject to a high concentration of animals that exert significant pressure on pastoral resources. In addition, there were many bush fires during the period. According to the testimony of the relays, some Mauritanian herders have already resorted to the use of cattle feed.

Tensions around water points

At the regional level, tensions around water points are slightly decreasing. The percentage of relays reporting conflicts at water points has decreased from 9% in September–October to 8% in November–December 2021.

In most of the countries covered by the monitoring system, the level of tensions around water points remained stable throughout the September–October and November–December 2021 periods. This is the case in Burkina Faso (5%), Côte d'Ivoire (0%) and Mali (5%). It is in Mauritania that the percentage of relays reporting tensions around water points is the highest (29% in September–October and November–December 2021).

The relays report a slight increase in tensions in Niger (7% to 11%) and Senegal (6% to 12%).



With regard to water availability in the region, although the rains have subsided, natural reserves still provide water for livestock watering. In pastoral areas, water resources are considered average to sufficient. However, the information reported by the relays underline a significant decrease in water availability in permanent and semi-permanent ponds. This situation could be explained in part by the silting up of ponds due to the violent winds that are currently blowing.

In Mali, several non-permanent ponds have dried up early, notably in the communes of Tarkint and Anchawadji. It is likely that the availability of these surface waters will decrease considerably in the coming months.

Market and economic activity

Regionally, 96% of the relays claim that the markets remained open throughout the November–December 2021 period. In coastal countries, such as Côte d'Ivoire, the relays unanimously emphasise the opening of markets.

In Senegal, the percentage of Relays who mention this phenomenon is slightly down, from 97% to 95%. In the Sahelian countries, in November–December 2021, market openness is slightly up compared to the September–October 2021 period, in Burkina Faso (85% to 89%). However, it remains stable in Niger (90% to 89%).

In general, economic activities continued during both periods. Only 6% of the relays reported a halt in activities in November–December at the regional level.

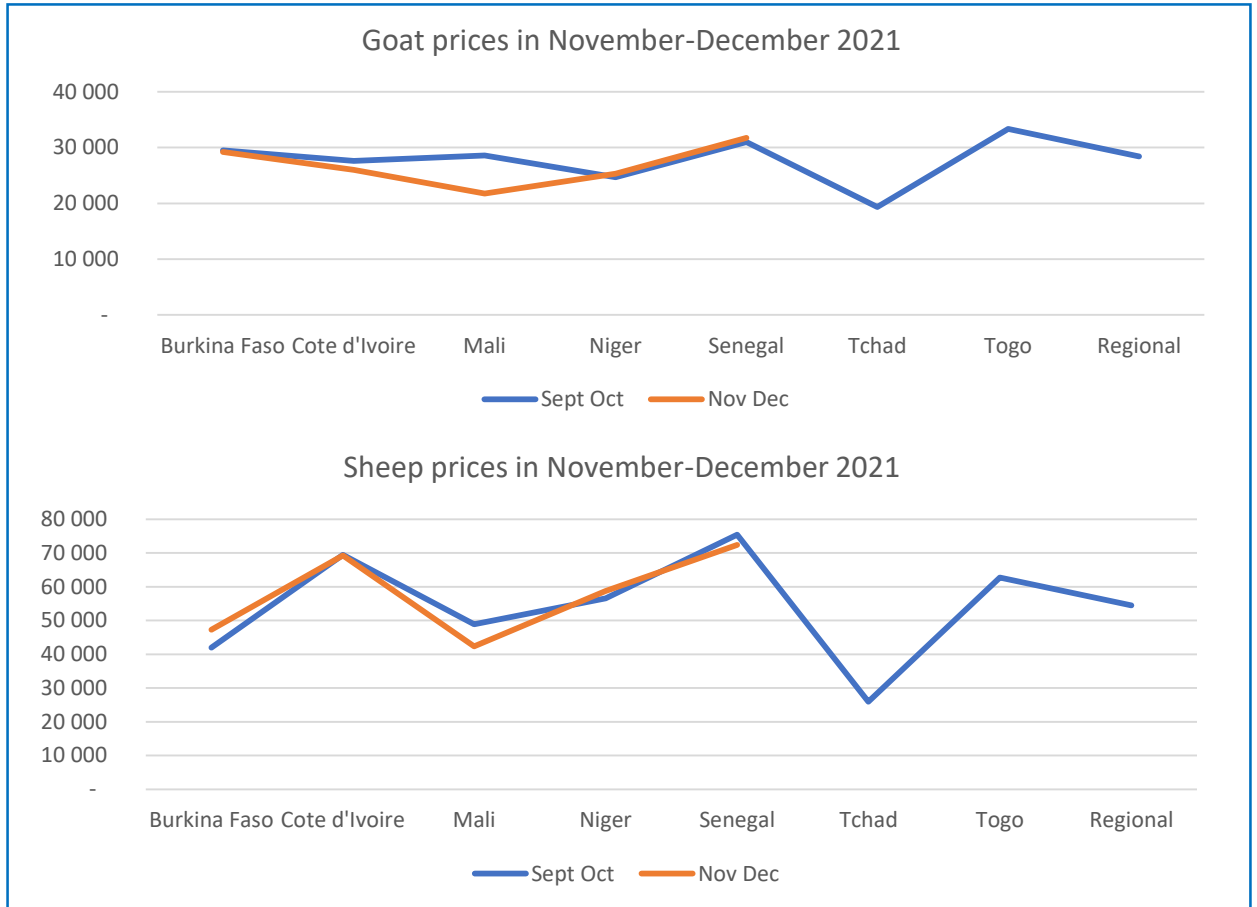
In the Sahelian zone, particularly in Mauritania and Niger, the percentage of relays having noticed a halt in economic activities rose from 4% to 7% and from 6% to 8% respectively between September–October and November–December 2021. In Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso and Mali, all the relays mention the continuity of economic activities both in September–October and in November–December 2021.

Evolution of goat and sheep prices

On a regional scale, prices have remained almost stable, although there has been a slight decrease of 4% for goats and 1% for sheep between September–October and November–December 2021.

In the Sahelian countries, goat and sheep prices fell more in Mali than in neighbouring countries, with a 14% reduction for goats and 7% for sheep.

In Burkina Faso and Niger, it was only the price of sheep that rose by 6% and 2% respectively. Goat prices remained stable at around 1% during September–October and November–December 2021.



Cereal prices

Regionally, between September–October and November–December 2021, millet prices fell slightly by 3% and sorghum by 9%. The price of maize fell more sharply by 26%. The price of rice increased by 3% between the two periods.

At the level of the different countries, the price of rice increased by 6% in Mali, but remained stable in Burkina Faso (variation of about 1%). The price of millet changed slightly in Burkina Faso, Niger and Senegal by 1%. In Côte d'Ivoire, the price per kilogram of maize fell by 26%.

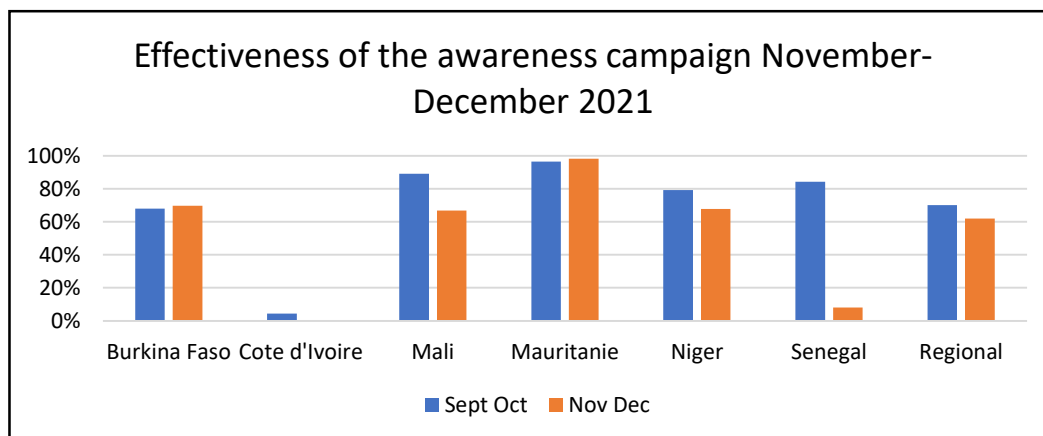
The terms of trade between livestock and cereals are still favourable to farmers. This is illustrated by the fact that the sale of one goat can buy 100 kg of millet.

Effectiveness of campaigns to combat COVID-19

At regional level, the effectiveness of the campaigns is highlighted by 62% of relays, a proportion that is down compared to September–October 2021 when it stood at 70%.

This decline is evident in several countries such as Mali (89% to 67%), Niger (79% to 68%). As for Senegal, the good efficiency already reported in the previous period has further improved, from 84% to 88%.

The rate of relays highlighting the effectiveness of campaigns against COVID-19 has reached the highest level in Mauritania already reported (98% in November–December 2021).

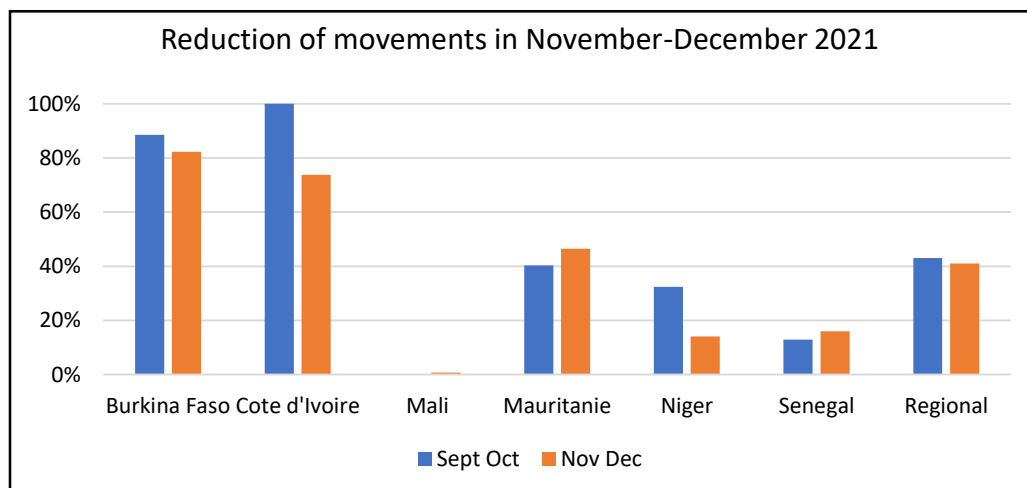


Reduction of livestock movements

Regionally, the rate of relays reporting a reduction in livestock movements is slightly down. It decreased from 43% to 41% between September–October and November–December 2021.

In the coastal countries, particularly in Côte d'Ivoire, movements are down according to the relays. The rate went from 100% in September–October to 74% in November–December. In Senegal, only 16% of the relays mentioned a reduction in livestock movements. This rate was 13% in September–October.

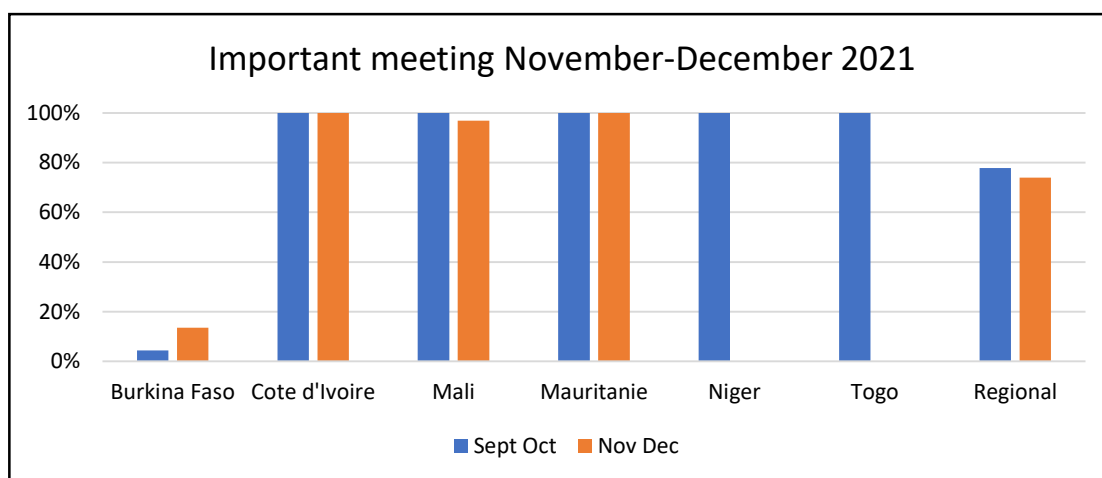
With regard to livestock movements in Mali and Mauritania, the Transhumance Tracking Tool (TTT) used by the RBM selected six counting points in Mali: Séguéla, Djélébou in the Kayes circle; Kremis in the Yélimané circle; Gavinane in the Nioro circle; Korongo and Falou in the Nara circle. In November–December, the count recorded the movement of 3,134,871 animals, essentially 683,733 from Mali to Mauritania and 2,396,689 from Mauritania to Mali.



Large gatherings

Despite the outbreak of the Omicron variant of COVID-19 in the sub-region, which is known to be more contagious, individual and collective prevention measures are no longer being respected. Indeed, the level of large gatherings remains generally relatively stable, with a slight downward trend between September-October and November-December 2021.

In Burkina Faso, few Relays reported large gatherings in their areas, but the rate is slightly up from 4% to 14%. In Mali, the percentage of Relays reporting large gatherings is decreasing (97% in November-December, against 100% in September-October). In Mauritania, the Relays unanimously mention the holding of large gatherings in the country, both in September-October and November-December 2021.



Potential impacts of ECOWAS sanctions against Mali on pastoral mobility and livestock trade in the context of an early and difficult lean season

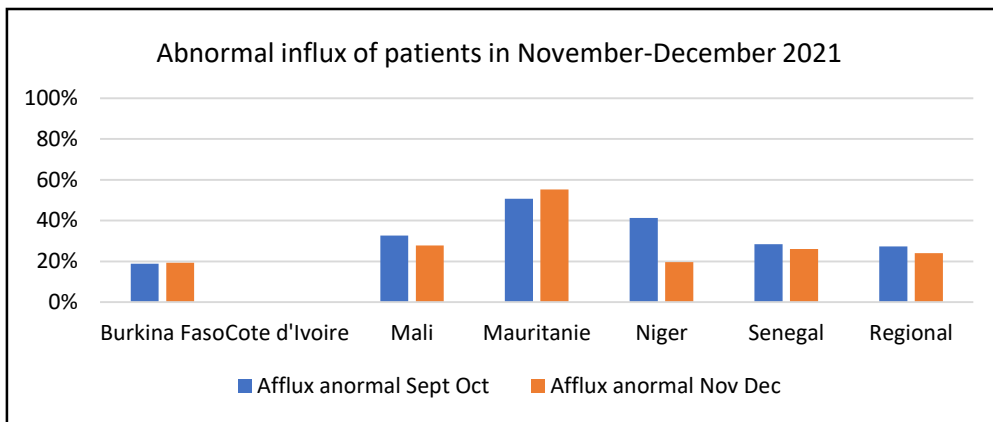
The extraordinary summit of leaders of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) adopted sanctions against Mali on 9 January 2022, due to the failure of the transitional authorities to meet the February deadline for holding elections and restoring constitutional order. One of these sanctions concerns the closure of the borders between Mali and ECOWAS member countries. The application of such a sanction will have detrimental socio-economic consequences. The closure of the borders will block Malian transhumants from travelling to Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal and Niger. Mali is also a transit country for Mauritanian transhumants on their way to Côte d'Ivoire and they have already started to come in Mali since last December.

Furthermore, ECOWAS sanctions risk severely damaging Malian livestock exports to Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal and Ghana. This activity contributes significantly to GDP (17% of national exports), as well as to the income of family farms and private sector actors (livestock traders, transporters, conveyors, livestock market operators, etc.).

Abnormal influx in health centres

Regionally, the abnormal influx of patients remained stable according to 24% of relays in November-December 2021, compared to 27% in the previous two months.

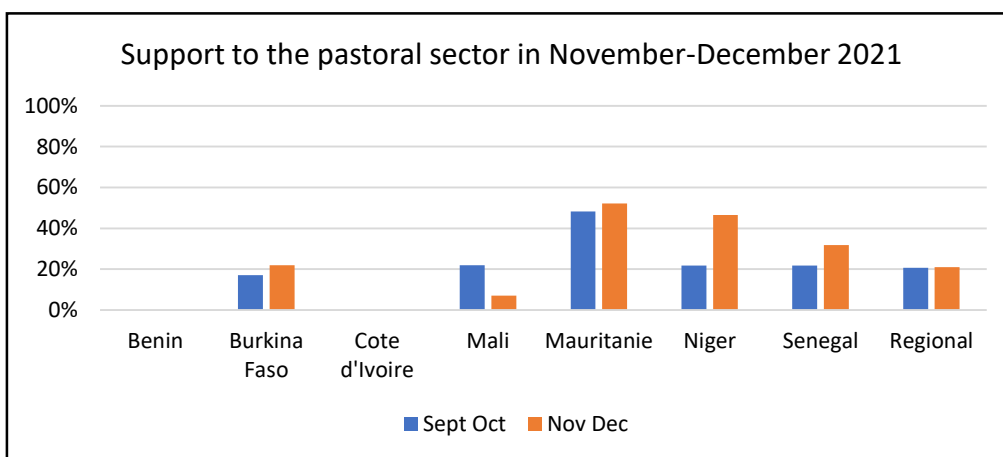
In the Sahelian countries, Mauritania records the highest number of flows considered as abnormal with 55% of the Relays underlining this influx towards the health centres. This rate is slightly up by 4% compared to the previous period. In Niger, the rate has decreased by half compared to the September-October period (41% to 20%). Similarly, in Mali, a slight decrease was observed (33% to 28%). In Côte d'Ivoire, no relay reported an abnormal influx of patients during the two periods.



Support to the pastoral sector

Support to the pastoral sector in all countries covered by the monitoring system stagnated at 21% between September-October and November-December.

According to the relays, this support is down in Mali (22% to 7%), while it has more than doubled in Niger (22% to 46%). Support has also increased in Senegal (22% to 32%) and Burkina Faso (17% to 22%). On the other hand, in Côte d'Ivoire, the relays as a whole show an absence of support for the sector.



Herds looking for pasture in the Mopti rice fields in Mali.

At the regional level, there is a stability in the percentage of Relays who reported suspected cases of disease (14% to 15%).

In countries such as Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal, the rate remained the same throughout the two periods concerned (26% in Côte d'Ivoire and 17% in Senegal).

Conversely, rates fell in Niger (39% to 32%) and rose in Mauritania (31% to 38%).

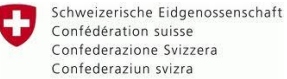
RECOMMENDATIONS

- Support the adaptation of satellite observation tools to monitoring outside of biomass production periods, focusing in particular on monitoring cultivated areas, bush fires and surface water;
- Regularly monitor the bushfire situation and develop response plans for an early and difficult pastoral lean season, with a focus on the provision of feed, free food assistance in affected areas, livestock vaccination and cash transfers to vulnerable pastoral and agro-pastoral households;
- Supporting income-generating activities based on, among other things, fattening and livestock trading, while ensuring that the diversification of activities carried out by households is supported;
- To support the strengthening of the technical and organisational capacities of pastoral and agro-pastoral communities in order to promote pasture regeneration initiatives;
- Support communities in the application of inclusive approaches to the management of common resources, with a view to contributing to the strengthening of social cohesion and the prevention of conflicts related to access to natural resources (establishment of land management and conflict resolution committees at local level);
- Strengthen the infrastructure and facilities that are needed to promote and secure livestock activity;
- Strengthen monitoring and early warning systems associated with an analysis system that anticipates the evolution of conflicts/alerts and vulnerabilities and their impacts on livestock keepers
- Reactivate awareness campaigns in the pastoral and agro-pastoral environment on the contagiousness of the Omicron variant and the need to respect individual and collective protection measures against COVID-19 ;
- Urge ECOWAS to adopt derogations to guarantee cross-border transhumance, transport on foot and export of Malian livestock to other countries in the community and vice versa.

Carried out with technical and financial support



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