

The monitoring system set up by ACF and RBM to measure the economic impacts of COVID-19 on pastoral populations is based on the optimisation of existing systems, in particular 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 through a public analysis platform. The present document, which is the third issue of the monitoring report, makes a comparative analysis of the data collected during the months of June and July 2020. The dashboard is available [here](#).

KEY ALERT MESSAGES

The Sahelian countries have experienced an exceptionally long and difficult pastoral lean season with late rainfalls in several areas resulting in lack of pasture. This situation has been exacerbated by the restriction of livestock movements to combat the spread of COVID-19.

The body condition of animals gradually deteriorated and many of them eventually starved to death. We are just coming out of the lean season; but many pastoral communities have been severely impacted. These communities need emergency assistance for survival and support for economic recovery.

The Kanem region in Chad has been so badly affected by the lean season that pastoralist organisations in the area have sought support from the government and cooperation partners.

Herders in the **province of Batha**, also in Chad, have also been affected. As they were unable to move to areas with grazing land, they recorded significant animal deaths (more than **8,500 cattle and 6,800 sheep**). A leader of the province's pastoralist organisations said that some of them recorded numerous losses in their herds in June and July 2020.

This disaster in Batha province has two main reasons: 1. the scarcity of pasture at the beginning of the dry season, as a result of the devastating rains; 2. delayed rainfall in some localities. While forecasts predicted an early start of the rainy season across the region, some areas had still not received rains by early July. And where it did rain, it was insufficient to grow grass.

More than **300 transhumant herders** have remained stranded in **northern Togo**, first because of the border closure and, above all, because of the fear of insecurity in the **eastern region of Burkina Faso** where they come from. They lead a herd of between **20,000 and 30,000 cattle and 10,000 sheep**.

Project coverage area

The Project area includes the **ACF and RBM intervention zones**. These zones are pastoral sub-areas located in around ten countries. Information is gathered and disseminated 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; GNAP, in Mauritania; PAT-Togo, in Togo; ANOPER, in Benin; BILPAN, in Nigeria; OPEF, in Côte d'Ivoire; COPAFIB, in Chad. This effort is supported by the decentralised technical services of Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso.



Cattle herds in Chad, July 2020

Livestock movement still restricted by the onset of the pastoral season

From **60%** in May 2020, the rate of Relays having reported a reduction in movements fell to **52%** in July 2020, i.e. a drop of **8%**.

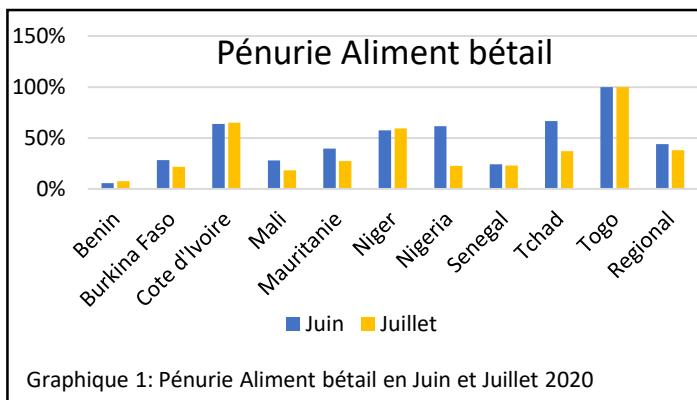
This resumption of livestock movements is explained by the availability of more fodder and water, thanks to the start of the rainy season, as well as the lifting of certain restrictions related to COVID-19.

There are still large areas of livestock concentration (Map 1). This is not the result of the scarcity of natural resources, nor of the restrictions imposed by the fight against COVID-19, but rather of the cultivation of agricultural areas. Animals remain stationed in relocation areas for fear of causing damage to the crop fields and conflicts with farmers.

Thus, in **Togo**, where the rainy season has fully started and fodder is abundant everywhere, the animals no longer move around, according to **100% of the Relays**

Livestock movements increased in **Côte d'Ivoire**, from **63%** in June to **89%** in July. During the period, herders left the **Sikolo sub-prefecture**, in the **Département** of **Kong**, following the security incidents that occurred in June 2020 in **Kafolobak**. Herd mobility also increased in Nigeria. Only **53%** of the Relays reported a reduction in movements in July, compared to **82%** last month.

Feed shortages less felt due to increased availability of fodder

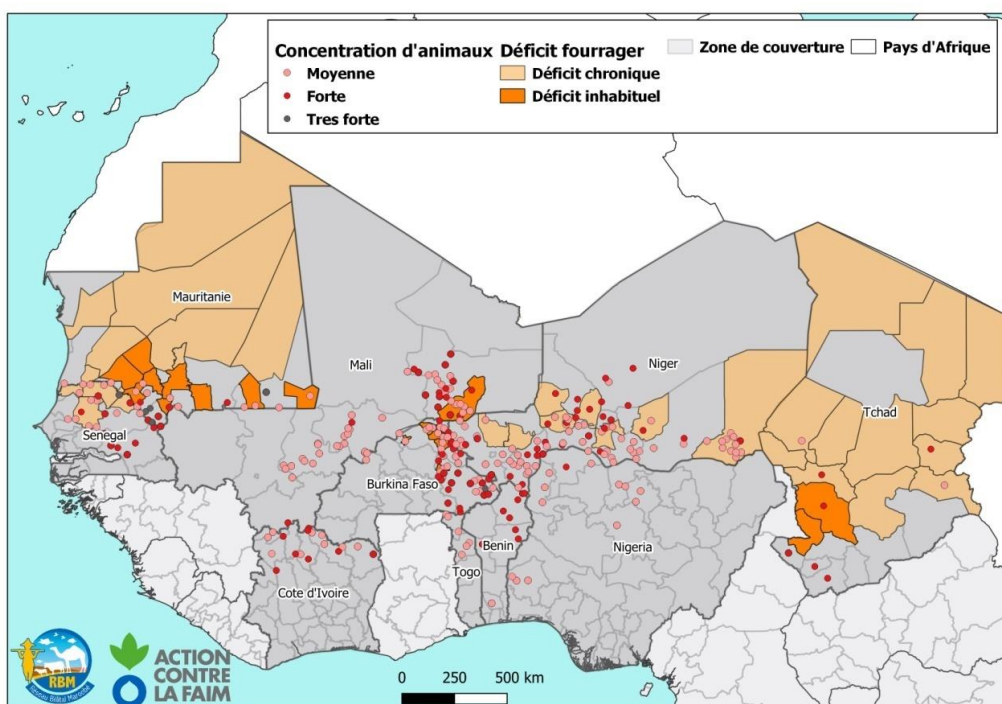


The regeneration of grazing land due to the useful rains that were recorded in July in most of the area covered by the monitoring system tends to reduce the need for livestock feed complementation. The shortage of feed resources for livestock is less acute.

At the regional level, the presence of feed shortages fell by **6%** from **44%** of the Relays in June to **38%** in July reporting such shortages.

The most significant improvements are observed in **Nigeria** where the proportion fell from **62%** in June to **23%** in July and in **Chad**, with **37%** in July, compared to **67%** in June (Graph 1).

These improvements in terms of availability should not obscure the livestock feeding difficulties pastoralists face in critical areas such as Kanem and Batha in Chad, for example. These herders have lost many animals or have only animals in poor body condition that are not selling well.



Map 1: Livestock concentration and forage deficits in the area being tracked by the monitoring system.

Continued decrease in tensions around water points

The decline in competition around water points that has started since the onset of the rainy season and the filling of ponds is ongoing.

At the regional level, **27%** of the Relays reported conflicts around water points in May, **23%** in June and **19%** in July, representing a drop of **8%** within a period of two months.

No tensions over access to water were reported in **Benin (0%)**; almost **3%** and **4%** in **Mali** and **Togo**. The situation has also steadily improved in **Mauritania**, although the rate remains relatively high, with **64%**, **56%** and **40%** respectively in May, June and July, i.e. **24%** fewer Relays reporting conflicts.

Only **Burkina Faso** reported an increase, from **50%** in June to **59%** in July. Even if surface water has become available with the filling of ponds, access to this resource remains difficult for animals because either there are no corridors to get to it or the ponds are fenced off by other users such as farmers.

A pastoral economy challenged by insecurity

Insecurity is a recurrent phenomenon that strongly impacts livestock mobility and the pastoral economy.

The Sahel faces multidimensional violence that is constantly increasing in intensity and spreading geographically from the West (**Central and Northern Mali**) to the South-East (**Southern part of Niger, Eastern region of Burkina Faso, Zamfara and Sokoto States in North-West Nigeria, Northern Benin and Côte d'Ivoire**).

This growing insecurity is evidenced by two attacks in less than three months on the livestock markets of **Kompienbiga** and **Namoungou** in **eastern Burkina Faso**.

The populations that live off the exploitation of these resources bear the brunt of the worsening conflicts, despite the existence of fairly favourable regulatory texts that are little or not applied at all.

Support for pastoralists, insignificant and likely to decline further

In general, support to pastoralists remained stable between May and June 2020 at around **25%**.

The most significant support for pastoralists is reported in **Mauritania** and **Senegal** where health crisis response plans have been implemented by the States and their partners. However, a downward trend is observed in these countries, with a rate that fell from **87%** in June to **77%** in July and from **70%** to **56%** respectively.

Pastoralists in **Côte d'Ivoire, Togo, Mali** and **Chad** have received little or no external assistance. The overall improvement in the pastoral situation following the onset of the rainy season may suggest that the lean season is over and that pastoralists no longer need support. In reality, this is not the case.

Even in coastal countries where natural resources are now available for animals, pastoralist communities have highly vulnerable and vulnerable households in need of food assistance and rehabilitation measures.

This support will also have to take into account the emerging needs for COVID-19 prevention products.

Improving the level of economic activities

The economic situation is improving, with a trend towards an upturn in activity.

Overall, the percentage of Relays reporting the interruption of economic activities fell sharply from **46%** in May to **30%** in June and **21%** in July.

Markets are reported to be open and functional by **95%** of Relays in July, compared to **87%** in June. Almost all livestock markets are open in **Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali** and **Niger**.

The opening of the markets is promoting increased livestock sales. The rate of increase has been steady, rising from **43%** in May, to **57%** in June and **79%** in July, an increase of **36%** within a period of three months, in line with the strong demand for sheep during the Tabaski period.

The border between **Mauritania** and **Senegal** has been opened on an exceptional basis to allow the movement of **450 000** Mauritanian **sheep** into Senegal. This operation brought in an amount of **CFAF 58.5 billion**, if the average selling price of the sheep is estimated at **CFAF 130 000**.

The Tabaski festival has driven up prices for small ruminants as shown in Tables and Charts 1 and 2. This was helped by a slight improvement in the body condition of the animals (**28%** in July compared to **19%** in June). The **Beninese**, **Ivorian** and **Togolese** herds benefited the most from the rainy season, with a good body condition reported by **100%** of the Relays.

However, the increase in livestock prices does not always compensate for the high level of cereal prices, which remained stable. For example, the average regional price of a goat is **CFAF 24 360**. While this is enough to buy a **50-kg** bag of rice, which costs **19,350 CFA francs**, it is not enough to buy a **100-kg** bag of millet at **26,600 CFA francs**.

The terms of trade in relative balance can tip to the disadvantage of pastoralists at the slightest increase in cereal prices, especially during the lean season when stockpiles are dwindling.

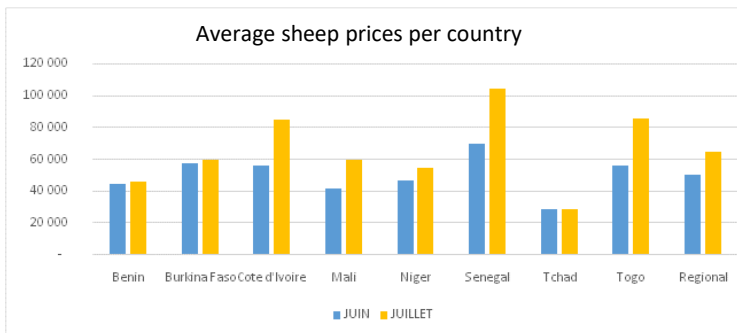


Chart 2: Sheep prices in June and July 2020

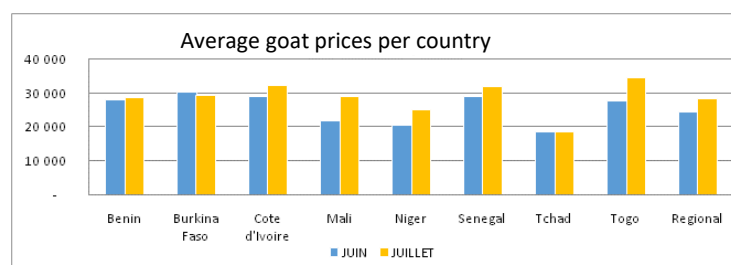


Chart 3: Goat prices in June and July 2020

PRIX OVIN			
PAYS	JUIN	JUILLET	Delta
Benin	44 813	45 833	1 021
Burkina Faso	57 447	59 877	2 430
Cote d'Ivoire	56 063	85 000	28 938
Mali	41 650	59 775	18 126
Niger	46 644	54 728	8 084
Senegal	69 461	104 421	34 961
Tchad	28 796	28 889	93
Togo	56 184	85 463	29 279
Regional	50 150	64 718	14 568

PRIX CAPRIN			
PAYS	JUIN	JUILLET	Delta
Benin	27 904	28 569	665
Burkina Faso	30 389	29 279	-1 111
Cote d'Ivoire	28 875	32 200	3 325
Mali	21 868	28 905	7 037
Niger	20 331	25 120	4 788
Senegal	28 902	31 735	2 833
Tchad	18 519	18 426	-93
Togo	27 526	34 379	6 853
Regional	24 360	28 364	4 004

Table 2: Evolution of goat prices

Normal flows in health care centres

Five months after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, patients are still not rushing to the health centres' gates.

Across the area covered by the monitoring system, only **14%** of the Relays reported an abnormal influx of patients in July, with a slight decline compared to June (**17%**). People tend to believe that the pandemic is over, while it is still present.

The Relays' perception of the effectiveness of the awareness campaigns remains stable, with a regional average of around **60%** in July and June.

Benin (92%), Mauritania (90%), Nigeria (87%) and **Senegal (77%)** are the countries conducting the most effective campaigns.

However, gatherings of people tend to become more frequent. The proportion of Relays reporting such gatherings has risen from **49%** in May to **57%** in June, suggesting that there is not yet a real awareness of the dangers linked to the pandemic that many people now think is behind us, whereas we now need to be more vigilant than ever.

Côte d'Ivoire has the highest number of gatherings (**100%**), followed by **Senegal, Mauritania** and **Chad (around 75%)**.

Field investigations carried out by the **RBM branch in Togo**, in collaboration with the **Ministry in charge of Livestock**, the **National Transhumance Committee** and the **networks of private veterinarians and auxiliaries** revealed that **325 transhumants** remained stranded in **northern Togo**. They lead a herd of between **20,000 and 30,000 cattle** and **10,000 sheep**.

These herders were first surprised by the border closure. Now, they fear above all the insecurity in the **eastern region of Burkina Faso**, where they come from and where the **Namoungou** livestock market has just been the target of an armed attack that resulted in about 20 deaths.

Currently, Togo has a medium to high concentration of animals, mainly in the **central-eastern part of the Savannah region**, and a low concentration in the **Dankpen and Doufelgou** areas in the **western part of the Kara region**.

These transhumant herders need emergency assistance, as they are made vulnerable by the impossibility of going back to their home areas. Outreach work is being carried out by RBM leaders and Relays, as well as by the technical services of the areas concerned, to facilitate access to the targeted herders.

All indications are that the area covered by the monitoring system is emerging from the lean season and the pastoral situation is improving.

However, this improvement **should not cause us to forget the situation of those households that have been severely affected by the very difficult pastoral lean season** they have just experienced and during which they have lost many animals. The most vulnerable households may not recover from this situation due to the lack of rapid and appropriate assistance.

One of the lessons learnt from the successive challenging lean seasons is that a distinction must be made between the areas that have become chronically in deficit, such as **Ferlo in Senegal, the regions of Diffa, North Maradi, Tahoua, Tillabéry and Zinder in Niger**, and the areas that have been so cyclically.

In chronically deficit areas, pastoralists and their organisations have developed coping strategies that work more or less well. In addition, governments and their partners have adopted a culture of intervention.

On the other hand, a concerted reflection on appropriate solutions is necessary to address issues in cyclically deficit areas.



Transhumant cattle and sheep herds in Chad, July 2020

RECOMMENDATIONS

RBM and its Member Organisations in Togo and Burkina Faso should expedite the implementation of assistance to transhumant herders who are stranded in **Northern Togo** by providing them with food and vaccinating their animals.

States and their partners should:

- Reinforce support to the pastoral sector in chronically deficit areas in order to consolidate household resilience;
- Provide emergency assistance, through the provision of vital resources to vulnerable households in areas occasionally affected by the past pastoral lean season and support their rehabilitation, in particular by restocking the herd.

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