

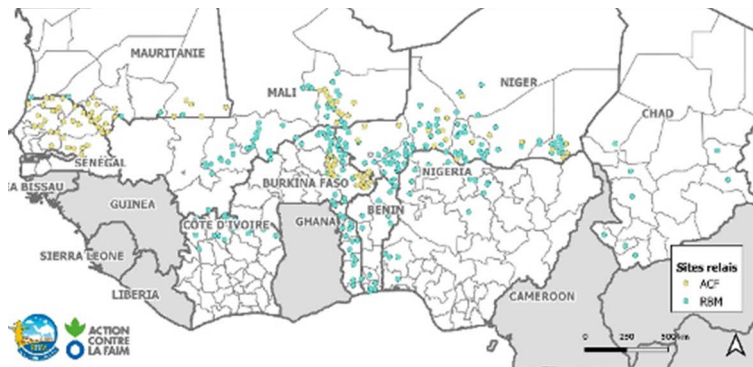


WATCH-KEEPING NEWSLETTER AND MONITORING OF THE COVID-19 IMPACT ON PASTORAL HOUSEHOLDS

SPECIAL ISSUE
MAY - DECEMBER 2020

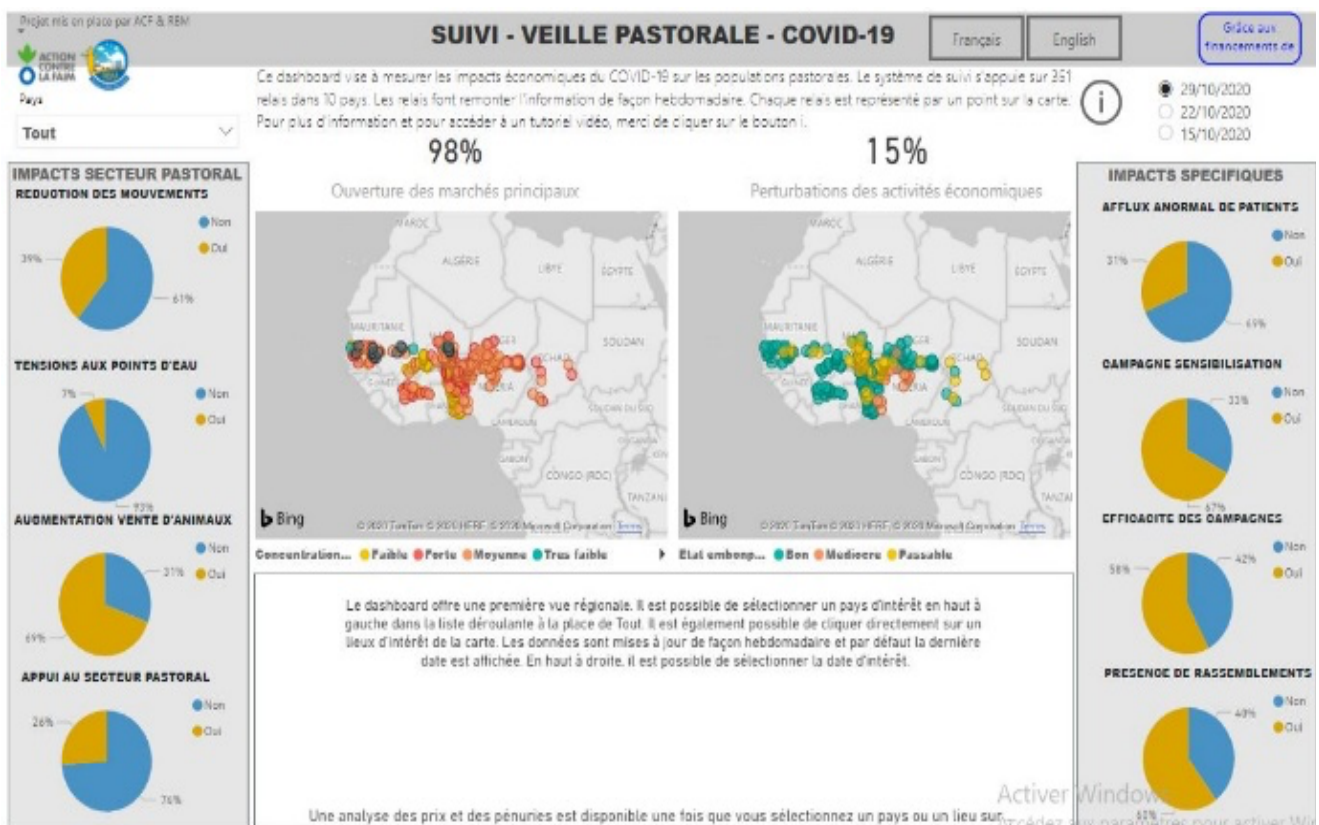


The monitoring system set up by RBM with the support of its technical and financial partners (ACF, IOM and CARE) to measure the economic impacts of COVID-19 on pastoral communities is based on the optimisation of existing systems, particularly the pastoral monitoring systems established by the organisations. This system is designed to provide weekly information on the situation of pastoral households through a public analysis platform.



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

The project groups together RBM's intervention zones. These zones are pastoral sub-areas in 9 countries: Mali (TASSA-GHT), Niger (AREN, GAJEL), Burkina Faso (CRUS, RECOPA), Senegal (ADENA), Mauritania (GNAP), Togo (PAT-Togo), Benin (ANOPER), Nigeria (BILPAN), and Côte d'Ivoire (OPEF), with the support of the technical services of Mali, Niger and Burkina-Faso.



Highlights during the reporting period:

- ▶ Occurrence of floods and bush fires resulting in adverse effects on the living conditions of pastoral families;
- ▶ An outbreak of armed violence that has severely affected pastoral and agro-pastoral communities in the Sahel and West Africa;
- ▶ Shortage of animal feed, which has led to the deterioration of livestock feeding conditions
- ▶ Failure to comply with the barrier measures against the coronavirus;
- ▶ Weak support for the pastoral sector.

Key recommendations:

1. Given the virulence of the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is urgent and essential to step up awareness-raising actions for pastoral and agro-pastoral populations ;
2. The need for coaching and support for the operational teams of the POs should be diligently addressed, in order to help the members of these teams to efficiently communicate, in the field, the protective measures against the coronavirus;
3. It is necessary to set up a monitoring system specifically on the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic in pastoral areas, with a focus on the incidence rate of positive cases in the home areas and the areas where the transhumant herders retreat;
4. Innovative actions should be promoted to intensify awareness raising campaigns through rural radios and mobile telephones;
5. RBM and its partners are calling for the mobilisation of additional resources to increase support services for pastoralists;
6. In order to improve the management of cross-border livestock transhumance flows between the Sahel and coastal countries, it is necessary to support the Sahelian States so that they can have appropriate and effective decision-making tools, particularly for counting and locating animals on the move;
7. Greater attention should be paid to the production of gender-disaggregated data in the context of the analyses on the socio-economic profile of pastoral households and their level of food security;
8. There is a need to better monitor the application of policy measures devoted to the support or regulation of the pastoral sector, in order to evaluate their level of implementation and assess their socio-economic impact on the target populations;
9. It is essential to ensure secure access to pastoral areas and transhumance corridors for pastoralists.

This newsletter, which recaps the main data from the pastoral monitoring system, is structured around the following points:

- Major factors aggravating pastoral vulnerability over the past period;
- Main alerts;
- Retrospective analysis of the data collected since May 2020;
- Conclusion.

MAJOR FACTORS AGGRAVATING PASTORAL VULNERABILITY

The adoption of restrictive measures by the government in the context of the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic has led to the closure of borders, which immediately blocked transhumant herds. As a result, many transhumant herders have been stranded in cross-border areas without being able to continue on to their final destination or return home. By extending the stay of their animals in the transit zones, they have contributed to greatly increasing the pressure on locally available pastoral resources.

The closure of livestock markets to prevent people from regrouping has resulted in the animals being sold at a time when pastoral families were in urgent need of cash to purchase the necessary supplies (food, feed, veterinary inputs, etc.).

The expansion of the security threat is coupled

with a context where the structural dynamics of pastoral mobility has to cope with the increase of many vulnerability factors that are linked to the growing human pressure on natural resources, the dynamics of privatisation of common resources and the introduction of new regulations in the coastal countries. The growing competition for access to strategic natural resources, as well as the partial or total occupation of transhumance corridors and grazing areas by the crops tend to increase the vulnerability of the pastoral livestock system.

The change in public perceptions of transhumance in coastal countries has resulted in a stricter regulatory framework being imposed for cross-border mobility of livestock, or even a ban on the entry of foreign transhumants into the territory of certain countries. Thus, the authorities of Benin adopted a ban measure in December 2019 that has still not been repealed.

KEY ALERTS

► Frequent floods and repeated bush fires

The year 2020 was marked by the abundant rainfall recorded during the rainy season, which resulted in positive effects in terms of availability of pasture and surface water resources. However, the heavy rainfall has caused immediate negative effects. Following the bad weather recorded during the month of August, several countries located in the area covered by the pastoral monitoring system experienced flooding (Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal, etc.). The large amounts of rain that fell in a short period of time caused loss of human life, destruction of homes, infrastructure and crops, as well as the death of animals already weakened by the long lean season.

Given the heavy downpours, the breeding areas had large quantities of fodder biomass at the end of the rainy season, theoretically allowing them to feed their livestock. However, as soon as these areas become dry and in the absence of proper management, the grass fodder falls prey to recurring bush fires in the Sahelian countries. This is causing the loss of valuable feed resources that animals need not only to continue their growth cycle in the dry season, but also to face the next pastoral lean season. Relays in several Sahelian countries, particularly Mali, Mauritania and Niger, issued bushfire alerts between October and December.

► Rising crime and armed violence in pastoral areas

The spread of insecurity is severely affecting several pastoral and agro-pastoral areas in the Sahel and West Africa. This situation is exacerbated by the development of new forms of conflict. Numerous emergency alerts were issued by the Relays about livestock raids. In areas such as western Niger (Tillabéry region) and northern Mali (Gao region), several herder families have been forced to give part or all of their livestock, under threat, to unidentified armed individuals.

In Nigeria, pastoralists are facing unprecedented challenges linked to the spread of insecurity. The rise in armed violence and banditry is reflected in the aggravation of the phenomenon of cattle rustling, as well as the kidnapping of people in several states of the country (notably those of Katsina and Sokoto), as well as on certain livestock movement routes (Zamafara - Kaduna, Abuja - Niger border, Abuja - Lokoja, etc.).

While Nigerian pastoral communities are victims of criminal activities by armed groups and mafia organisations, some young men from the same communities are now and frequently involved in acts of banditry. These young people who know the area perfectly and are very mobile, are driven by the lure of easy and quick gain: they are increasingly involved in kidnappings for ransom. Those kidnapped are kept in camps, often chained and brutalised. Some of them die in captivity. The use of the Fulbe language by most of these brigands is

causing a confusion between them and the pastoralists who use this language.

- ▶ Risks of farmer-pastoralist conflicts in Nigeria due to the premature departure of herds on transhumance

In Katsina, Sokoto and Kebbi States, pastoral areas are experiencing, at the beginning of the dry season, a shortage of fodder that causes many herds to leave early for transhumance. Insofar as cultivated lands are not yet completely cleared in the traditional areas of retreat of pastoralists, the arrival of transhumant herds is accompanied by considerable increase in tensions linked to the damage that can be caused by animals to the crop fields.

- ▶ Feeding constraints likely to reduce the livestock system productivity

In most pastoral areas, feeding conditions for animals are beginning to become difficult due to the shortage of concentrated feeds (e.g., cotton seed and cake) and the increase in their price. When such feed is available along the transhumance routes, it is sold at high prices. To remedy this, herders have revised upwards the selling price of their animals, both small ruminants and cattle.

For example, an adult goat is currently sold for 20,000 CFA francs, an adult sheep for 35,000 to 40,000 CFA francs, and a bull calf weighing about 200 kg for 150,000 CFA francs.



RETROSPECTIVE ANALYSIS OF DATA COLLECTED SINCE MAY 2020



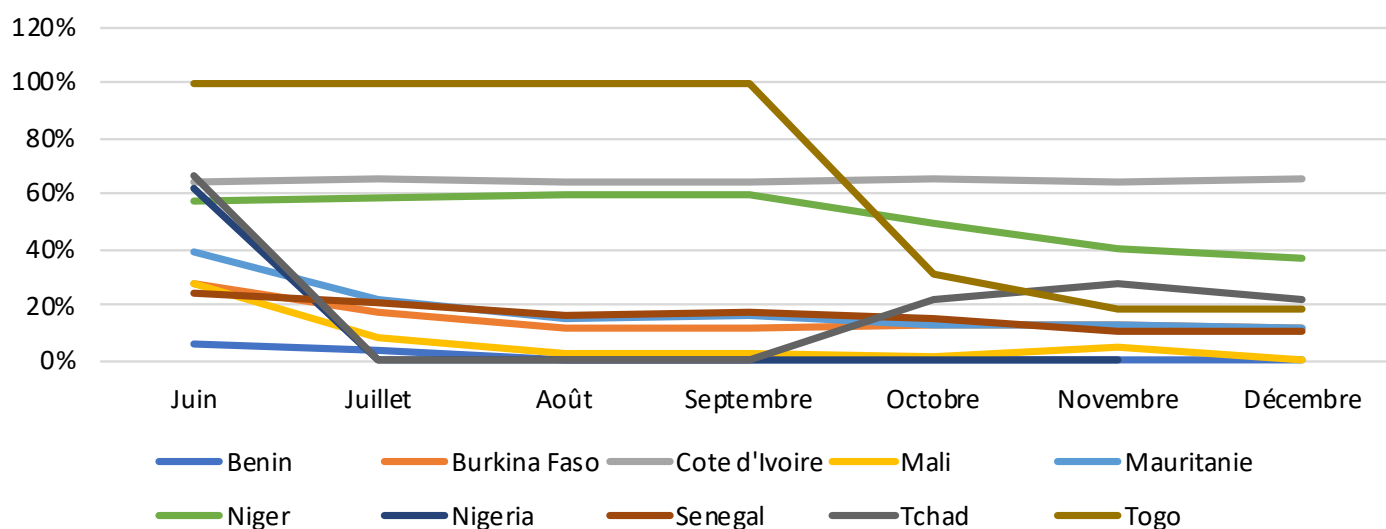
At the regional level, the shortage of livestock feed (concentrated feed mainly) is tending to ease with only 22% of the Relays mentioning it in December, against 43% in June. Overall, localised and short-term shortages were observed over the period, but the most pessimistic scenarios were avoided. However, special situations were noted in Togo, Côte d'Ivoire and the Sahelian countries

It should be noted that the level of food input shortages has remained constant in the coastal countries. Thus, animal feed shortage was reported by 100% of the Relays in Togo during the months of June, July, August and September. This can be explained by two main factors: (i)

feed banks are reluctant to rebuild their stocks, given the high availability of grass fodder at this time of the year; and (ii) the increased difficulties of accessing pastoral areas during the rainy season make it difficult to replenish feed banks. A similar situation is observed in Côte d'Ivoire, where the percentage of Relays reporting feed shortages was close to 65% during the period between June and December.

In the Sahel as a whole, animal feed shortages were mentioned by a high proportion of Relays during the months of June, July and August corresponding to the period when the rainy season is settling in and pasture is developing. In Chad, the level of livestock feed shortages started to decrease from June.

Evolution of the feed shortage



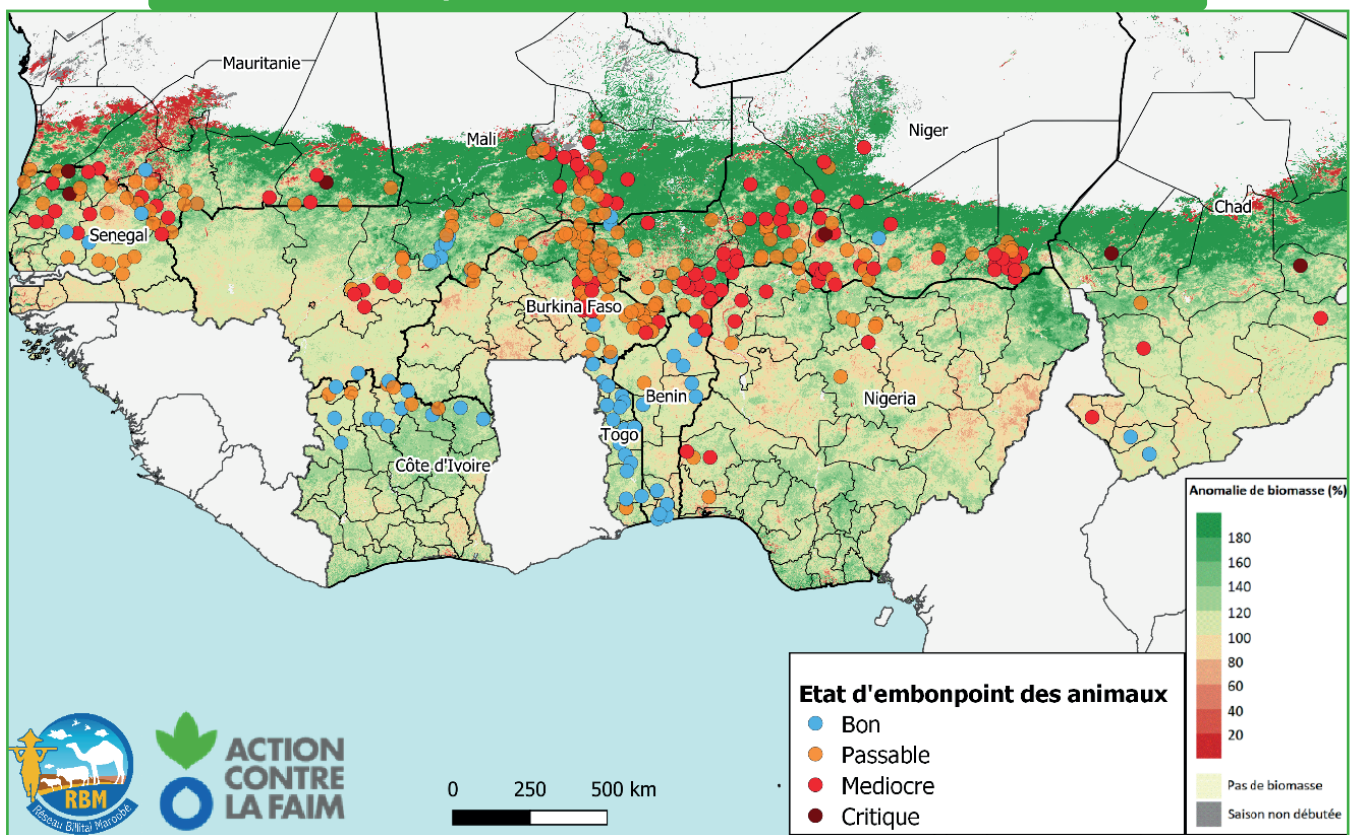
Livestock body condition considered to be average or poor in general

It appears from the testimonies provided by the Relays that the animals are in fair body condition throughout the area covered by the monitoring system. However, animals are in better condition in some coastal countries, such as Côte d'Ivoire, Togo and Benin. Overall, a good body condition was noted in the northern coastal countries during the period covered by the analysis.

On the other hand, in Burkina Faso and Niger,

the body conditions of animals were rated as fair or poor during the period from November to December 2020. The same is true for Nigeria, where such a situation could be explained by the sharp decline in animal movements resulting mainly from the implementation of public measures to control COVID-19 and, to a lesser extent, from the deliberate option made by some herder families.

Anomalie de production de biomasse durant l'hivernage 2020 et état d'embonpoint des animaux de novembre à décembre



Overall, the body condition of livestock was rated as fair in June in the Sahel. Chad presented the most critical situation, given the late onset of the rains there. At the end of the rainy season, the body condition of livestock improved slightly in some countries, namely Mauritania and Mali, where 83% and 59% of the Relays, respectively, consider it to be good.

During the rainy season, the body conditions of the animals were not negatively affected by the shortage of feed in the Sahel because natural pastures were abundant and surface water resources available. However, in November and December, the general condition of livestock declined in Burkina Faso and Niger, due to a combination of several factors including: (i) the delayed clearing of the crop fields did not allow the animals to access crop residues; (ii) the increasing bushfires led to the destruction of a significant part of the fodder stock; and (iii) the reduction in livestock mobility due to the spread of the security threat and the application of restrictive measures adopted in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Critical situations are noted in Senegal and Mauritania.

Tensions gradually easing around water points

Regionally, tensions were reported around pastoral water points by 23% of the Relays, at the time when the coronavirus pandemic had just emerged in the Sahel and West Africa (May 2020). These conflicts over access to water, which were frequent in Burkina Faso and Mauritania, gradually declined between July and December, as the percentage of Relays reporting them fell from 19% to 8%.

In the specific case of Burkina Faso, the late onset of the rainy season led to persistent tension around water points (wells and boreholes). The percentage of Relays

reporting strained relations between water point users was 50% in June and 59% in July, a period during which surface water resources were in deficit. In the months that followed (August to December), conflicts almost ended with the onset of the rains (reduction in the proportion of Relays reporting such a phenomenon to 1% or even 0%). The lack of conflict was also observed in Mali and Chad.

In Senegal, the extent of tensions around water points remained constant throughout the period under review. Between the months of June and December, the proportion of Relays reporting this phenomenon was around 15 or 16%, reaching, at most, a maximum of 20% at certain times.

REDUCED LIVESTOCK MOVEMENT



Reduced livestock movements was one of the main consequences from the application of the COVID-19 political and health measures adopted in all Sahelian and coastal countries. It is worth mentioning that the measures restricting livestock mobility at the national level were lifted after a relatively short period of application in several countries where they were adopted (e.g. Senegal).

During the period between June and December, the implementation of these measures has had uneven effects on pastoralist families, in relation to the degree of their application (strict or partial).

Analysis of the data collected as part of the monitoring system shows that the greatest reduction in livestock mobility was recorded in Togo (information provided by 95% of the Relays). This drastic restriction on animal movements was caused by the strict application of measures enacted by the public authorities to curb the spread of the pandemic.

In Côte d'Ivoire, the Relays reported a sharp reduction in livestock movements during the months of July (89% of the Relays), August (98%) and September (100%), due to three main factors including: (i) the application of public measures restricting livestock movements; (ii) the availability of abundant fodder resources following the onset of the rains; and (iii) the occupation of most of the rural areas by crop fields.

In Nigeria, in December, only 13% of the Relays mentioned a reduction in livestock movements. The reduction in livestock movements was high in June, as it was mentioned by 82% of the Relays. From July onwards, impediments to the mobility of herds decreased considerably as a result of a relaxation in the application of restrictive public measures.

Like other Sahelian countries, Mali experienced severe restrictions on animal movements following the outbreak of the health crisis. Pastoral resources being available during the rainy season, the herds remained around camps set up in the pastoral and agro-pastoral areas. In December, only 6% of the Relays reported a reduction in pastoral mobility.

In Mauritania, the decline in animal mobility was reported by 78% of the Relays in June. This percentage gradually fell to 50% in December.

In summary, the countries can be divided into three groups in terms of the evolution of livestock mobility systems during the period under review:

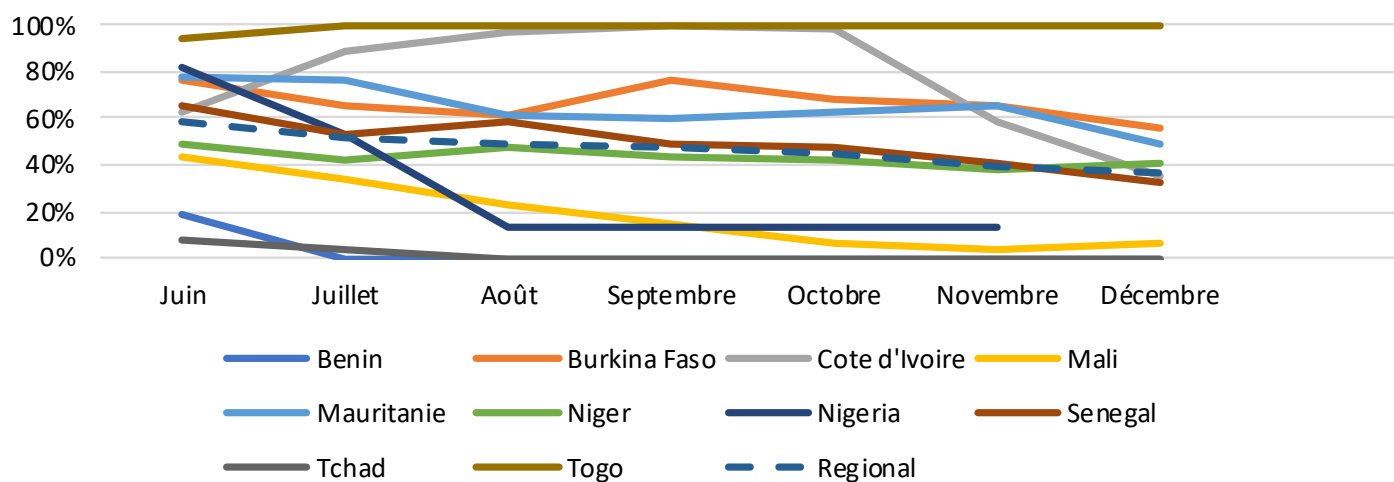
- The first group includes coastal countries in which the enforcement of restrictive measures has been strict (Togo) or relatively strict (Côte d'Ivoire);
- The second group is made up of Sahelian countries which have been characterised by a poor application of the measures adopted by the public authorities (e.g. Niger and Burkina Faso);
- The third group is made up of the countries that have enforced the public measures in a non-coercive manner (case of Mauritania, for example)

In 2020, the transhumance campaign was so disrupted that there were no departures recorded in the area of the WAPO complex (W, Arly, Pendjari, and Oti-Mondouri parks and wildlife reserves and hunting zones) and at the western Niger-Nigeria border. In addition, changes in transhumance routes have resulted in additional constraints for herders and flocks, such as increased travel time, the obligation to bear the additional costs generated by border controls, the loss of weight of the animals due to lack of access to good quality pasture and the decline in their commercial value, the loss of animals in areas they are not used to visiting, etc.

The weakening of mobility systems has led to a concentration of livestock in certain areas, resulting in increased pressure on pastoral resources, as well as the development of conflicts over access to water and grazing.

Recent field studies show that in areas where the situation is still relatively stable, such as the Kénédougou province in Burkina Faso, for example, herders deliberately restrict their mobility in order to escape the consequences of security incidents (interventions by defence and security forces following jihadist attacks).

REDUCED LIVESTOCK MOVEMENTS



LIVESTOCK CONCENTRATION IN CROSS-BORDER AREAS

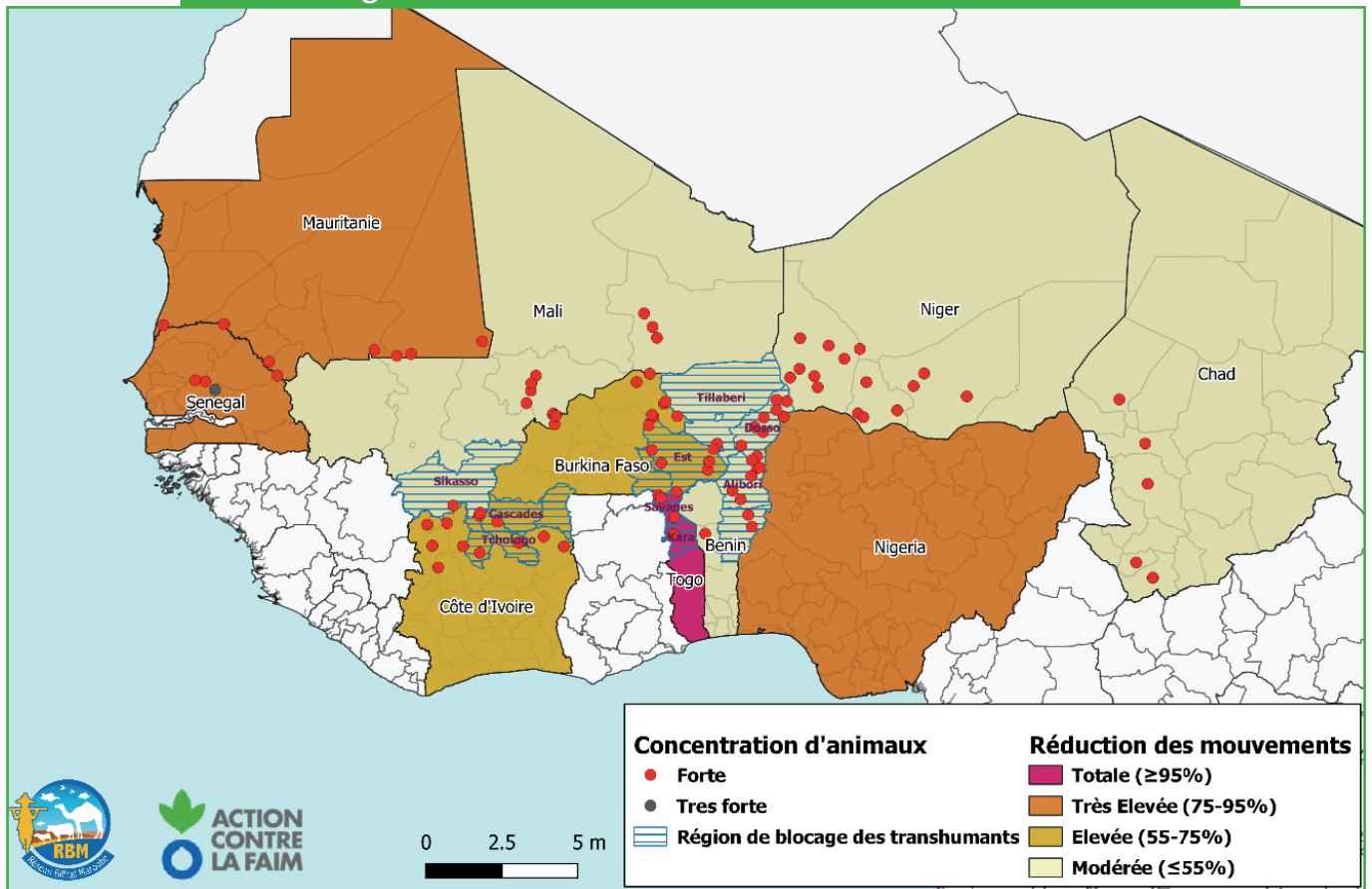


High concentrations of animals were observed in the trans-boundary areas east of Burkina Faso, north of Côte d'Ivoire, north of Togo (up to the Plateaux region), south of Niger and north of Nigeria. During the period under review, animal concentrations were consistently reported to be high or very high in these areas which are severely affected by recurrent insecurity.

Most of these animals belong to transhumant herders who have been stranded on their way back to their home areas due to the spread of insecurity on the one hand and the decision to close the borders adopted as part of the fight against the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic on the other hand.

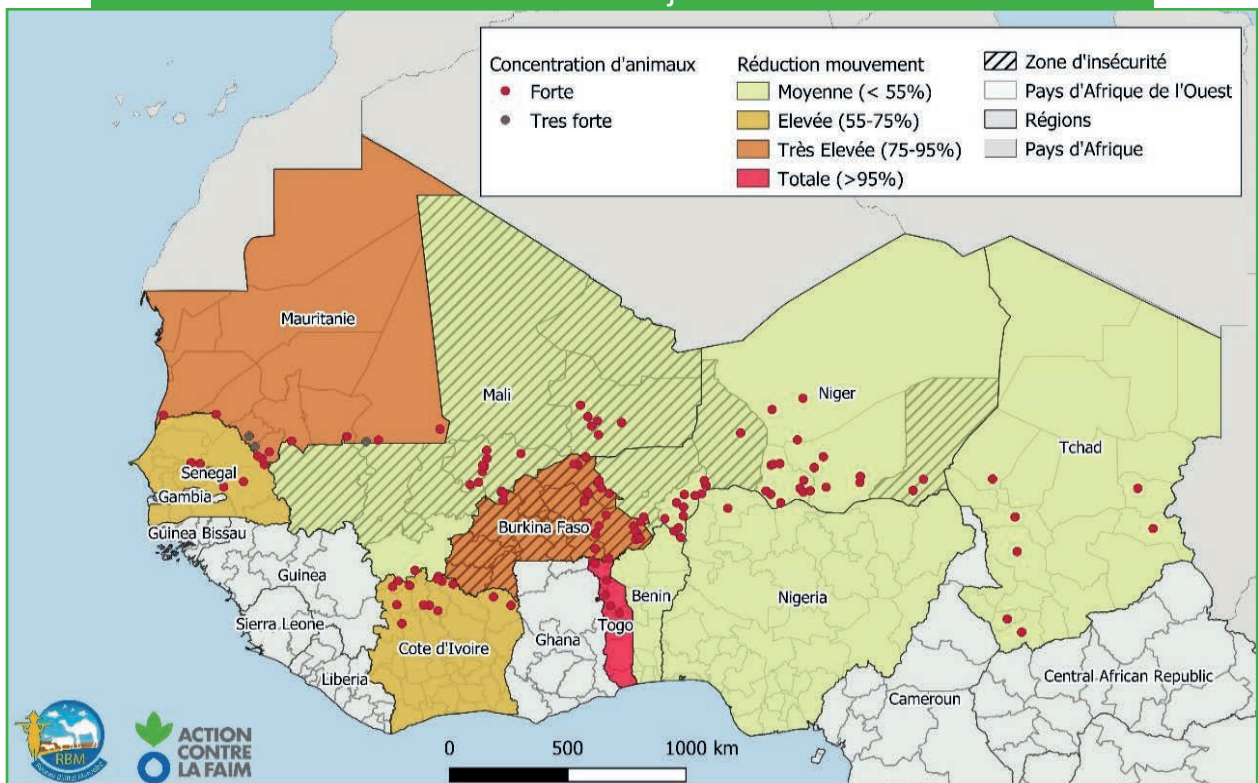
In Senegal, it was the northern part of the country that hosted concentrations of animals during the period under review (June to December). As for Mauritania, it was mainly in the south-western part of the country that herds were concentrated.

Concentration d'animaux et zones de réduction de mouvements et de blocages des transhumants de novembre à décembre 2020



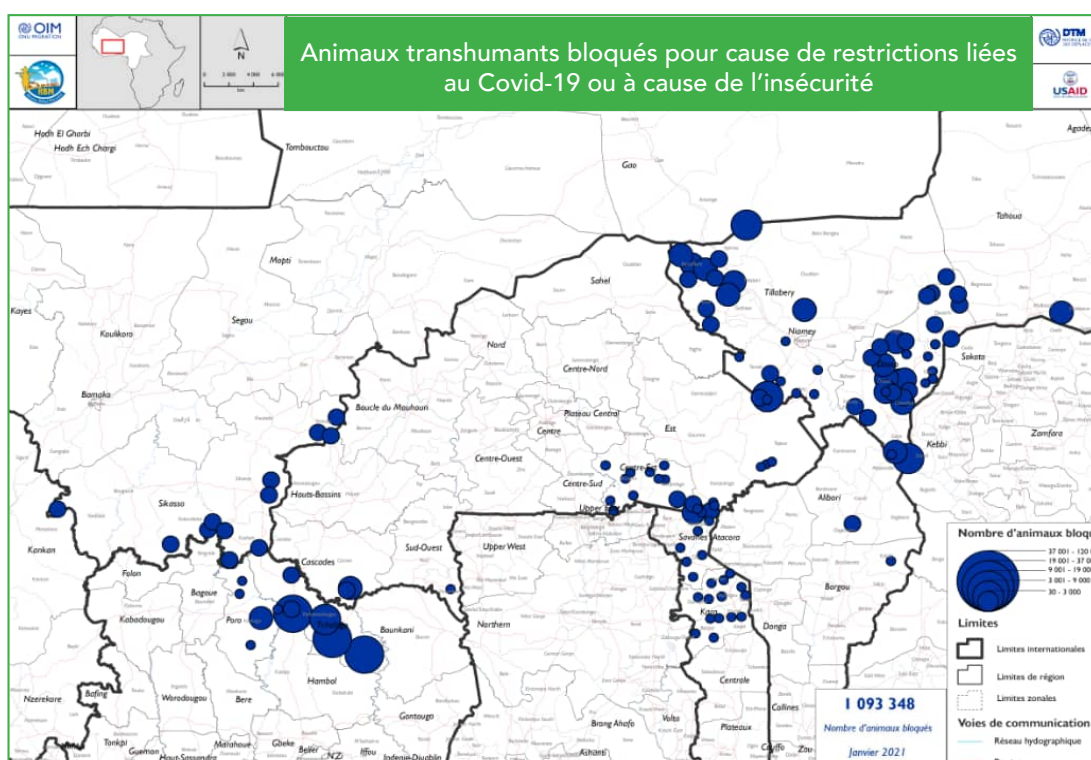
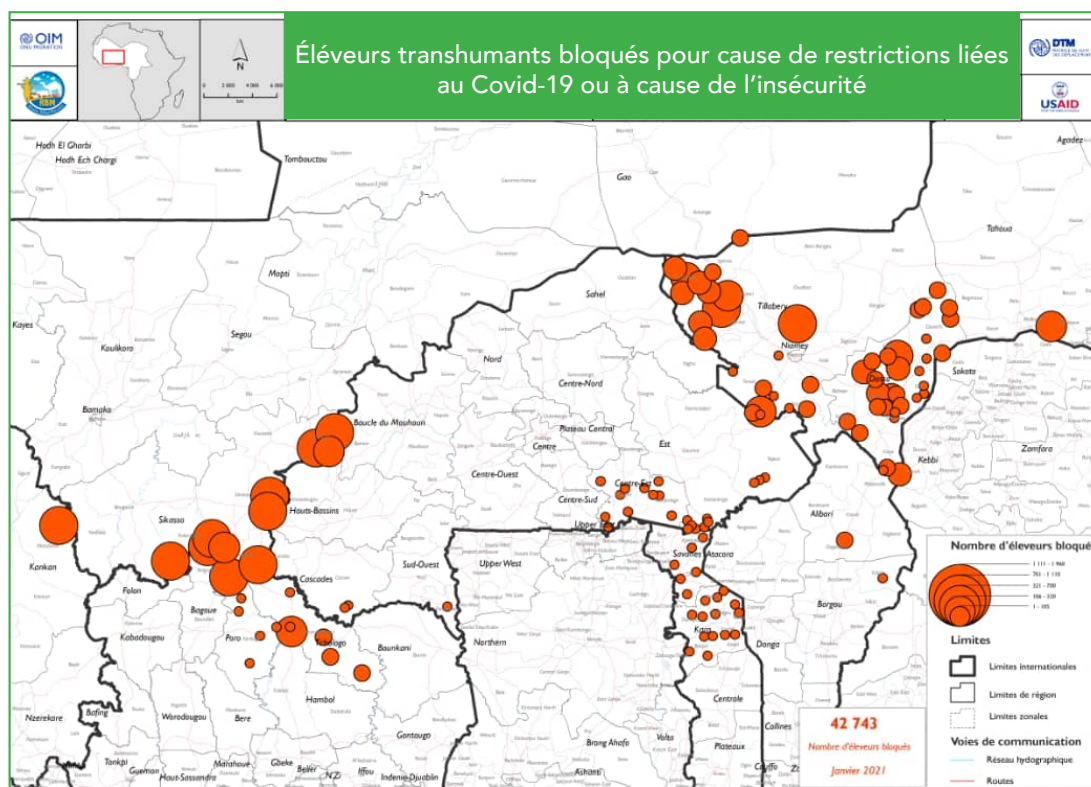
According to the data collected as part of the monitoring system, during September and October, 323 transhumant herders with a herd of about 33,000 cattle were stranded in insecure cross-border areas (e.g., the eastern region of Burkina Faso).

Concentration d'animaux et zones de réduction des mouvements et d'insécurité en juin 2020



In December, there were 40,000 transhumant herders and more than one million head of cattle still stranded in border areas compared to June because the coastal countries have not opened their borders.

Such a situation calls for a review of approaches to conducting policy dialogue between actors, highlighting evidence of new forms of insecurity and establishing an updated mapping of cross-border transhumance flows. In addition to the location of transhumant settlement areas, the groups should be disaggregated according to the factors that explain their presence in transit or reception areas (extension of stay due to insecurity prevailing in the regions of origin, impediments to livestock movements caused by the application of public measures to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, settling of families who have left their home areas affected by climate change,



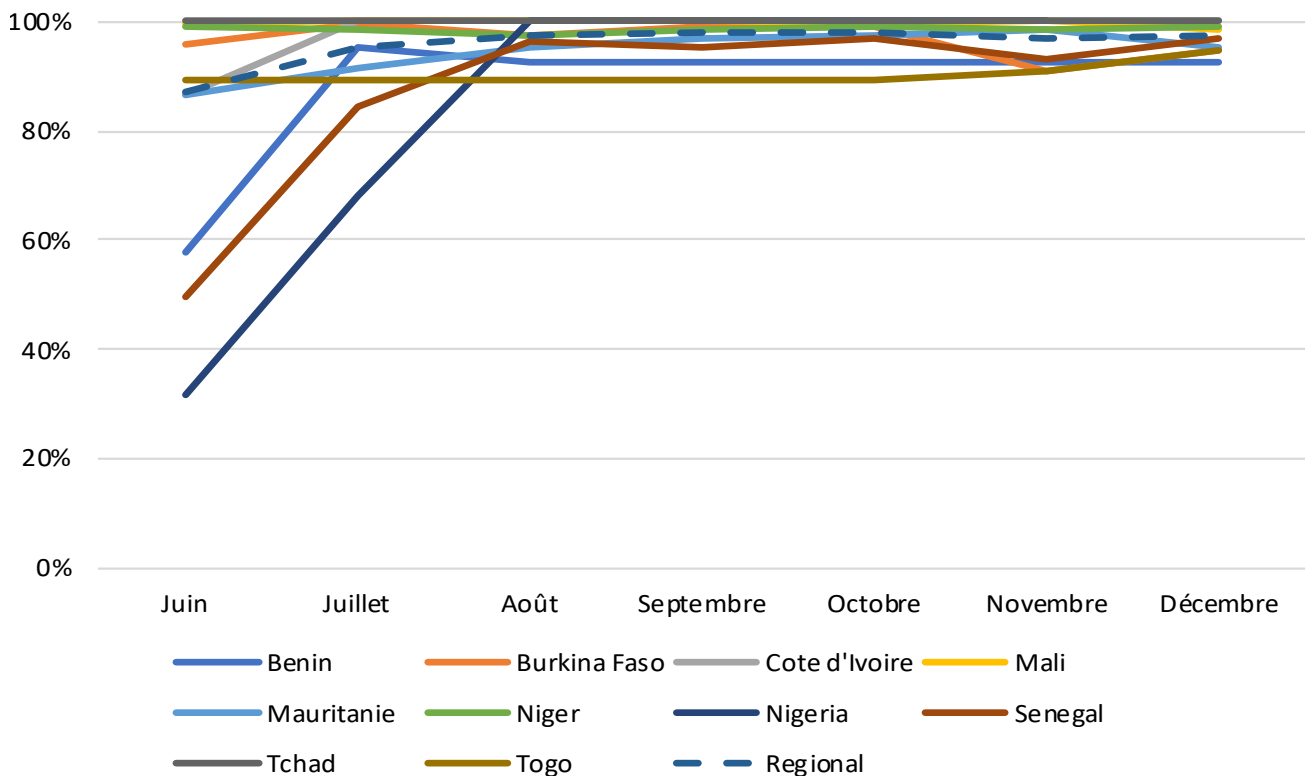
Resilience efforts and adaptation of the pastoral economy to the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the security crisis

Markets almost constantly open during the period under review

In most of the coastal countries, more than 80% of the Relays reported the reopening of livestock markets as of July, following the relaxation of sanitary measures.

In some Sahelian countries such as Mali and Chad, 100% of the Relays reported that markets remained open throughout the period from June to December. The systematic closure of all official markets (particularly in Senegal), which was observed at the start of the pandemic, has not been maintained.

Trends in market opening



Regionally, livestock markets have remained open according to 87% of the Relays, since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. This percentage rose to 98% in December. At all countries where data are collected, almost all markets are open. On the one hand, the markets have resisted the restrictive measures adopted by the public authorities, insofar as most of them have remained open. On the other hand, the decisions to close livestock markets, as reported by the Relays, mainly concerned community and informal markets.

Upward spikes in goat and sheep prices

Sheep and goat price table (in CFA francs)

PRIX CAPRIN								
PAYS	JUIN	JUILLET	AOÛT	SEPTEMBRE	OCTOBRE	NOVEMBRE	DÉCEMBRE	Delta
Benin	27 904	28 569	26 615	23 846	24 292	26 410	26 077	- 1 827
Burkina Faso	30 389	29 279	28 433	28 975	29 254	30 394	31 469	1 079
Cote d'Ivoire	28 875	32 200	24 125	23 650	23 500	23 475	23 900	4 975
Mali	21 868	28 905	24 225	23 860	24 033	25 916	26 336	4 468
Niger	20 331	25 120	21 673	18 559	19 429	20 207	20 795	464
Senegal	28 902	31 735	32 423	30 720	30 946	31 614	28 772	- 130
Tchad	18 519	18 426	15 833	15 833	35 278	34 389	35 000	16 481
Togo	27 526	34 379	32 592	24 379	25 000	25 691	30 798	3 272
Regional	24 360	28 364	25 342	23 515	24 284	24 958	25 455	1 095

PRIX Ovin								
PAYS	JUIN	JUILLET	AOÛT	SEPTEMBRE	Octobre	NOVEMBRE	DÉCEMBRE	Delta
Benin	44 813	45 833	42 354	38 667	39 317	42 135	41 917	- 2 896
Burkina Faso	57 447	59 877	60 496	58 790	55 950	56 147	58 283	836
Cote d'Ivoire	56 063	85 000	49 250	42 920	42 000	42 000	42 150	- 13 913
Mali	41 650	59 775	48 306	43 457	42 182	44 971	42 956	1 306
Niger	46 644	54 728	48 154	40 249	39 093	45 595	45 853	79
Senegal	69 461	104 421	77 333	70 116	73 737	74 965	69 175	- 286
Tchad	28 796	28 889	22 500	22 500	23 333	22 889	22 778	- 6 019
Togo	56 184	85 463	72 763	48 311	46 179	48 750	58 246	2 061
Regional	50 150	64 718	53 938	47 150	46 250	48 590	49 217	- 93

In general, selling prices for goats and sheep followed the same trend of upward peaks that were recorded on two occasions: (i) on the eve of the Tabaski festival, in July; and (ii) during the end-of-year festivities, in December. The prices for small ruminants were revised downward, between August and October.

In some countries, such as Benin and Burkina Faso, goat prices remained stable throughout the period under review.

In Chad, goat prices nearly doubled in recent times, from 15,833 CFA francs for an adult male in September to 35,000 CFA francs in December. On the other hand, the sheep prices remained stable over the period (about 22,500 CFA francs for an adult male).

A considerable drop was recorded in the selling price of sheep the day after the celebration of the Tabaski festival in some coastal countries such as Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal. In Côte d'Ivoire, the average price fell from 85,000 CFA francs in July to 49,250 CFA francs in August. During the same period, the average price fell from 104,420 CFA francs to 77,330 francs in Senegal.

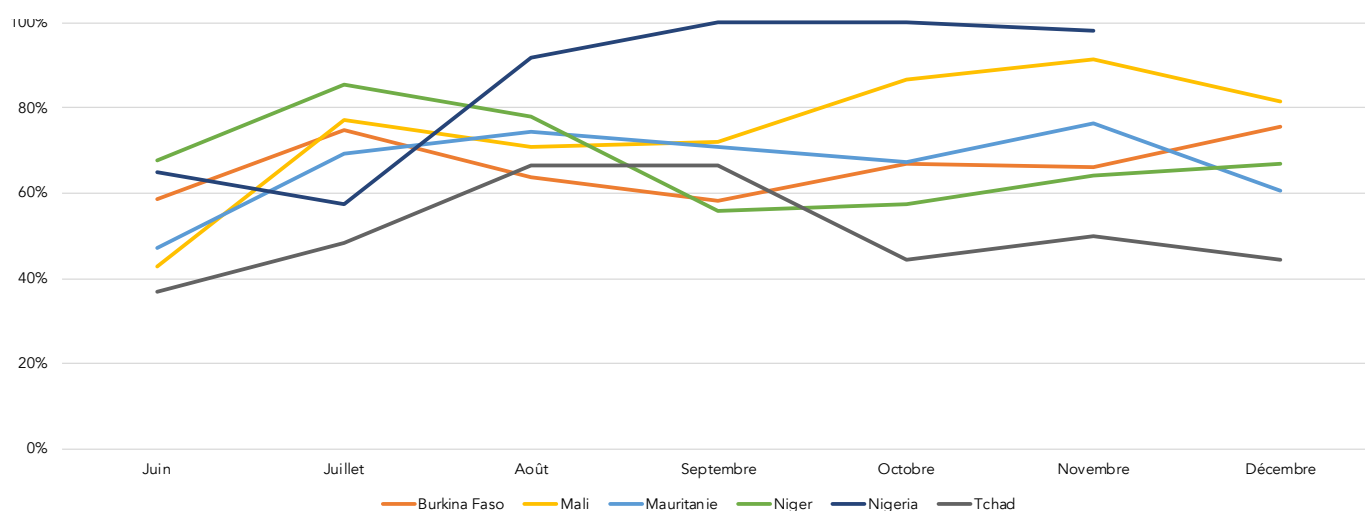
Increased animal sales

At the beginning of the health crisis, the proportion of Relays mentioning animal sales in all countries was between 37 and 68%. As the Tabaski festival approached, a peak in sales of small ruminants was followed by a gradual decline in all countries.

Thus, at the regional level, it can be seen that animal sales were boosted by the fact that most livestock markets remained open. As an illustration, in Benin, the percentage of Relays reporting an increase in animal sales rose from 50% to 92% between June and December.

In some countries, the increase in livestock sales is mainly related to the significant body condition of the animals. This is the case in Mali, where the proportion of Relays reporting an increase in animal sales rose from 43% in June to 77% in July, before rising to more than 80% in October, November and December. This upward trend was observed in the other Sahelian countries. On the other hand, there has been a decrease in animal sales in Côte d'Ivoire where markets are largely supplied by livestock from Mali.

Increased sales in the Sahelian countries



It should be noted that despite the application of restrictive public measures, the Relays recorded a considerable increase in animal sales during the months of July and December, during which the sharp rise in demand helped to sell sheep and goats at very high prices.

In this way, the breeders were able to take advantage of changes in supply and demand in the market. Market opportunities vary depending on the time of the year, animal species and country. In general, the selling price of goats is maintained at a relatively high level throughout the year. For this reason, this species is central to the resilience strategy of the pastoral families. In fact, the sale of goats is the first line of defence for pastoralists to avoid the descent into poverty.



In many Sahelian countries that have experienced a difficult pastoral lean period (Chad, Niger and parts of Burkina Faso), the sale of small ruminants has served as a lever to improve the livelihoods of pastoral families. Despite a fair or poor body condition of animals observed in Niger, Chad and part of Mauritania, the Relays noted an increase in

sales at the end of June and beginning of July to cover the food needs of herder families facing a difficult pastoral lean season. Moreover, during this period, pastoralists began to implement a strategy of strategic destocking of their animals.

The selling price of sheep on the market was less favourable than that of goats in several countries (namely Chad, Niger, Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire), outside the periods of major religious festivals. For the most part, prices for these species have moved up and down during the period under review. The cases of Côte d'Ivoire and Niger are illustrative examples.

With regard to the sale of cereals, the data collected from the Relays show little regional variations in market prices.

It should be noted, however, that the price of 1 kg of sorghum fell from 312 CFA francs in June to 200 CFA francs in December. A decline in cereal prices was recorded in several Sahelian countries (Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Senegal) during the period under review: (i) millet, 241 CFA francs/kg in December, compared to 352 CFA francs/kg in June; (ii) sorghum, 209 CFA francs, compared to 352 CFA francs; and (iii) maize, 207 CFA francs, compared to 416 CFA francs.

In general, the analysis of price trends shows that

the terms of trade were favourable to livestock farmers between the end of July and December in some Sahelian countries (Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania and Niger).

DECREASING EFFECTIVENESS OF AWARENESS AND INFORMATION CAMPAIGNS ON COVID-19

According to the information provided by the Relays, information and awareness campaigns on the coronavirus pandemic targeting pastoral families proved to be very effective during the month of June in almost all the countries.

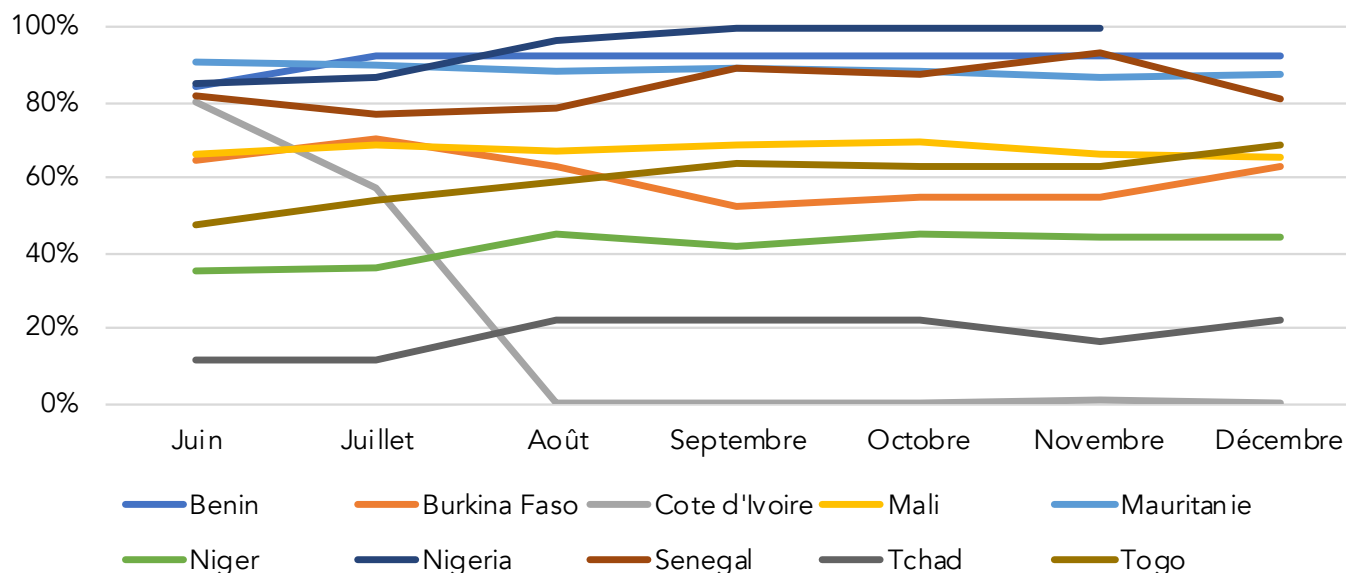
According to more than 80% of the Relays, the campaigns were effective in the Sahelian countries between the beginning of the health crisis and the months of July and August. Subsequently, the effectiveness of the campaigns declined slightly in several countries, notably Burkina Faso, Mali and Mauritania.

In Chad, the assessment of the effectiveness of the information and awareness campaigns varied depending on the time of the year. In June and July, only 11% of the Relays highlighted the effectiveness of the actions carried out; the proportion rose to 22% in the following months (October to December).

In Togo, 50% of the Relays deemed the campaign conducted at the time of the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic effective.

In Côte d'Ivoire, there was a decline in the effectiveness of the campaigns during the period from August to October.

EFFECTIVENESS OF AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS



Large public gatherings: contrasting trends between Sahelian and coastal countries

At the regional level, between June and December, the proportion of Relays reporting a gathering of people (public or private meetings) ranged between 56 and 62%. From August onwards, there was a decrease in this proportion, followed by a further increase in November/December.

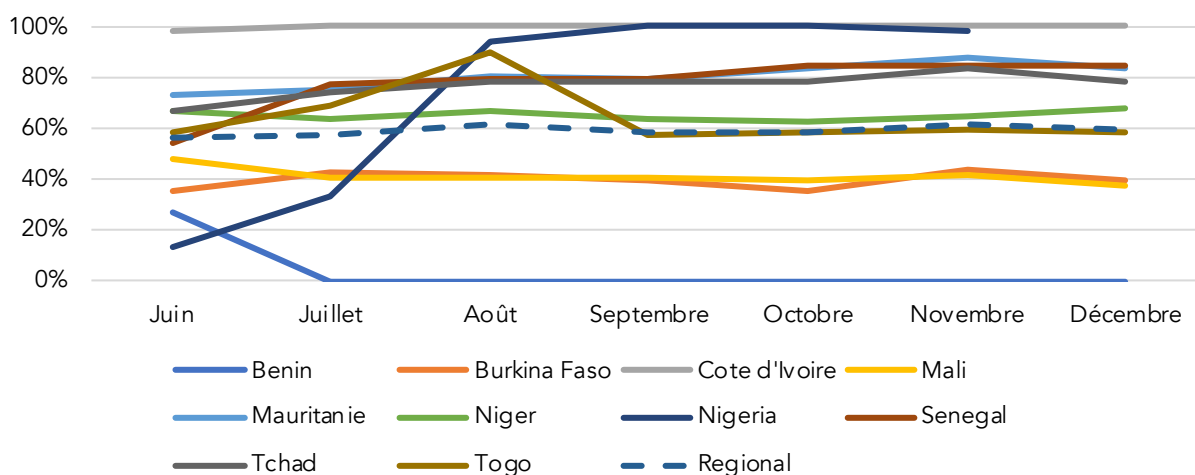
In Nigeria, only 13% of the Relays reported gatherings of people in June, reflecting a satisfactory level of compliance with coronavirus protection measures. Subsequently, this percentage increased gradually from July onwards, reaching a peak in September and October. This shows a decline in the observance of these measures. In Togo, 58% of the Relays reported that gatherings were continuing in June. This phenomenon reached a peak in August.

In Côte d'Ivoire, 98% of the Relays reported gatherings in June. In the following months, this proportion rose to 100%.

In the Sahelian countries, the proportion of Relays reporting gatherings is lower than in the coastal countries. During the period under review, the proportion was between 35% and 42% in Burkina Faso, between 63% and 68% in Niger and between 38% and 48% in Mali.



LARGE GATHERINGS OF PEOPLE



In general, the information and awareness campaigns were very effective at the start of the health crisis, due to the strong mobilisation of the media, NGOs and all community actors. The call for general mobilisation against COVID-19 resulted in compliance with the public measures adopted, including the ban on public and

private gatherings. Starting in August, there was a relaxation in compliance with the barrier measures against the coronavirus. The return of the people to their old habits resulted in private meetings being organised on the occasion of family and social ceremonies.

DECLINING ABNORMAL INFLUX OF PATIENTS

Abnormal influx of patients was reported regionally In June, by 17% of the Relays. Between September and December, this proportion increased from 20% to 33%. It should be mentioned that this period corresponds to the cold dry season in the Sahelian countries and is generally characterised by an increase in abnormal patient influxes.

At the start of the health crisis, the countries with the highest level of abnormal influxes, according

to the Relays, were Mauritania, Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal. From August onwards, the situation changed in Côte d'Ivoire, since the proportion of Relays reporting this phenomenon was between 5 and 6% during the period from October to December.

In Nigeria, the data provided by the Relays show a low abnormal influx of patients during the period under review.

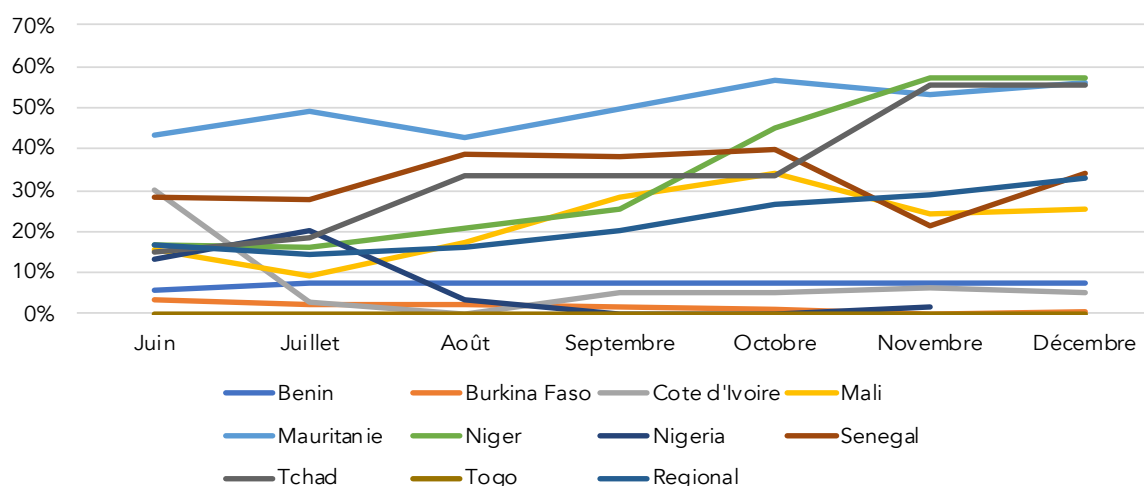
In Togo, no Relay reported an abnormal influx

of patients during the entire period under review.

In Burkina Faso, between September and December, a very small proportion of Relays reported abnormal patient influx.

In Niger and Chad, as well as in Mauritania, more than 50% of the Relays reported abnormal patient influx, which may suggest a resurgence of the epidemic in these countries.

Abnormal influx of patients



SUPPORT FOR THE PASTORAL SECTOR

The percentage of Relays mentioning support provided to the pastoral sector was between 24 and 27% between June and December, regionally. This means that three out of four needy pastoralists did not receive any support. There are therefore very few sector-specific support field programmes. In Mauritania and Togo, support was provided to herders mainly between June and August, according to the Relays. In Mali and Burkina Faso, support was provided in June and July. In Niger, Benin and Mauritania, many families of pastoralists have received support under a project implemented by RBM . In Côte d'Ivoire, the pastoral sector did not receive any specific support during the period under review.

In general, support was low for the pastoral sector. The countries can be divided into two groups: (i) Mauritania, Benin, Senegal and, to a lesser extent, Niger and Togo in which the pastoral sector seems to have been supported, to varying degrees; and (ii) the other countries in which the pastoral sector is largely neglected.

The major gains recorded are the result of the diligent intervention of the warning systems. They provided useful information on the situation of pastoral households to the public authorities and technical and financial partners. Some support that takes into account both the food needs of pastoralists and those of their animals has been widely appreciated.

1 Assistance project for pastoral families facing the cumulative effects of the pastoral lean season, insecurity and the COVID-19 pandemic (PAS2P). This specific support somewhat distorts the results since the Relays directly benefited from the support provided to the families

TESTIMONY OF A WOMAN PASTORALIST INTERNALLY DISPLACED, AS A RESULT OF SECURITY INCIDENTS



Salama, 43, lives in the commune of Ouatagouna (Ansongo circle, Gao region, Mali). In her testimony, this widow and displaced person said: «Because of the crisis that we have been experiencing in the region for the past ten years, I have lost my sources of income, which were based on a herd of small ruminants comprising about forty heads. This period of crisis is so difficult that I had given up all hope. A few months ago, some enumerators came to visit me. They told me that my name is on

the list of beneficiaries of support from a project that wants to help people in our area . I was not familiar with this project, which gave me invaluable support. On two occasions, I received a cash transfer for an amount of 60,000 CFA francs. Then, I benefited from a herd of small ruminants which includes 4 goats and 3 sheep, as well as 390 kg of feed for the animals. This support brought me relief and hope is beginning to return. My situation is changing because the herd is growing: a goat and a sheep have given birth and they are producing milk to feed my family members.

Efforts should be made to intensify awareness raising and promote the provision of collective and individual protection kits against coronavirus. At the same time, it would be advisable to reflect on strategies to support livestock farming families faced with health crises.

SUPPLY DIFFICULTIES IN SUGAR AND SOAP

The idea of setting up these indicators came from the fact that they appeared to us as interesting parameters for measuring possible market dysfunctions and addressing the problems of access to one of the commodities necessary in the fight against the pandemic.

At the regional level, sugar shortage was reported by 11% of the Relays at the time the COVID-19 pandemic had just emerged. This proportion gradually declined to 9% in August and then to 7% in December.

Between August and December, a small proportion of the Relays reported sugar shortages in Sahelian countries such as Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Chad and Mali. The situation was different in Niger where the percentage of Relays reporting a sugar shortage was between 16 and 25% during the period under review. This could be explained by the access problems to certain rural areas during the rainy season.

The Relays sometimes reported soap shortages linked to border closure measures; this was noted mainly in the Sahelian countries. For example, in Mauritania, a high proportion of Relays mentioned soap shortages in June. This proportion fell in August and September, before rising again in November and December.

In Burkina Faso and Niger, soap shortages were not significant between June and December.

In coastal countries, specifically Togo, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, and Nigeria, very few Relays reported a shortage of soap.

In conclusion, the disruptions caused by the measures did not have a strong impact on the supply of sugar and soap to the markets.

² The Resilience and Social Cohesion of the Liptako Gourma Cross-Border Communities Project (RECOLG).



CONCLUSION



Retrospective analysis of the data over the period under review highlights a number of findings and recommendations.

With regard to bushfires, a number of important points should be taken into account, mainly:

- Gradually integrating the parameters relating to bush fires and floods into the RBM's information monitoring system (mapping of areas affected by these phenomena, establishment of a typology of bush fires according to their scale and origin (fires caused deliberately or accidentally);
- Awareness-raising campaigns for rural communities, to be led by professional livestock breeders' organisations and focused on the ecological and socio-economic impacts of bushfires in areas with recurrent fires;
- Establishing collaborative relationships between pastoralist organisations and fire brigades to facilitate the prosecution of those responsible for deliberately-caused bushfires;
- Pastoralist organisations to develop advocacy for the inclusion of a module on bushfire control in the training curriculum for magistrates;
- Pastoralist organisations to approach technical and financial partners, so that they provide support for firebreak management initiatives that are promoted by local authorities;
- Local Authorities to grant an authorisation for mowing and commercial development of bush straw, while ensuring the establishment of a collection system of dues to finance the package of activities identified (running the information monitoring system, conducting awareness campaigns and carrying out firebreak development operations).

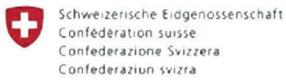
The constraints identified regarding livestock feed are due to several factors, including: (i) difficulties in accessing crop residues due to the delay in clearing the fields; (ii) destruction of a significant portion of the fodder stock caused by bush fires; and (iii) reduction in livestock mobility due to the spread of the security threat and the application of restrictive measures adopted in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The deterioration in the body condition of animals has reached such a level that several families have begun to implement a strategy for strategic destocking of their animals.

As far as livestock mobility is concerned, the major fact lies in the fact that nearly 40,000 transhumant herders on their way back to the Sahel have been stranded in cross-border areas following the border closure in coastal countries. Faced with such a situation, more convincing advocacy should be carried out, based on evidence of new forms of insecurity and an updated mapping of cross-border transhumance flows should be established (location of transhumant settlement areas, typology of groups according to the factors explaining their presence in the transit or reception areas).

With regard to support for the pastoral sector, the data collected highlights the diligent intervention of the warning systems and the quality of the information they have provided to the public authorities and technical and financial partners on the situation of pastoral households. In addition, the data highlight the relevance of certain interventions that took into account both the food needs of the pastoralists and those of their animals.

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