



Decision support note on Mobile Livestock Systems (MLS) in West Africa and the Sahel (WAS)

Number 1

October 2023-May 2024

1. Introduction

Ruminant farming in West Africa and the Sahel is dominated by pastoral and agropastoral systems characterized by movements of more or less long distances and durations of animals and shepherds. These movements are amplified by the effects of two phenomena: climate change and insecurity that affect Sahelian and coastal countries indiscriminately.

The analyses in this note are based on¹ the results of the consultation organized with representatives of fourteen (14) countries, regional institutions (ECOWAS, UEMOA, CILSS) and breeders' organizations. It covers the period from October 2023 to May 2024.

From discussions with these stakeholders, a number of factual observations emerged. The period under review is considered relatively calm and peaceful, although marked by the accentuation of certain phenomena that seem to be part of a major trend:

- A mixed forage situation
- The amplification of bushfires,
- The increasing complexity of crime: cattle theft and conflicts,
- The concentration of animals and livestock in cross-border areas,
- The development of fodder crops,
- Improving the sector's contribution to the local economy,
- Strengthening surveillance and control of transboundary animal diseases .

2. Trends in the phenomena identified

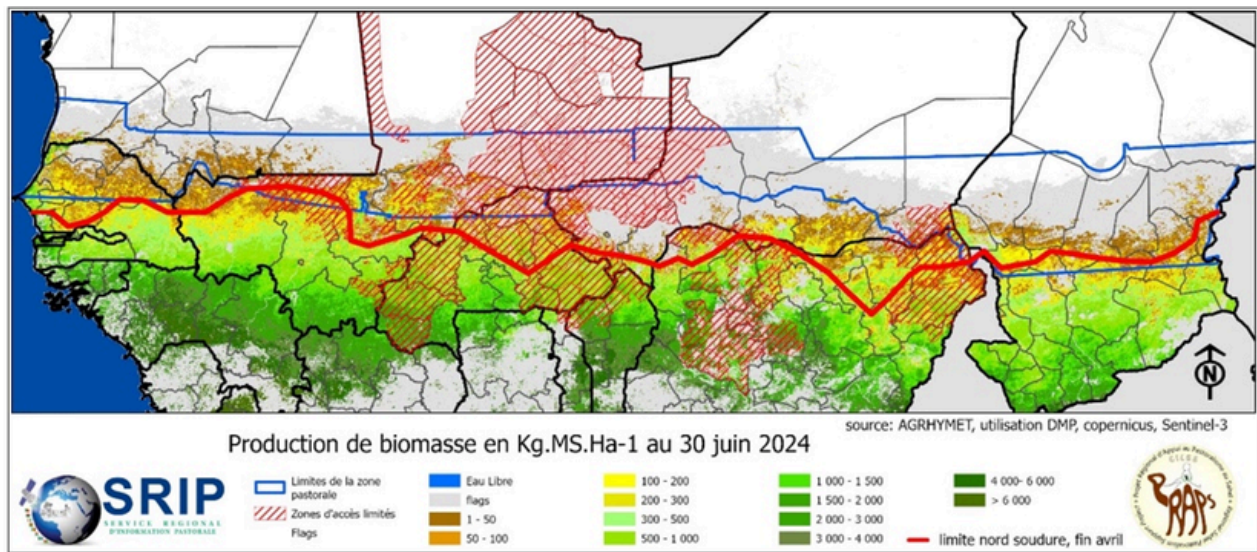
2.1 A mixed forage situation

As of June 30, 2024, in the Sahel and West Africa, the pastoral situation is mixed. In the agropastoral zone of the Sahelian countries, we observe an increase in the vegetation front. However, in the purely pastoral part, animals continue to feed on the residual fodder mass on approximately 65% of the area.

Biomass productivity is lower than the average of the last 8 years in almost 80% of the pastoral zone. However, compared to the previous year at the same time, it is around 55%. This is explained by the delay recorded in the installation of the season. This period of year was also difficult for animals. The lean period is currently at its peak and many animal losses have already been recorded due to difficulties in accessing pastures. However, the interesting rainfall prospects announced give hope for an improvement in the situation in the coming weeks.

1 Bénin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Gambie, Guinée, Libéria, Mali, Mauritanie, Niger, Nigeria, Sénégal, Togo, Tchad ; (CRSA) et RBM

The pastoral situation in June seems to be aggravated by the security crisis, the ban and/or suspension of transhumance and a significant drop in the residual fodder mass and water for watering livestock, which are vital elements for the survival of animals. As a result, the body condition of animals varies from poor to good depending on the region.



2.2 The amplification of bushfires

According to the data presented by the countries, the region recorded during the period from October 2023 to May 2024, twelve thousand four hundred and twenty five (**12,425**) **cases** of bushfires that burned fifteen million two hundred and ninety-three thousand one hundred and seventy-four (**15,293,174**) **ha**, or **two hundred and eighteen million two hundred and twenty-eight thousand, one hundred and fifty-one (218,228,151) TMS**. These fires caused a loss of four hundred and eighty-three (**483**) **UBT** .

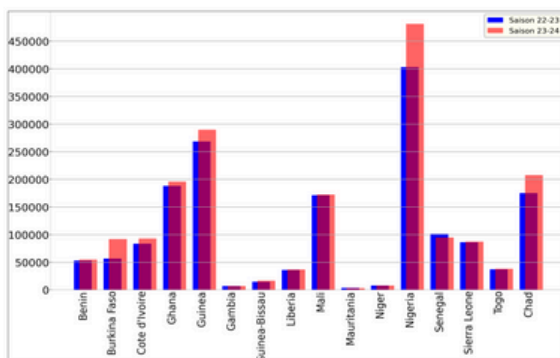
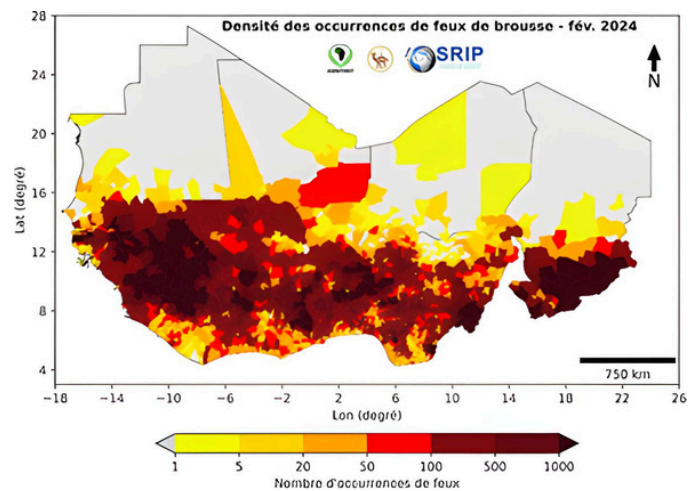


Figure 2. Fire occurrences by country for the 2023-2024 season

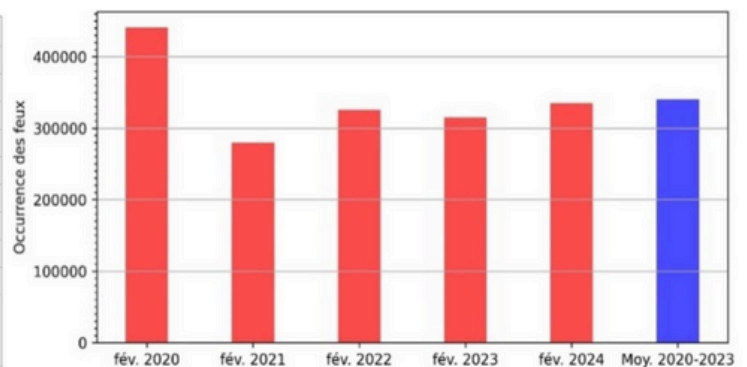


Figure 3. Evolution of the occurrence of bushfires in February - CILSS/ECOWAS zone



2.3 A slow growth in fodder production

According to data provided by some countries, fodder production during the period under review amounts to two hundred and eighteen million, two hundred and twenty-eight and one hundred and fifty-one (**218,228,151**) TMS for an approximate coverage of one hundred and fifty million, three hundred and sixty-six thousand and three hundred and seventy-six (**150 366 376**) UBT. The areas sown with fodder crops were one thousand one hundred and forty-eight (**1148**) ha, largely insufficient to provide the region's fodder needs estimated at five billion five hundred and thirty-three million, seventeen thousand five hundred and seven (**5,533,017,507**) TMS, largely provided by natural pastures. Approximately twenty-one million nine hundred and forty-six thousand and two hundred and fifty (**21,946,250**) UBT could be faced with a difficult situation of access to food.

Planche photographique n°3 : Image traduisant un état d'embonpoint défavorable



2.4 The concentration of animals and livestock in cross-border areas

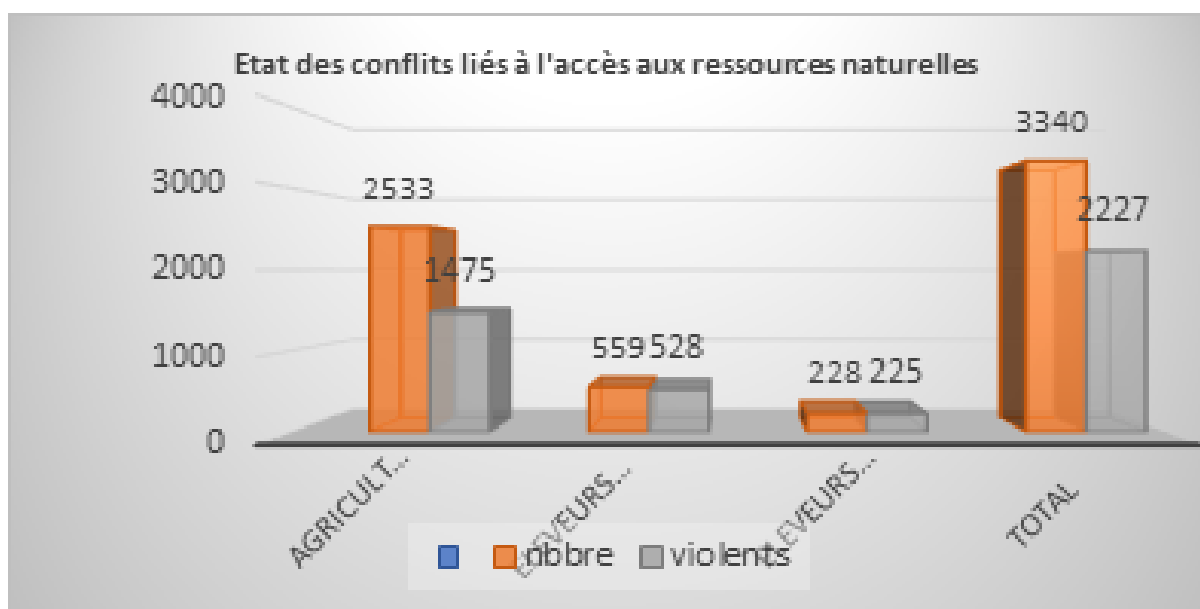
The effects of climate change and insecurity are increasing the mobility of livestock and shepherds. According to observations made by the RBM, some seventeen million two hundred and five (**17,205,000**) animals transit each year between coastal and Sahelian countries, the majority of which sometimes stay for several months in cross-border areas, some of which are home to forests or reserves.



This strategy is developing against a backdrop of the sedentarization of many herds in coastal countries.

2.5 1.The complexity of crime: conflicts and cattle thefts

Competition for access to natural resources: pasture, water and land is one of the causes of conflicts that mainly pit three protagonists against each other: farmers, herders and administration officials. From October 2023 to June 2024, were recorded three thousands three hundreds and forty (3340) conflicts; 76% of which were between farmers and breeders, 17% between breeders and 7% between the administration and breeders. Approximately 67% of these conflicts were violent, of which more than 66% resulted from confrontations between farmers and breeders; 24% between breeders and 10% between the administration and breeders. These conflicts caused 65 human victims and 422 animal losses. However, 885 cases of conflict were settled amicably, including 845 of those between farmers and breeders; 452 before the conciliation bodies and 181 cases brought before the courts.



Livestock theft is on the rise in West Africa and the Sahel. During the period under review, some one hundred and eighty-four thousand and four hundred and ninety-six (**184,496**) heads of cattle were recorded stolen, all species combined. These rapes are sometimes perpetrated against a backdrop of kidnapping of people with a demand for ransom. During this period, forty-one (**41**) people were reported kidnapped with fifty-nine million nine hundred and two thousand four hundred and sixty-two (**59,902,462**) FCFA in ransom declared paid. Chad has reportedly experienced a surge in this form of crime in recent years.

During the period, nine hundred and seventy-eight (**978**) forcibly displaced households and eight thousand three hundred and five (**8305**) hectares of land were recorded.



2.6 Economic and social potential serving local communities and states

Beyond the contribution of mobile livestock systems to meeting food and nutritional needs, they are sources of income for States, local authorities and job creation for young people (men and women).

In terms of food, more than three million five hundred and thirty-three thousand and seven hundred and twenty-seven (3,533,727) tons of meat were produced during the period. Milk production amounts to three hundred and thirty-eight million, two hundred and forty-three thousand and five hundred and fourteen (338,243,514) liters of which twenty-eight million sixty-three thousand six hundred and sixty-two (28,063,662) liters, or 8.2% were processed.



The financial resources generated by the marketing chain are estimated at 246,017,780,032 CFA francs, including 243,583,359,700 francs generated by marketing operations.

Nature of transactions	Recipes
Sale of animals	243583359700
Dock	169030000
Slaughter area	2265390332
Total	246017780032

On the social level, the number of direct jobs generated by the livestock and meat value chain is estimated at over 17 million. Markets and slaughterhouses are the largest providers, with 52.8% and 41.9% contribution respectively.

Jobs created by Mobile Livestock Systems	
Pastoral equipment	Number of jobs created
Livestock markets	8,988,150
Boarding docks	480 380
Slaughter area	7 133 006
Livestock feed banks	168,963
Dairy	132,300
Livestock feed manufacturing unit	157,810
Veterinary pharmacies	6,452
Pharmaceutical warehouses	45
Local veterinary services	1,586
Totals	17,068,692



2.7 The regulation of transhumance

Since the adoption of Decision A/DEC.5/10/98 on the regulation of transhumance between ECOWAS Member States (Abuja, 30–31 October 1998) and ECOWAS Regulation C/REG.3/01/03 on the implementation of the regulation of cross-border transhumance at the Council of Ministers from 26 to 28/01/2003 in Dakar, the region has been teeming with a legal and regulatory arsenal.

This arsenal was completed in July 2024 by the validation by the Ministers in charge of livestock and agriculture of the regional strategy for the development of livestock farming and the securing of pastoral systems in West Africa and the Sahel.

Evolution of the regulatory framework			Policy/strategy documents		
Adopted texts					
Laws	Decrees/orders	Arrested	Policy	Strategy	Decision
63	44	15	15	18	7



2.8 Surveillance and control of transboundary diseases

Animal disease surveillance and control actions still face many obstacles. According to data provided by countries and validated by the Regional Animal Health Center, the prevalence rates of animal diseases are relatively high, at **37.40%** for PPR; **24.56%** for FA; **35.90%** for PPCB; **15.90%** for anthrax; **35%** for Rabies and **0.20%** for New Castle Disease.

The vaccination coverage rate varies between **12.33%** for small ruminants (**42,960,409** heads vaccinated out of a herd of **348,447,666** heads) and **26.45%** for large ruminants (**24,276,387** heads vaccinated out of a herd of **91,772,715** heads).

The regional center of animal health is banking on the deployment of the “ONE HEALTH” strategy to improve the surveillance and control of animal diseases.



3. Lessons and recommendations

Pastoral and agro-pastoral systems remain dynamic, as evidenced by the relatively good health of livestock. According to state data, the latter totals: 614,779,723 heads , including 598,533,080 ruminants (131,121,301 large ruminants, 439,639,208 small ruminants); 8,521,128 donkeys; 4,709,729 horses; 14,541,714 camels and 16,246,643 pigs.

They play an increasingly important role in the densification of local economies (integration of production systems, markets, communities, food and nutritional security, income and jobs). But it faces four existential challenges: climate change, the advance of agricultural frontiers, the insecurity of property and people and the recurrence of transboundary animal diseases. It must also deal with two other sprawling phenomena: livestock theft and kidnappings of people for ransom.

Based on the findings, the stakeholders gathered together formulated recommendations, the main ones of which are listed below:

1. To the OIG (ECOWAS, UEMOA, CILSS)

- Strengthen the control and surveillance of animal diseases based on the principle of “ONE HEALTH” to better take into account the health concerns of human and animal populations and that of the ecosystem;
- Integrate the data and information collected within the framework of OSEMAOS into the “Digital Library” Platform of the Regional Pastoral Information System of the AGRHYMET center.

2. To the States :

- Take the necessary steps to carry out actions to prevent bush fires by creating fire strips;
- Make livestock feed stocks available in both Sahelian and coastal countries.
- Intensify animal vaccination campaigns against identified priority and cross-border diseases;
- Begin the implementation of the animal identification strategy,

3. To local authorities :

- Intensify the security of passage corridors through materialization and marking actions;

4. To the OP/OPR :

- Document the phenomenon of livestock theft and raise awareness among breeders to intensify the identification and marking of animals;
- Strengthen awareness-raising and dialogue actions for better prevention and management of conflicts linked to competition for access to natural resources.

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