

FOOD SECURITY AND HUMANITARIAN IMPLICATIONS IN WEST AFRICA AND THE SAHEL



N°59 - September 2014

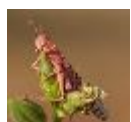
KEY POINTS

- ◆ The agricultural productions (cereal and pulses) are expected to be lower than the five-year average in the Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Mauritania and Senegal.
- ◆ Market cereal supply is adequate with stable or decreasing prices, except in some markets in Mali, Senegal, Chad and Niger where price increases have been observed.
- ◆ The prevention measures adopted to control the spread of the Ebola virus disease (EVD) continue to affect food prices and flow especially in the Ebola affected countries (Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone).
- ◆ The influx of displaced persons from Nigeria to Diffa region in Niger is increasing.

Sections



Agriculture



Locust situation



Displacements



International Markets



Markets in WA



Food Security



To go to

In the region, recent rainfall contributed to reduce deficits in central Mali and northern Senegal. However, the deficits persist in some areas of the Atlantic side (Mauritania, Senegal and the Gambia) and in Nigeria. These deficits explain the delays in harvesting which prolonged the lean season of agricultural households. The regional consultation of the Regional System for the Prevention and Management of Food Crises (PREGEC), held in The Gambia, announced that the expected agricultural productions (cereals and pulses) will likely be lower than the five-year average in the Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Mauritania and Senegal. This situation needs to be closely monitored as it will unavoidably affect income of agricultural households and their access to adequate food.

In the three commercial basins of West Africa, as a result of the new harvests, the level of cereal supply is fairly satisfying with generally stable or decreasing prices. However, prices in some markets in Mali, Senegal, Chad, and Niger are increasing. A longer than normal lean season would explain the price increases except in Diffa, in Niger, where the prices increase is due to the civil unrest in Nigeria. In Diffa, the influx of displaced persons from Nigeria has recently increased. The refugees, more present around Lake Chad islands, resort to coping strategies such as begging and prostitution. The ongoing assistance should be extended fairly soon to arrivals who strongly depend on the solidarity of already-established displaced persons.

The prevention measures put in place by governments to control the spread of the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) continue to affect the food flows and prices in the affected countries (Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone). Other observed effects, we note that there is a 50 percent decrease in trading volume in the Diaobé market in Senegal and significant increases in imported rice prices in Liberia.

Recommendations for regional partners

- Reinforce monitoring of the 2014-2015 agricultural campaign in areas that have registered a late start in the rainy season or irregular rainfall after planting.
- Advocate for timely funding of the Sahel Humanitarian Appeal for the preparation of the agricultural season and off-season.
- Monitor population displacements arriving from CAR, Nigeria and northern Mali.
- Monitor the socio-economic impact of the Ebola epidemic in the concerned countries

Objective : Within the framework of the monthly meetings of the Regional Food Security and Nutrition Working Group for West Africa, it has been agreed that, in a humanitarian perspective, WFP and FAO provide the group with highlights on the food security situation of the previous month

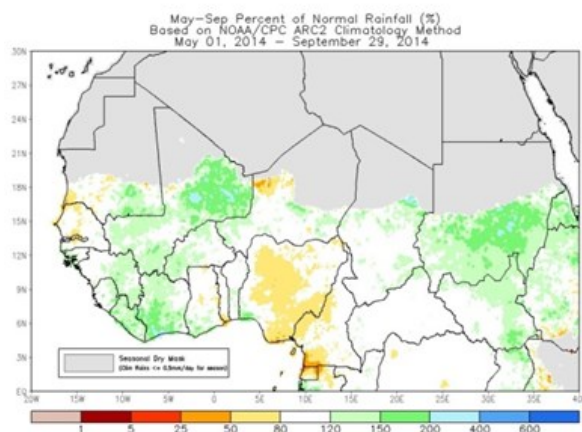
2014-2015 Agro-pastoral campaign

Below average gricultural productions are expected in the Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Mauritania and Senegal

Through September, surplus rainfall were registered in Liberia, in the northeastern Mali, eastern Guinea and western Cote d'Ivoire (Figure 1). These rains have also reduced the deficit in central Mali and northern Senegal. However, the deficit that appeared since the beginning of the season, still persists along the Atlantic coast (Mauritania, Senegal and the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau) and Nigeria, which could have a negative impact on crop yields.

The regional consultation on the mid-term assessment of the agropastoral season and the 2014-2015 agricultural and food prospects within the framework of the Regional System for the Prevention and Management of Food Crises (PREGEC) in the Sahel and West Africa held in Banjul (Gambia) from 8 to 10 September 2014 confirmed the difficult onset of the agricultural season with delays and reseeded in Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Chad.

Figure n°1: Percentage of rainfall compared to normal levels between 1st May and 29th September 2014



Source : [NOAA](#)

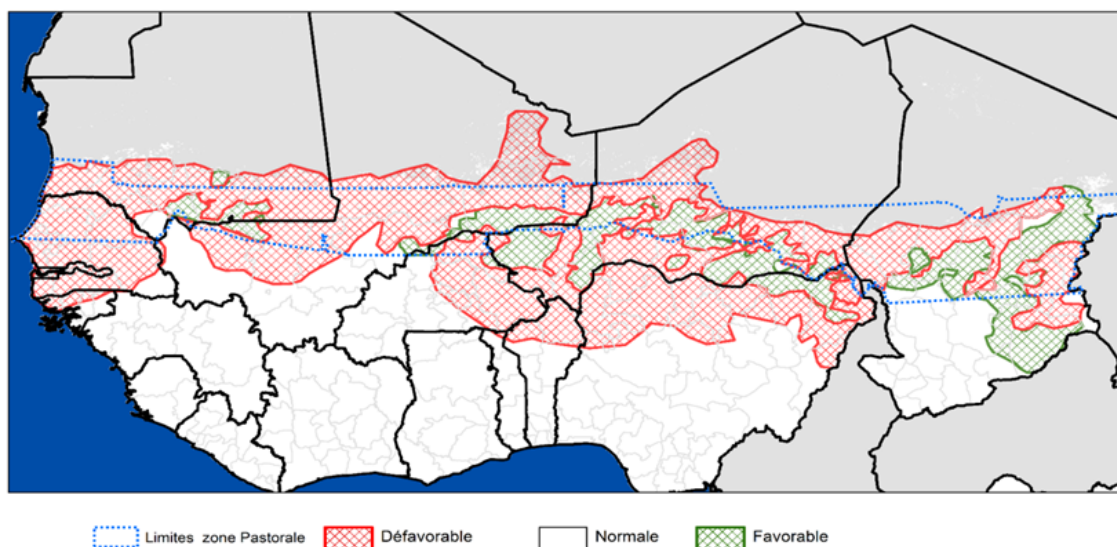
Legend:

The map compares the cumulative rainfall received between May and September in the region compared with the average rainfall of the last 30 years as a percentage. The rainfall deficit relative to normal is represented by the yellow-red colors and surpluses by blue-green colors.

Consequently, average agricultural productions (cereals and pulses) are expected in Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali and Niger. It will likely be lower than the five-year average in the Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Mauritania and Senegal. Roots and tubers production is expected to be average to above average in the Gulf of Guinea.

The livestock situation is marked by a long lean season due to insufficient grazing availability in early season. It has improved progressively with the onset of rains. However, areas at risk of decline in biomass production are identified in Gambia, Mauritania, Senegal, and in some areas in Burkina Faso, Niger, northern Nigeria and Chad (figure 2).

Figure 2 : Map of areas at risk of decline in biomass production midterm agropastoral season



Source : CILSS/Agrhymet



Desert locust situation as of 2nd September 2014

Unusually good rains can give rise to large scale outbreaks in the Sahel

The desert locust situation is currently calm. So far, only isolated adults were detected in the summer breeding areas in Mauritania, Niger and Chad. Following the unusually good rains in August in the Sahel, the potential conditions exist that reproduction takes place over a wide area, which could lead to a significant increase

in locusts. The increase in headcount may go unnoticed until October when the vegetation starts to dry. Locusts could then concentrate and form groups in several areas, which could cause outbreaks from Mauritania to Sudan.

Figure 3 : Desert locust situation as of 2nd September 2014



Source : [FAO](#)



Displacement situation in the region

Violence in Nigeria leads to significant displacements towards Niger

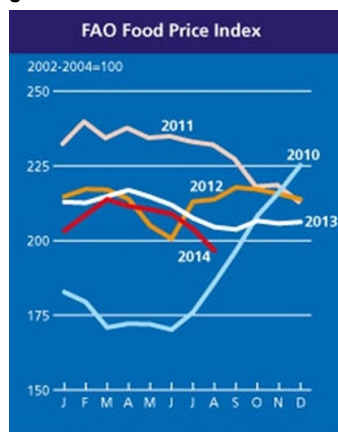
Mali: According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) has decreased from 199,575 people in February 2014 to 101,279 in September 2014, a decrease of 50 percent since the beginning of the year, following a gradual return to their place of origin. The movements of displaced people continue northwards although a downward trend has been observed since the beginning of the year. [OIM](#)

Chad: Between 21st July and 31st August 2014, IOM and its partners have registered 5,643 people which have been evacuated to Chad. This results to a total of 113,143 of Chadian returnees, Central African refugees and third country nationals (TCNs), who arrived in Chad. [OCHA](#)

Niger: Security situation in Nigeria has taken an unexpected turn in the last month with the occupation of three cities in the north of the country (Damboa, Gwoza and Buniyadi) by Boko Haram. Important influx are likely to continue as the security situation deteriorates with repeated incidents. Flows to the islands of Lake Chad are increasing, leading to new needs in an area that lacks basic infrastructure such as health centers, schools and modern water points. The total number of refugees from Nigeria is now estimated at over 105,000 people. If this trend continues in the coming weeks, the contingency plan which includes a scenario of 150,000 displaced persons will be triggered. [OCHA](#)

The FAO Food Price Index averaged 196.6 points in August 2014, its lowest level since September 2010. In August, the index registered its fifth consecutive monthly decline, down 7.3 points (3.6 percent) from July and 7.9 points (3.9 percent) from August 2013. Except for meat, all the other food sub-indices dipped markedly in August, with dairy values falling most, followed by oils and sugar.

Figure 4 : FAO Food Price Index



Source : [FAO](#)

The FAO Cereal Price Index averaged 182.5 points in August, down 2.8 points (1.5 percent) from July and 24.2 points (11.7 percent) from August 2013. The Index has been falling continuously since May, mainly due to excellent crop prospects and abundant supplies of wheat and coarse grains. Another record world production this year weighs on international wheat prices which slid in August to their lowest value since July 2010. Similarly, maize prices have fallen to a 4-year low, thanks to almost ideal growing conditions while stocks are already at very high level.

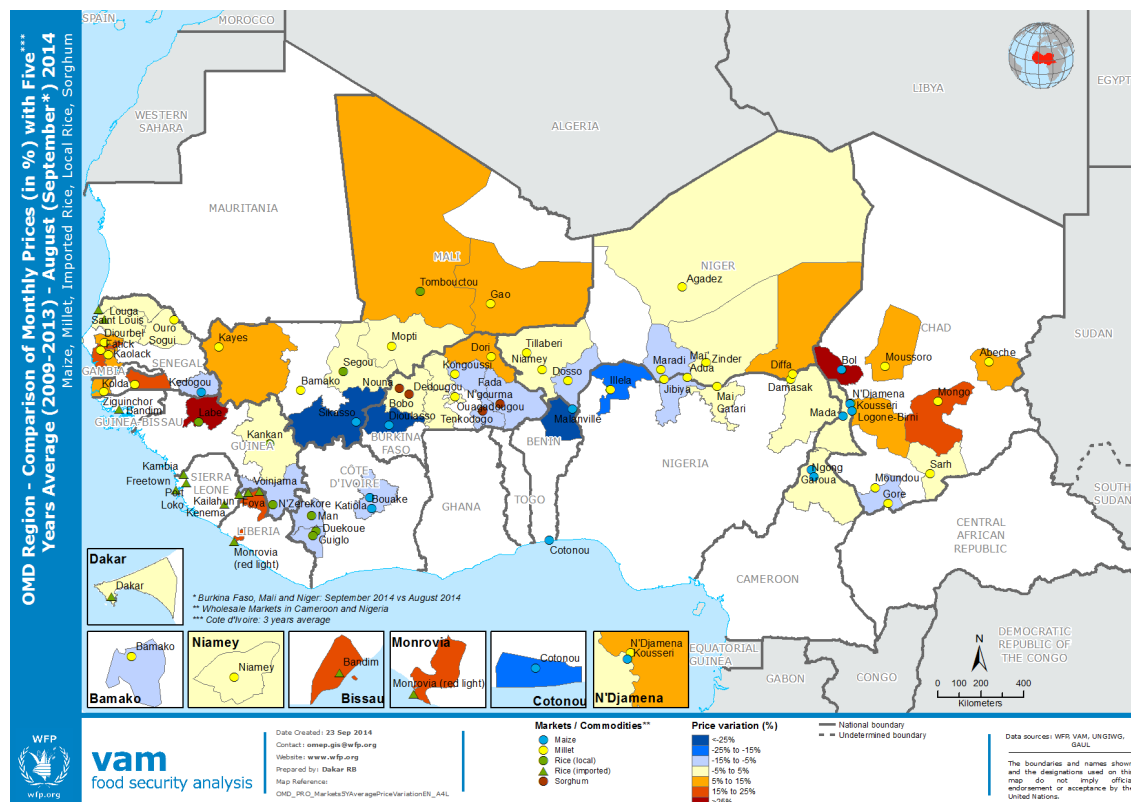
In August, the global prices of rice were relatively firm but they tended to stabilize in the second half of the month. The Asian large importers have returned and export market is very active. In West Africa, the Ebola crisis had led to some initial limitations in grain supply because of the quarantine decided in some countries. Nevertheless, for the time being, there is no risk of shortness of imported rice. Therefore, the world prices are likely to remain relatively stable, with downward trends in the last quarter of 2014.

[InterRice](#)

Trends on West African markets

First harvests arrive to the markets in several localities of the sudanian zone and the Gulf of Guinea

Figure 5 : Comparison (in %) of monthly prices – August (Sept*) 2014 – to the five years average (maize, millet, imported rice, local rice, sorghum)





Trends on West African markets (Cont.)

First harvests arrive to the markets in several localities of the sudanian zone and the Gulf of Guinea

In the three West African Trade basins, market availability of cereals is overall considered to be satisfactory. This is especially explained by the maturing state of cereals in the Sudanese zone and the gulf of Guinea, as well as by the arrival of early maize and millet harvest, as well as those of groundnuts and tubers on local markets. This situation is supported by destocking activities of traders and large producers, as well as the influx of other non-cereal harvests such as beans, cassava and fruits, providing additional revenue streams. In August 2014, favorable price differentials between exporting and importing countries have contributed to the continuity of cross-border flows, particularly from Burkina Faso, Benin and Nigeria to Niger.

During this lean season, localized increases of monthly coarse grain prices were observed in western Mali, Senegal and Chad, where seasonal demand remained high after the depletion of household food stocks. However, with the arrival of early harvests in most markets of the surplus producing countries (Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Benin), monthly retail prices of millet and maize declined. Overall, prices declined compared to August / September 2013 and are relatively stable compared to the five-year average in all basins in the region, except in Mauritania, Senegal and northern

Mali. In Niger, prices of major cereals (millet, maize, sorghum) are below their five-year average and the same period of 2013, with the exception of the Diffa market in the east of the country, where cereal prices are still very high compared to the five year average. This is due to civil unrest in the north-eastern Nigeria, which limits an adequate supply of local markets. At the same time, the value of the Nigerian Naira against the CFA franc in late September 2014, is 3 percent above its level during the same period in 2013 and increased by 8 percent since March 2014. These factors, coupled with insecurity in the north of the country, could adversely affect trade flows to Niger in the coming months.

This year's cocoa production in Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire has benefitted from conducive weather conditions and cocoa bean supplies are envisaged to be higher than those of the previous season. However, the price received by cocoa farmers is being progressively eroded by the depreciation of the Ghana cedi which has lost around 35 percent of its value against the US dollar this year, coupled with soaring inflation, which has reached 15.9 percent in August 2014. These factors could severely erode farmer incomes which are tied to a fixed farm-gate price.



Impact on food security

Probable decrease on food production may affect household food access in concerned areas

In the region, particularly in the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania and Senegal, the agro-pastoralist campaign disturbances in certain areas have extended the rural households' lean season. The agricultural production forecast, largely inferior to the five-year average, might affect the income of the agricultural population and limit their access to food. The situation needs to be closely monitored.

In Mauritania, the final findings of the food security monitoring system (FSMS) done by the Food Security Commission (CSA) and WFP for the 2014 lean season indicate that 26 percent of Mauritanian households are food insecure. This proportion is increasing compared to the proportion of 23 percent of the same period last year. The reason behind this increase is the strong progression of food insecurity in Hodh El Chargui, from 29 percent to 50 percent, due to a global deficit of the agropastoralist campaign; and in Nouakchott from 10 percent to 17 percent, which is explained by the rural exodus of poor population. The areas which are most affected by severe food insecurity are Hodh El Chargui, Hodh El Gharbi, Assaba and Guidimakha. A deterioration of the food and nutrition status is expected due to the poor agropastoralist campaign experienced in certain areas.

In Niger, the recent arrival of displaced persons from Nigeria in the Diffa region has triggered a joint mission in early September 2014, coordinated by OCHA with humanitarian actors in Diffa. The displaced persons, who are more present in the districts of Diffa, Bosso and Mainé Soro, are essentially women and children (more than 70 percent) according to the mission's results. A higher proportion, of Nigerian (refugees) than Nigerien returnees is noted in the recent influx. Food assistance is the main food source for registered refugees. However, the use of begging or prostitution as coping strategies is also noted.

In Senegal, according to the September bulletin of Africa Risk View (ARV), the drought in Senegal might affect 644,000 and 1 million people by the end of the season. The west and north of Senegal have recorded limited precipitations during the planting season. Certain areas concerned by this low rainfall experienced a critical nutritional situation according to the June/July 2014 nutrition survey. These areas are located in the regions of Tambacounda (14 percent), Matam (19 percent) and Podor (23 percent).



Impact on food security (Cont.)

Probable decrease on food production may affect household food access in certain areas

In Chad, according to the September 2014 information bulletin on markets in Chad, the household food situation is getting better thanks to the arrival of new harvests on markets and decrease in cereal prices particularly in the sudanian zone. In the sahelian zone, the decrease in animal prices and the high level of cereal prices is contributing to deteriorate the 2014 terms of trade for pastoralists compared to 2013, reducing food access mainly in the pastoralist zone.

In Guinea Bissau, erratic and poor rainfalls in the northern part of the country is cause for concern of a decrease in production and an extended lean season. Currently, the food situation is globally satisfying thanks to a relatively good commercialization campaign of the cashew nut.

The prevention measures adopted to control the spread of the Ebola virus disease (EVD) continue to affect food flows and prices in the affected countries.

As of 30 September 2014 7,157 cases and 3,330 deaths have been declared in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone (Source : [WHO](#)). The WHO forecasts are built on a sharp increase in cases. The consequences of the epidemic on markets and households livelihoods make the population of the affected districts vulnerable to food insecurity, particularly in Liberia. A FAO Liberia mission in the Lofa county indicates a likely decrease (between 10 and 25 percent) in the agricultural production in the area and confirmed the negative impact of the EVD on income, livelihoods and agriculture. Joint missions with government, NGO, FAO and WFP on agriculture, livelihoods, markets and food security are planned or ongoing.

The prevention measures taken to control the spread of the Ebola virus disease (EVD) have led to the closure of borders and markets as well as restrictions on the flow of goods inside countries. This situation continues to slow the commercial flows in the affected areas. In Senegal, 16 markets were closed along the Guinean border, which led to a decrease of 50 percent in trading volume in the Diaobé market (Source: [WFP](#)). In Liberia, imported rice prices are still increasing above their seasonal peak, while prices seem to be stable in Guinea where farmers have difficulties to sell their stocks. As to Sierra Leone, prices trends are more heterogeneous.



Mark your calendars !

- Agro-pastoralist campaign assessment in coastal countries: 22 – 26 September 2014
- Cadre Harmonisé analysis workshop in coastal countries: 29 September – 3 October 2014
- Agro-pastoralist campaign assessment in the Sahelian countries: 22–26 September 2014
- Cadre Harmonisé analysis workshop in the Sahelian countries: 3 – 7 November 2014
- Regional consolidation workshop: 13 -15 November 2014
- PREGEC : 18- 20 November 2014 in Dakar (Senegal)



Information on
food security
in West Africa

www.wfp.org/food-security

Mme Anne-Claire Mouilliez

Anne-Claire.Mouilliez@wfp.org

M. Malick Ndiaye

malick.ndiaye@wfp.org

www.fao.org/crisis/sahel/fr/

M. Vincent Martin

Vincent.Martin@fao.org

M. Patrick David

Patrick.David@fao.org