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, FAO and WFP provide the group with highlights on the food security situation of the previous month.
The agropastoral season is marked by an ascent in the Intertropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ) at high latitudes in the Sahel, especially in the Central and Western part of the Sahel to improved precipitation compared to June, particularly in northern areas which were low rainfall in Chad, Mauritania and Senegal.

The analysis of rainfall percentage compared to normal since the beginning of the season shows several important drought areas (Figure 1). The Gambia, the two thirds of Senegal northern and the Sahel belt in Chad have recorded only 25-80% of normal rainfall. In some areas in the central and eastern Niger, localized percentages are below 50%. Deficits are observed in the coastal regions of the Gulf of Guinea, particularly in the southern areas of Benin, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana and Togo. However, these deficits will not have the same impact as in the Sahel. In Nigeria, despite improved rainfall the center area always knows a rainfall deficit. The impact of this deficit will depend on the date of the end of the rainy season and the ability of crops to complete their development cycle.

The pastoral situation has slightly improved with recorded rains fall during July 2015. However, an extension of the lean period for the animals is still observed in most pastoral zone because of a delay installation of vegetation mainly in North West of Senegal, in the west of Mauritania, in the Diffa region of Niger and north-eastern Chadian Sahel (Figure 2).

In these areas, the animals are feed with the few residues of the past campaign and accessible ligneous. The persistence of this situation is likely to cause significant losses of animals where the provisions have not been taken for positioning in time livestock feeds.

In Mali, the strong deterioration of pastures and watering difficulties for livestock at the concentration areas generate unusual movements in search of water. The lack of fodder and drinking difficulties has caused the degradation of the livestock overweight status, it’s also observed that an undernourishment livestock and the livestock mortality cases than average in Gourma Timbuktu region, especially in Gossi sector. "Afrique Verte"

In Burkina Faso, a high de-capitalization of livestock were reported between April and June 2015 at the level of poor households in the far northern part of the country due to very pronounced fodder deficit and average load of water points during rainy season 2014-2015 campaign. Consequently, the physical condition of animals has deteriorated and cases of deaths were recorded in Tin-Akoff commune, located in the province of Oudalan Sahel region. (SAMAR News N° 002 April -June 2015)
Persistent rainfall deficits in the Sahelian zone

The avian influenza H5N1 situation, with the exception of Niger, always remains worrying in the other countries (Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire and Nigeria).

In Nigeria, since July 20, two new states (Abia, Enugu) reported outbreaks of contaminated by this flu. These new outbreaks, including those already positive states of Lagos, Oyo and Rivers have increased the number of new areas with 20 affected states. Analyses revealed 455 positive cases tested on 632 farms and 10 live bird markets on 12; more than 1.48 million poultry were slaughtered / dead, which is comparable to the number of dead in previous outbreaks of 2006-2008.

In Burkina Faso, samples have been confirmed as positive in a farm with no reported deaths. In Côte d’Ivoire, additional deaths were reported in a farm of Amanibo 2 (Bouaké region) in the first week of July and suspicious deaths in a farm of Modeste (Bassam region) as of July 24, 2015. in Ghana, there have been 18 confirmed outbreaks and notified in late July 2015, including 15 in the region of Greater Accra, 2 in the Volta region and 1 in the Ashanti. (FAO-Empres-Animal Health H5N1 situation update August 6, 2015)

Population movements situation in the region

Insecurity worsens the food situation of displaced populations

Continued conflict and civil insecurity in Nigeria and in Mali continue to cause population movements resulting in a deterioration of the food security situation of displaced populations and host communities throughout the region. There is a slight decrease in the number of displaced persons and refugees compared to June from nearly 2.163 million people less than 2.069 million people. This decrease is explained by the return of some people in their communities of origin following the difficult living conditions and access to farmland in host areas. UNHCR

In Nigeria, the total number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in July was 1,385,298, which represents a slight decrease compared to June following the return of some IDPs to their places of origin, especially in the state of Adamawa where the displaced population has decreased by 49 percent. However, in Borno, the number of internally displaced people has increased and now reaches more than one million. IOM DTM

In Chad, for fear of attacks by Boko Haram in the Lake Chad region, a large extent of spontaneous movement is observed; the number of newly displaced is estimated at 7,000 to July 27th 2015. OCHA

Trends on international markets

The FAO Food Price Index declines by just under 1 percent in June, on falling dairy and sugar prices

Food consumption of the majority of the countries of West Africa and Sahel depends on imports of commodities (especially rice and wheat) which prices are traded on international markets.

The FAO Food Price Index averaged 165.1 points in June 2015, down 1.5 points (0.9 percent) from the previous month and almost 44 points (21.0 percent) down from June 2014. Price movements diverged across the various markets, with sugar and milk products incurring pronounced falls, while cereals and oils prices firmed somewhat. Meat prices were stable. Except for a lull in October 2014, the overall food price index has declined every month since April 2014.

The FAO Cereal Price Index averaged 163.2 points in June, up 2.5 points (1.5 percent) from May, marking the first month-on-month rise since December 2014. Compared to June 2014, prices have fallen by as much as 33 points (17 percent). All of last month’s price strength stemmed from wheat and coarse grain prices, which gained 2 percent each, while rice quotations remained under pressure. Although unfavorable weather in some regions provided support to prices, the rise was contained, amid abundant carryover stocks and generally good production prospects.
Market trends in West Africa

With the beginning of the lean season, prices start to rise since May

With the start of the lean period and increased demand due to Ramadan, prices are rising for local cereals. However, markets remain well supplied and the grain availability is satisfactory.

In the western basin seasonal incomes remain low. In the 3 Ebola affected countries, the commercial activity is low and stocks diminish. For example, in Guinea, revenues declined for 67 percent of the population compared to before Ebola reducing household purchasing power (WFP EFSA in June 2015). In Liberia, it is the rice stocks are emptied to a third of households. (WFP EFSA in June 2015), while prices for imported rice remain high. In Mauritania and northern Senegal, the condition of pastoralists remains challenging with poor cattle status hindering their purchasing power.

In the central commercial basin, Mali’s coarse grain prices are still rising in recent months, however, they still remain below their five year average. Overall, the terms of trade (small ruminants/cereal) are deteriorating compared to last year in Mopti (-1 percent), Gao (-13 percent) and Timbuktu (-24 percent). In the North Douékiré, Niafunké Rharous, Menaka and Anderamboukane markets are still disrupted. In terms of cereal prices the scenario is the same in Burkina Faso with prices upward compared to May 2015, but below their five year average.

In Côte d’Ivoire, according to government sources, there was a production of 625,000 tons of cashew nuts in the year 2015, generating revenue of 337 billion CFA francs, an increase of 68 percent for a production growth of 25 percent since 2013. At the same time income distributed to producers increased from 75 billion CFA francs to 256 billion CFA francs. In Ghana, prices across all commodities, are still very high.

In the eastern commercial basin, Niger the price of millet, sorghum and maize are rising, but remaining below their five year average. In Chad, prices remain stable, with the exception of market Sarh and NDjamena where significant increases are observed over 20 percent for sorghum compared to May. The situation in north eastern Nigeria and Cameroon Far North knows no improvement. A recent WFP survey, there is a general increase in food prices by 17 percent in markets of Kousseri, Maroua, Mokolo and Mora in June 2015.

Trends on international markets

The FAO Food Price Index declines by just under 1 percent in June, on falling dairy and sugar prices

In June, the world prices decreased further by 1 percent, but they tend to stabilize. Thai and US prices had stronger falls, depressed by strong competition. Accumulated foreign sales still mark a delay. Some exporters have declines of 20 percent compared to the same period in last year. However, a reactivation of import demand could come from Southeast Asia, following the possible return of the El Nino weather phenomenon. African and Middle Eastern buyers also begin to return to the import market. This reactivation could strengthen international prices. InterRice

Figure 4: FAO Food Price Index

Source: FAO
With the beginning of the lean season, prices start to rise since May

Food Security Impact

In Diffa (Niger), 76 percent of households have adopted at least one coping strategy in order to deal with food difficulties

Niger

In June 2015, the mVAM results carried out by WFP in the Diffa region show a satisfactory food situation (92 percent of households who have received WFP assistance have a borderline or acceptable food consumption). The results of this same assessment carried out in the refugee camps of Mangaizé and Abala show a similar food situation (more than 90 percent of households have a borderline or acceptable food consumption).

In the Diffa region, 76 percent of households have adopted at least one coping strategy to deal with food difficulties. According to government and humanitarian actors’ estimations, due to conflict, about 457,000 people would need assistance during the lean season (June to September), of which 260,000 people have already benefited from food assistance during June 2015.

Burkina Faso

Poor households in the extreme north of the country are confronted by food insecurity after depending for 3 months on markets for food. Indeed, in the Oudalan province and surroundings, the food situation of very poor and poor households is worrying, constraining them to reduced number of daily meals and to a poorly diversified diet. Their strategies, their assets and sources of revenue have strongly deteriorated. These households are obliged to consume maize, sorghum or rice deemed less expensive compared to the preferred millet. (WFP/FEWS NET)
Food security Impact (continued)

In Diffa (Niger), 76 percent of households have adopted at least one coping strategy in order to deal with food difficulties

Mali

The food situation of households in the south and center of the country remains globally normal where food availability is deemed average to significant, and the principal markets are globally well stocked. *Afrique Verte*. In contrast, the food situation in the northern regions is more difficult because of the conjugated effects of the poor food stocks and the extension of the lean period for pastoralists with consequence high mortality of livestock, the weak animal production, the deterioration of terms of trade and revenue decreases. The recent deterioration of the security situation has affected the economic circuits, the unusual movements and the agro-pastoral activities. The erosion of livelihoods by the loss of livestock and other goods has equally affected these same populations. ([Système d’Alerte Précoces](http://www.fao.org/emergencies/crisis/sahel/en/))

Mauritania

The ongoing assistance programmes, for poor households in the center and the south of the country, has allowed to attenuate the impact of the crisis. Despite this assistance and with an average rainy season, the country’s population in crisis (Phase 3) will increase between July and September 2015. Certain very poor households in the west of the agro-pastoral region and center of the Senegal River valley could find themselves in an emergency situation (Phase 4). [FEWS NET](http://www.fao.org/emergencies/crisis/sahel/en/)

Mark your calendars!

→ Training workshop on the Cadre Harmonisé (CH) in the 3 countries affected by the Ebola virus disease from August 17 to 22;
→ Training of country trainers on the CH in Niamey, Niger from August 25 to 28;
→ Training on indicators of the CH in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso from September 7 to 10;
→ Workshop on countries needs identification on tools for resilience measurement in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso from September 11 to 12;
→ Meeting on Regional System for the Prevention of Food Crisis (PREGEC) in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso from September 14 to 16;
→ Special session of the Food Crisis Prevention Network (RPCA) in Milan (Expo Milan 2015) from October 29 to 30;
→ Analysis workshop on the CH:
  ◦ Coastal countries: September 28 to October 2
  ◦ Nigeria: October 19 to 23
  ◦ Sahel countries: November 2 to 6
→ Regional summary of the CH in Niamey, Niger from November 16 to 20;
→ Meeting PREGEC in Niamey, Niger from November 23 to 25;
→ Meeting on RPCA in Dakar from December 14 to 15.