Food Security and Humanitarian Implications in West Africa and the Sahel

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KEY POINTS

Sections


Agriculture


Displacements


International Markets


West Africa Markets


Food Security

To go to the section

- **The agricultural production is expected to be overall average to above-average in West Africa and the Sahel.**
- **Fodder deficits persist in the extreme North-East of Chad, the pastoral zone of Niger, Northern Senegal and the agro-pastoral zone of Mauritania.**
- **The Fall Armyworm continues to spread in the region, the situation remains very worrying.**

The food security situation in West Africa and the Sahel is expected to improve with the appearance of the first season crops in coastal countries and early crops in the Sahel including millet and cowpea.

Despite the overall satisfactory pastoral situation, some areas, such as in the extreme North-East of Chad, the pastoral zone of Niger, in Northern Senegal and in the agro-pastoral zone of Mauritania, remain at risk of fodder deficit, which may indicate difficulties for pastoral households.

The spread of the Fall Armyworm continues in West Africa and the Sahel where 14 countries are affected.

Heavy rains have caused floods, resulting in extensive damage on the crops and infrastructures in Sierra Leone, Niger, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Guinea Bissau and Benin.

Recommendations for regional partners

→ Monitor the 2017 – 2018 agro-pastoral campaign in the Sahel and West Africa region

→ Monitor the pastoral situation in the region, particularly in the extreme North-East of Chad, the pastoral zone of Niger, the North of Senegal and the agro-pastoral zone of Mauritania

→ Continue to monitor the food and nutrition security situation, particularly in the Lake Chad basin, Northern Mali, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Senegal, Chad and Central African Republic

→ Advocate for funding and implementation of responses in Nigeria's three North-East States (Borno, Yobe and Adamawa)

Objective: *Within the framework of the monthly meetings of the Food Security and Nutrition Regional Working Group for West Africa, from a humanitarian perspective, FAO and WFP inform the group with highlights on the food security situation of the previous month.*

2017 - 2018 Agropastoral Campaign

Production is expected to be overall average to above average for the region

The meeting of the Regional System for the Prevention and Management of Food Crises (PREGEC) held in Conakry (Guinea) from 18th to 20th September 2017 made the mid-term review of the agro-pastoral campaign 2017 -2018 and the agricultural and food perspectives in the Sahel and West Africa.

Rainfall situation

It exceeds globally the normal level in the region with heavy rains which have caused floods. As a result, there were extensive damages to crops and facilities in Sierra Leone, Niger, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Guinea-Bissau and Benin. There were also loss of life, particularly in Sierra Leone, Niger and Côte d'Ivoire. However, rainfall deficits were also observed in some areas during the first half of the season, particularly in some parts of Central Nigeria, Northern Ghana, Southern Burkina Faso, Central and Western Mali, in the agro-pastoral zone of Mauritania, Northern Senegal and North-Eastern Chad.

Agricultural situation

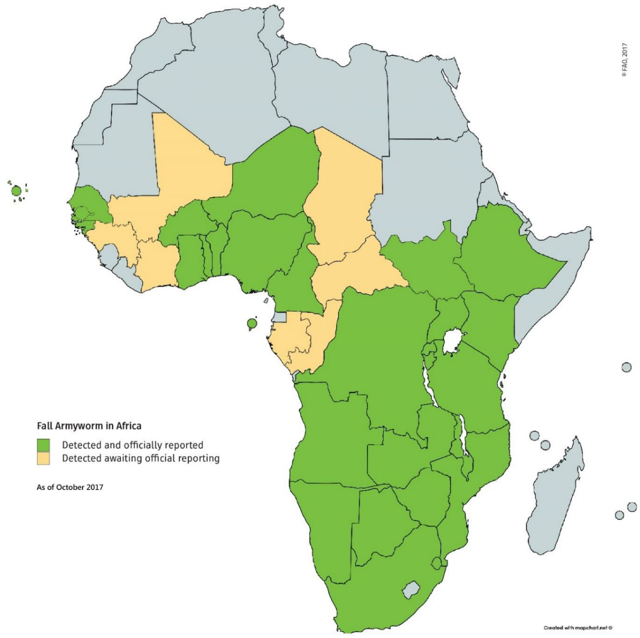
2017-2018 agricultural production is expected to be overall average to above average in the region:

- Grain harvests could be between 66 and 73 million tons, representing a -1.4 percent to 8 percent variation over the previous year and between 9 to 20 percent compared to the five-year average;
- Root and tuber crops are estimated to be between 166 and 171 million tons, an increase of 0.05 to 3 percent over the previous year and an increase of 3 to 9 percent compared to the five-year average (2012-2016);
- For legumes production, an overall increase is expected compared to the average of the last five years.

Phytosanitary situation

The situation is stable except for the areas where Fall Armyworm attacks have required rapid intervention of the countries and their partners. Such was the case in Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Niger, Nigeria, and Togo. Its presence has been detected and officially confirmed in ten countries, and it is awaiting official reporting in four other countries (Figure 1). In the future, the presence of grain-eating birds could be a threat for millet and rice crops in Burkina Faso, Mali and Nigeria.

Figure 1: Map of areas affected by Fall Armyworm (as of 1 October 2017)



Source: FAO

Based on the Partnership Framework, FAO formulated a programme for action for the coordination of immediate, mid-term and strategic responses to manage Fall Armyworm attacks in Africa. The programme was presented at the African Union Conference of the Specialized Technical Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment, during a partners' round table on the 4th October 2017.

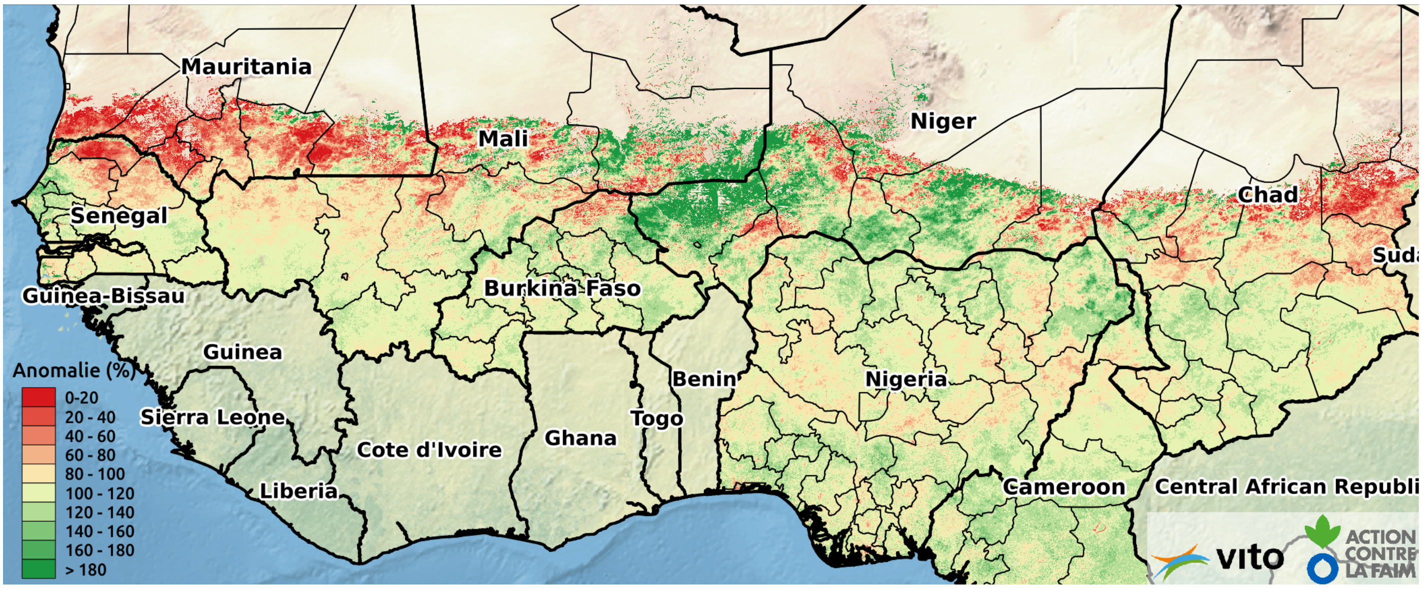
Fall Armyworm (FAW) early warning system development: FAO finalized a standard core set of data to be collected and recorded in the field for FAW monitoring that was identified by farmers and stakeholders. This will allow the same data to be collected in all countries and facilitates comparative analysis as well as training. It is also a prerequisite for the development of field tools such as a mobile phone application, databases and geographic information systems.

2017 - 2018 Agropastoral Campaign (continued)

Production is expected to be overall average to above average for the region

The **pastoral situation** is generally good in the Sahel and West Africa region with good availability of fodder and surface water for livestock. However, there are areas at risk of pasture shortages in the **extreme Northeast of Chad, in the pastoral areas of Niger, in Northern Senegal and in the agro-pastoral areas of Mauritania** (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Anomaly of the biomass production in the Sahel to October 1, 2017



Source: ACF

Population movement's situation in the region

Decrease in the number of IDPs in Lake Chad Basin region

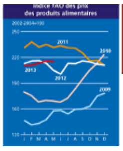
Population movements are ongoing in Lake Chad basin region and in Mali.

Nigeria crisis: The number of IDPs has decreased from 2,358,877 to 2,239,304 persons UNHCR.

As of 15 August 2017, the estimated number of IDPs in Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe was 1,757,288, representing a decrease of 68,033 persons or four percent compared to the population of 1,825,321 identified in June 2017 (Displacement Tracking Matrix – Round XVII Report). This decrease is in line with the decreasing trend noted over the last two rounds (16th and 17th). The chief drivers of mobility were people returning to their places of origin and searching for better livelihood opportunities. Other reasons included the relocation of Nigerians from neighbouring Cameroon and more areas becoming newly accessible on account of improved security. The trend of increasing number of returnees continued in DTM Round XVIII assessment. A nominal increase of one percent was recorded in the number of returnees, rising from 1,257,911 in June 2017 to 1,268,140. The increase was in line with the increasing trend since the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) started recording data on returnees in October 2015. DTM 18th Report

Nigerian refugees are 163,412 people in the 3 neighbouring countries of the Lake Chad basin: Niger, Chad and Cameroon. The total number of internally displaced persons in Nigeria's three neighbouring countries is 482,016. UNHCR

Mali crisis: As of the 31 august 2017, partners of the Population Movement Commission (CMP) have recorded 60,373 returnees. This corresponds to an increase of 188 persons compared to July 2017 data (60,185 returnees). Besides, 55,880 IDPs (10,609 households) were recorded, which corresponds to an increase of 498 persons compared to July 2017 data, DNDS teams recorded 498,170 returnees in Mali and 142,386 Malian refugees are in neighboring countries by UNHCR. CMP



Trends on international markets

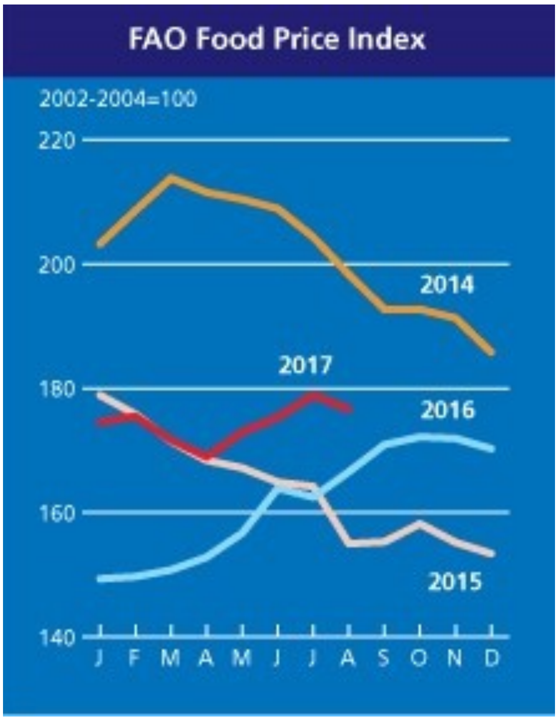
FAO Food Price Index mildly up in September

The FAO Food Price Index averaged 178.4 points in September 2017, up 1.4 points (0.8 percent) from August and 7.4 points (4.3 percent) above September 2016. Firmer prices in the vegetable oil and dairy sectors were behind that small month-on-month rise.

The FAO Cereal Price Index averaged 152.2 points in September, down 1.6 points (1.0 percent) from August. While the Index declined for the second consecutive month, it remained 8 percent above the corresponding month last year. Maize prices fell in September, reacting to ample supplies in South America and harvest pressure in the northern hemisphere. Wheat values were also weaker, with continued upgrading of this year's harvest forecast in the Russian Federation.

In September, the world rice prices began to rise, influenced by the firming up of Thai and U.S. prices, while in India, Vietnam and Pakistan, they tended to decline. Since mid-September, all the exportation markets are on a decreasing trend due to strong competition in Asian markets. This trend is likely to continue with the arrival of the new Asian crops during the last quarter of the year. Crops are likely to increase overall, except for India where the production could decline by 1.4 percent due to poor weather conditions at the end of the crop cycle. Global exportable supplies would be satisfactory and global stocks could recover again in 2018. The world trade forecasts for 2017 increased by 8.3 percent. [Interice]

Figure 3: FAO Food Price Index



Source: [FAO]

Market trends in West Africa

Latest seasonal price hikes before harvests drop pressure in the Region

In general, coarse grain prices continued to increase in September following seasonal trends, although they began to decline in the countries where the 2017 harvests have started, including coastal countries. (FAO) During this month of September, the lean season is gradually getting closer to an end in many West African countries while food availability improves with the arrival of new crops in some countries. (ROAC, N°14)

In Mali, the grain price trend is slightly up compared to August 2017 (+ 4 percent). Compared to September 2016, prices are sharply up for almost all cereals: + 32 percent for millet, + 27 percent sorghum, + 16 percent maize. The availability of cereals on the markets is overall average and could improve with the timid arrival of maize harvests in the south and local rice in office du Niger area. Supply is able to meet demand across the country. However, the supply status varies from medium to rare for certain commodities (sorghum, beans, maize) in the northern areas because of the deterioration of certain roads due to the rainy season, insecurity, and poor harvest areas. Terms of trade for goat / cereals are in sharp decline compared to September 2016 in circles of Gao, Timbuktu and Mopti regions. (WFP, September 2017)

In Niger, the general trend in grain price trends is down for local dry cereals (millet and sorghum) and up for rice and maize. The decline in local dry cereals is due to the maturing of millet in several localities in the agricultural zone. However, flooding in all regions has affected many households. On the markets, the situation is characterized by an average level of supply of local and imported cereals. Nevertheless, the current price level remains very high compared to the same month of the previous year and to the average of the last 5 years. (Afrique Verte, N° 197)

Market trends in West Africa (continued)

Latest seasonal price hikes before harvests drop pressure in the Region

In Senegal, the upward trend in millet prices continued in September. This situation is justified by the exhaustion of supply in the production areas and the significant demand of processors, traders and consumers. The wholesale and retail market is hardly supplied even in major production areas like Kaolack. In prospective, the market situation could know a reverse trend by next month because crops have started timidly in some areas. As a result, supply could improve and lead to a decline and gradual stabilization of prices. For sorghum, market transactions have decreased in intensity as supply is running out. Stocks are almost non-existent in the production areas. Only a few wholesalers and intermediaries still hold small stocks that they only sell very gradually to take advantage of high prices. This has led to a slight increase in sorghum prices in the groundnut basin. (ROAC, N°14)

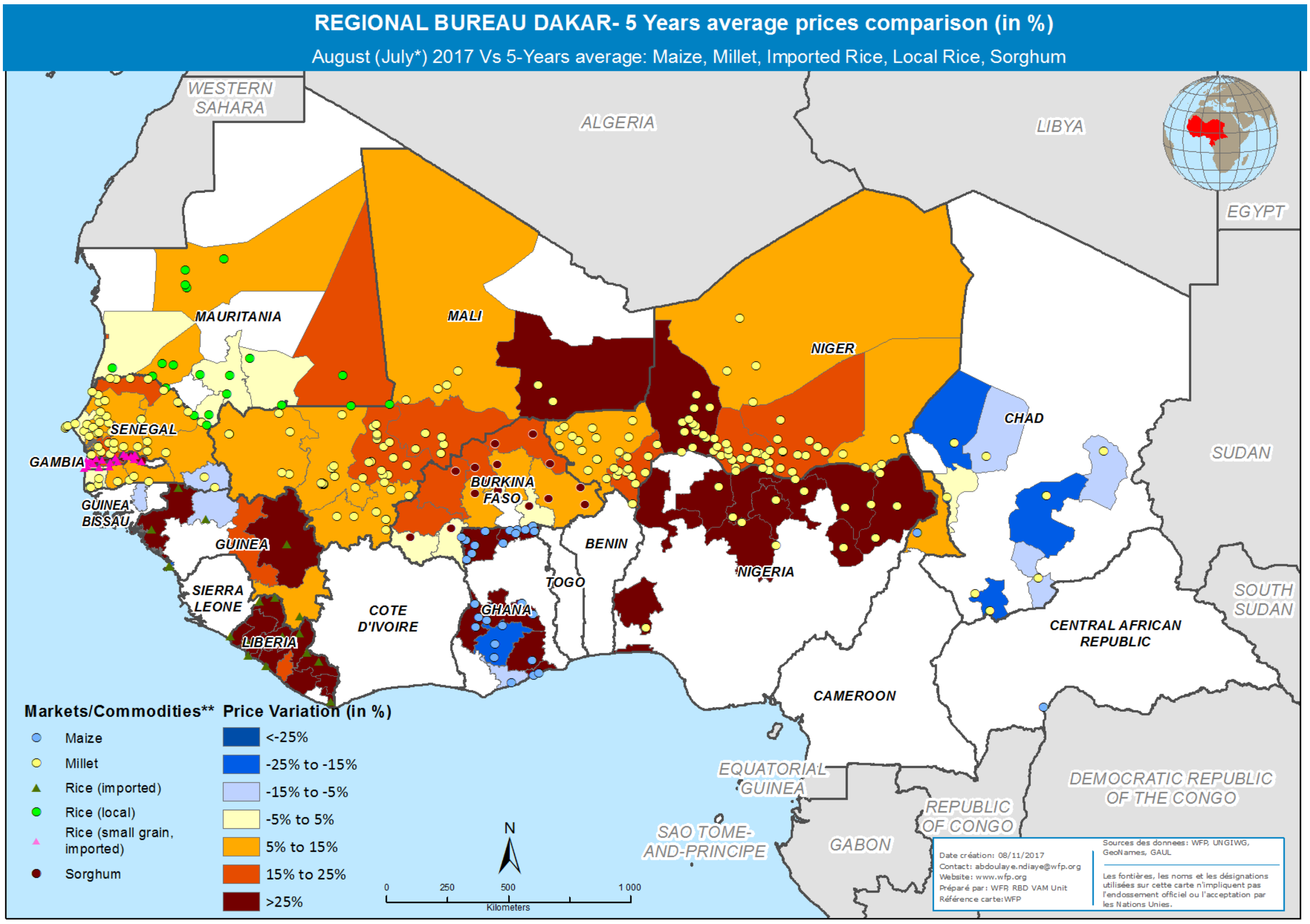
In Chad, coarse grain prices increased seasonally in most markets in August and were generally higher than a year earlier; prices were also supported by the continuing conflict in north-eastern Nigeria, which affected central and southwestern Nigeria. However, the next harvests should be abundant and mitigate the upward pressure on prices in the coming months. (FAO)

In Nigeria, preliminary results from a joint WFP / FEWS NET market study have shown that market functioning in conflict-affected areas in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states is gradually improving. However, staple food prices remain higher compared to the same period last year and far above average price levels. Household demand remains high in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa States at 70, 63 and 64 percent, respectively, compared to the same period last year (WFP / FEWS NET, 2017).

In other coastal countries, such as Togo and Ghana, maize prices are falling with the arrival of the first harvests.

For rice, prices are stable across all West African markets; with good local productions and low international prices, further decreases are expected.

Figure 4: Comparison (in %) of cereals prices in August (July) in 2017 compared to the five-year average - Maize, Millet, Rice Imported, Local Rice and Sorghum



Source: WFP

Impact on Food Security

Crisis effects persist in certain areas despite good rainfall and improved food access

In September, PREGEC members gave their opinion on the progress of the agricultural campaign and the agricultural and food perspectives in the region:

- Overall, the food security situation is improving with the appearance of the first season crops in coastal countries and early crops in the Sahel including millet and cowpeas.
- Food assistance interventions (sale of cereals at reduced prices, free distribution, formal and informal monetary transfers, etc.) implemented by the governments and their partners also contribute to improving the food security situation of vulnerable households during the lean season.
- However, the persistence of civil insecurity in the Lake Chad Basin, in Northern and Central Mali and in the Liptako Gourma (area that covers the common borders of Burkina Faso, Niger and Mali) would constitute the main threat of the food security situation in the region. (PREGEC, September 2017)

In Mali, the current food situation is overall satisfactory throughout the country despite some food shortages in low production areas. The situation is generally characterized by a satisfactory supply of the cereals markets, the persistent insecurity which disturbs trade flows in the north and the center of the country, the food reserves in reduction even exhausted in very low production areas and the free food distributions by Food Security Office to support vulnerable households. (PREGEC, September 2017)

In Burkina Faso, following the threat of the Fall Armyworm, mostly on maize crops, grain-eating birds are now beginning to invade cereal production, especially millet in the Sahel region. Moreover, threats of terrorist attacks in that region could limit pest control operations by both producers and agricultural technical services.
Compared to the last five years average, better access to new crops (cowpeas, peanuts, maize, fonio) improves household's food situation. However, due to limited income sources, poor households sell some of these crops to cover school expenses and pay debts. (FEWS NET, September 2017)

In Chad, throughout the Sahelian belt except Hadjer Lamis and Chari Baguirmi, the proportion of households with poor or borderline food consumption remain above 30 percent, with an average of 34.1 percent at national level. High rates are observed in the southern and south-eastern Sudanian belt with deterioration in the eastern and western Logone regions.
Due to the limited resources allowing non-stockbreeders households to purchase products such as milk and animal protein, there is a low level of consumption for these products. Nevertheless, food assistance from WFP and other partners, and the availability of early harvest especially in the Sudanian belt, improves basic food products consumption for beneficiaries and agricultural producers.
The coping strategy index has remained high (6,13), reflecting the lack of resources that limit the purchasing power of many household's due to the lean season peak especially in the Sudanian area. Despite the last year's relatively good agricultural production, this lean season remains worrying for households because of the difficult economic situation in the country. (WFP Chad, mVAM, August 2017)

Calendars !

→ Joint Crop Missions

◊ Coastal Countries (Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Liberia, Guinea Bissau, Guinea, Sierra Leone): 2 to 6 October 2017

◊ Nigeria: 16 to 20 October 2017

◊ Sahel Countries (The Gambia, Cap Vert, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Chad, Senegal): 6 to 11 November 2017

→ *Cadre Harmonisé* (CH) Workshop

◊ Coastal Countries: 9 to13 October 2017

◊ Burkina Faso: 23 to 28 October 2017

◊ Nigeria: 23 October to 03 November 2017

◊ Sahel Countries (The Gambia, Cap Vert, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Chad, Senegal): 13 to 18 November 2017

→ CH Regional Consolidation: 20 to 25 November 2017 in Bamako, Mali

→ PREGEC: 27 to 29 November 2017 in Bamako, Mali

→ RPCA: 4 to 6 December 2017 in Cotonou, Benin

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