

# Food Security and Humanitarian Implications in West Africa and the Sahel

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Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations



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## KEY POINTS

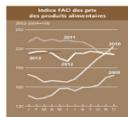
### Sections



Agriculture



Displacements



International Markets



West Africa Markets



Food Security

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- ◆ Expected seasonal forecast of overall average to slightly below average in the Southern Gulf of Guinea countries.
- ◆ Expected seasonal forecast of overall cumulative rainfall in Sudano-sahelian Africa countries.
- ◆ Millet and sorghum prices have risen above the five past year average in Niger and Mali.

The 2016 - 2017 agricultural campaign is marked by the end of off-season crop operations. Market gardening supply remains moderately available in the markets. The period is also characterized by the 2017 - 2018 campaign preparations.

As part of the 2017 - 2018 campaign preparation, the synthesis of the forecast by the Agrhymet Regional Center dated 3 April 2017 indicates that it is more likely that the rainfall for the main rainy season are overall average to a slight below average in the Southern of the Gulf of Guinea countries and overall above average in Sudano-sahelian Africa countries.

In Chad, the pastoral situation is worrying in Ennedi East, Ennedi West, Ouaddai, Sila, Kanem and Bahr-El-Gazal regions due to the depletion of fodder resources and water points. The regions with decline cereal production (Tandjilé, Mayo Kébbi Est and Wadi Fira) will experience more difficulties during the lean season.

Cereal stocks are declining throughout the region. In most Sahelian countries (Mali and Niger for example), millet and sorghum prices increased in April 2017.

## Recommendations for regional partners

- Continue to monitor the food and nutrition security situation, particularly in the Lake Chad Basin, Northern Mali, the Central African Republic, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Senegal and Chad
- Monitor the food situation in Northern Nigeria
- Advocate for funding and implementation of responses in Nigeria's three Northeast states (Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe) and in other Lake Chad Basin countries where very little resources are being mobilized for the humanitarian response and for 2017 - 2018 agricultural campaign

**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.

The seasonal forecast of the agro-hydro-climatic characteristics of the rainy season is expected for the Gulf of Guinea countries, overall average to slightly below average and in Sudano-sahelian Africa countries, above average cumulative rainfall

The restricted meeting of the Food Crisis Prevention Network (RPCA) held in Paris, France from 10 to 12 April 2017 confirmed good crop yields, of which cereal production reached 67.2 million tons, up 10 percent from the 2015 - 2016 season and 17 percent from five-year average.

2016 - 2017 agricultural campaign remains marked by the end of the off-season crops operations. The gardening production remain moderately available in the markets. Also, the period is characterized by the preparation of 2017 - 2018 agricultural campaign.

The pastoral situation is marked by the early depletion of fodder resources and water points in some parts of Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali and Niger, point to an early and serious lean season in pastoral areas.

## The seasonal forecast of the agro-hydro-climatic

### The Gulf of Guinea countries

As part of the 2017 - 2018 campaign preparation, the synthesis of the different climate forecasts Centres models (ECMWF, IRI, UK-puts-Office, NOAA/NCEP, etc.) by the Centre Regional Agrhymet dated April 3, 2017, indicates that it is more likely that the rainfall totals of the longest rainy season be overall average to slightly below average in the South of the Gulf of Guinea countries, on March-April-May June 2017 periods.

Generally, early to normal season dates are expected in areas covering the Center of Côte d'Ivoire, the Center - West of Ghana and the band from the extreme East-Central of Ghana to the extreme West-Central of Nigeria, through the Center of Togo and Benin. In the South Central of Nigeria, it is rather a late onset dates is expected for the longest rainy season 2017 (Figure 1).

Early to average end of season dates are expected on the Center-West of Côte d'Ivoire, the South-East of Ghana, the extreme Southwest of Togo and across the band from the extreme Southeast of Togo to Nigeria South, passing through the Center of Benin. Throughout the Center of Côte d'Ivoire to the extreme West-Central of Ghana, average end of season dates is expected. On the other hand, it is very likely that season have a late ending to normal across the band Center of Nigeria.

### The Sudano-sahelian Africa countries

The 4th Forum on Seasonal forecast of the agro-hydro-climatic characteristics of the rainy season in

Sudano-sahelian Africa (PRESASS, 2017) held from 15 to 19 May 2017 in Accra, Ghana indicate that:

### Rainfall

Above average cumulative rainfall in areas covering Northern Ghana, Northern Togo, Northern Benin, Eastern half of Burkina Faso, Western Nigeria, Western Niger, Central Mali, Southern Mauritania, The Gambia, Northern Senegal, Southern Chad and Eastern Cameroon. (Figure 2)

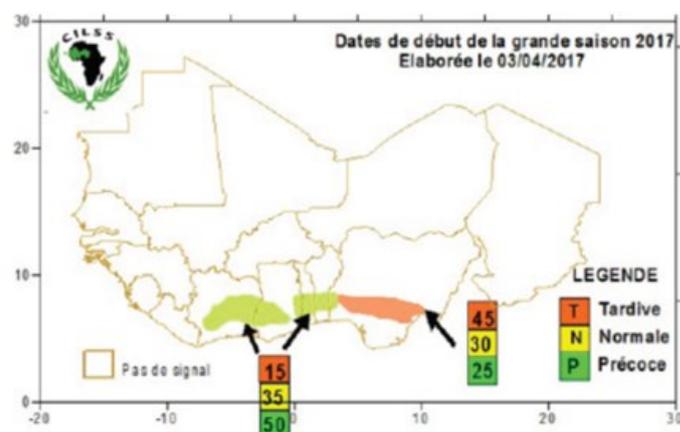
Early onset dates in the same areas, extended to the agricultural zone of Niger, Northern Nigeria and Central Chad.

An early-to-normal end of season should expect in the countries in the Western part of the Sahelo-sudanian zone.

Longer to normal dry spells will be observed during the crop installation phase throughout the Sahelo-sudanian zone of West Africa.

Longer than average dry spells during the second half of the rainy season are expected in the most parts of Burkina Faso, Southern Mali, Northern Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo and Benin.

Figure 1: Forecast of the onset date of the 2017 longest rainy season for the Gulf of Guinea countries



Source: Agrhymet, Monthly Bulletin n° 01 - April 2017

### River flow

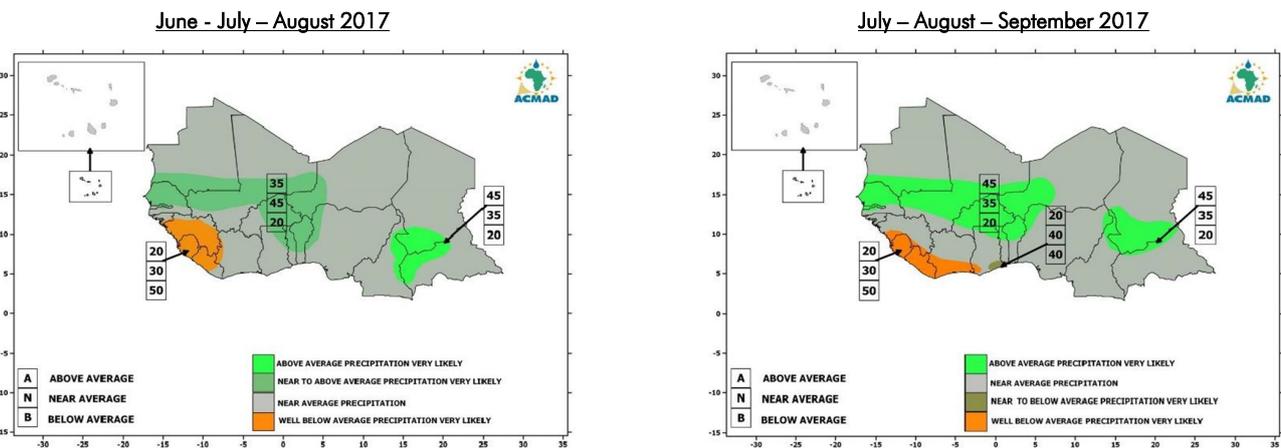
It expected that average or above-average flows relatively to the past 30 years in the river basins of the West African region, except for the Mono River basin (Togo and Benin) and the lower Volta River basin (Ghanaian part mainly).

The above forecasts may change during the raining season. Therefore, it is highly advised to monitor updates that will be made in June, July and August 2017 by the AGRHYMET Regional Centre, ACMAD and national Meteorological Agencies.

# 2016 - 2017 Agropastoral campaign and preparation of 2017 - 2018 campaign

The seasonal forecast of the agro-hydro-climatic characteristics of the rainy season is expected for the Gulf of Guinea countries, overall average to slightly below average and in Sudano-sahelian Africa countries, above average cumulative rainfall

Figure 2: Seasonal forecast of the agro-hydro-climatic characteristics of the rainy season in sudano-sahelian Africa



Source: Agrhymet/ACMAD, PRESASS - May 2017

## Population movement's situation in the region

### Decline in the number of displaced persons in the region of Lake Chad

**Nigerian crisis:** the number of displaced people has declined, from 2,328,303 to 2,302,487 persons. [UNHCR](#)

As of 31 March 2017, the estimated number of IDPs in Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe is 1,832,743 representing a decrease of 4 percent of 1,899,830 in the last round (DTM Round XIV). The key reasons for population movement continue to be to return to their place of origin and to search for livelihood opportunities. Some more people were also displaced due to continuing military action and in some instances, due to communal clashes. A marked increase was recorded in the number of returnees from 1,099,509 persons during Round XIV assessment to 1,151,427 returnees' persons in this round of assessments. [DMT round XV report](#)

The Nigerian refugees in the 3 neighboring countries of the Lake Chad basin are 208,439 persons: Niger, Chad and

Cameroon. The total number of IDPs in the three neighboring countries of Nigeria is 451,077 persons. [UNHCR](#)

**Malian crisis :** As of April 30, 2017, there are in total 58,985 IDPs recorded in Mali and the CMP partners counted 58,315 returnees, which corresponds to an increase of 907 person compared to February 2017 (57,408 returnees). Moreover, about 13,219 people are displaced following the violent confrontation in the circle of Gourma Rharous. ([DNDS Rapport CMP](#))

The Malian refugees in the 3 neighboring host countries are 143,567 persons: Mauritania, Niger and Burkina Faso. [UNHCR](#)

## Trends on international markets

### FAO Food Price Index falls for the third consecutive month

The FAO Food Price Index averaged 168.0 points in April 2017, down 3.1 points (1.8 percent) from March, but still 15.2 points (10 percent) higher than in April 2016. As in March, all commodity indices used in the calculation of the FFPI subsided in April, with the exception of meat values.

The FAO Cereal Price Index averaged 146.0 points in April, down 1.8 points (1.2 percent) from the previous month and 3.8 points (2.5 percent) from its value in April 2016. Strong export competition and expectations that global cereal availabilities will remain ample in the 2017 - 2018 season continued to weigh on international prices of most cereals, wheat in particular.

Figure 3: FAO Food Price Index



Source: FAO



## Trends on international markets (continued)

### FAO Food Price Index falls for the third consecutive month

In April, the rice world prices remained firm, influenced by Thai and Pakistani prices. In contrast, Indian and United States' prices registered moderate rises. In Thailand, prices rose thanks to the revaluation of the bath against the dollar. Meanwhile, Vietnamese prices were weak due to a reduction of the import demand from its main clients, especially Philippines. In 2017, the world trade is likely to increase by 4.5 percent due to the recovery of import demand from the

Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa. Thus, Asian exporters expect to increase their sales in 2017. But for now, most of them, except in the United States and Thailand, have a delay of 5 to 20 percent in comparison to the previous year at the same time. [Interice](#)



## Market trends in West Africa

### Trend above the seasonal levels for dry cereals overall of the Sahel

Commercial activity during the month of April remained intense. Cereal stocks decline throughout the region, but not enough to trigger the seasonal price increase. (ROAC, May 2017)

In the Sahelian belt, overall, the increasing availability of rice in the region has sustained general price stability with scattered small increases.

On the other hand, prices for locally produced cereals such as millet and sorghum, the main staples in the region, increased in April. In Mali and Niger, prices have soared despite the abundance of supplies from the exceptional cereal harvests of 2016 (FAO, May 2017). By the way, these countries also experience a large forage deficit, but also a drop in livestock prices following the decline in demand in Nigeria.

**In Niger**, the price of millet is up compared to the same period of 2016 and the average of the last five years. This increase, in addition to being seasonal, has a particular feature this year in that the rise occurred earlier than usual because of:

- A start-up of the marketing year with high levels due to the early influx of traders and households to replenish their stock;
- A decrease in local supply in line with the deficit pockets recorded this year in certain production areas;
- A speculation effect on the launch of the government's 30,000 tons national tenders for the replenishment of the National Security Stock;
- (non-official) export restraint measures along the Nigerian border;
- The economic situation (weak Naira), with a consequent reduction in incentives for Niger actors to import;
- The increase in demand as a prelude to Ramadan (period of high consumption of cereals especially millet) (SIMA Niger, April 2017).

On the other hand, the closure of certain markets and the curfew in the Tillabéri and Tahoua region, set up to fight against terrorist infiltrations from neighboring Mali, reinforce the difficulty of access to the market and the availability of food.

**In Nigeria**, coarse grain prices remained mostly stable or declined in March, largely as a result of the recent stability of the local currency against the US dollar. However, prices remain at significantly higher levels than a year earlier.

**In Burkina Faso**, the situation of rising prices seems less pronounced and hence less worrying.

**In Chad**, the positive 2016 - 2017 agricultural harvest hides the burden of the negative impacts of its national poor economic performance and regional disparities on the vulnerable most of whom live in rural areas. The on-going fiscal crisis cuts government investment/spending in agriculture and will therefore likely impact the next harvest and further fuel food insecurity. Since September 2016, the government reacted with austerity measures, among others, reducing civil servants' allowances and cutting salaries. Throughout the country early lean season signs are observed as livestock prices have significantly dropped and seasonal cereal prices are increasing. These increases range from 20 percent to 40 percent depending on the markets and commodities considered. Nigeria export market for cattle has come almost to a complete halt and cut the revenues of thousands of Chadian pastoralists. Agriculture, livestock and informal trade, the main life lines for most households throughout the country are the hardest hit by the economic crisis and austerity measures. Surrounding security crises continue to put Chad's stability in danger. On top of that, migration from other regions is putting additional pressure on the local population. (WFP, April / May 2017)

## Market trends in West Africa (continued)

### Trend above the seasonal levels for dry cereals overall of the Sahel

In Mali, during the month of April 2017, there was a decrease in the smallholder supply. Indeed, in the rural markets followed, the quantities of dry cereals sold by the producers decreased by 11 percent (8 121 tons last month to 7205 tons). The reduction in the quantities sold by the producers is mainly perceptible in millet and maize. This is due to the combination of the following factors:

The existence of deficit pockets across the country during the 2016 - 2017 marketing year (northern and southern areas affected by droughts and / or floods and insecurity);

Increased insecurity, which often disrupts markets in the center and north of the country and prevents the free movement of people and their goods;

The seasonal decline in the quantities marketed by producers during this interim period appears to be greater than in April 2016 due to higher demand and the importance of cash crops. (OMA, April 2017).

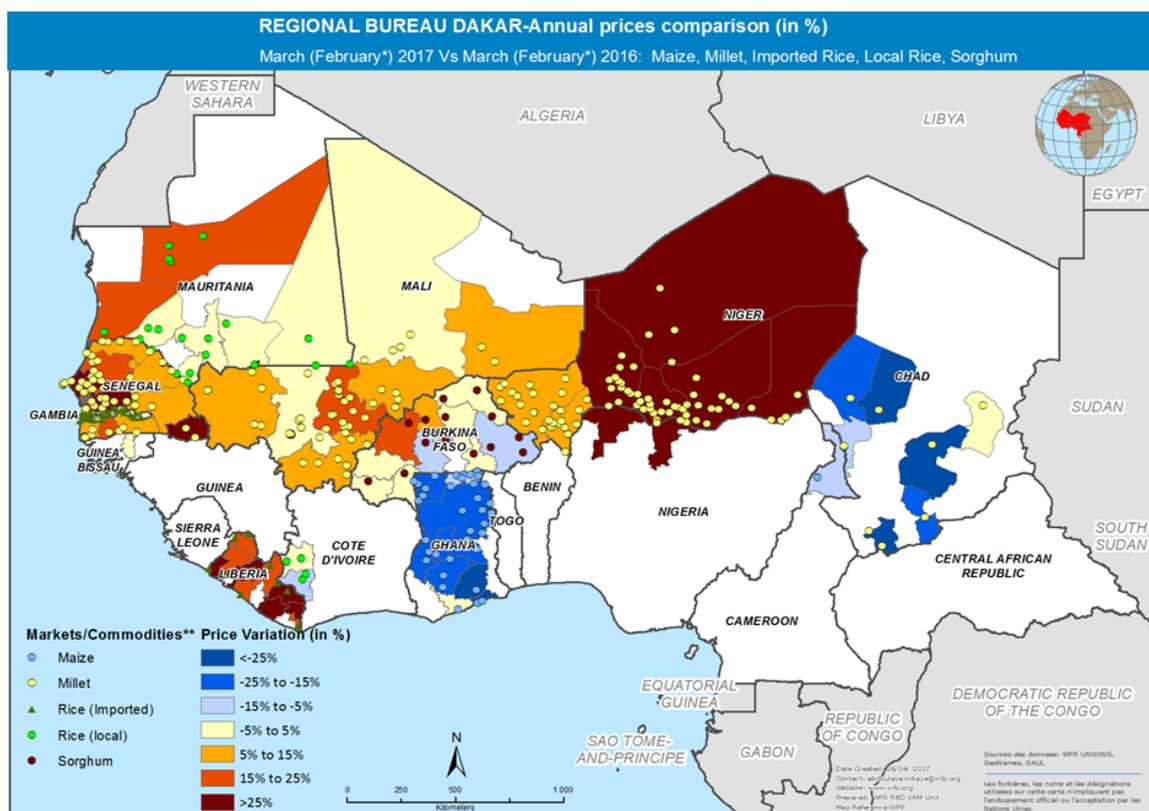
In Mauritania, consumer markets are well supplied with imported goods (rice, wheat, oil, sugar) whose prices are beginning to rise with the approach of the Ramadan. The seasonal supply of traditional cereals is reduced by the low level of domestic production and by Malian cross-border flows limited by the decline in cereal production in the areas that supplied Mauritania. Their prices are rising in most of the country. (FEWS NET, May 2017)

In Senegal, average monthly prices per kilogram of dry local cereals remained relatively stable compared to the previous month and averages over the past five years, but remain above last year's prices with rates of change of +23 percent for millet, +14 percent for sorghum and +9 percent for maize. During May 2017, stocks of local products (dry grains, pulses) will be low in all markets. This situation would be the consequence of the depletion of smallholder reserves resulting in a lack of renewal of sufficiently traded commercial stocks. (SIM, April 2017)

In CAR, rice, maize and palm oil prices increased in most locations between January and March 2017. On the other hand, the price of cassava remained stable over the same period. Access to markets in Bambari, Berbérati, Ndélé, Paoua and Zémio remains limited or difficult according to a number of key informants. The reasons are insecurity and road degradation. Although basic foods are generally available in most markets in the localities followed by mVAM, significant deficits have been reported in Bambari, Bocaranga, Kaga-Bandoro, Nana-Bakassa, Obo, Yaloké and Zémio. (WFP, April 2017)

Finally, one observes a range of early warning signs in the markets that should serve as early warning signs for humanitarian actors.

Figure 4: Comparison (in %) of cereals prices from March (February) 2017 relative to March (February) 2016 (maize, millet, imported rice, local rice, sorghum)



### Worrying food security situation in Tandjilé East department in Chad

In Chad, the pastoral situation is worrying in most of the Sahelian regions, due to the depletion of forage and the drying up of surface water points. In particular, the following regions approach a very harsh pastoral lean season: Ennedi East, Ennedi West, Ouaddai, Sila, Kanem and Bahr-El-Gazal.

The food and nutrition security situation is currently satisfactory. However, the regions with cereal production deficits (Tandjilé, Mayo Kébbi Est and Wadi Fira) will experience more difficulties during the lean season. The food situation, already very precarious in the department of Tandjilé East deserves special attention.

The results of the mVAM of April 2017 show that the food security situation is decline in Chad compared to October 2016 (harvest). The Sahel Center (Guéra, Batha), Sahel East (Sila, Ouaddai, Wadi Fira) and the North (Borkou, Ennedi East and West, Tibesti) regions record high rates (30 percent or more) of poor and borderline food consumption. However, compared to last year at the same time (April 2016), the food security situation has improved in all regions of the Sahel except in the Lake region where a decline was observed among the host population (9.8 percent vs. 28.9 percent) and the displaced (16.2 percent vs. 41.2 percent).

The reduced coping strategies index deteriorated from October 2016 (mVAM) and April 2016 (EFSA), revealing the difficulties of household physical and economic access to nutritious and diversified foods due to Economic crisis in the country. (WFP Chad, April 2017)

In Senegal, the food security situation is characterized by pockets of food insecurity in the departments of Matam, Kanel, Goudiry, Tambacounda, Malem-Hodar and Mbacké, despite relatively good agricultural production. These areas have experienced a deterioration in their livelihoods, particularly as a result of the early cessation of the rains. In fact, the poor household's purchasing power is altered and stressed by a lack of income generation activities diversification. Thus, the government will implement, with the WFP support, a response plan in the departments in crisis phase (341,929 people would be assisted). (WFP Senegal, May 2017)

In Burkina Faso, the food situation remains satisfactory overall and characterized by a good supply to the markets, with, however, higher prices for dry cereals. In the North-Central region, the food situation is considered good. Nevertheless, the stock level of households is increasingly low. (Afrique Verte, April 2017)

In Mali, minimal food insecurity for the main part of the country is maintained thanks to a high availability of cereals,

pulses and vegetable products from 2016 - 2017 agricultural production. In Gao and Timbuktu regions, the food security situation is considered slightly good to average although affected by civil insecurity, which is characterized by frequent incidents that disrupt the people free movement and assets. (Afrique Verte, April 2017)

In Niger, beginning of April, the food security situation remains overall satisfactory. In the Agadez region, food security situation is characterized by:

- A low food supply (cereals and pasta) due to the Algerian border closing;
- A significant increase in food requirements following the return of the Djado goldsmiths due to the closure of the sites;
- A significant increase in dry cereal prices;
- A renewal of the begging of the talibés who came massively from the Zinder and Tahoua regions.

In Zinder, the food security situation is moderately satisfactory and is characterized by a significant increase in the dry cereals (millet, sorghum and maize) prices, thus affecting the purchasing power of average households. The start-up of low-price cereal marketing operations is helping to mitigate the effects of the cereal deficit. (Afrique Verte, April 2017)

In the Diffa region, Crisis food insecurity (Phase 3 IPC) will continue until September 2017 due to the persistence of the security crisis and its effects on the local economy and the constant population's movement. In some areas, humanitarian access difficulties and seasonal declines in household food stocks may translate into food insecurity among poor households. (FEWS NET, April 2017)

## The fall armyworm threatened agricultural production in Sahel and West Africa

Fall Armyworm (*Spodoptera frugiperda*), FAW, is an insect pest that feeds on more than 80 crop species, causing damage to economically important cultivated cereals such as maize, rice, sorghum, and also to legumes as well as vegetable crops and cotton. It is native to tropical and subtropical regions of the Americas, with the adult moth able to move over 100 km per night. It lays its eggs on plants, from which larvae hatch and begin feeding. High infestations can lead to significant yield loss. Farmers in the Americas have been managing the pest for many years, but at significant cost.

FAW was first detected in Central and Western Africa in early 2016 (Sao Tome and Principe, Nigeria, Benin and Togo) and in late 2016 and 2017 in Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, and it is expected to move further. Although it is too early to know the long-term impact of FAW on agricultural production and food security in Africa, it has the potential to cause serious damage and yield losses.

FAO took immediate actions to support countries in responding to the threat of FAW in Africa. A consultative meeting was held in Harare, Zimbabwe (14 - 16 February 2017) with government officials and stakeholders from Southern Africa to provide an update on the current situation, and support emergency preparedness and rapid pest management response. FAO undertook a series of quick actions such as the development and sharing with countries of a technical guide for FAW identification, protocols to assess levels of infestation and damage, and recommendations for management options including support to governments in the development of action plans.

In June 6 to 7, 2017, a [joint workshop](#) is planned in Accra, Ghana for all West Africa Plant Protection Departments of Ministries for Agriculture and partners. Responding to the threat of FAW is one of topics.



### Calendars !

- RPCA: April 10 to 12 in Paris (France)
- Training of the Technical Committee CH-AMR (Analysis and Measurement of Resilience) on the RIMA tool (Resilience Index Measurement and Analysis): 19-20 April 2017 in Dakar (Senegal)
- PREGEC: 29 to 30 June 2017 in Praia (Cabo Verde)
- Technical Committee – *Cadre Harmonisé* (CH) meeting: June 28, 2017 in Praia (Cabo Verde)
- Retreat for *Cadre Harmonisé* revised Handbook validation: July 17-22, 2017 in Bamako, Mali
- CH training and communication tools review: July 24-26, 2017 in Bamako, Mali



Food Security Information in  
West Africa

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