The Niger

DIEM – Data in Emergencies Monitoring brief, round 7

Results and recommendations

September 2023
Key highlights

> The majority of households (68 percent) experienced at least one shock in the three months preceding the survey. Non-agricultural households experienced fewer shocks than those involved in agricultural activities. Rising food prices affected 12 percent of households, down from the previous two rounds. Previous seasons were affected by the poor crop year of 2021, due to severe drought and the consequences of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine.

> Sixty-two percent of households involved in cultivation encountered production difficulties, including lack of water (42 percent), pest invasion (28 percent) and plant diseases (20 percent).

> Sixty-six percent of surveyed producers noted a reduction in the size of their herds compared to the same period last year. Sixty percent encountered difficulties carrying out their activities in the three months preceding the survey, notably due to access to feed (64 percent) and animal diseases (31 percent).

> Dietary diversity remains low among 66 percent of households.

> Coping strategies were mainly oriented towards crisis (33 percent), stress (26 percent) and emergency (27 percent) strategies, with 17 percent of households having sold their last female animal and 10 percent having sold their house or land.

> The main short-term recommendations include strengthening anticipatory actions to cope with flooding at the end of the rainy season, developing the marketing capacities of producer organizations and promoting home gardens to support dietary diversity.
Methodology

Between 15 and 25 July 2023, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) conducted the seventh round of the Data in Emergencies Monitoring (DIEM-Monitoring) household survey in the Niger to assess agricultural livelihoods and food security.

Data were collected via computer-assisted telephone interviews in all regions of the Niger, with the exception of the Niamey urban area: Agadez, Diffa, Dosso, Maradi, Tahoua, Tillabéry and Zinder. A total of 1,644 households were surveyed.

Weights were calculated on the basis of population size and a wealth indicator (access to drinking water). Data collection took place at the beginning of the rainy season and also covered the end of the irrigation season. The results of this seventh round of data collection have been compared to those of the sixth round (March 2023, off-season period), the fifth round (December 2022, end of main harvest and start of off-season) and the fourth round (August 2022, rainy season) throughout this brief.

Figure 1. Countries with an established DIEM-Monitoring System


The dotted lines correspond approximately to the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed by India and Pakistan. The parties have not yet settled the final status of Jammu and Kashmir. The final delineation of the border between Sudan and South Sudan has not yet been defined.

About DIEM-Monitoring

FAO has set up the DIEM-Monitoring system to collect, analyse and disseminate data on shocks, livelihoods and food security in countries affected by multiple shocks. DIEM-Monitoring aims to support decision-making by providing regularly updated information on how different shocks affect the livelihoods and food security of populations involved in agriculture.

DIEM-Monitoring is based on dashboards presented by country. Readers are invited to explore these tables for more information on the context in the Niger and the other countries monitored.

Learn more at https://data-in-emergencies.fao.org/pages/monitoring
Income and shocks

The majority of households (68 percent) experienced at least one shock in the three months preceding the survey. All regions were affected, but Maradi reported the highest rate of shocks (74 percent). Non-agricultural households experienced fewer shocks (52 percent) than those involved in agricultural activities. The main shocks reported were illness or death of a household member (45 percent), rising food prices (12 percent), floods (4 percent) and livestock diseases (4 percent) (Figure 2). Comparisons to previous rounds display a decrease in the percentage of households affected by rising food prices. In 2022, prices remained very high throughout the year due to the poor crop year of 2021 resulting from the severe drought and the ongoing conflict in Ukraine.

These shocks had a negative impact on the economic situation of households, with 47 percent reporting a drop in income in the three months prior to the survey. This rate rose to 55 percent for households involved solely in livestock production and dropped to 43 percent for those engaged in crop production.

The survey was administered during the lean season, when livestock producers depend on their ability to obtain feed for their animals on the market (cost and availability) before they can access pasture again. During this period, the animals are very weak and more susceptible to disease. Agricultural transactions are more concerned with crop production, intended to support households after their stocks have been depleted.

Figure 2. Main shock in the three months preceding the survey (percentage of households)

Crops

Figure 3. The Niger agricultural calendar

Of the households surveyed in the seventh round, 70 percent were crop producers. Sixty-two percent of them encountered production difficulties, including lack of water (42 percent), pest invasion (28 percent) and plant diseases (20 percent) (Figure 4). Producers were most likely referring to irrigated crop diseases or fungal diseases common in the development of new rainfed crops.

The area sown was lower than usual for 19 percent of households, but higher for 33 percent. A quarter of producers predicted lower harvests than usual, while 47 percent predicted higher harvests.
Figure 4. Crop production difficulties (percentage of crop producers)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Round 4 August 2022</th>
<th>Round 5 December 2022</th>
<th>Round 6 March 2023</th>
<th>Round 7 July 2023</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not enough irrigation water</td>
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<td>Pests</td>
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<td>Plant disease</td>
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<td>Access to fertilizer</td>
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<td>Access to extra labour</td>
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<td>Too much irrigation/water</td>
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<td>Uncontrolled animal grazing</td>
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<td>Access to plot</td>
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<td>Access to machinery</td>
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<td>Access to pesticides</td>
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<td>Access to enough seeds</td>
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<td>Low quality of seeds</td>
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<tr>
<td>Access to fuel/electricity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Soil erosion</td>
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Changes to the response options in the sixth-round survey make it impossible to compare certain data with previous rounds.

Difficulties marketing crops were reported by 35 percent of households, mainly due to low selling prices (36 percent), falling demand from traders or regular customers (27 percent) or difficulties accessing markets (22 percent). Difficulties selling irrigated crops – tomatoes and onions in particular – have been exacerbated since the closure of the borders with Nigeria and Benin following the coup d’état on 26 July 2023.

Livestock

Of the households surveyed, 64 percent were livestock producers. Of these, 66 percent reported a reduction in the size of their herd compared to the same period last year. The decline can be explained by distress sales (33 percent), own consumption (10 percent) and animal deaths (7 percent).

Sixty percent of livestock producers encountered production difficulties during the three months preceding the survey. This rate reached 71 percent in Tillabéry. These difficulties were attributed to access to feed (64 percent) – particularly in Tahoua (79 percent) – and animal diseases (31 percent) (Figure 5).
Thirty-nine percent of livestock-producing households encountered marketing difficulties. This was due to low prices (41 percent), high transport or marketing costs (25 percent) and lack of demand from regular traders or buyers (21 percent), particularly in Dosso (54 percent). The lack of demand and lower prices can be explained by the thinness and weakness of the animals due to the lack of feed.

Food security

According to the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES), 1 51 percent of households were moderately or severely food insecure recently (up 8 points from the previous round), with severe insecurity affecting 12 percent of households (up 2 points).

According to the Household Dietary Diversity Score (HDDS), 66 percent of households surveyed had low dietary diversity, 28 percent had average dietary diversity and 6 percent had good dietary diversity. Crop producers experienced greater low dietary diversity (73 percent) than livestock producers (57 percent) and non-agricultural households (65 percent). The percentage of households with low dietary diversity was higher in Tillabéry (66 percent) and Maradi (67 percent).

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1 FIES results are subject to change, until the country scale is established for more consistent comparability across rounds.
Coping strategies were reported during this seventh-round survey. Thirty-three percent of the households resorted to crisis strategies, 26 percent to stress strategies and 27 percent to emergency strategies. Of those who used crisis strategies, 64 percent borrowed money and 47 percent sold more non-breeding animals or spent their savings. Of those who used stress strategies, 41 percent reduced health expenditures and of those who used emergency strategies, 17 percent sold the last female animal and 10 percent sold their house or land (Figure 6).

**Figure 6. Indicators of food security (percentage of households surveyed)**


**Needs**

Almost all households surveyed (99 percent) reported the need for assistance within three to six months of the survey, mainly in the form of food (84 percent), cash (76 percent) or agricultural inputs (24 percent). Crop producers expressed a preference for assistance in the form of food (84 percent), cash (73 percent) and crop production inputs (31 percent). Livestock producers expressed a need for assistance in cash (82 percent), food (75 percent) and livestock feed (30 percent).
Recommendations

Short-term recommendations (1–6 months)

> Strengthen anticipatory actions to cope with flooding at the end of the rainy season and to preserve livelihoods.
> Develop the marketing capacities of producer organizations.
> Distribute livestock feed in deficit areas.
> Promote home gardens to support food diversity (distribution of seeds, seedlings and farming tools, and technical support).

Long-term recommendations (6 months and more)

> Promote pest-resistant varieties and encourage biological control of pests and diseases.
> Strengthen the capacity of producers around climate change smart agriculture through field schools.
> Promote off-season crops with more efficient irrigation systems and solar pumping.
> Protect natural pastures, an essential source of animal feed, by creating firebreaks.
> Promote fodder crops.
> Raise awareness of strategic livestock destocking.
> Strengthen the animal disease surveillance systems to provide technical service providers and decision-makers with recent, reliable data on diseases, enabling them to respond rapidly when needed.
> Develop agri-food processing of perishable products (such as tomatoes), to limit the impact of shocks.
> Develop different ways of distributing cash, depending on the season and the context: unconditional cash transfers, cash for work in connection with pasture improvement, bushfire prevention and water and soil conservation, among others.