West Africa

Key Message Update

The gradual improvement of pastoral conditions remains insufficient to significantly impact household food security

August 2018

Key Messages:
Regular rains this rainy season have allowed for planting to be nearly complete in August in the Sahelian countries. Weeding is in progress and crop development is satisfactory with stages ranging from sprouting, for late sowing, to near maturity for cereals. New crops of maize, peanuts and yams have been started in the coastal countries and are already supplying Sahelian countries. Fall armyworm damage reported in Burkina Faso and Mali remains low due to pesticide interventions by agricultural extension services and producers.

The regeneration of pastures and water points is gradually improving livestock conditions, though poorer conditions persisted in pastoral areas of Niger until July due to poor rainfall conditions in June. Livestock demand has remained below average and below-average exports to Nigeria continue to affect terms of trade for livestock / grain, to the detriment of pastoralists. However, livestock prices are expected to improve with the usual high demand for the Tabaski holiday in August.

With the exception of the Lake Chad Basin, and in northern and central Mali, where markets remain disrupted due to insecurity, elsewhere markets are sufficiently supplied, but at below-average levels. These levels will still be sufficient in the Sahel to satisfy household consumption demand until the next harvests in October thanks to food stocks from the coastal countries, new off-season harvests, marketing of stocks and other imports. Food prices remain higher than the previous month in Nigeria, but stable in the Sahel. Overall, prices remain above-average and will remain so throughout the lean season.

Most of the region will remain in Minimal (IPC Phase 1) until January 2019. However, Crisis (IPC Phase 3) level of food insecurity will continue to affect central and eastern Mauritania, parts of the Sahel, north-central and eastern regions of Burkina Faso, Chad in the Wadi Fira, Kanem, Barh El Gazel, Batha and Hadjer-Lamis regions, until September. This is due to a significant decline in agricultural and pastoral production, and a significant deterioration of livelihoods, that negatively affect food consumption for poor households.

Crisis (IPC Phase 3) will also continue to affect the Diffa region in Niger and the Lake Chad region, as a result of the Boko Haram conflict, and in CAR as a result of the armed conflict. Households in northeastern Nigeria affected by the Boko Haram conflict continue to rely on humanitarian aid to access food, and face Crisis! (IPC Phase 3!) levels of food insecurity. Those
who do not have access to assistance are currently in Emergency (IPC Phase 4). In nearby areas that remain inaccessible to humanitarian actors, the food situation could be similar or worse.

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