

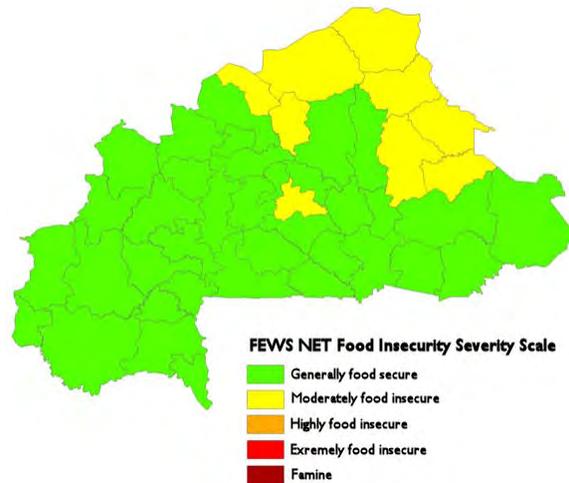
## BURKINA FASO

### Food Security Update

November 2007

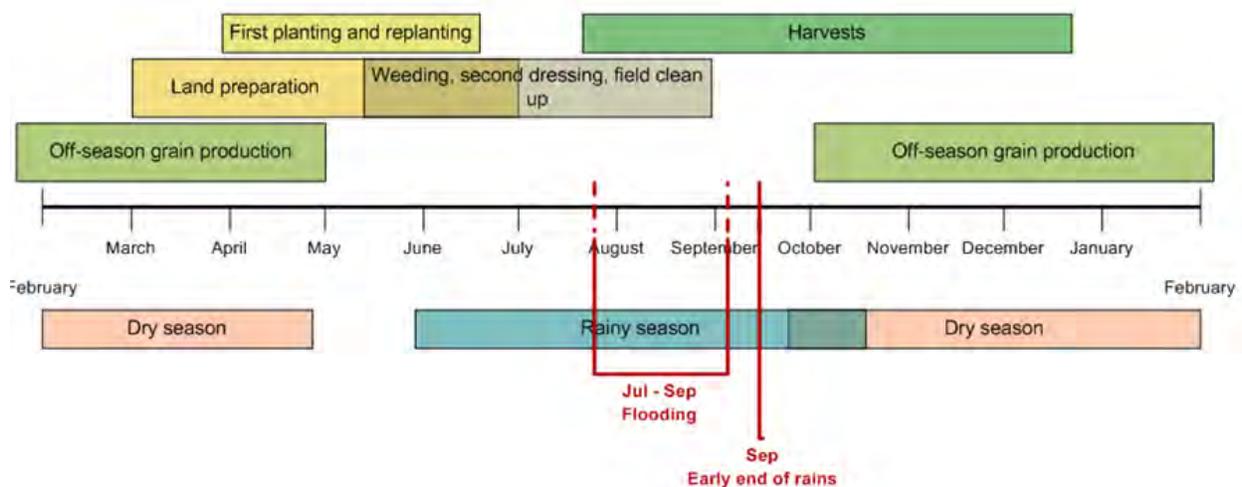
- Despite the abrupt end of the 2007/08 growing season, preliminary harvest estimates released by the Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) puts gross grain production for Burkina Faso at 3,736,656 metric tons, a two percent improvement over final production figures for the 2006/07 season and eight percent above the five-year average.
- Household food security is generally stable, thanks to ongoing harvests, with major crop-producing areas spared from localized production problems such as drought and flooding (Figure 1).
- However, prices in the 15 provinces (of a total of 45) with projected grain shortfalls increased between September and October. These price increases are mitigated by a special deployment of the National Intervention Stock (SNI).

**Figure 1.** Current food security conditions for Burkina Faso, fourth quarter 2007 (October through December)



- Earlier-than-usual livestock migrations in some pastoral livelihood zones due to deteriorating vegetation conditions have been reported.
- While the food security of flood-affected households is currently generally stable, it is anticipated that certain villages, such as Bama in Houet, Tiébélé and Po in Nahouri, and Niofila in Léraba will experience grain access problems and unmet nonfood needs in the months ahead.

### Seasonal calendar and timeline of major events



### Current food security conditions

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Food security is generally satisfactory in livelihood zones primarily dependent on livestock production with some millet cultivation (the Sahel region and parts of the North) and those that produce grain and vegetables (the North-Central region). Moreover, this year, these generally food-short areas report good grain harvests, thanks to improved utilization of shorter-cycle seed, which allowed for better crop growth in these areas where most rainfall is concentrated between late June and the first dekad of September.

Household food security in the Central and Central Plateau regions – livelihood zones dependent mainly on grain and groundnut production, with some vegetable farming activities – is also stable. Food security is more than adequate in all other major grain-producing livelihood zones, which are reporting normal harvests. These areas continue to provision those parts of the country facing production deficits for this crop year.

Levels of food insecurity are moderate in regions heavily affected by flooding, with concerns over production deficits in areas such as Nahouri and Kouritenga provinces.

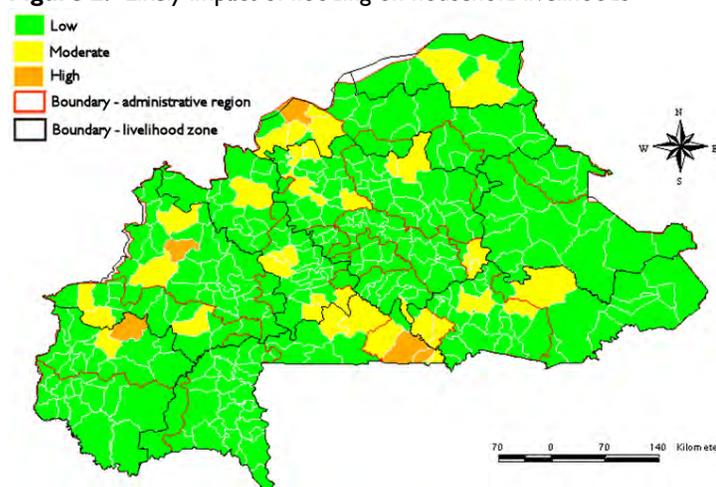
In addition, price increases in departments reporting production shortfalls early in the harvest season raised concerns about future food access in these areas, though the deployment of the SNI under a social marketing program has helped contain and, in some cases, halt the upturn in prices, at least for the time being. However, given the low SNI levels in these areas; traditional cross-border grain trade with neighboring countries; and reported production shortfalls in certain coastal states, household food security in these departments could be slightly problematic in the coming months with the upward trend in grain prices likely to resume if follow-up measures (the lowering of fuel prices for carriers, the relaxation of national stock-building measures, etc.) are not taken immediately and kept in place through next year's lean period (July through September).

### Impact of flooding on household livelihoods

Virtually all regions of the country were affected by some climatic shock (ice storm, flooding, high winds, etc.) between June and October. Households affected by these shocks were impacted to varying degrees, depending on the extent of losses of livelihoods, whether the department was classified as a high-risk area in 2006, the extent of losses of area planted, and the decline in the percentage of needs met by production in the province in question (Figure 2). In fact, households in these areas are reeling from the effects of the loss of their homes, their cropland and their means of support (livestock, grain stores, poultry, etc.)

Some of the households most affected by these shocks are being forced to sell part of their harvests in order to earn income to rebuild their homes and purchase essential goods. In addition, some shock-affected populations received community assistance, and their host families, finding themselves with extra mouths to feed, were forced to dig into their meager food reserves and, in some cases, use crops from ongoing harvests to feed their extended families.

**Figure 2.** Likely impact of flooding on household livelihoods



Source: FEWS NET

### Projected grain harvests and grain balance sheet for the 2007/2008 growing season

Gross grain production for 2007/08 is projected at 3,736,656 metric tons, based on interviews with farmers in the first dekad of September of this year. This figure is a two percent improvement over the final production figure for the last

growing season and eight percent above the five-year average. These figures were corroborated by the joint CILSS/FAO/FEWS NET mission in October.

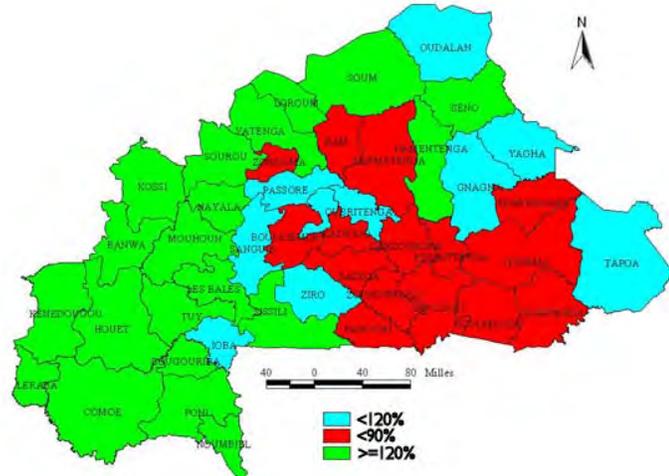
Despite this, harvests for some crops, such as corn – important in provinces such as Mouhoun, Banwa, Kénédougou, Tuy, and Sourou – are running anywhere from eight to 40 percent behind last year due to the late start of the rainy season and the erratic pattern of rainfall which delayed planting of crops and stunting their growth.

Given the untimely end of the growing season in much of the region this year, field missions organized by the Early Warning System and the Multidisciplinary Working Group helped to establish which areas faced production deficits. Approximately 15 provinces (of a total of 45) are showing large production shortfalls and low coverage rates for local food needs (with less than 90 percent of local food needs being met by production) (Figure 3). This poor crop performance is a result of delays in planting crops, flooding and, most importantly, drought conditions beginning in mid-September. A qualitative assessment, by department, shows most departments with mediocre production levels concentrated in the Central Plateau, Northern and Sahelian regions (Figure 4). These same missions identified the areas most vulnerable to food security problems and/or conditions warranting close monitoring (Figure 5). All departments in the Southwestern region are considered high-risk, since the region lies in a livelihood zone dependent on tuber and corn production, where crops have apparently not performed very well with the delays in planting and the sudden drought.

Harvest forecasts for cash crops grown in virtually all parts of the country put groundnut production at 298,107 MT, sesame production at 29,990 MT and soybean production at 7,684 MT.

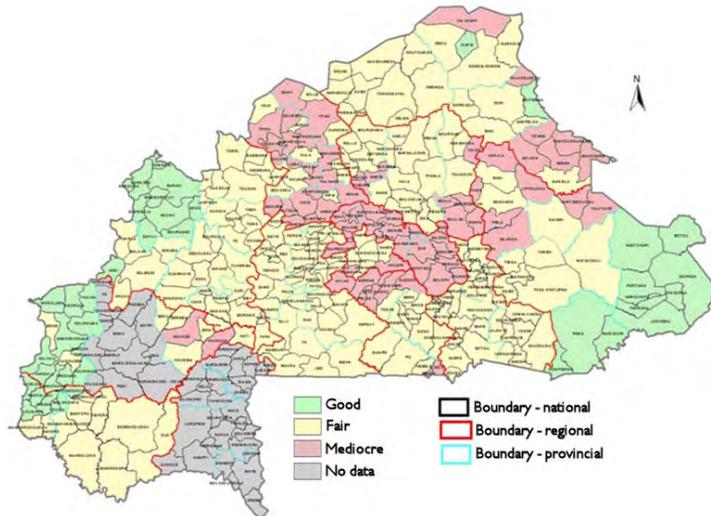
Although Burkina Faso is generally Africa’s second largest producer of cotton, this year’s cotton harvest in Burkina Faso is estimated at a mere 380,000 MT, 32 percent below last year’s figure, according to the Burkinabè Textile Fiber Company (SOFITEX). This drop in production is due to the high cost of farm inputs and the decline in the farm-gate price of cotton from 165 CFAF/kg to 140 CFAF/kg for first grade and from 145 CFAF/kg to 120 CFAF/kg

**Figure 3.** Provincial production compared with local food needs



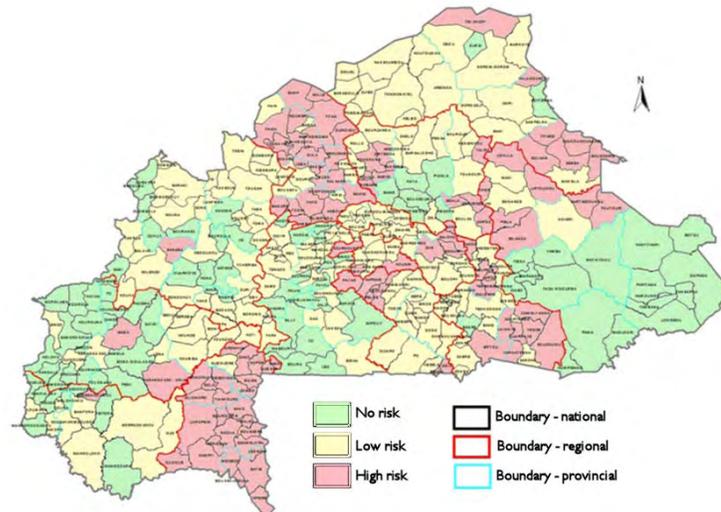
Source: Early Warning System/DGPSA -October 2007

**Figure 4.** 2007/08 growing season harvest assessments



Source: MWG mission data, November 2007; Map constructed by the DGRE

**Figure 5.** Areas at risk of food insecurity



Source: MWG mission data, November 2007; Map constructed by the DGRE

for second grade, lowering the income of cotton-producing households. Moreover, this year, coincidentally, many of these households chose to grow corn instead of cotton, whose output is up 19 percent nationwide but, as in the case of cotton, is also lagging in major corn-producing areas.

As for other food crops, the forecast for cowpea production is normal to above-normal, at approximately 415,580 MT, earth pea production is estimated at 44,875 MT, yam production at 34,462 MT and sweet potato production at 73,920 MT. Together, these harvests are improving the household food security outlook.

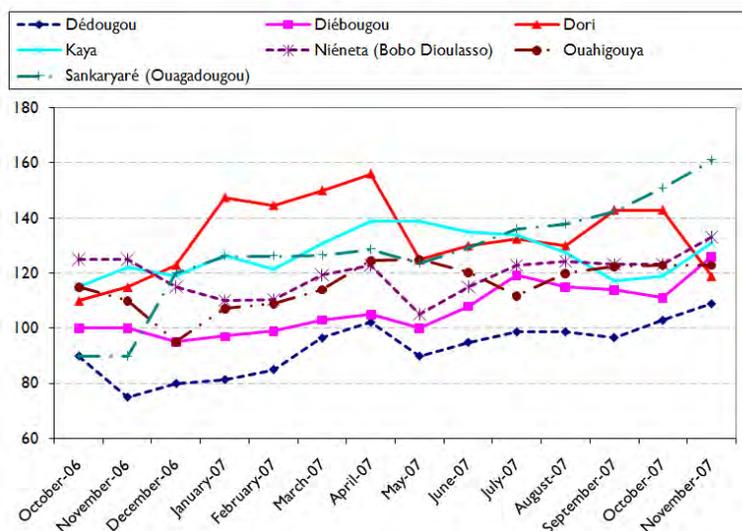
### Markets, trade and access to crops

Despite good grain availability during the ongoing harvests, when farmers traditionally earmark part of their crops for sale on local markets, prices are rising in many parts of the country. This price increase is largely a result of reactions to reports of a probable nationwide grain production shortfall due to the late start and early end of rains in the country. These reports may have prompted traders to hold onto their inventories, fueling the rise in market prices since the end of September.

The pre-positioning of crops from the SNI in the 15 provinces with deficit local production meets a two-fold objective: 1) it facilitates household grain access through social marketing programs; and 2) it helps stabilize or decrease rising prices. With millet production also lagging behind last year, prices are rising on all reference markets with the exception of Dori and Ouahigouya, where this year's harvests are reportedly good (Figure 6). Expected good harvests in traditional deficit production areas in the Northern and Sahelian regions should also help facilitate household access to crops on local markets. As of the third week of November, the price of millet stood at 133 CFAF/kg on the Niéneta market in Bobo Dioulasso, 131 CFAF/kg in Kaya and 126 CFAF/kg in Diébougou in the Southwest. These prices have increased 8 percent, 10 percent and 14 percent, respectively, since October 2007. Prices on the Ouahigouya market are steady, with the Dori market reporting a 17 percent drop in prices.

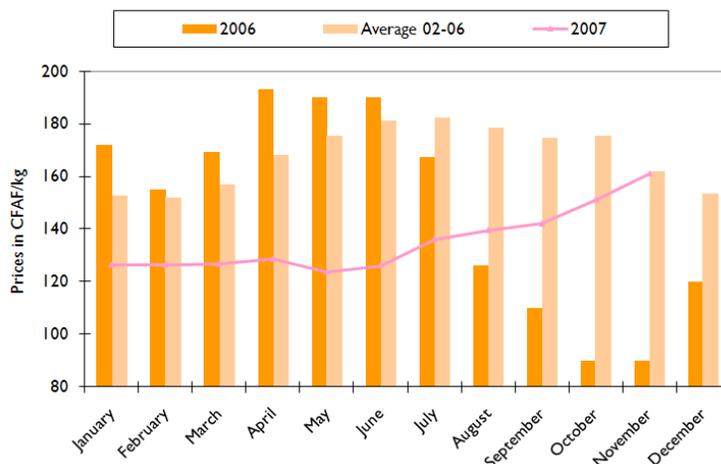
Steady price increases since last July on the Sankaryaré market – a retail and relay market in the nation's capital – shows no sign of abating. The price of millet reached 161 CFAF/kg in November, which is on par with the five-year average and a 44 percent increase from the same time last year. Prices increased 18 percent between July and November 2007, with increases speeding up considerably over the last two months. This is likely part of a pricing strategy by grain traders on this urban market and at collection markets in deficit production areas, as well as in neighboring countries, in the face of this year's anticipated decreases in

**Figure 6.** Millet prices on selected markets in Burkina Faso, October 2006 to November 2007



Source of data: SIM/SONAGESS, RESIMAO, DRAHRH; Graphic by FEWS NET- November figures are averages as of week 3.

**Figure 7.** Trends in millet prices on the Sankaryaré market in 2007, compared with 2006 and the five-year average.



Source of data: SIM/SONAGESS, RESIMAO, DRAHRH; Graphic by FEWS NET

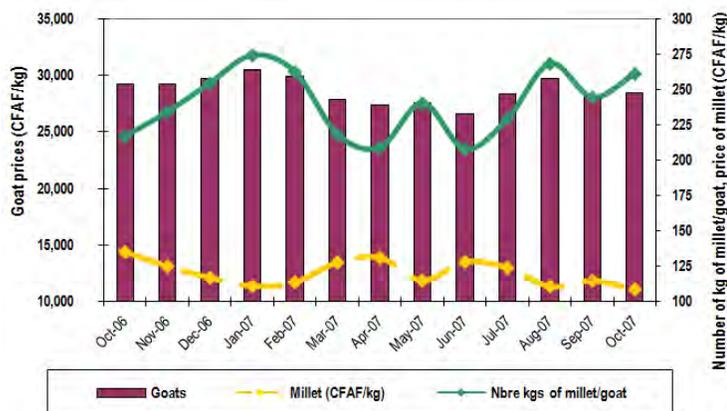
gross production when compared to last year's final production figure. Demand from grain traders outside the country is also contributing to price increases on this market, making it especially important to regularly monitor this year's cross-border grain trade between Burkina and its traditional trading partners.

## Livestock conditions

The food security outlook for livestock in areas dependent on herding activities is mediocre, due to limited pasture production from floods and droughts. In addition, crop residues from this year's harvests that are available have little nutritional value, due to the untimely end of the rainy season. As a result of this and expected agro-industrial byproduct shortages (e.g., cottonseed cakes) at the height of the lean period for livestock (from February to April), seasonal migration by herders is expected to begin earlier than usual this year.

Terms of trade between livestock and grain on the Djibo market, in a transhumant pastoralism and pearl millet producing zone, favors male goats over millet (Figure 8). This trend is a result of increased demand for small ruminants in the period just before Christmas and the celebration of Tabaski (the Muslim Feast of the Sheep) and decreasing millet prices as harvests arrive on markets. At present, the selling price of a goat is equivalent to the cost of more than two and a half 100 kg sacks of millet.

**Figure 8.** Terms of trade for male goats/millet on the Djibo market, October 2006 to October 2007



Source of data: DGPSE, DRRRA-Sahel, SIM/SONAGESS, DRAHRH; Graphic by FEWS

## Conclusions and outlook

Preliminary harvest estimates for the 2007/08 growing season indicate a stable food security outlook nationwide. However, despite the presence of grain crops on local markets right now, in the midst of the harvest season, prices are increasing, likely due to price speculation by certain grain traders. To address these rising prices, the Government of Burkina Faso (GoBF) deployed available SNIs, and should consider borrowing against the National Food Security Reserve (SNS) given the low stock levels of the SNIs. The SNS has a physical capacity of 35,000 MT and a funding capacity of 10,000 MT. Administered by the GoBF, mobilization of the SNS requires a production deficit equal to five percent of national output. In the face of its inability to mobilize the SNS to deal with minor crises, the GoBF established the 10,000 metric ton physical inventory known as the SNI, which can be deployed by order of the government. Deployment of the SNS requires the consent of GoBF partners, and only in the wake of a national disaster declaration. Moreover, with farmers having been encouraged to make an effort to grow off-season crops as a way of covering production shortfalls, the establishment of a mechanism to help move these crops to market areas is in order, particularly for farmers choosing to grow vegetable crops, which have a short shelf-life after harvest. To contain a possible surge in prices, the main stakeholders in the country's grain industry, namely, the Farmers' Confederation of Burkina Faso, the Interprofessional Grain Committee of Burkina Faso, the Interprofessional Rice Committee of Burkina Faso and their partners, should get more involved in awareness-raising activities for grain traders and grain shippers about the harmful effects of grain speculation by their members in general and by grain traders in particular.

CONASUR (the National Committee for Emergency and Rehabilitation Assistance) and its partners should make a study of the socioeconomic impact of the recent floods and evaluate activities designed to improve day-to-day household living conditions in the months ahead. This study could serve as a source of relevant information, drawing lessons on the effects of flooding problems and implemented responses. All NGOs engaged in humanitarian operations need to continue efforts to reach a consensus on the types of activities needed to mitigate the effects of this year's flooding and rising prices.