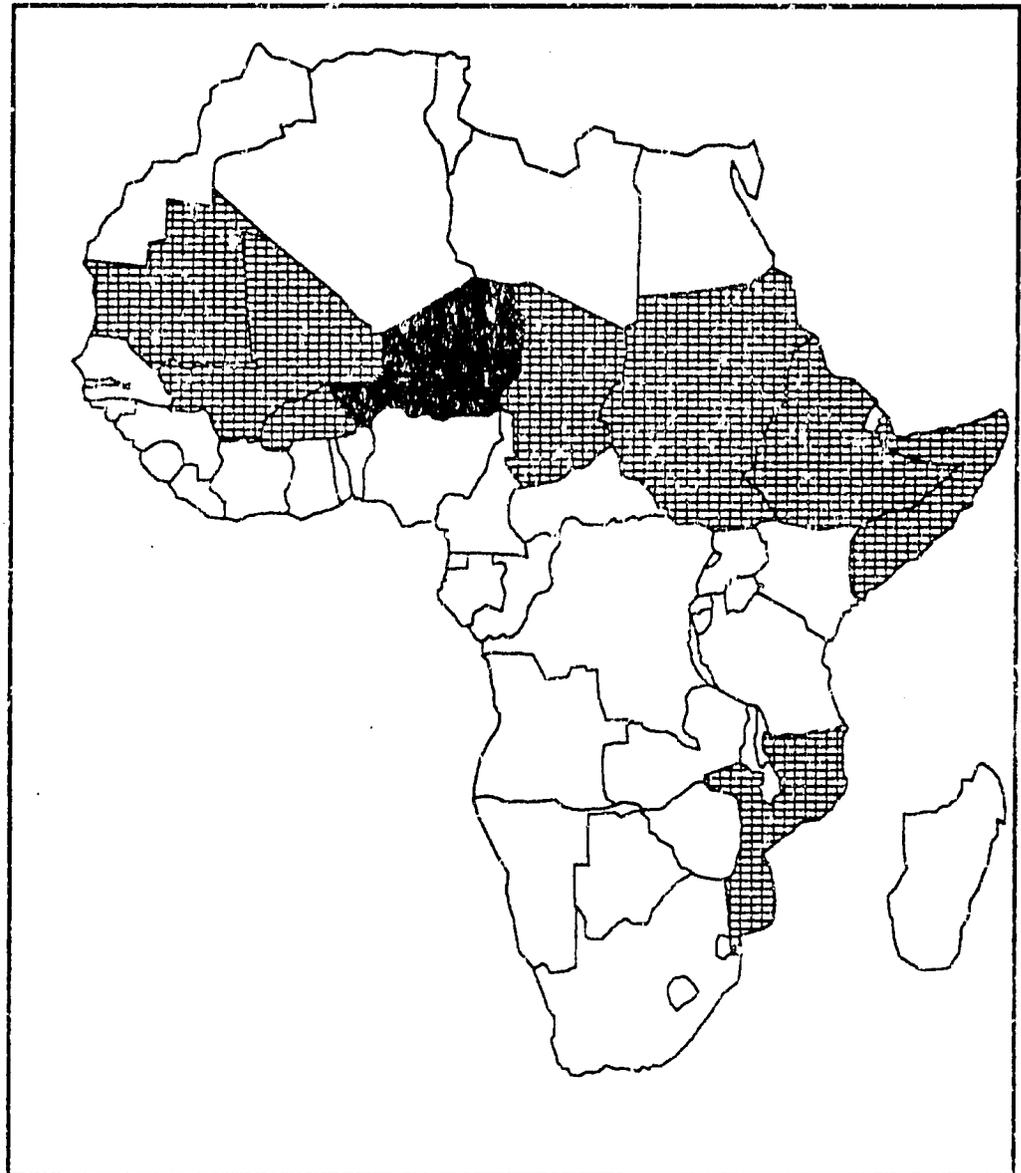


Report Number 4
September 1986

FEWS Country Report

NIGER



Africa Bureau
U.S. Agency
for International
Development

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MAP 1 SUMMARY

August, 1986

Ⓞ = Grasshoppers Reported

Grasshoppers
Breeding in
Mali ?

Ⓞ

Ⓞ

in Burkina
Faso ?

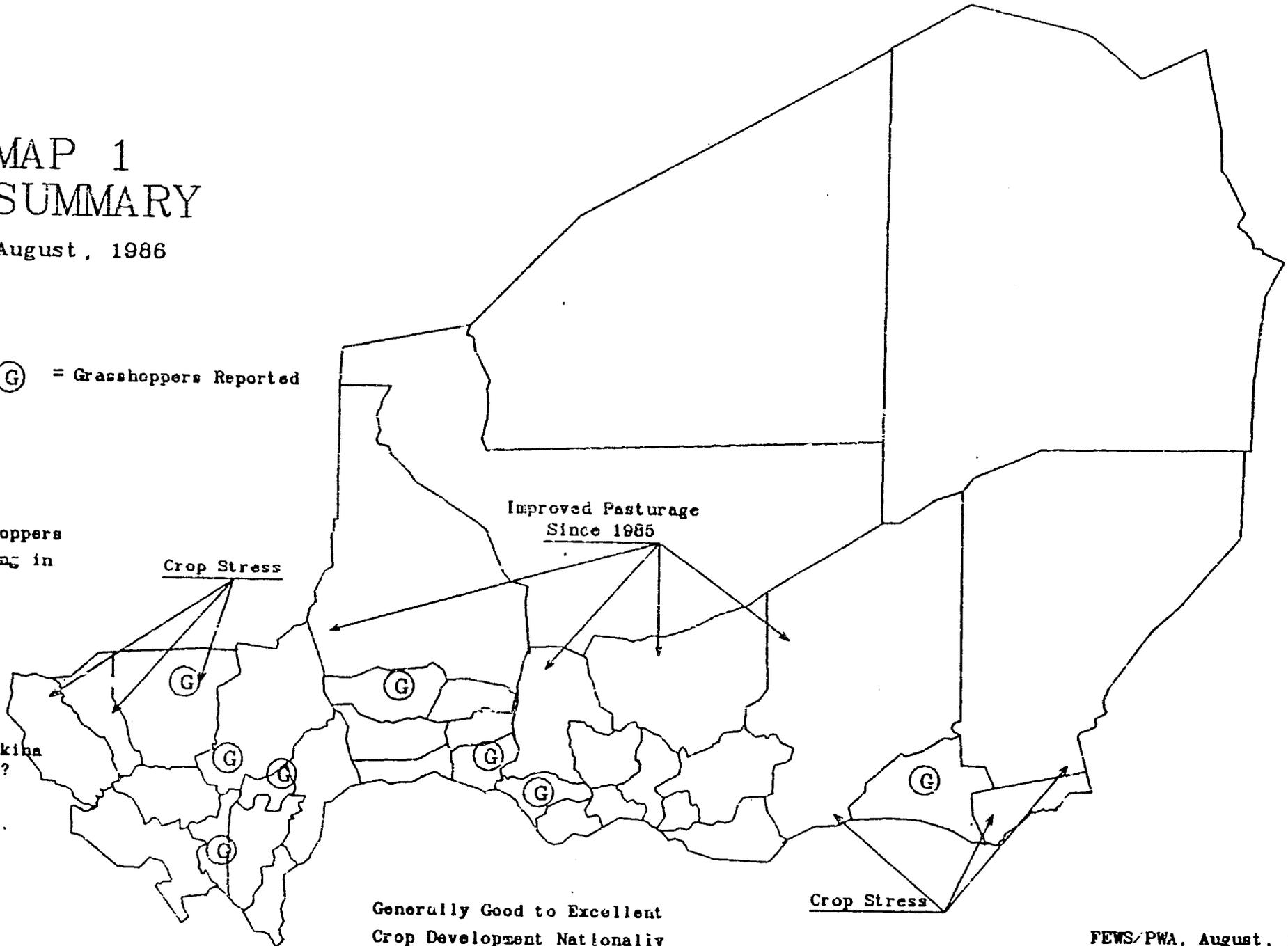
Crop Stress

Improved Pasturage
Since 1985

Crop Stress

Generally Good to Excellent
Crop Development Nationally

FEWS/PWA, August, 1986



NIGER

Another Good Year ?

Prepared for the
Africa Bureau of the
U.S. Agency for
International Development

Prepared by
Price, Williams & Associates, Inc.
September 1986

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INTRODUCTION

This is the fourth of a series of monthly reports issued by the Famine Early Warning System (FEWS) on Niger. It is designed to provide decisionmakers with current information and analysis on existing and potential nutrition emergency situations. Each situation identified is described in terms of geographical extent and the number of people involved, or at-risk, and the proximate causes insofar as they have been discerned.

Use of the term "at-risk" to identify vulnerable populations is problematical since no generally agreed upon definition exists. Yet it is necessary to identify or "target" populations in-need or "at-risk" in order to determine appropriate forms and levels of intervention. Thus for the present, until a better usage can be found, FEWS reports will employ the term "at-risk" to mean...

...those persons lacking sufficient food, or resources to acquire sufficient food, to avert a nutritional crisis, i.e., a progressive deterioration in their health or nutritional condition below the status quo and who, as a result, require specific intervention to avoid a life-threatening situation.

Perhaps of most importance to decisionmakers, the process underlying the deteriorating situation is highlighted by the FEWS effort, hopefully with enough specificity and forewarning to permit alternative intervention strategies to be examined and implemented. Food assistance strategies are key to famine avoidance. However, other types of intervention can be of major importance both in the short-term and in the long-run, including medical, transport, storage, economic development policy change, etc.

Where possible, food needs estimates are included in the FEWS reports. It is important to understand, however, that no direct relation exists between numbers of persons at-risk and the quantity of food assistance needed. This is because famines are the culmination of slow-onset disaster processes which can be complex in the extreme.

The food needs of individual populations at-risk depend upon when in the disaster process identification is made and the extent of its cumulative impact on the individuals concerned. Further, the amount of food assistance required, whether from internal or external sources, depends upon a host of considerations. Thus the food needs estimates presented periodically in FEWS reports should not be interpreted to mean food aid needs, e.g., as under PL480 or other donor programs.

FEWS is operated by AID's Office of Technical Resources in the Bureau for Africa in cooperation with numerous USG and other organizations.

SUMMARY

This rainy season has progressed fairly well, and left Niger on the verge of a normal to above-normal harvest in most areas. The only arrondissements in which there may be significant crop reductions are in the east (see Maps 1 & 2). Crop stress is also currently found in scattered northern areas of the western arrondissements. Pastures, on the other hand, are showing much more vegetative cover than last year. No major infestations of grasshoppers have yet been reported. There is still a chance that Niger will follow the same pattern as Burkina Faso and develop severe infestations late in the season. Total hectarage treated for grasshoppers rests at approximately 47,000. Price surveys indicate a stabilization of grain prices at a normal level. Meat prices are mixed but generally in normal ranges, showing indications of a return to normal, non-crisis slaughter rates.

Issues

- o The grasshopper problem of other parts of the Sahel has not yet been as serious in Niger.
- o An excellent harvest, given no dramatic changes in rainfall in September, is possible.

Key Events

- o Normal rainfall totals will be required in most parts of the country during September for crop levels to approach the excellent results of 1985.
- o If reports of grasshopper breeding in the areas north and west of Tillabery and Tera are confirmed, there may be an external threat of grasshoppers as well as the potential for internal, late season explosive growth.

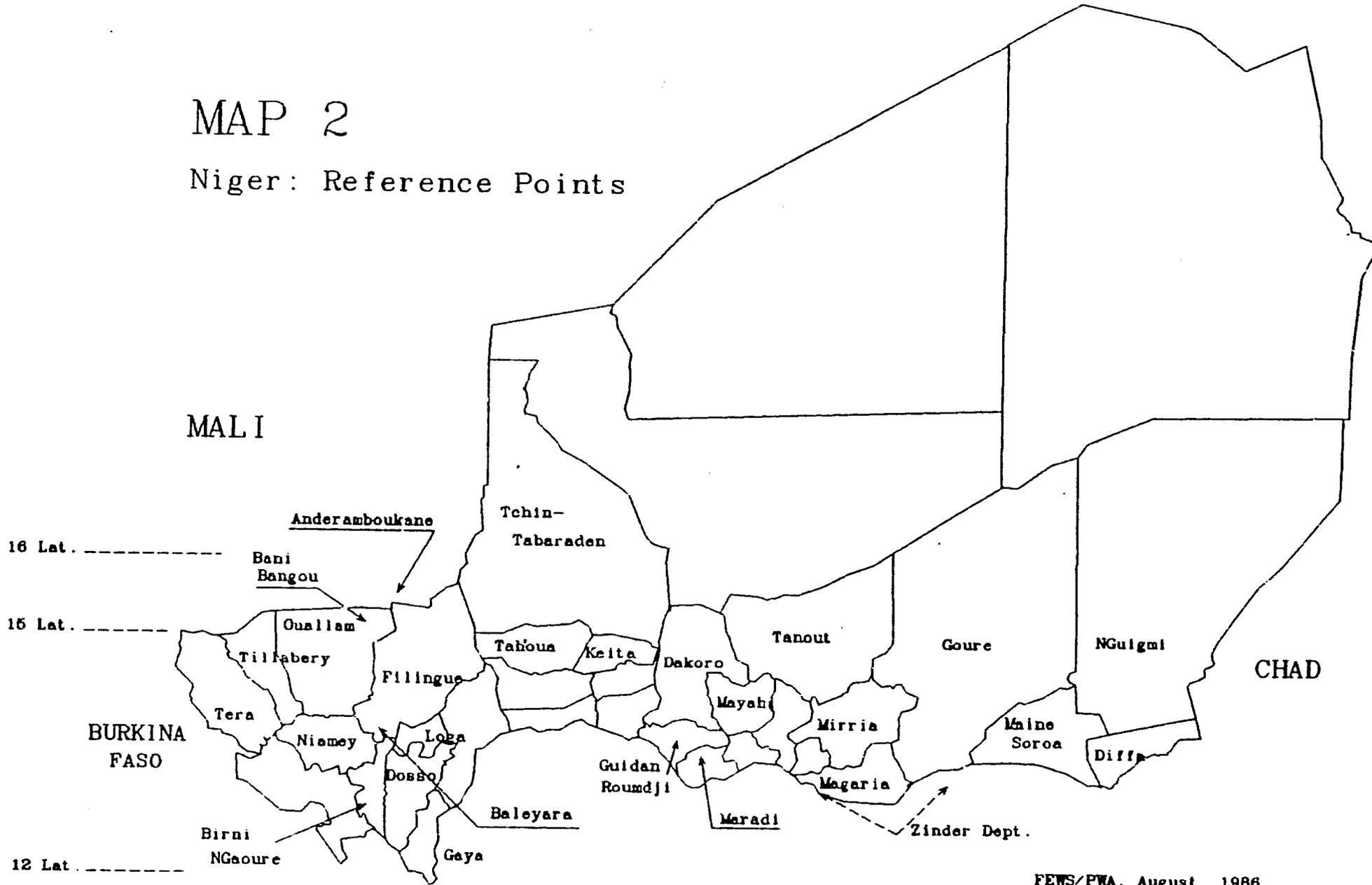
RAINFALL

Rainfall in August was, with a few exceptions, adequate to sustain crop growth throughout the period. The moderate and relatively well-spaced rains Niger has received over this rainy season leave most areas of the country with prospects for average to above average harvests. They also mean that rain in September is still critical, as there is not much of a reserve of moisture in the soil.

A few scattered areas are experiencing crop stress due to low rainfall in August. Tillabery received only 40% (72mm) of normal monthly rainfall, and Niamey only 56% (114 mm). Going through the center of the country, most stations received at least 70% of normal monthly totals. These amounts are generally much higher than those recorded in 1984, and slightly less than in 1985. They were, in any case good enough to continue growth into

MAP 2

Niger: Reference Points



2

September, but good rains need to continue in September to permit final stages of growth.

A band of poor rainfall and considerable vegetative stress is found between Maine-Soroa and Nguigmi. This continues the relatively poor agricultural conditions that were found in this same area last year. Significant reductions in crop yields are likely.

Notable positive changes, compared to last year, are found in pastoral areas of the center and parts of the north of the country. They occur in particularly favored grazing areas, and will be important to the nomadic and sedentary residents.

VEGETATION/CROPS

Niger shows a generally positive picture compared to its neighbors to the west, Mali and Mauritania. Looking at the country-wide 1985 to 1986 Positive Vegetation Difference Image (see Image # 1), it can be seen that significant positive changes have occurred in much of the pastoral zone, particularly those areas running from Tchén-Tabaraden through Dakoro and Tanout to northern Gouré. The only negative changes (not shown here), are scattered in the western arrondissements of Tera, Niamey (Kollo), and Dosso, and more significant ones to the east in Gouré, Maine-Soroa, and particularly in N'Guigmi.

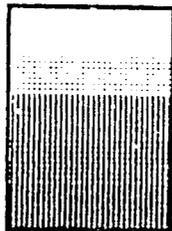
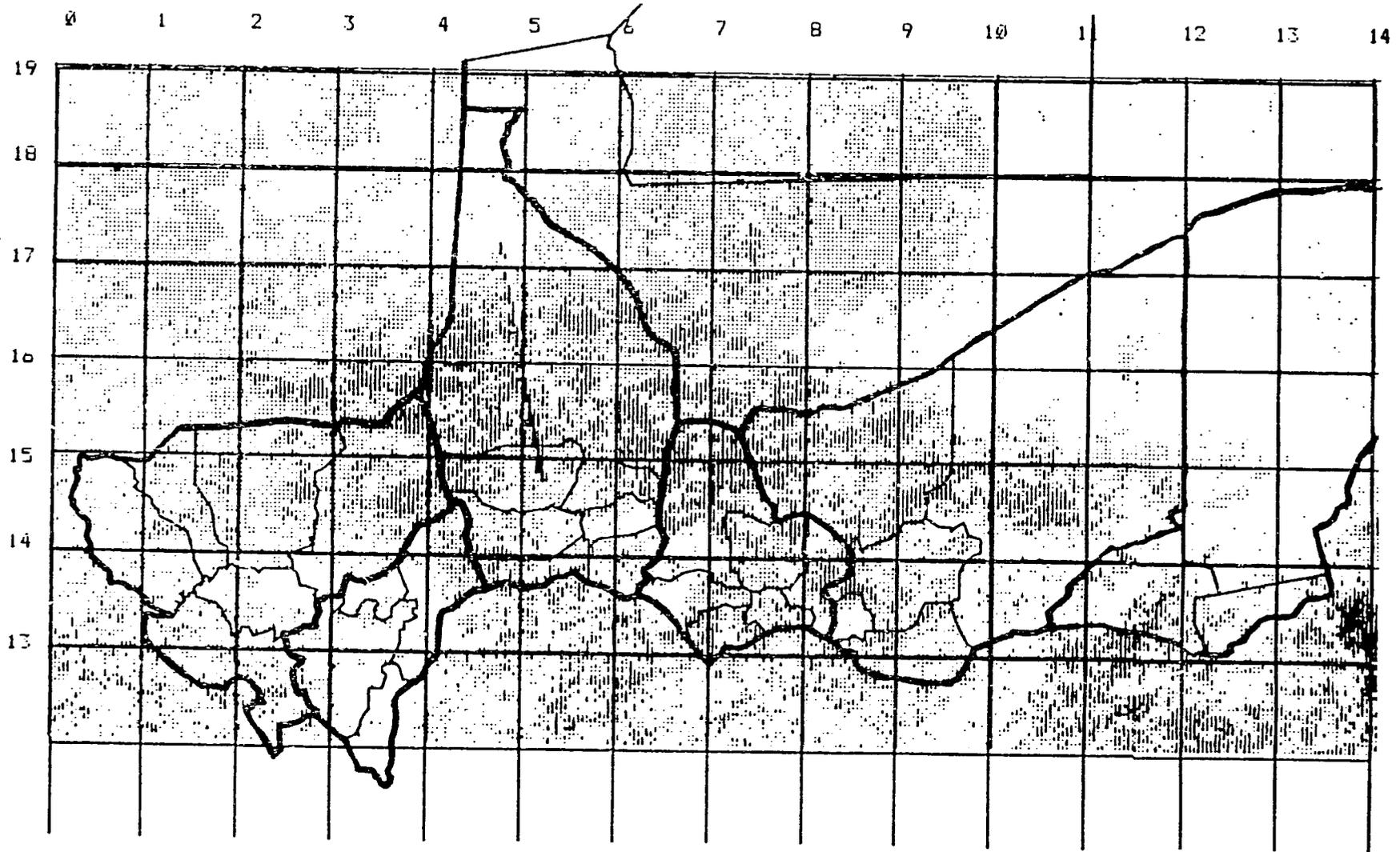
Western Niger - This rainy season (roughly June through October) in the western areas of Niger began with a better vegetative cover than in 1985 (see Image series # 2). However, by the end of the decade running from August 11-20 (see Image series # 3), the images of the major crop growing areas in the south (Birni N'Gaoure, Dosso, Gaya) show a picture largely similar to 1985, which was a relatively good year. The only noticeable changes in this area from 1985 have been positive ones in north-eastern Filingué, in the adjoining areas in Tchén-Tabaraden, and across the Malian border around Anderamboukane, where pastures are noticeably greener than in 1985 (look at the upper right quadrant of the image between 3 and 4 degrees longitude, and 15 and 16 degrees latitude).

South-Central Niger - In this area which includes the important grain-growing areas around Maradi, there has been slightly more positive vegetative growth than in 1985 (see Image series # 4), particularly between western Tahoua Arrondissement, Keita, Dakoro, and northern Tanout. Strikingly visible in this area was a drop in vegetative cover in the Mirria and Magaria arrondissements (see Image series # 5, bottom right quadrant) from the end of May, 1986 to the end of July, 1986. Rainfall

Image 1

NIGER: Positive Vegetation Differences, August 11-20, 1985-86

(Source NOAA NVI)



28681	60.4702%	Clouds, No Change, or Negative Change
12696	26.7679%	1 Category Improvement
4258	8.9774%	2
1296	2.7324%	3
349	0.7358%	4

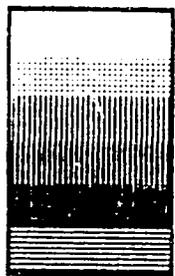
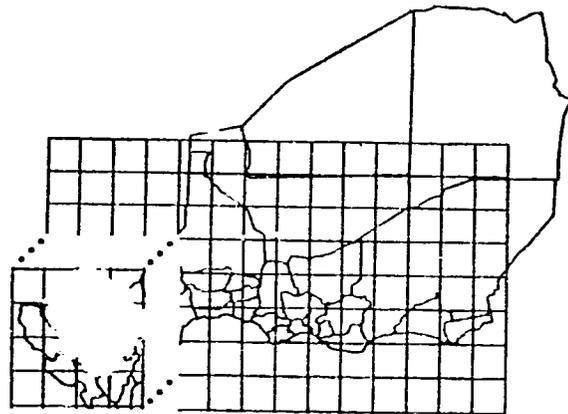


85	0.1792%	5
28	0.0590%	6
15	0.0316%	7
22	0.0464%	8

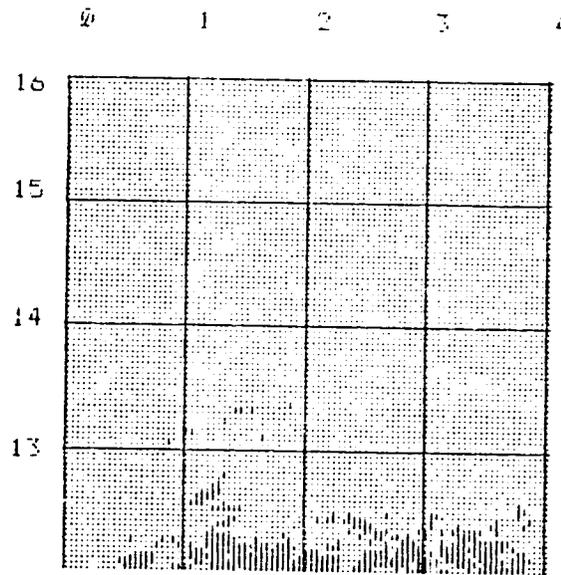
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Image Series 2 & 3 Western Niger Vegetation Images

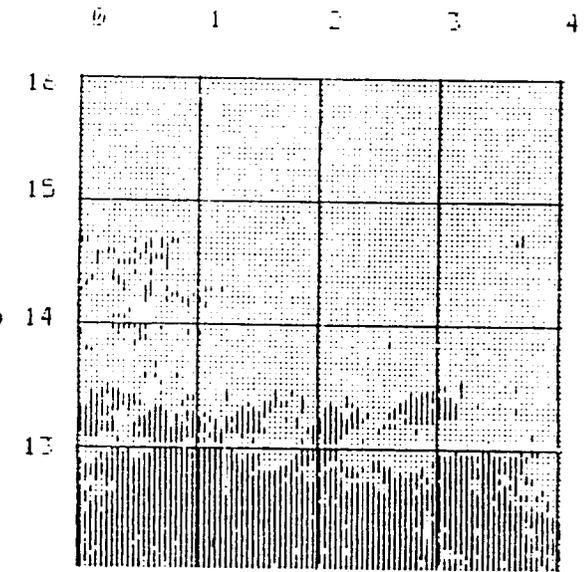
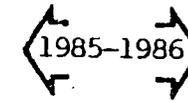
(Source NOAA NVI)



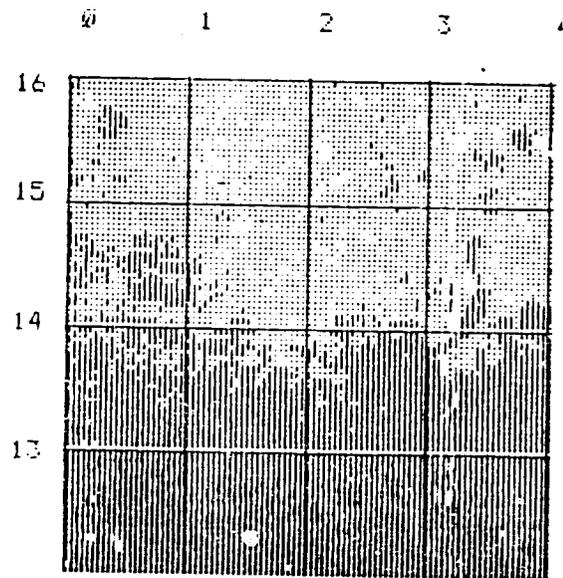
Clouds
Bare Soil
Sparse Vegetation
Vegetation
Heavy Vegetation
Water, Mud



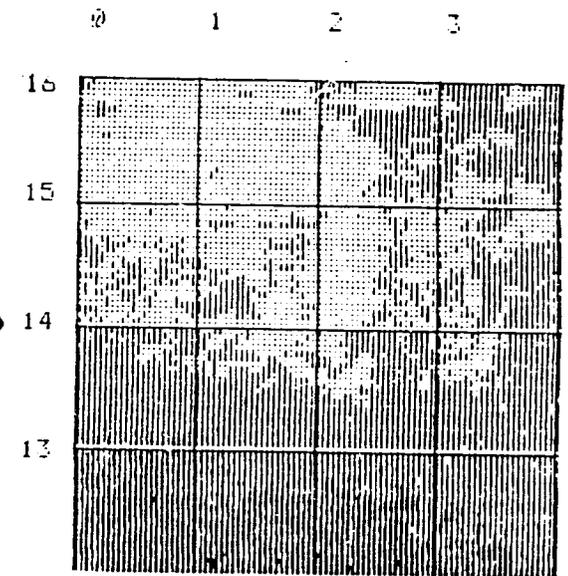
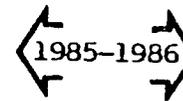
June 21-30, 1985



June 21-30, 1986



August 11-20, 1985



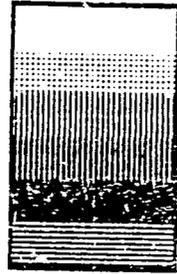
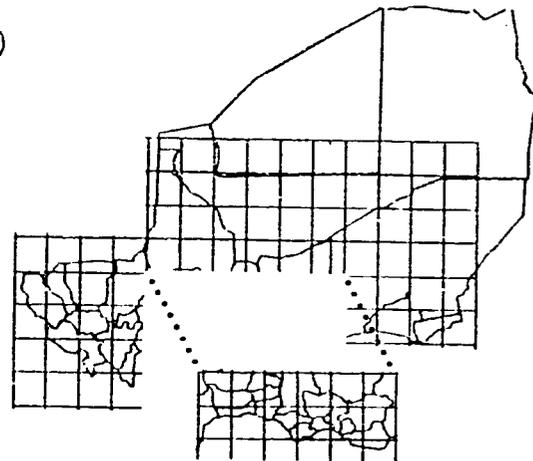
August 11-20, 1986

Image Series 4 & 5

South - Central Niger

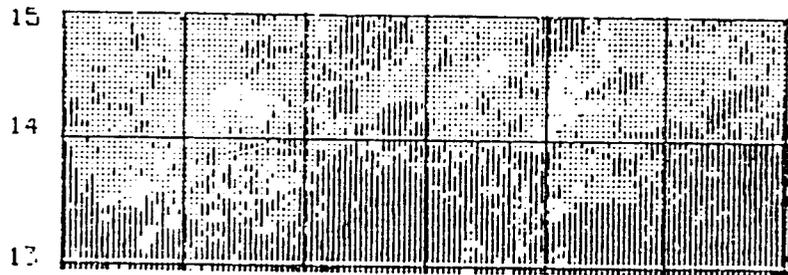
Vegetation Images

(Source NOAA NVI)



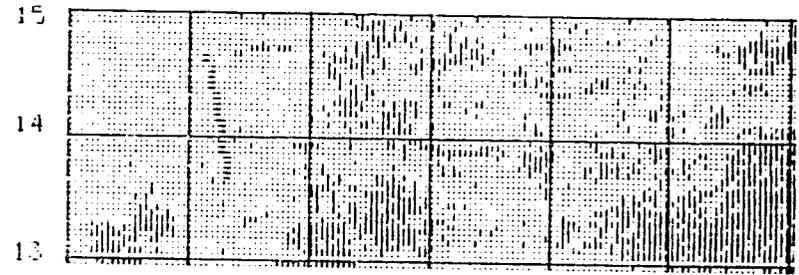
Clouds
 Bare Soil
 Sparse Vegetation
 Vegetation
 Heavy Vegetation
 Water, Mud

4 5 6 7 8 9 10

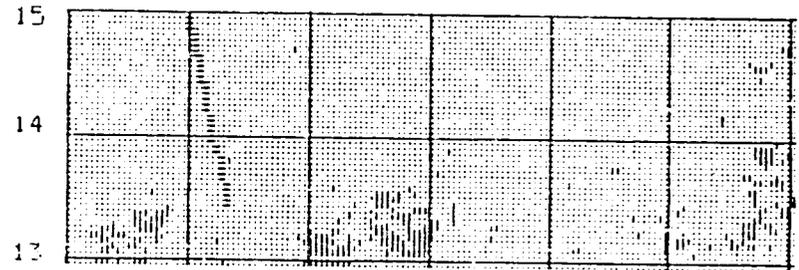


August 21-31, 1985

4 5 6 7 8 9 10



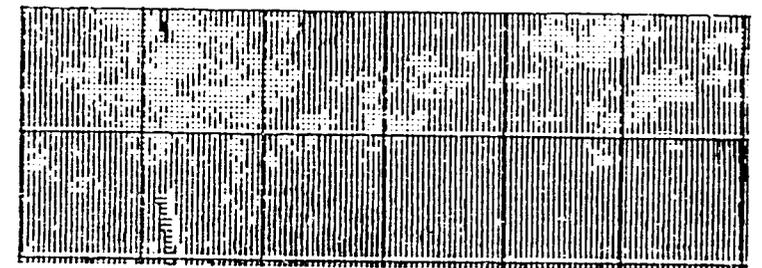
May 21-31, 1986



June 21-30, 1986



July 21-31, 1986



August 21-31, 1986

between May and the end of June amounted to only 28 mm, which made it drier than an average 19 out of 20 years in this area.

By late August, thanks to much higher rainfall than usual, this area had rebounded back to 1985 levels. Crop maturation may, however, be slightly later than in 1985 due to these conditions. The rains in September thus become more critical. The Maradi area is showing a healthy picture similar to last year's positive vegetative cover.

Eastern Niger - The early rainy season cover was better than in 1985. However, Gouré, Maine-Soroa, and N'Guigmi showed a recession of cover similar to that found in Mirria and Magaria in the same period, falling back to a stressed level worse than 1985.

GRASSHOPPERS

National - Compared to the problems of its Sahelian neighbors, Niger has been fortunate to suffer only small and widely spaced grasshopper damage. To a large extent, this is due to Niger's own efforts, as it has consistently proved itself able to effectively mobilize the resources at its disposal, and quickly treat problem areas. While there are some experts that believe that Niger is still at risk of a late season explosion of grasshopper breeding, much like what is occurring in Burkina, no reports have yet shown this to be the case.

Only small and very localized infestations of grasshoppers (*Oedaleus senegalensis*) continue to crop up in various arrondissements (see Map 3). In the Niamey and Dosso departments, a maximum grasshopper density of up to 150/m² was reported, with most areas reporting much lower figures. Aerial treatment of the Baleyara area (2,500 HA), and Bani Bangou (3,200 HA) occurred in early August. In the Dosso department, 10,400 hectares were aerially sprayed in the Loga and Birni N'Gaoure arrondissements. It appears that minimal damage has been done to crop production in these areas.

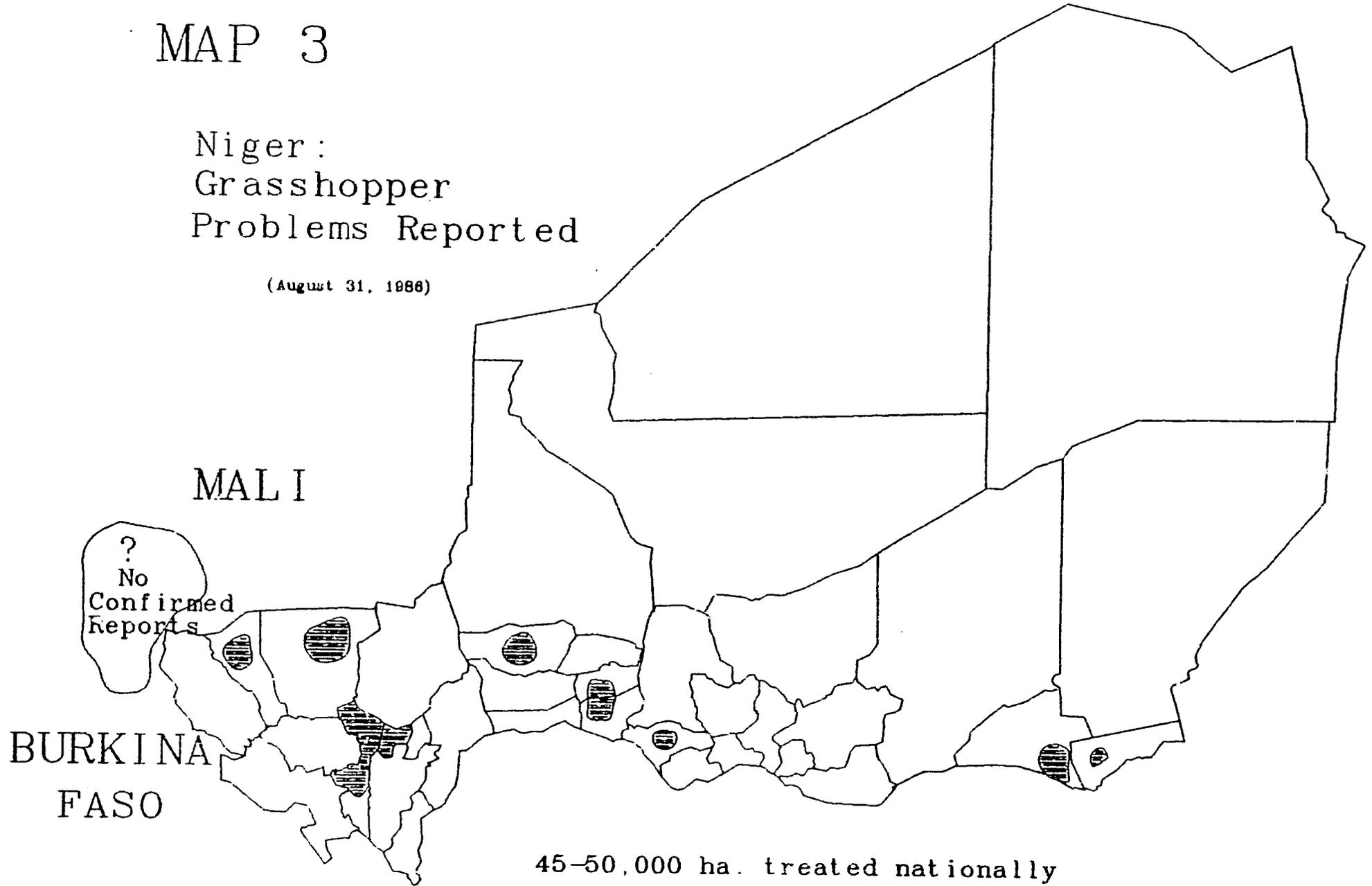
In the Diffa department around Maine-Soroa, 1,255 hectares were ground treated. Other very small infestations of less than 100 hectares each were treated in the Zinder and Diffa departments. The Crop Protection Service reports high mortality rates in the areas treated (primarily using fenitrothion).

For the season to date, a total of 47,591 hectares have been treated (39,200 by air and 3,391 on the ground). Geographically, the departments in which most of the

MAP 3

Niger: Grasshopper Problems Reported

(August 31, 1986)



treatment has occurred are Dosso (32,002 hectares), and Niamey (13,000 hectares).

Current reports on pesticide stocks give an encouraging picture. There is sufficient fenitrothion for coverage of 240,000 to 480,000 hectares by aerial spraying. For comparison, current plans in Senegal, where the grasshopper infestations are reported the most serious, are to spray approximately 300,000 hectares.

Other resources are more scarce. Niger's Crop Protection Service is close to exhausting its operating fund account, used particularly for surveillance (vehicle fuel), and had not yet received the pledge of 140,000,000 FCFA (\$400,000) from CILSS (Inter-State Committee for the Fight Against the Drought in the Sahel).

While most of the attention internationally has been focused on grasshoppers and locusts, there has also occurred in Niger and elsewhere in the Sahel, very large rodent problems. These were particularly noted in the Maradi Department, in the Dakoro, Mayahi, and Guidan Roudji arrondissements, and in the east in the N'Guigmi and Diffa arrondissements. Indications about whether crop damage from these pests was greater this year than usual is not yet available.

Regional - Niger sits as an island of relative tranquility among its neighbors so busily preparing for, and already engaged in fighting grasshopper and locust infestations much larger than those found here (see Map 4). Mali reports far over 200,000 hectares infested across its central belt, and many more at-risk of damage later in the season. Senegal reports more damage than Mali. Burkina Faso has recently had to reverse directions, seeing their heretofore small infestations growing from 15,000 ha. to between 200,000 and 400,000 ha. at-risk of severe damage. They also fear a southward movement of grasshoppers from Mali in September and October. Chad is currently dealing with a migratory locust problem east of Lake Chad, and grasshopper damage between the 12th and 16th parallels of latitude.

None of these situations, however, appear to threaten Niger. The diminishing nature of the Chadian problem, as more field reports come in, seems to indicate that what seemed earlier as a serious threat will be dealt with locally and effectively. In Mali, the great distance between the current serious infestations and the border with Niger, as well as historical evidence indicate that if the problem does go anywhere, it will go generally southwards into Burkina Faso.

One area does, however, merit watching in this coming month. There are poorly detailed reports that indicate that rains in August south of Gao have given rise to fast growth of grasshoppers all along the Niger River valley. Along the same river valley, but in Burkina Faso, there are reports of outbreaks north-east of Dori, along the Niger border. If substantiated, these outbreaks would pose a threat to all of western Niger, and some important crop production areas.

PRICES

Prices for staple grains remain low and relatively stable. Meat prices are slowly rising on most markets. All available indices show a picture of a relatively stable food supply.

MAP 4

Grasshoppers & Locusts in the Western Sahel

September 1, 1986

