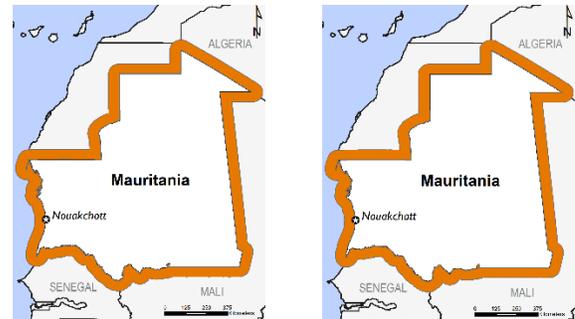


Restrictive measures hinder transhumant migration and negatively affect the income of poor households

KEY MESSAGES

- The closure of the land borders with Mali and Senegal blocked transhumant migration in the southern parts of the country, resulting in quicker deterioration of pasture in those areas. Demand for livestock feed will be higher than usual in order to support a harsher pastoral lean season prior to new pasture growth from July onwards.
- Developments in the COVID-19 pandemic in neighboring countries could lead to the authorities maintaining borders closed and restricting population movements until June. As a result, economic activities in urban centers will not resume quickly enough to adequately meet labor demand for seasonal workers who usually migrate from rainfed cultivation zones and agropastoral farming areas.
- Regardless of the social safety nets introduced as part of the government’s COVID-19 response – for the most part targeted at poor urban households – the decline in income due to movement restrictions will negatively affect poor households’ livelihoods and access to food. Crisis (IPC Phase 3) levels of food insecurity will continue through September in the rainfed cultivation zone in the South and in the agropastoral zone through June, before improvements are seen between July and September with increased access to fresh milk and the harvest.

Projected food security outcomes, April to May 2020 (left) and June to September 2020 (right)



- Phase 1: Minimal
- Phase 2: Stressed
- Phase 3+: Crisis or higher

! Would likely be at least one phase worse without current or programmed humanitarian assistance

Source: FEWS NET

FEWS NET classification is IPC-compatible. IPC-compatible analysis follows key IPC protocols but does not necessarily reflect the consensus of national food security partners.

FEWS NET Remote Monitoring countries use a colored outline to represent the highest IPC classification in areas of concern.

ZONE	CURRENT ANOMALIES	PROJECTED ANOMALIES
National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a result of closure of the borders with Mali and Senegal, more transhumant migrants have gathered in the southern wilayas, which has accelerated pasture degradation and adversely affected the physical condition of the livestock. • In addition to the more difficult pastoral lean season due to the fodder deficits, poor households, especially those in the rainfed cultivation zone, have depleted stocks from their own production atypically early in March. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since the last lean season, purchases of livestock feed supplements have remained above average due to shortfalls in livestock feed production. These purchases will increase until the new pasture growth in mid-July, resulting in lower purchasing power for livestock farmers.

PROJECTED OUTLOOK THROUGH SEPTEMBER 2020

As a result of fodder deficits in the central and northern wilayas (Trarza, Brakna, Tagant, Adrar, northern Assaba, north-east Gorgol), early departures for transhumant migration began in November. Since March, the southern regions, particularly those along the Senegal River, southern Gorgol and Guidimakha, have recorded a high concentration of livestock. These regions are normally transit areas, but this year, due to the closure of the land borders with Senegal and Mali, the transhumant migrants cannot continue on. This leads to an accelerated deterioration of resources in these regions and increases livestock farmers' dependency on the markets to buy crop residues and food supplements (wheat bran and Rakhal) for their livestock. While awaiting the implementation of the government's decision to sell 88,000 tons of livestock feed at half price, the prices of crop residues and Rakhal are up by 60 percent and 25 percent, respectively, compared with average prices in the Gorgol and Guidimakha host areas. As a result of restrictive measures put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19, those who derive most of their income from seasonal labor migration will face gaps in the protection of their livelihoods.

As of April 18th, there were no active cases of COVID-19 in Mauritania and there have only been seven confirmed cases since March. However, restrictive measures such as the closure of non-essential businesses and the ban on interregional travel remain in place, although they may be relaxed during Ramadan (curfew times are already being adjusted). Prior to the announcement of the pandemic on 21 March, the supply of imported food (wheat and rice) was satisfactory, but below average for local cereals (millet, sorghum and maize). As the country imports 42 percent of its food needs, the government has lifted customs duties on imports of wheat, oil, milk powder, fruit and vegetables for the rest of the year in order to maintain supply. Maximum prices have also been set for fresh vegetables (potatoes and onions) and vegetable oil. Despite these measures, speculative practices have developed in the Guidimakha region. At the Sélibaby market, for example, rice, sugar and oil prices increased by 30, 23 and 35 percent, respectively, in early April compared with March before the introduction of the measures.

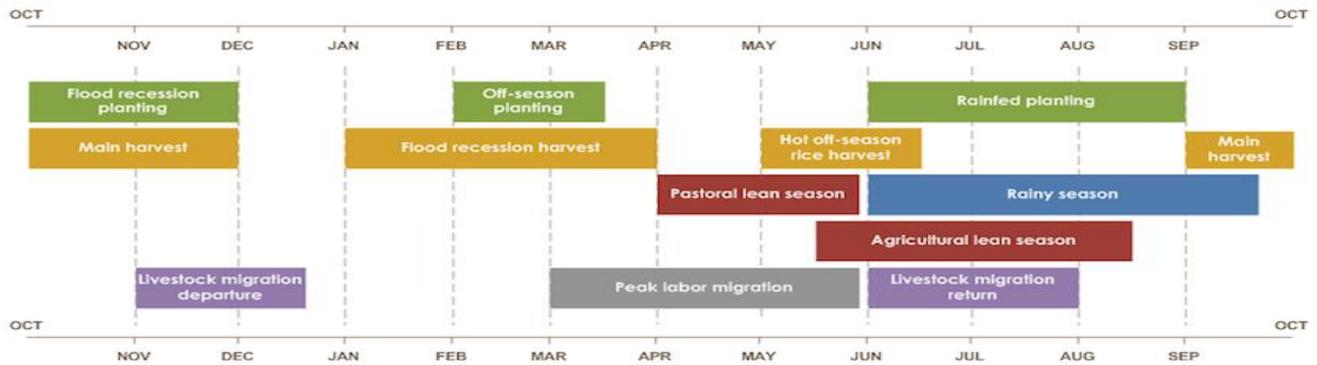
Government assistance measures should help alleviate the food access difficulties prompted by the government's COVID-19 response for 30,000 beneficiaries in urban centers, 20,000 of whom are in Nouakchott. In Nouakchott, poor households in the informal sector are most affected by the closure of restaurants, kiosks and trade points, although food retail and food shops remain open. Despite this assistance, the decline in income due to restrictions put in place in response to the pandemic will prompt the majority of poor households to adopt more harmful food access strategies. In some regions, the government initiatives are accompanied by local initiatives. In the wilaya of Tiris Zemmour, one thousand households are benefitting from food distribution and the opening of outlets selling socially priced food. Food is also being distributed to 7,000 families in the wilaya of Adrar. However, not all of the poor, who account for about 45 per cent of the total population and whose sources of income are being adversely affected by the restrictive measures and the lockdown of the cities of Nuakchott and Kaedi, have been included in the social measures. Decreasing demand for labor in urban centers and restrictions on movement particularly affect young migrants from rural areas who normally travel to the cities seeking work at the end of the growing seasons. Poor households in rainfed cultivation zones (MR 09) and agropastoral zones (MR07) will be the most affected, since 75 percent of their income is typically derived from self-employment and seasonal labor migration. As a result of restrictive measures put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19, those who derive most of their income from seasonal labor migration will face gaps in the protection of their livelihoods. The slowdown in livestock markets has further reduced demand and prices for livestock. Prices for rams in January had already fallen by 13 percent at the Adel Bagrou market compared with last year. Such a decline in income from livestock sales particularly affects the poor in the nomadic zone (MR01), for whom these sales normally represent 60 percent of their income.

As the pandemic evolves in neighboring countries, land borders could remain closed over the next two months, preventing transhumant migration. Fodder deficits will lead to a deterioration in the physical condition of livestock and reduce their market value compared with the average. The terms of trade for livestock/cereal will remain unfavorable for livestock farmers. This may expose the poor in the nomadic zone to Stressed (IPC Phase 2) food insecurity. With increased access to fresh milk from July onwards, this level will be maintained until September.

Over the next few months, economic activity in urban centers will not likely resume quickly enough to allow sufficient demand for labor. For example, the poor in rainfed crop and agropastoral zones who are dependent on income from seasonal migration and have been exposed to livelihood protection gaps will be forced to adopt Crisis strategies to access food such as reducing the amount of food consumed and the number of meals. With deteriorating food access and livelihoods, malnutrition rates could increase, especially in the wilayas of Hodh Ech Chargui, Assaba, Gorgol, Tagant and Guidimakha. Crisis (IPC Phase 3) food insecurity will prevail in the agropastoral zone until June, but the situation will improve to Stressed

(IPC Phase 2) between July and September when households will have access to fresh milk and wild products. However, in the rainfed cultivation area, Crisis (IPC Phase 3) will be maintained through September until households have access to the main harvests in October.

SEASONAL CALENDAR FOR A TYPICAL YEAR



Source: FEWS NET

ABOUT REMOTE MONITORING

In remote monitoring, a coordinator typically works from a nearby regional office. Relying on partners for data, the coordinator uses scenario development to conduct analysis and produce monthly reports. As less data may be available, remote monitoring reports may have less detail than those from countries with FEWS NET offices.