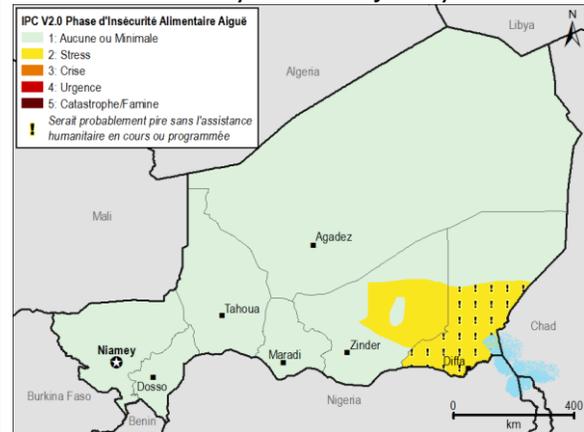


Diffa region experiencing food insecurity due to civil insecurity in northeast Nigeria

KEY MESSAGES

- With the majority of households not experiencing significant issues accessing cereals, the food security situation was better in January 2015 than in 2014. It is expected to remain at Minimal (IPC Phase 1) acute food insecurity in most parts of the country from February through June 2015.
- The most concerning acute food insecurity situation is in the Diffa region, where poor households in northern areas will be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) beginning in April due to declining pastoral incomes and low cereal supplies leading to high prices on markets.
- The Diffa region also needs assistance for the estimated 150,000 to 200,000 refugees and returnees fleeing insecurity in northeast Nigeria. Assistance currently available in the southern part of the Diffa region will help maintain acute food insecurity in the area at a level of Stress! (IPC Phase 2!) until June 2015.
- With the approach of the lean season, which this year will coincide with the early depletion of cereal and forage stocks in areas with rainfall shortages, food insecurity could increase. This will particularly be the case beginning in May-June, with cereal prices rising higher than the purchasing power of poor households in agropastoral zones of northern Tillabéri, pastoral zones of northern Tahoua, and farming/pastoral zones of eastern Zinder.

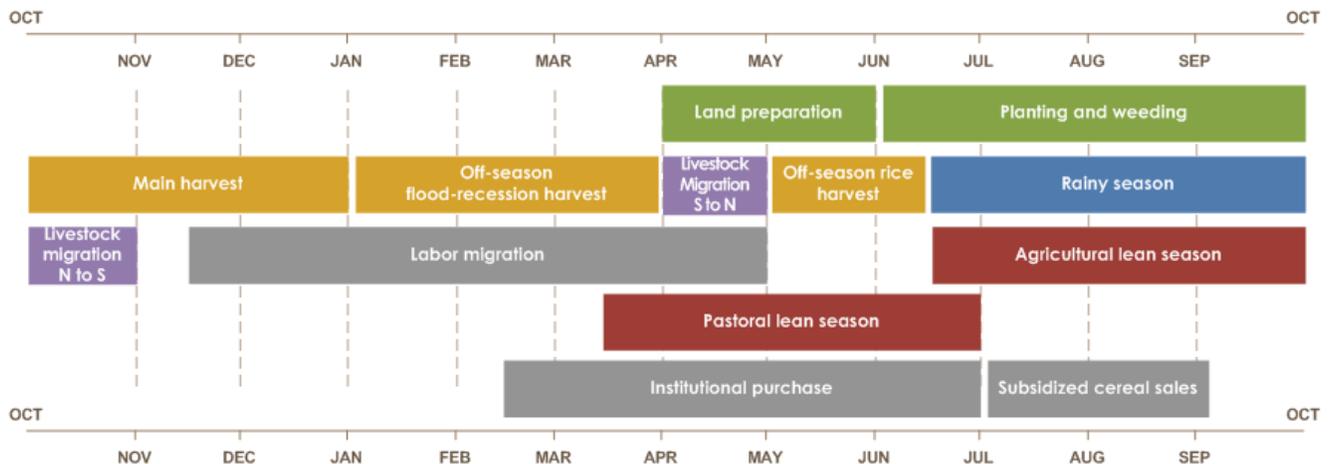
Current food security outcomes, January 2015



Source: FEWS NET

This map shows relevant acute food insecurity outcomes for emergency decision-making. It does not necessarily reflect chronic food insecurity. Learn more [here](#).

SEASONAL CALENDAR FOR A TYPICAL YEAR



Source: FEWS NET

NATIONAL OVERVIEW

Current situation

The official results of the 2014/15 cultivation and agropastoral season are not yet available. However, in light of the farming conditions observed during the rainy season, various assessment mission results, the evaluations of key informants, markets that are following normal seasonal trends, and typical demand pressure, cereal availability is expected to be generally above average throughout the country. Many households in farming and agropastoral areas are consuming their own cereal stocks. In areas with irrigated rice crops, food availability is being bolstered by rice crops. However, households in some areas, such as Ouallam (Tillabéri), Dungass/Magaria (Zinder), Abalak, and Tchintabaraden (Tahoua), have become market dependent with crop production levels estimated at more than 60-70 percent below their food needs.

In these areas and throughout the rest of the country, the market gardening season has begun, with crops being placed in nursery beds in some cases and the start of crop maintenance activities in others. This season has begun normally thanks to above-average aquifer recharge and input assistance expected from the government and its partners, including the FAO. The necessary conditions will therefore be in place to fully develop potentially irrigable lands and assure near-average production levels. The harvests that will run through the entire period from February through March/April 2015 will improve household food access and diversity.

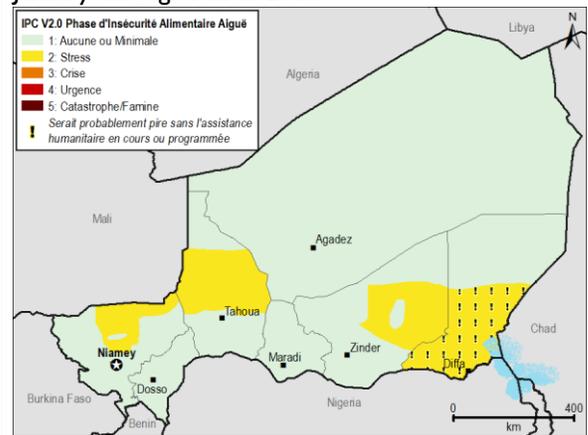
All markets are currently functioning normally except for those in the Diffa region, which are being disrupted by the effects of the sociopolitical crisis in northeast Nigeria. Supplies on the main markets are high due to above-average cereal availability in importing countries. On the whole, prices of staple products (millet and sorghum) are in line with the five-year average. On the markets in Maradi, Zinder, and Tahoua, millet prices range from 135 FCFA to 188 FCFA per kilogram, more than 10 percent lower than the five-year average. These fluctuations in market prices for millet are similar to those observed for sorghum.

The situation in the pastoral area is characterized by normal demand for livestock and stable or even above-average prices. Prices for small ruminants are stable but bull prices are above average due to high demand for local terminal fattening activities and for exports to countries such as Nigeria, Benin, and Togo.

However, the pastoral area of the Diffa region, particularly the Nguigmi department, is feeling the combined effects of deteriorated animal body conditions resulting from pasture deficits and the decreased demand for exports to Libya and northeast Nigeria. The majority of demand is therefore local, coming from traders from other regions (Zinder and Maradi) who export to central Nigeria and other coastal countries and to meet demand from mine workers in Zinder, Agadez, and Diffa. Livestock prices are already below average and will continue to fall. This will negatively impact pastoral households' purchasing power, especially if the additional demand from traders from the Zinder and Diffa regions falls with an escalation of civil insecurity in Nigeria.

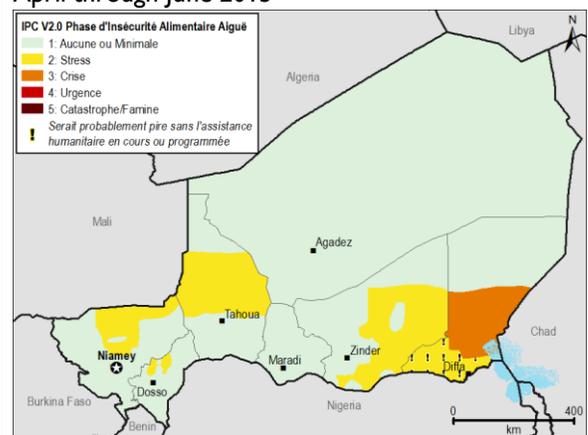
Elsewhere in the Diffa region, particularly in the agropastoral departments in the south, most households only have enough crops to cover 5 to 10 percent of their annual consumption needs, or 1 to 2 months of consumption compared to 3 to 4 months in a normal year. Outside of food assistance, most of the food consumed in agropastoral areas experiencing severe shortages was purchased beginning in December, instead of February-March in a normal year. Increased demand for cereals from pastoral and agropastoral households and displaced persons from Nigeria is keeping market prices of these foods above the five-year average.

Most likely estimated food security outcomes for January through March 2015



Source: FEWS NET

Most likely estimated food security outcomes for April through June 2015



Source: FEWS NET

This map shows relevant acute food insecurity outcomes for emergency decision-making. It does not necessarily reflect chronic food insecurity. Learn more [here](#).

With the start of production of off-season crops, including irrigated rice along the Niger River, peppers, maize, and cowpeas on the Komadougou Yobé River, onions, and other horticultural products in the country's different production basins, there is normal demand for farm labor, namely for placing crops in nursery beds and maintaining crops that have already been planted. Thanks to the availability of sufficient quantities of water for irrigation and assistance in the form of farm inputs, the areas being planted are comparable to an average season, making it possible to hire and pay local farm workers as usual. However, the areas planted in maize and cowpeas on Lake Chad are well below average, leading to lower demand and therefore less income earned from farm labor.

With the receding and gradual fall in water levels, permanent and seasonal rivers have become areas for fishing, and sales of fish locally and in urban centers are generating substantial income for fishermen, as usual. Sources of household income also include the gathering and sale of bush products (wood, straw, and gum arabic), which are helping to maintain normal income levels.

With the combined effects of food security problems, child healthcare practices, and the occurrence of seasonal diseases, the food security situation for children will be marked by a normal rise in admissions of cases of malnutrition from January through at least June.

Assumptions

The most likely food security scenario for the period from January through June 2015 described below was established based on the following underlying assumptions with respect to trends in nationwide conditions:

- With above-average water availability and assistance from the government and its partners, the dry growing season will begin normally in January-April 2015. Crop production in February-April is expected to be average and to make an average contribution to household income and food diversification.
- Harvested cereal crops will allow farming and agropastoral households to cover their consumption needs without depending on markets for a normal period of time, except in areas with production shortfalls in Tillabéri, Tahoua, and Zinder, where households will significantly deplete their cereal stocks earlier than the average period.
- Cereal imports from Burkina Faso, Benin, and Mali will remain normal, which will help maintain sufficient supplies on markets in most parts of the country. Cereal supplies will be sufficient, as usual, on the markets from January through June but will be impacted by insecurity in Nigeria, which will lead to fewer cereal imports, particularly in the Diffa region. Supplies of livestock and market garden produce will follow normal trends from January through June.
- Demand for cereals, livestock, and horticultural products will continue at a normal pace, except among households in areas with production deficits in Tillabéri, Tahoua, and Zinder, where demand for cereals will rise earlier and more significantly than normal for this period.
- On the whole, market prices in real terms are expected to be lower than in 2013/14 and in line with the five-year average. However, in certain areas with production deficits, particularly in Diffa and north Tillabéri, prices will be above the five-year average.
- The nutritional situation is expected to deteriorate to an average level in traditionally impacted areas (Maradi and Zinder), as well as in areas which normally have a better nutritional situation.
- As of yet, there is no indication of an atypical start to the 2015 rainy season in May/June. Seeds will be available in time to be distributed for the 2015/16 growing season to households experiencing shortages. Fertilizer prices and availability are expected to be normal.
- Household incomes will remain average for the season thanks to increased demand for farm labor, namely for maintaining irrigated crops in January-March/April and for preparing land for the start of the rainy growing season in April-June.
- Migration will take place normally, with migrants leaving in January and returning in April/May 2015, generating average income from remittances.

Most likely food security outcomes

Given all of these factors, Minimal (IPC Phase 1) food insecurity will generally dominate in all livelihood zones from January through March 2015, except among a minority of poor households, particularly those in the pastoral and agropastoral zones

of Abalak, Tchintabaraden, and Ouallam. A limited number of them will experience Stress (IPC Phase 2) due to the depletion of household food stocks, increased demand for cereals, increased cereal prices, and a decline in cereal purchasing power.

This situation will correspond to the depletion of farmers' stocks in April-June 2015. In many cases, the return of migrants in April/May is synonymous with an influx of financial resources, which will improve household incomes. Markets will be sufficiently supplied, with prices similar to the five-year average beginning in April 2015. However, localized price spikes will be seen in areas where cereal shortages are cyclical, and these higher prices will lead to deteriorated food access for poor consumers in April/May/June. Food assistance will help compensate for this deterioration. Plans have already been developed for its implementation, and funding is under negotiation with partners. Food access and consumption will be ensured through food assistance to identified households under Stress (IPC Phase 2) in pastoral and agropastoral zones, especially in north Tillabéri, Tahoua, and Zinder and in south Diffa, beginning in April 2015.

The food insecurity situation in Nguigmi, which will remain Stressed (IPC Phase 2) in January-March thanks to food assistance, will rise to one of Crisis (IPC Phase 3) in April-June due to a disruption in income sources, market dysfunction, and a prolonged, atypical deterioration in the ability to access cereals.

In Diffa, the situation of refugees from northeast Nigeria has gotten significantly worse since November, with attacks in several communities bordering the region. The largest numbers of refugees have been reported in the Bosso area and the islands of Lake Chad, which have taken in an estimated 32,464 and 40,953 people, respectively. Humanitarian organizations in Diffa estimated the number of refugees/returnees in the region at 109,489 people on November 13, 2014. The number of displaced persons currently in the Diffa region is estimated to be 150,000 to 200,000. This is in addition to the more than 3,000 refugees/returnees registered at the Gagamari site in the Chétimari rural community after the attack in Damassak, Nigeria on November 24, 2014. Even with ongoing assistance, most displaced persons in Niger will be unable to meet their basic non-food needs.

AREAS OF CONCERN

Transhumant and Nomad Pastoralism Zone of Nguigmi (Livelihood Zone 3)

Annual rainfall in this primarily livestock-raising area ranges from 100 to 200 mm. Most (56 percent) of the local population consists of very poor and poor households whose livelihoods depend on one or two large ruminants, four to six small ruminants, and poultry. The main sources of income are sales of animals and animal products, the tending of livestock herds, sales of wood/charcoal and hay, migrant remittances, and sales of hand-crafted goods. The main sources of food are market purchasing, animal products, gifts/charity, school meal programs, and in-kind wage payments. Household expenses consist of food purchases (millet and sorghum), purchases of animal feed in April-May-June, loan payments, and social spending (for feasts and other social events).

Current situation

Agropastoral season:

The start of the agropastoral season was significantly delayed by irregular, poorly distributed rains. In August, however, significant rainfall helped ensure pasture development. Pasture production in the zone is generally average in the northwestern part of the Kablewa area and below average in the eastern and northern parts of the Nguigmi area and the southern and eastern parts of the Kablewa area. Pasture is not available in sufficient quantities to meet animals' food needs throughout the year due to a decrease in transhumant migration and increased pressure on available pasture with the presence of animals belonging to displaced persons from northeast Nigeria. Usually, because of transhumant migration, there is enough pasture available in the zone to cover six to seven out of nine months of animal food needs, compared to three to four months this year. Animals are drinking from surface watering holes (Lake Chad), wells, and pastoral boreholes. This situation has kept animal body conditions acceptable for the time being.

Markets and prices:

Cereal markets are supplied with millet and sorghum through commercial imports from Nigeria, which are currently low due to insecurity, preventing normal trade between this zone and Nigeria. Recent attacks on the Damassak and Geydam markets in late November and late December 2014, respectively, by fighters claiming to be from Boko Haram caused significant shock to cross-border cereal trade between this zone and Nigeria.

December 2014 prices of millet, sorghum, and maize were significantly higher than the five-year average, up 29 percent, 22 percent, and 21 percent, respectively.

Livestock markets are characterized by relatively low demand. Livestock exports to Nigeria and Libya have fallen considerably due to civil insecurity in those countries. This situation has negatively impacted prices of livestock, especially camels, prices of which fell 20 to 40 percent below average.

Unlike for large ruminants, demand for small ruminants has remained acceptable, coming mostly from consumers in Nigeria (through longer routes passing through Zinder and Maradi) for year-end celebrations.

Livelihoods:

Income from remittances and livestock sales is below average due to sociopolitical conflict in Libya and Nigeria, the main destination countries for flows of livestock and migrants from this zone. Terms of trade for male goats/millet and the tending of livestock herds/millet are 30 percent and 15 percent below average, respectively.

Unlike the other livelihoods mentioned above, sales of wood and charcoal are generating above-average income with increased demand due to the presence of exporters from Zinder who are supplying gold-mining sites in Djado/Agadez.

Nutritional situation of children:

The nutritional situation in November 2014 was marked by fewer cases of admission of malnourished children to nutritional rehabilitation centers than in the same period in 2013, but the numbers are still 13 percent above average. Global acute malnutrition rates, which were 13.8 percent in July 2014, could fall in January 2015 if they follow typical seasonal variations.

Assumptions

The most likely food security scenario for the period from January through June 2015 was established based on the following assumptions:

- Usual cereal import and livestock export flows will be disrupted and market cereal supplies will continue to fall from January through June 2015.
- The zone's population will rise with the arrival of returnees/refugees from Nigeria, resulting in a significant rise in consumer demand for cereals.
- With increased consumer demand and decreased supply, cereal prices will rise significantly above the five-year average from January through June 2015.
- Livestock movements will remain limited due to insecurity in northern Nigeria and Libya.
- With the arrival of livestock belonging to refugees/returnees from northeast Nigeria, the number of animals in the zone will be higher in January-June 2015 than both the average and 2014, translating to a significant increase in seasonal pasture needs in this zone.
- Available pasture will be depleted earlier than usual, in February/March 2015, causing abnormally high demand and significantly higher prices for animal feed from January through June 2015. Animal watering holes will dry up early, in February/March 2015.
- This will lead to deteriorated animal body conditions from March through June 2015. Sales of large ruminants, especially camels, will also remain low from January through June 2015 with a significant drop in demand for livestock exports due to conflicts in Libya and Nigeria. These factors will contribute to lower pastoral incomes from January through June 2015, resulting in deteriorated cereal purchasing power for poor pastoral households.
- Milk production and consumption will fall, which will likely have a negative impact on child nutrition from February/March 2015 through June 2015.

- Migratory routes for people in this zone will be disrupted by conflicts in Nigeria and Libya. There will be fewer migrants from January through June 2015, and the contribution of migrant remittances to household incomes will fall significantly.
- The supply of local labor for the tending of livestock herds will be up from January through June 2015, which could lead to lower wages for local labor.

Most likely food security outcomes

Income sources and food access will fall significantly, but thanks to assistance combined with coping strategies, very poor and poor households will be able to sufficiently cover their food needs in January-February 2015, though they will have to draw on their meager livelihoods and avoid non-food spending to do so. Because of this, and given the level of assistance, this zone will face Stressed! (IPC Phase 2!) acute food insecurity conditions in January-February 2015. From March/April 2015 through June 2015, poor households will face higher cereal prices, income losses, and larger households, with migrants either returning or not leaving due to insecurity in host countries. Poor households in the zone will therefore be unable to meet their consumption needs, despite receiving food assistance in the form of food sales at affordable prices and the distribution of free food rations. This situation will place the zone in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) from April through June 2015.

Agropastoral Zone of Ouallam (Livelihood Zone 4)

Current situation

In this zone, where annual rainfall ranges from 400 to 600 mm, the main sources of food and income are agriculture (rainy season millet, sorghum, cowpea, groundnut, and earthpea production and labor) and livestock-raising (cattle, sheep, and goats). Local crop production normally covers over 40 percent of household food needs and generates 18 percent of the income of very poor and poor households. Migration and sales of bush products (wood and hay) are other important sources of cash income for local households. This zone is home to refugees who came from Mali two to three years ago. These displaced persons, the number of which has fallen with the calming of the situation in their home country and cross-border movements, are housed in camps built according to international standards.

2014/15 growing season:

To improve crop production, the government has distributed 19.37 metric tons of seeds (potato, maize, and cowpea), up from 12.25 metric tons for the 2013/14 growing season. Partners, including the FAO, have distributed 91 kilograms of tomato, cabbage, carrot, and lettuce seeds and are expected to distribute 25 metric tons of potato seeds. However, the growing season has been marked by early planting in June followed by long periods of drought, resulting in the replanting of crops. The rains started again in the end of July, were more intense in August but were then irregular during the crop reproductive phase in September. Rainfall conditions therefore did not support the normal development of crops, especially millet and sorghum. There will be crop production deficits in 2014/15, with production levels below both 2013 and the average. However, heavy rains in the month of August were favorable to the growth and development of herbaceous plant cover and to the replenishing of watering holes, which significantly improved livestock body conditions.

Markets and prices:

Markets are well stocked with foodstuffs such as millet, sorghum, maize, and pasta products. These products are being supplied by the typical sources, coming from countries such as Burkina Faso, Benin, and Nigeria via Niamey. As usual, people in this zone are supplying neighboring regions (Niamey, Tillabéri) with firewood and straw for animal feed and séko matting.

Cereal prices (millet, sorghum, and maize) were the same in December 2014 as during the same period in 2013 and the previous month. Prices of millet, the main staple food, were slightly higher than the five-year average (up eight percent) in December 2014 on the Ouallam market. Stable market prices are the result of sufficient supply due to above-average availability in areas that supply this zone. Livestock prices are four percent lower than in 2013, the result of high supplies due to the relatively stable security situation in Mali, the origin of more than 50 percent of animals on the markets.

Household livelihoods:

Sales of livestock, wood/straw, séko matting, and horticultural products and migrant remittances constitute the main sources of income for very poor and poor households. Terms of trade for male goats/millet are four percent lower than the five-year average. With lower crop production levels, more members of poor households are expected to migrate, and with low rainfall levels, the availability of straw and séko matting for sale will be below average. Relative per-person income from migrant remittances and sales of straw and séko matting could remain in line with the average, with both favorable security conditions in areas and countries hosting migrants and high demand for labor and straw.

Assumptions

The most likely food security scenario for the period from January through June 2015 was established based on the following assumptions:

- Households will become market dependent earlier than usual, in January/February 2015, and for a longer time, until June 2015, having constituted insufficient cereal stocks during the rainy season.
- Markets will be sufficiently supplied from January through June 2015 thanks to imports, which should remain normal.
- Cereal prices will be significantly higher than the seasonal average in January-March and April-June 2015 due to high consumer demand, which will lead to a significant decline in terms of trade.
- High demand is expected for wood and straw, with prices expected to remain in line with average levels from January through June 2015.
- Poor households will benefit from annual assistance in the form of cash for work programs from January through June 2015.
- Migration will take place from January through June 2015 and will contribute to incomes through remittances during the period as usual.
- Livestock prices will remain in line with the average from January through June 2015 due to high demand, generating average levels of income during the period.
- Less area will be planted in crops due to below-average aquifer recharge following below-average rainfall. Crop production levels will therefore also be below average.
- Average income earned from off-season farm labor from January through March/April 2015 will be below average but will be normal in May/June 2015, namely for land preparation work for the main 2015 growing season.

Most likely food security outcomes

Affected poor households in this zone will deplete their food stocks earlier than usual this year and will turn to markets sooner to purchase cereals and meet their food needs using the income they earn, which will also allow them to meet other non-food needs in January 2015. From February through June 2015, cereal prices will rise significantly above average, and with generally average income levels, most spending will be on food. Despite assistance, poor households will be able to meet their food needs but will not be able to cover basic non-food needs. These households will face Minimal (IPC Phase 1) acute food insecurity in January 2015 but will experience Stress (IPC Phase 2) from February through June 2015.

EVENTS THAT COULD CHANGE THE OUTLOOK**Table I.** Possible events in the next six months liable to change the outlook

Area	Event	Impact on food security conditions
National	Weak flows of cereals from Mali, Burkina Faso, Benin, and Nigeria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decreased market supplies • More significant rise in prices • Fewer cereals purchased by very poor and poor households
	Limited implementation of the national assistance plan from December through March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited mitigation of food security problems • Persistent food insecurity
	More sociopolitical unrest in Nigeria or Mali, accelerating the rate of population displacement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hoarding of cereal stocks by large farmers and traders • Limited flow of imports and higher than expected cereal prices • Larger than expected increase in the number of refugees • Stronger demand for cereals, larger supply of labor, and higher than expected prices • Poorer than expected purchasing power, with livelihood protection deficits
Agropastoral Zone of Ouallam	Escalation of the security situation in Nigeria and the emergence of a conflict situation in other migrant destination countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decreased flow of cereals and other crops • Early return of migrants • Decreased income
Pastoral Zone of Nguigmi	Beefing up of measures designed to close the country's borders with Nigeria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete suspension of trade • Rises in prices
	High increase in livestock demand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High livestock prices • Increased income

ABOUT SCENARIO DEVELOPMENT

To project food security outcomes over a six-month period, FEWS NET develops a set of assumptions about likely events, their effects, and the probable responses of various actors. FEWS NET analyzes these assumptions in the context of current conditions and local livelihoods to develop scenarios estimating food security outcomes. Typically, FEWS NET reports the most likely scenario. Learn more [here](#).