

Summary

The month of July was characterized by a satisfactory situation overall, in both the Sudanian and Sahelian zones of Chad. Highly food insecure populations in the Sahelian zone constituted an important exception. People there had to intensify their income-generating activities (such as working for others and selling cattle) in order to buy their basic food staples.

The agricultural season is underway, although it started late this year in most cantons compared to last year. Pasture conditions are good in the Sudanian zone while the Sahelian zone only started *greening up* during the third dekad (10-day period) of July. Livestock health is also good. Millet and sorghum prices remain affordable, although higher than prices last year in the Sahelian zone. Prices in Kanem and parts of Ouaddaï Prefectures in the Sahelian zone increased during the past quarter, though this is normal for the pre-harvest period.

1. Agrometeorological Situation

The Inter-tropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ) oscillates between 17° N and 19° N, between the cities of Fada and Ounianga Kebir (Borkou and Ennedi Sub-prefectures). Large quantities of rainfall were recorded south of the ITCZ during the third dekad of July, notably in the Sahelian zone.

According to the Directorate of Water Resources and Meteorology (DREM), total dekadal rainfall during July was less than the rainfall during the same period last year, except for several rain stations. Rainfall during the third dekad exceeded long-term average levels (1961-1990) in most locations.

Satellite images analyzed by FEWS NET/Chad corroborate rain station data showing that third dekad rainfall varied between average and very good in the Sahel and Sudanian zones. The major exceptions were most of Kanem and eastern Biltine Prefectures where rainfall was poor.

In some parts of the Sudanian zone, early-maturing millet and sorghum are at the stage of height growth, while peanuts are at the stage of branching out. At Lake Chad, off-season maize is in harvest and rainfed maize and dune millet are due for weeding, according to the Lake Development Company (SODELAC).

In the Sahel, millet and sorghum are in the leaf-emergence stage in most of the fields investigated. In general, the phenological stage of crop development at the end of July is later than that of last year at the same time, according to DREM observations.

2. Plant Health and Protection

In villages located within a radius of 25 to 70 km from N'djamena, rats are causing considerable damage to maize and sorghum seedlings. Grasshoppers at the larva stage have been sighted in Batha and Ouaddaï Prefectures. Other plant pests include centipede larvae.

3. Water Levels

River levels at the end of July were far higher than levels reached at the same time over the past two years at three stations (N'Djaména TP, Chagoua and Sarh), but similar to last year's level at a fourth station, N'Guely, as shown in Tabel 1.

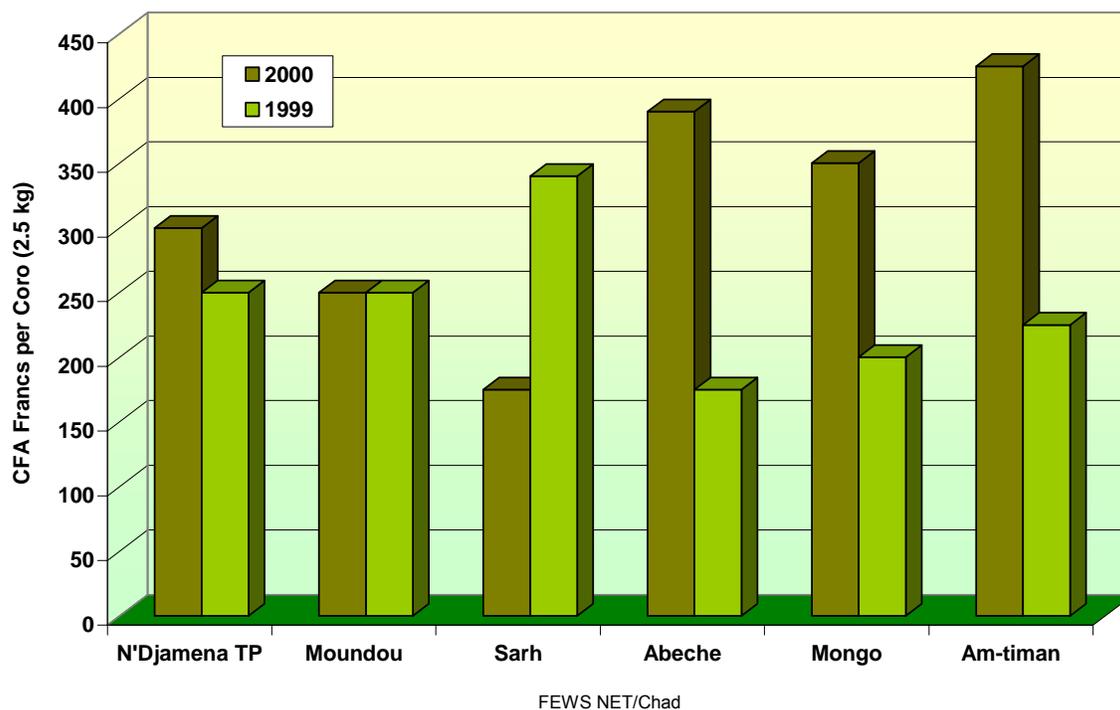
Table 1. Comparison of River Levels at the end of July 1998 – 2000 (Centimeters above sea level)

	July 31, 2000	July 31, 1999	July 31, 1998
N'Djaména TP	256	229	239
Chagoua	291	267	288
Sarh	267	230	206
N'guely	312	315	312

4. Market Prices

Figures 1 and 2 (drawn to the same scale) compare millet and sorghum prices across major markets in Chad at the end of July 2000 and July 1999. Prices are expressed in terms of *coro*, equivalent to 2.5 kg.

Figure 1. Comparison of July Millet Prices across Major Markets in Chad: 2000 and 1999



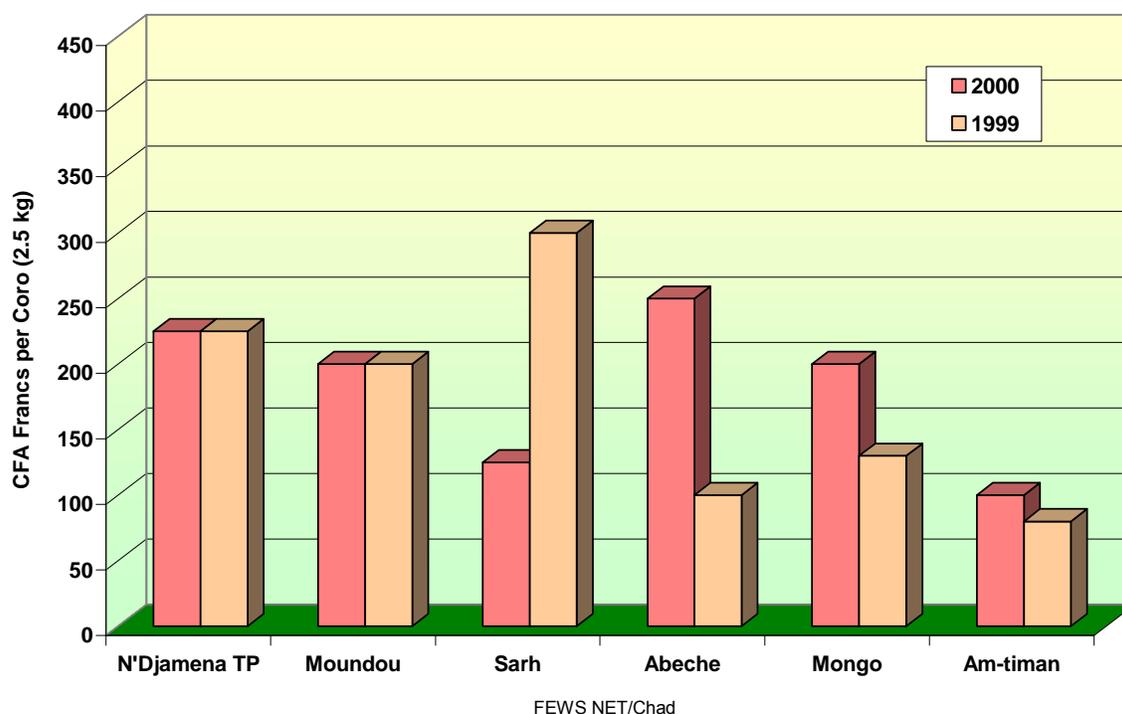
These figures illustrate several points:

1. Sorghum is cheaper than millet in every instance. As Chad produces more sorghum than millet, this helps ensure that poorer consumers have a lower cost alternative food staple.

2. Millet prices are higher this year in the Sahelian zone markets of Abéché, Mongo and Am-Timan than in the Sudanian zone markets.
3. Millet prices are higher this year than last year, except in Moundou where prices are the same and in Sarh where prices this year are considerably lower.
4. Sorghum prices are mixed, exhibiting none of the same patterns as millet. Remarkably, sorghum prices in Abéché are two and one-half times more expensive in July this year than last year.

This price comparison during the pre-harvest (*soudure*) period confirms the good agricultural season last year in southern Chad, except in the flooded areas and in the cantons of rural Abéché in the Sahelian zone where farmers did not obtain a great harvest due to severe attacks of millet-eating caterpillars.

Figure 2. Comparison of July Sorghum Prices across Major Markets in Chad: 2000 and 1999



5. Food Situation In Zones Targeted By FEWS

As identified by FEWS in its Current Vulnerability Assessment of March 2000, food insecure areas in the Sudanian zone are essentially those that were flooded in November 1999 — various villages in the sub-prefectures of Bedjondo, Koumra, Maro and rural Sarh in Moyen Chari as well as some villages in Logone Oriental and Mayo-Kebbi Prefectures.

In June the World Food Program (WFP) launched an emergency operation in Mayo-Kebbi Prefecture in support of 14,000 flood victims during the agricultural season last year.

Distribution of 1,818 MT of free food started on June 24 for another 60,000 flood victims in Moyen Chari Prefecture.

In the Sahelian zone, FEWS identified all of Kanem Prefecture as a highly food insecure area, outside of Moussoro. Subsidized food sales are planned for August.

6. Conclusion

Although the 2000/01 agricultural season started late, it is doing fairly well at the end of July in most parts of the country. For the most part, millet and sorghum are at the height-growth stage of development in the Sudanian zone and at the leaf-emergence stage in the Sahelian zone.

Some crop pests have been noticed. Damage due to below-normal rainfall is minimal and the general appearance of standing crops varies from average to good. Cereal prices are generally affordable except in some parts of the Sahelian zone where they are high.