

Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Livestock Systems

Niger: Enabling Policies for Livestock

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This brief is a work in progress. It will be updated with additional information collected in the future.

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I. Introduction

According to the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, 87% of the population in Niger keeps livestock (Ministere d'Elevage, 2013). Four out of the eight ethnic groups present in the country (Peul, Tuareg, Arab, and Toubou) depend almost exclusively on livestock for their livelihoods. (Ministere d'Elevage, 2014). Livestock contribute 11% to the National Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 35% to the agricultural GDP (Ministere d'Elevage, 2014). In 2011, the government has put in place long-term livestock strategies and policies to work toward the development of this sector. The 3N initiative, the “Nigeriens Feed Nigeriens” (“*Nigériens Nourrissent les Nigériens*”), showed some notable successes during the 2011-2015 stage and started a second phase in 2016. The Strategy for the Sustainable Development of Pastoralism (*Stratégie de Développement Durable de l'Elevage*, SDDEL), an initiative by the Ministry of Livestock, is also underway and is projected to continue through 2035. Both of these are consistent with the Economic and Social Development Plan (*Plan de Développement Economique et Social* (PDES), and the more recent Economic and Development Document (EDD), which specify a broader medium-term framework for Niger’s development. Producer organizations and NGOs are active participants in initiatives to further the development of the livestock sector on a national level, while regional West African organizations, such as ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) and WAEMU (West African Economic and Monetary Union), influence policy through directives with the objective of harmonizing policies across the region.

2. Resources for livestock sector development

In Niger, livestock contributes to 15% of household income, making livestock a crucial component to people’s livelihoods and food security across the country (Ministère de l'Elevage, 2014). Despite the significant role it plays in national GDP, government expenditure on livestock remains minimal. In 2009, spending on the livestock sector dropped significantly, from 11.7 billion FCFA in 2008 (447 CFA=\$1) to 9.2 billion FCFA (468 CFA=\$1) (Ministère de l'Elevage, 2013) – even though the agricultural sector as a whole continued to attract 10% of government expenditures. Niger therefore fulfills the 2003 Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Program (CAADP) Maputo Declaration request for governments to allocate 10% of their national budget to the development of the agricultural sector (Salla, 2014).

Between 2012 and 2015, the 3N government initiative devoted 1194.36 billion FCFA (502 CFA=\$1) towards boosting food security in the country. A portion of this budget was allocated to developing the livestock sector over the four-year period. A majority of this funding came from bilateral and multilateral donors, their donations totaling 862.94 billion FCFA; the government of Niger contributed 278.65 billion FCFA, or 23.33% of the budget. The program is projected to continue for the period 2016-2020 (République du Niger, 2015).

3. Government Framework and Policies

The *Plan de Développement Economique et Social* (PDES) 2012-2015 and the Economic Development Document (EDD) 2016-2019 are governmental medium-term strategies geared toward increasing GDP growth, investing in social sectors, and increasing living standards across Niger. Five pillars were established under the PDES to support these objectives (FAO, 2015):

- i. Creating conditions for sustainable and equitable growth
- ii. Strengthening public institutions
- iii. Supporting food security and sustainable agricultural development
- iv. Promoting a competitive and diversified economy
- v. Advancing social development.

While the average economic growth rate throughout the implementation of PDES was 8%, it was not evenly sustained (International Monetary Fund, 2016). The EDD lays out priorities in order to sustain the progress already underway, further emphasizing the role of the agricultural and livestock sectors (International Monetary Fund, 2016):

- i. Improving public financial management and domestic resource mobilization;
- ii. Accelerating the implementation of the domestic food security '3N' initiative with a focus on agribusiness as a way to promote export diversification and import substitution;
- iii. Enhancing public investment in priority infrastructures and in the social sectors;
- iv. Attracting foreign direct investment especially in the areas of mining and oil prospecting and exploitation to boost exports; and
- v. Enhancing the level and quality of households' consumption, especially for the poorest sections of society through their ascension to the middle class.

As previously mentioned, the 3N initiative is an intragovernmental program put in place in 2011 by the government of Niger with the objective of fulfilling the third pillar of PDES. The objective of the initiative is to **put an end to famine and malnutrition in the country through strengthening the agricultural sector and boosting resilience to climate change and natural disaster**. 3N works across ministries in order to provide an outlet for collaboration between the state, technical and financial partners, producer organizations, NGOs, civil societies, and private sector contributors with a stake in improving the nutritional status of Niger. Five objectives are laid out by the 3N initiative:

- i. Intensify and diversify agricultural, fishing, forestry and agro-silvo-pastoral production
- ii. Support urban and rural markets
- iii. Increase resilience of at-risk groups to climate change and natural disasters
- iv. Improve nutritional status of Nigeriens

v. Ensure the continued success and impetus of 3N and its reforms

Notable achievements in the livestock sector were made by the 3N initiative during the 2011-2015 timeframe. In an effort to increase fodder availability, 29 livestock feed warehouses, 355 livestock feed banks, 340 mills, and 79 municipal supply centers were created. In addition, 105,534 tons of fodder, 105,176 multi-nutrient blocks, and 1,032 kg fodder seeds were provided to distribute to livestock holders. Additionally, wells were constructed and restored to increase water availability among livestock holders. A significant effort was made in combatting disease in livestock through vaccination. In 2014, 82% of the bovine population had been vaccinated compared with 49% in 2011. Similarly, the vaccination rate of small ruminants and camels went from 18% and 0% respectively to 57% and 35%. The 3N initiative also reports a 23% increase in milk production and a 44% increase in meat production over the course of the project (République du Niger, 2015).

The 3N initiative outlines some challenges encountered in the first phase of the project. These include, among others, delay in disbursement of the budget, the slow implementation of projects, a lack of resources in decentralized administrative offices, a failure of many projects to reach the execution stage, notably in the livestock sector, and difficulty in disseminating information, especially to isolated regions (République du Niger, 2015).

The 3N initiative launched the second phase of the project for the period 2016-2020. The initiative will continue to fight hunger, malnutrition, and poverty and will build on the progress already made. The 3N initiative is projected to be completed by 2035 (République du Niger, 2015).

In 2013 the Ministry of Livestock initiates a policy in order to leverage the potential of the livestock industry and increase milk and meat consumption among the populations so to improve nutrition. The *Stratégie de Développement Durable de l'Élevage* (SDDEL) is a strategy document that aims to work alongside the PDES and the 3N initiative to help develop the sector for the period 2013-2035. Its overall goal is to **sustainably develop livestock in order to improve the food security, income, and resilience to natural disasters of the Nigerien population** (Ministère de l'Élevage, 2013). The strategy is built around three axes and corresponding objectives as outlined in Table 1.

Table 1. Axes and objectives of SDDEL (Ministère de l’Elevage, 2013)

Axes	Objectives
1) Sustainable improvement of animal health and safety of animal source food products	Improve animal health services with regard to international standards
	Ensure the safety of animal food products
2) Development, increase, and diversification of animal-source foods	Sustainable management of pastoral lands
	Modernization of animal-source food production systems
	Increase the artisanal and industrial production capacity of animal-source food processing units
	Increase the availability of animal-source foods in markets
	Expand alert and information systems to improve capacity to respond to disaster
3) Establishment of a legal and institutional environment favorable to the sustainable development of livestock	Establish an institutional environment that supports the development of animal sub-sectors
	Mobilize financing for the livestock sector
	Reinforce institutional and organizational capacities of livestock sector stakeholders
	Improve intervention capacity of stakeholders through providing information on the sector and food safety

A number of strengths and weaknesses exist in Niger’s livestock sector. A key strength of this sector is the resilience and diversity of the livestock. The SDDEL document highlights some of the successes achieved thus far, while identifying four factors that are inhibiting the growth of the livestock subsector, namely:

- The prevalence of disease among animals
- Lack of reliable access to food and water for livestock
- Lack of funding and promotion of veterinary research
- Weak institutional and financial environment surrounding livestock

Access to land and water is a particularly thorny issue, often leading to conflict, due to the uncertainty of the laws in place and lack of implementation. A 1961 law dedicated the zone in the north of Niger to pastoralism, distinguishing it from the southern agricultural zone. Farming is forbidden in pastoral zones under this order; furthermore, in 1987 decree N° 87-077 granted pastoralists grazing rights in agricultural zones between December and January, after the harvest period. In 1993, ordinance N° 93-15 referred to as the ‘Rural Code’ recognized that all Nigeriens, including pastoralists, have equal access to the country’s natural resources (Davies,

2016). While this would help to strengthen pastoralist claims to their traditional lands, the Rural Code hasn't been effectively enforced in much of the country (Hughes, 2014).

4. Other Policies and Actors in the Livestock Sector

4.1. Regional Level

Niger is a member of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), an organization of West African countries with the common goal of achieving economic integration across the region. As a part of the CAADP process, ECOWAS adopted the ECOWAS Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP) as a means of implementing agricultural reform. Under ECOWAP, an Action Plan for the development of livestock farming in West Africa was approved in February 2009. The Action Plan lists its objectives as, "the transformation and economic value addition to the cattle, meat, and dairy sector in order to provide sustainable food security, reduce poverty, and provide decent income for those working in the sector while preserving our natural resources," and describes four components that will help achieve this goal: (i) Promote livestock, meat, and dairy sector; (ii) Provide security to facilitate transnational mobility and reduction of conflicts; (iii) Provide structure to the animal production sector; and (iv) Create a favorable environment for the cattle, meat, and dairy sector (ECOWAS, 2010).

The ECOWAS Decision A/DEC.5/10/98 of 1998 regulates cross-border transhumance through the International Transhumance Certificate (ITC), which acts as a type of passport for herders. The ITC allows for management of the arrival and departure of transhumant herds as well as the sanitary protection of local herds (Kamuanga, 2008).

The West African Economic & Monetary Union (UEMOA), of which Niger is also a member, was founded to further facilitate economic integration among states that share the CFA franc. The UEMOA instituted a common external tariff (CET) in 2000, which aimed to promote regional trade through a general tariff on products imported from non-UEMOA countries and a tax-free entry for products originating from member states (Kamuanga, 2008). Under the CET, imported milk is taxed at a rate of 5% and other dairy products are taxed at 15-20%. However, these rates are not sufficient to ensure competitiveness of locally produced dairy products (Salla, 2014).

National producer associations are key stakeholders in any strategy to improve the agriculture sector, and the ECOWAP Action Plan identifies, and works with, several regional bodies concerned with supporting producer organizations. Numerous regional associations work on issues that are relevant to the regional sphere in livestock, including the Confederation of National Federations in the Meat and Livestock sector for West Africa (COFENABVI), the Association for the Promotion of Livestock Farming in the Sahel and the Savannah (APESS), the Network of West African Farmers' and Producers' Organizations (ROPPA), the Network of West African Agri-food Sector Economic Operators (ROESAO), the Confederation of

Traditional Livestock Farmers (CORET), and Lawol Fulfuldé (ECOWAS, 2010). Additionally, regional or multi-country donor-funded projects advance efforts on regional issues, including the USAID-funded West Africa Trade and Investment Hub.

Donors are heavily investing in programs to develop agricultural value chains and help reduce poverty. For instance, the World Bank's West Africa Productivity Program (WAPP) has, in Niger, established *le Centre National de Spécialisation en Elevage* (CNS-EL). To this end, CNS-EL has partnered with national organizations including *l'Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique du Niger* (INRAN), *la Faculté d'Agronomie de l'Université Abdou Moumouni* (FA/UAM), *le Laboratoire Central de l'Elevage* (LABOCEL), and *le Centre de Multiplication de Bétail* (CMB) (Saley, 2016).

4.2. National Level

The governmental agency overseeing livestock in Niger has been continually evolving since 1985. It wasn't until 2011 that independent ministries for livestock and agriculture, which had previously been lumped together, were created and the Ministry of Livestock was formed (Ministère de l'Elevage, 2013).

Niger has a network of livestock extension offices distributed across the country. These include eight regional offices, 67 departmental offices, 265 municipal offices, and numerous local intervention units (*Cellules d'Intervention de Base*). In addition, there are 303 vaccination parks distributed across Niger. These parks, however, are insufficient in number, poorly equipped, not easily accessible and many have been altogether abandoned (Ministère de l'Elevage, 2014). *Le Laboratoire Centrale de l'Elevage* (LABOCEL) is a national veterinary laboratory located in Niamey. The laboratory houses a vaccine production unit, although inadequate resources due to a lack of funding remains a major constraint for the center (Ministère de l'Elevage, 2014).

A number of national producer organizations exist in Niger, including *l'Association pour la Redynamisation de l'Elevage au Niger* (AREN), *la Fédération Nationale des Eleveurs du Niger* (FNEN Daddo), et *le Collectif des Associations Pastorales du Niger* (CAPAN) (République du Niger, 2013). Other livestock value chain actors have their national associations and are included in federation (e.g., *Syndicat National des Commerçants du Niger* for traders and *la Fédération de Bétail du Niger*, for platform organization)

Nongovernmental organizations supporting livestock in Niger include Veterinarians without Borders - Belgium (VSF-B), CRS, SNV, OXFAM, Merci Corps, Save the Children, and Network Bilital Maroobé. VSF has played a large role in Niger, building veterinary clinics, training doctors, and disseminating animal health information to livestock holders. As of 2014 they were reaching 49% of Niger's livestock population (VSF, 2016).

4.3.Sub-national Level

The structure of local governments in Niger is established by the General Code of Local Authorities (2010). Niger is divided into 7 regions, 41 urban communes, and 214 rural communes. The commune is the unit of local government in Niger, where local participation and governance take place (Kaboré, 2014). Due to their mobility throughout the year, pastoral communities are oftentimes underrepresented under this structure (Hughes, 2014).

FAO, WFP, and IFAD have numerous initiatives across Niger to improve food security and resilience at the community level. In 2012 the three UN organizations signed a joint program entitled, “Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women.” Through this program, women are provided with tools to encourage their participation in the local economy through livestock and agriculture. IFAD also works through the Family Farming Development Programme (ProDAF) in Maradi, Tahoua, and Zinder with the objective of obtaining long-term food security in these regions (FAO, 2015). Save the Children, Mercy Corps, CRS, CNFA, and CLUSA implement USAID-funded programs that aim to enhance ownership of small ruminants among women and vulnerable youth in USAID intervention zones. The main initiatives include sheep fattening, which has given grants of 60,000 FCFA to approximately 2,000 women, and a program based on the traditional Abanaye systems, in which women receive adult goats in order to breed offspring. While these projects are geared toward generating income, they also have an indirect impact on human nutrition.

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