Transhumant practices and its effects on natural resource management in the Sudano-Sahelian Zone of Mali

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Key research activities
- Documentation of local perceptions on transhumant practices
- Identification of advantages and disadvantages of transhumant practices in southern region of Mali
- Assessment of impact of transhumant practices on natural resource management

Results and main findings
- Koutiala district was a transit point for transhumant herders while Bougouni district was a destination points for many transhumant herders
- More than 90% interviewed in Bougouni and Koutiala stated that there have been more southerly movements by transhumant herders into the Sudano-Sahelian Zone of Mali over the past two decades (Figure 1).
- Advantage of transhumant practices in the study area were: manure deposition on farmers crop fields, availability of animals for purchase at low cost, availability of milk, local trade
- Disadvantage of transhumant practices and impact on NRM in southern region of Mali: abusive cutting of trees, damage to crop, increase in conflict, natural resource degradation
- Distance travelled by transhumant herders was positively associated with the transhumant herd size.
- From farmers and pastoralist herders perceptions, transhumance was no longer a practice dedicated to Fulani group as it was the case in the past. Today, the transhumant practices concern diverse ethnic groups.

How this work would continue in Africa RISING phase 2
- Assessing the effect of climate change on transhumant pastoralism
- Identifying the role of livestock mobility in the livelihood strategies of rural population in Mali
- Mapping and demarcation of pastoral corridors

Fig. 1: Trend of transhumant pastoralism in the southern region of Mali in the past 30 years. Magnitude of change: 0 =none; 1=low; 2=average; 3= High; 4= Very high
LivM.: Livestock mobility; TravDis.: Distance travelled; AccGW.: accessing grazing area and water points; TraHeSize: Transhumant herd size; LengStay: Length of stay; FreqConfl.: Frequency of conflict.

Implications of the research for generating development outcomes
This research will help to identify the key options to enhance the sustainability of transhumant practices in Mali

Current partnerships and future engagements for out scaling
- Partnerships with the Association Malienne d’Eveil pour le Développement Durable (AMEDDD)

The Africa Research in Sustainable Intensification for the Next Generation (Africa RISING) program comprises three research-development projects supported by the United States Agency for International Development as part of the U.S. government’s Feed the Future initiative.

Through action research and development partnerships, Africa RISING will create opportunities for smallholder farm households to move out of hunger and poverty through sustainably intensified farming systems that improve food, nutrition, and income security, particularly for women and children, and conserve or enhance the natural resource base.

The three projects are led by the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (in West Africa and East and Southern Africa) and the International Livestock Research Institute (in the Ethiopian Highlands). The International Food Policy Research Institute leads an associated project on monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment.

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