



Process case study

Lessons learnt from slaughter livestock offtake interventions in Niger and Mali

Background

Over the past three decades droughts have become very frequent in the Sahelian countries, with one year out of every three declared a deficit year in terms of forage production. Droughts result in direct livestock losses due to animal mortality as well as indirect losses from animal wasting, reduced milk production, abortion, etc. It is in this context that *Vétérinaires Sans Frontières* Belgium (VSF-B) developed an emergency livestock offtake strategy to: (i) avoid drought losses for livestock owners through purchasing their emaciated animals; and (ii) improve the diets of poor households through the distribution of meat after animal slaughter and health inspection.

Activities

The main activities covered by the livestock offtake strategy included:

- Raising awareness among livestock keepers and identifying sites for grouping animals
- Targeting of livestock keepers
- Tagging of animals
- Awareness raising for participants on livestock offtake criteria and techniques
- Identification and grouping of animals selected to be slaughtered
- Choice of slaughter sites
- Preparation of slaughter sites
- Recruitment of slaughter teams
- Slaughter of animals
- Remuneration of slaughter teams and logistics
- Selection of meat recipient households
- Distribution of the meat
- Monitoring of the operation
- Impact evaluation

Outcomes

In Niger in 2011, 1,813 severely emaciated cattle with no market value were selected for livestock offtake. More than 79,270,000 CFA francs were distributed to 1,256 herders, at an average of 63,113 CFA francs per herder (30,000-50,000 CFA francs/head of cattle and 1-2 cattle per herder). This amount allowed households to cover the cost of purchasing two to three months of grain.

In Mali in 2019, 1,000 at-risk households benefited from a livestock offtake operation, with 14% headed by women. In this intervention, 1,851 small ruminants and 371 cattle were slaughtered, providing 56,680 kg of meat to some 2,267 recipients, 65% of whom were female.

Lessons learnt

There are number of key lessons learnt from these two operations:

Timing : It is most appropriate for the start of this type of livestock offtake to coincide with the period when herders begin to concentrate around the few remaining pockets of pasture and protected grazing areas, i.e. before they experience significant losses from drought.

Meat preparation: When there is insufficient labour for meat processing, it is preferable to distribute fresh meat with oil, so that recipients can cook it themselves. In this case, recipients should be selected in advance so that distribution reaches the most at risk. If there is sufficient labour to process the meat, recipients should still be advised to re-cook the meat before eating it, to reduce the risk of diarrhoea.

Support for calves: In order to protect weakened calves whose mothers have been selected for livestock offtake, it is helpful to also establish recovery centres for young animals. Once recovered, these calves can then be returned to their owners.

Mobile banking: Where payments to participants of livestock offtake interventions have been made via mobile money accounts this has reduced security risks for both participants and the implementation team.

Sources:

VSF-B (2010). *Destocking Operation in Niger: Lessons Learned in 2010*. Capitalization document. 31 pages/ Opération déstockage, rapport d'activité 24 pages

Gilles Vias (2016) *Emergency destocking as a food and pastoral crisis mitigation strategy in Niger* in 'Strengthening resilience to food and nutrition insecurity in Sahel and West Africa.' Knowledge Share Fair, Ouagadougou Burkina. 54-56p. FAO.

VSF-B (2019). *Operation destocking in Mali. Final Report* OSRO/ML/803/SWE and OSRO/ML/805/CHA

LEGS case studies demonstrate good practice in livestock emergency response. They cover the six LEGS Technical Intervention areas, the eight LEGS Principles as well as the broader contexts covered in the third edition of the LEGS handbook. **Process case studies** illustrate the application of LEGS guidance and **impact case studies** reflect on the outcomes of LEGS interventions.

- ▶ You can access all of the LEGS case studies at livestock-emergency.net/resources/case-studies
- ▶ For more information see the Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards Handbook at livestock-emergency.net

