

# Water transforms the life of livestock markets in Burkina Faso and Niger

## USAID *TerresEauVie*

In West Africa, livestock is a key economic sector, contributing between 8 and 15% of overall gross domestic product (GDP) and nearly 50% of agricultural GDP<sup>1</sup>. In Niger and Burkina Faso, buying and selling livestock is mainly done in livestock markets, where large and small ruminants are assembled for sale. Livestock markets are separate from other commodities markets that happen concurrently. The financial scale also differs vastly. At each livestock market, the total transaction amounts are sometimes in the hundreds of millions CFA francs (more than \$165,000). They are exceptional centers for capital flow in rural areas.

Cattle markets are one of the most spectacular aspects of cattle trading. In a dynamic atmosphere, they bring together large numbers of animals and diverse people who come and go among the livestock, such as sellers, buyers, intermediaries, animal health specialists, restaurant owners, and street vendors. It is difficult for an observer to discern transactions amid the chaos. The COGES, the market management committee responsible for the registration of transactions, collection of taxes, and maintenance of infrastructure, collaborates with the municipality to which it pays taxes.

Temperatures can soar above 45°C /113°F during the hot season, leaving animals and humans dehydrated. If there is no water supply, people must buy water at a high price from vendors. With the heat and the difficulty of obtaining drinking water, the action within the market slows down, as does business. The intense activity fades into emptiness and silence.

Despite the economic importance of livestock markets, most do not have water supply systems. And yet, water is at the heart of the markets' vitality.

In Manni (Burkina Faso) and Kwaya (Niger), USAID *TerresEauVie* Activity constructed water supply infrastructures that meet the needs of buyers and sellers, animals, and cooks who

work around the edges of the market. It has given a new life to businesses within the market.

## IN MANNI, SELLERS AND BUYERS CAN “STAY LONGER, NEGOCIATE BETTER” THANKS TO WATER AVAILABILITY AND AFFORDABILITY

Laya Namountougou, General Secretary of the Manni breeders' association, is delighted: *“Before, you had to buy water for the animals from vendors. They took the water from the dam and sold it at a higher price with a “take it or leave it” attitude. And the animals, especially those fattened for sale, don’t last long without water, so those who don’t want to pay for water leave quickly so as not to tire their animals. This meant a loss of revenue for them and fewer transactions for the market. For human consumption, water also came from vendors. It was expensive and not necessarily clean. Our other option was to go downtown to find water for drinking or for ablutions before prayers. After that, many people didn’t return to the market. The water system [called “PEA” or Poste d’Eau Autonome] changed it all. We can stay longer, observe the animals better before purchasing them, and negotiate better. More and more traders come from far away because they know that the animals can be watered, and that they will also find water for themselves. There’s more choice and more competition.”*

Tifoudiba Tindano, COGES's head of external relations for the livestock market, can also see the changes: *“In a month, this market can bring together 5,000 to 6,000 animals, all species combined, and mobilize nearly a thousand people who do business there, through the marketing of animals or related activities such as catering. We want to properly manage this infrastructure so that it continues to give value to our market in the region and beyond.”*

Tiabrimani Tindano, Municipal Water and Sanitation agent of the commune of Manni, appreciates this progress: *“Having water available at a reasonable price keeps market users on site. Leaving the market to get water downtown is part of the past. The PEA rejuvenated the livestock market. The municipality is happy about this because the more users there are, the more taxes the*

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<sup>1</sup> Source : Kamuanga, M. J. B. , Somda, J. , Sanon, Y. , & Kagoné, H. (2008). Livestock and regional market in the Sahel and West Africa: potential and challenges. Sahel

and West Africa Club/Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, Economic Community of West African States.

*COGES pays us. More than half of the municipality's revenue comes from this market."*

### **KWAYA LIVESTOCK MARKET, READY TO TACKLE THE FULL POTENTIAL OF EXPORT TO NIGERIA**

In Kwaya, Zinder region of Niger, TerresEauVie extended the town's water network to the livestock market, offering water for human consumption and animal watering. Kwaya is one of the largest livestock markets in the region, because it is located near the Nigerian border. Having a water point sparked new sales and energy, laying down the foundation for transformational business growth, especially for export: Nigeria is a buoyant market, with a consumption of 350,000 tons of beef per year.

Nassirou Abdou, a cattle trader from a neighboring town, expresses the change he witnessed: *"I have been a regular visitor to this market for more than 25 years. The change brought by water availability is huge. The number of buyers has at least doubled and there are more and more profitable transactions as the sellers stay longer and the animals are in better shape. Drinking water provision on site is having positive impact at all levels."*

### **PROPERLY MANAGED, DRINKING WATER SUPPLY FEEDS SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS AND PROFITS IN LIVESTOCK MARKETS**

These markets now generate a steady tax revenue, that depends on the number of animals, size, and destination (export, consumption, or domestic breeding). Part of the taxes collected will be paid to the municipality that will in turn invest in services for the population. TerresEauVie is helping those municipalities develop a collaborative management model with the COGES. Each municipality must find its own arrangement that suits both the commune and the COGES, and define the rights and duties of the contracting parties. TerresEauVie also commissioned groundwater studies to support the municipalities understand the availability and quality of their water resources, and to ensure sustainable usage of the water systems.

In Manni, the water point is now managed by the COGES, under municipal supervision. Users are charged a small fee to use the water point (two 25-liter plastic jerrycans cost 25 CFA), and the money is used to pay a guard and a tapstand

manager. Their remuneration is based on the analysis of the balance sheet of the PEA operation. It is estimated that the PEA can generate about 25,000 CFA (\$41) a week and, at times of high temperatures, over 35,000 CFA (\$58).

In Kwaya, the management of this water point is based on a "three party agreement" between the municipality (responsible for the supply of water on its territory), the private water service operator that serves the market and other parts of the town, and the COGES (which is responsible for infrastructure and operations related to the livestock market). This partnership is still in its infancy, but it is very promising because the potential is huge. Lawali Abdou, who is in charge of collecting fees for water service at the market, sees its potential: *"The sale of water is really profitable at the livestock market. The cubic meter is sold at 250 CFA (less than \$1). The water tower can contain up to 25 m<sup>3</sup> of water. On ordinary days, you can fill it three to four times and every market day it goes up to 10 times!"* This means that it can generate between 18,750 to 62,500 CFA (\$31--\$103) a day.

These two livestock markets are in the process of becoming hubs for local development. Water is life, but it is also central to local business growth.