94. Perception of climate change and adaptation of herd conduct mode in Burkina Faso during rainy season

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In Sub-Saharan Africa, livestock breeding is traditional, characterized by the exploitation of natural pasture. In the context of climate change and increased uncertainty of rainfall, breeders adapt herds conduct modes on pastures to maintain acceptable levels of production, and to build resilience of their agricultural system. An investigation realized with 30 breeders distributed over 3 climatic areas in Burkina Faso (Sudano-Guinean (Folonzo), Sudanese (Koumbia) and Sudano-Sahelian (Dédougou)) showed that they had a perception of climate change from 10 to 15 years ago, manifested by decreasing order of importance:
- By a delay of 1 to 2 months of rains installation (more important in the south);
- By an increasing of the length of « drought pockets » of 10 to 20 days (more important in the north);
- And to a lesser extent by an increase of the rainfall in August and finally an early stopping of rains (shorter in the north).

The main cause of these changes would be, according to them, the expansion and advancement of agricultural front.

Face to this evolution, breeders adapted the conduct modes of herds:
- In case of delayed rains, they split the herd in two with a transhumant lot, proceed to food shopping and move temporarily the herd towards a more watered area;
- In case of prolonged or repeated drought pockets, they conduct herds in swampy areas, better provided into herbaceous pasture;
- In case of heavy rains in August, herds are conducted on hills, times of staying in muddy parks are reduced and sanitary treatments increase;
- In the event of early stopping of rains, a short transhumance is anticipated in areas where annual herbaceous remained green and retained their food value.

Adaptations of climate change is different with the agro-climatic area (largest storage of the fodder in the Sudanese and Sudano-Sahelian area), but also with the size of the herd (more food and fodder stock in the medium size herds) and locally available resources (short transhumance facilitated by the presence of free space without cultivation).

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