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# GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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## **Benin**

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### **Report Highlights:**

This report provides a brief introductory overview on agriculture in Benin, with a focus on international trade. The Office of Agricultural Affairs, U.S. Consulate, Lagos, covers Benin and is active in supporting USDA food aid programs and exploring and developing markets for U.S. agricultural exports in the country. This report compiles information gathered during field visits and from other sources.

## General Information:

### Overview

The USDA/Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) covers U.S. agricultural/agribusiness interests in Benin from its office located in Lagos, Nigeria. This report attempts to provide a brief overview of the country's agricultural sector as it relates to international trade. By no means comprehensive, it will best serve to provide an initial understanding of this country's agriculture and food sector and the importance it plays within the economy.

Benin is located on the West African coast, bordering Nigeria in the east and Niger in the north, Togo in the west and Burkina Faso in the northwest, with a total surface area of 112, 622 sq km. Benin's relatively efficient port services and liberal trade policies mean it is an important cog in the regional trade flows to nearby countries. Benin benefits significantly from Nigeria's anti-import policies and poor customs operations as a huge proportion of exports to Nigeria enter through Benin. The exchange rate is fixed at US\$ 1 = CFA 486, as France supports the West African Franc zone currencies by pegging the CFA monetary unit to the Euro.

Benin's total population is estimated at 9.9 million in 2013, composed of over 50 percent women. It is a young population as well, with 17.4 percent of its children under 5 years old. 42% urbanized, the population is mostly concentrated in the southern portion of the country. By Department the population distribution is as follows - Alibori 8.7%, Atacora 7.7%, Borgou 12%, Donga 5.4%, Collines 7.2%, Zou 8.5%, Plateau 6.3%, Couffo 7.4%, Ouémé 11%, Mono 5%, Atlantique 14%, and Littoral 6.8%.



Source: <http://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/africa/bj.htm>

Benin is predominantly a rural society and more than 70 percent of the population depends on

employment in the agricultural sector. Agriculture contributes around 35 percent of the Country's GDP and 80 percent of export income. While the Government of Benin (GOB) aims to diversify its agricultural production, Benin remains underdeveloped and its economy is underpinned by subsistence agriculture. 93% of total agricultural production goes into food production. The proportion of the population living in poverty is about 35.2%, with more rural households in poverty (38.4%) than urban households (29.8%). 36% of households depend solely upon agricultural (crop) production for income, and another 30% depend on crop production, livestock or fishing for income.

Cotton is the principal cash crop and accounts for 70% of export earnings. Cotton is mostly exported as bales with only three percent of total production processed locally, making the country heavily dependent on world cotton prices. Cashews, Shea Nuts and Shea Butter, Pineapples, Palm products, and some Cocoa and Coffee also are export crops. Animal and meat exports to nearby countries contribute a significant amount to the agricultural economy, but remains mostly outside official recorded statistics. Corn, beans, rice, peanuts, cashews, pineapples, cassava, yams, other tubers, and vegetables and fruits are grown for local subsistence and for export to neighboring countries through informal cross-border trading activities. Top commodities produced by quantity are cassava, yams, corn, pineapples, tomatoes, rice, cottonseed, cashew nuts, fresh fruit, and groundnuts. Top commodities produced by value are yams, cassava, cotton lint, cashew nuts, pineapples, corn, tomatoes, cattle, hot peppers, and rice.

Since 2008 the Government of Benin has been actively involved in strengthening agricultural development and the staple crop value chains. Benin is a party to commitments made by the Heads of Government at the various world summits on food and nutrition, including the Millennium Development Summit. Improving agricultural productivity and strengthening diversification are on the top of President Boni Yayi's agenda for agricultural development and overall poverty reduction strategy. The country's long term vision is to move towards greater diversification in order to become a major exporter of agricultural products by 2025.

To start, the GOB has focused on corn and rice to promote food security and food self-sufficiency. Coarse grains (corn, sorghum, millet) and rice are mostly grown by independent small scale farmers, who are responsible for producing 90% of the total output while using between 7% and 10% of the total arable land available. Many of the farmers that grow cotton or corn do so on only 1 hectare, with the largest single farm only reaching up to 18 hectares of land. Current national actions are still very weak and national plans for food security are mostly focused on staple food (calories) production and addressing nutrient deficiencies by supplementation (Vitamin A & Fe), food fortification, and salt iodization.

While the GOB aims to diversify its agricultural production, Benin remains underdeveloped and dependent upon the world price for cotton and regional trade. Agriculture policy is set and implemented or influenced by a number of ministries, including the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock breeding and Fishing (MAEP), Ministry of Industry and Trade, Ministry of Economy and Finances, and the Ministry of Transport and Public Works. Extension services are provided at the Department level through the CerPA (Regional Centres for Agriculture Promotion). Research is carried out at the National Institute of Agriculture Research (INRAB) and the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA). Partners working with the GOB to improve the agricultural sector include the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), The World Bank, FAO, United Nations Industrial Development Organization

(UNIDO), SNV Benin, the European Union, the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ), Agence Francaise de Développement (AFD), and many NGOs and initiatives.

INRAB is the primary GOB research institution in the agriculture sector. Issues of concern include:

- Prospection / Collection Germplasm
- Supply of improved seeds
- Regeneration of soils with organic fertilizer
- Inventory of specific pests
- Pests control (mites, caterpillars, nematodes, whiteflies )
- Cultural practices
- Physical protection
- Plant extraction

### **Food Security**

Benin is one of Africa's most stable democracies but the country is challenged by multiple economic and development factors and the country ranks 166 out of 187<sup>th</sup> countries on the 2012 Human Development Index. Economic growth is largely dependent upon agriculture and fluctuations in the volume of rainfall, the high cost of agricultural inputs, and the low level of mechanization impact the country's food security.

The World Food Program has reviewed Benin's situation recently and has determined that 2.3 million people, some 23% of households, in Benin have limited food security, another 11% suffer severe to moderately bad food security, and 1.1 million are considered food insecure, 34% of households. Only 55% are considered food secure. Among the departments Couffo, Mono, and Atacora are the most food insecure departments, with 29%, 28%, and 25% of their households, respectively, considered food insecure. Within these departments there are pockets where food insecurity is experienced by 35-40% of all households. These same three departments also lead in the percentage of households experiencing the slightly improved situation of limited food security, Mono 49%, Atacora 48%, Couffo 47%, Borgou 34%, Collines 27%, and Donga 25%. Of these departments, Atacora, Donga, and Mono suffer the weakest diversity of diet. This is a seasonal problem in many locations, exacerbated by a lack of income. Anecdotal discussions with Peace Corps volunteers stationed in the Peonga area in Oueme Department indicated that absolute food scarcity is not a common problem, but that the lack of diversity in diets, especially during the hungry seasons just before harvests, brought a lack of micronutrients and insufficient nutritional benefits from the available foods. Heavy reliance upon staple crops for starches was common as well, with sauces important to the daily diet, vegetables, vegetable oils, and sugar next in importance, and animal proteins less a common ingredient in the daily meals.

Most food insecure households consume primarily cereals and tubers, with legumes and vegetable oil. Slightly better off households introduce animal proteins and sugar into their diets when they can afford to do so. There are varying levels of household wealth among the departments, here listed from wealthiest to poorest: Littoral, Ouémé, Atlantique, Mono, Zou, Plateau, Donga, Collines, Borgou, Couffo, Alibora, Atacora. Most households, over 85%, obtain most of their food in local markets, as opposed to being self-sufficient. Most of these households grow crops for consumption, but rely upon the market for diversity and during the famine times.

### **Percent of Household Expenses for Food**

Department	Percentage
Alibori	68
Atacora	59
Plateau	52
Donga, Couffo	50
Borgou	48
Mono	47
Zou	46
Collines	44
Atlantique	42
Ouémé	41

*Source: WFP*

### **Regional and International Agribusiness and Trade**

Benin serves as a delivery corridor for West Africa reaching more than 100 million people in the landlocked countries of Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso, Chad, and the northern states of Nigeria. Goods landed in Cotonou get placed on trucks first heading north to the border towns of Malanville in Benin and Gaya in Niger and then onto the rest of the Sahel. Parakou is the major crossroad town in Benin, where goods going west to Togo, Ghana, and Burkina Faso pass, and goods going into Nigeria transit before heading to various border crossings. The Sèmè/Kraké border crossing with Nigeria along the coastal road is a major trade nexus for many of the agricultural products imported into Benin.

Currently trade between Benin and the United States is small, but interest in U.S. products is growing and increased 70% in CY 2013 calendar year to reach a record \$28.9 million in U.S. agricultural exports to Benin. The leading U.S. export items were poultry meats and products, rice, and condiments and sauces. The best prospects for U.S. agricultural exports include rice, poultry meat, wheat, corn, soybeans, canned fruits and vegetables, tomato sauce/ketchup, vegetable oil, fruit juices, pasta, wine and other spirits, powdered milk, energy drinks, mayonnaise, and snack foods. Benin has been eligible for the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) since the program began in 2000. It qualified for AGOA textile and apparel benefits in January 2004. Furthermore, the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) established a \$307 million –five year compact with the Government of Benin in 2006 to increase investment and private sector activity. The compact focused on expanding the Port of Cotonou, promoting land tenure, and creating a more efficient judicial system and it was completed in October 2011. In December 2012 the MCC board of directors selected Benin as one of the two countries (the other one is El Salvador) to develop a second development compact but that remains on hold until Benin can improve its rating on corruption.

Benin's traditional trade links with the EU, in particular France and Belgium, remain strong. There is presence of Chinese foodstuffs in the open-air markets and supermarkets. Benin's major trade partners include Nigeria, France, Belgium, Spain, Switzerland, Argentina, Brazil, U.S., China, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

The major regional trading partners include Niger, Togo, Nigeria, and Burkina Faso. Estimates of annual trade with these countries are extremely hard to determine, but some sources indicate that Benin exports about 15,000mt of corn and 1,500 mt of rice to Nigeria, 6000 mt of corn to Niger, 1400 mt of corn and 2000 mt of rice to Togo. Vegetables and animals move across these borders in large amounts

in regular patterns. In “crisis years” where local crops are underproduced, Benin has sourced as much as 9500 mt of corn and 950 mt of rice from Togo, and 6000 mt of rice and 1800 mt of corn from Nigeria.

Nigeria’s 170 million people and the country’s income from oil also influence the economy of Benin significantly. Informal trade between Nigeria and Benin is substantial. Importers take advantage of Nigeria’s high tariff changes and porous borders to export unrecorded rice, poultry products and other food and agricultural products to Nigeria. Trade sources estimate that more than 85 percent of these types of products that are shipped to Benin are meant for onward sales into Nigeria through informal cross-border trading activities. While Nigerian brokers can travel up to farms in Benin to buy vegetables, local buyers often transport their fruits, mostly pineapple and oranges to markets on the Benin-Nigeria border. The Sèmè/Kraké border market is the best known market of the country for pineapple and orange transactions, where Nigerian brokers load up vehicles bound for Nigeria. This border crossing is also where the majority of other imported agricultural products leave Benin for Nigeria, including palm oil, rice, refined sugar, and poultry meat. According to border-based sources, Kalale, Caldel and Onazal in Benin are the three major border towns for the routes of cross-border trade with Nigeria. However, women carrying baskets filled with yams and other items regularly pass over the border at Tchikandou in central Benin heading to the Nigerian town of Tchikanda.

Benin has recognized the importance of trade transit and providing predictable policies for traders. Benin was ranked by The World Bank’s annual 2014 “Doing Business” guide as 174 out of 189 countries, making it the third year in a row that Benin climbed in its ranking. Benin has lowered barriers to starting businesses by establishing a one-stop window for setting up a business, lowering time needed from ten to three days; and has boosted trading by creating a one-stop window for customs clearance at the Port of Cotonou now taking only three days, instead of the 15-30 needed previously. The Port of Cotonou has received two international awards in 2014 for information technology and public-private partnership, due in large part to the improvements in port operations resulting from the MCC compact stimulated reforms and U.S. Coast Guard assistance to meet international standards on security compliance. It is becoming one of the major ports in West Africa.

**Top Ten Leading Agricultural Exports and Imports**

<b>Exports by Quantity, including re-exports</b>	<b>Imports by Quantity</b>	<b>Exports by Value, including re-exports</b>	<b>Imports by Value</b>
Palm Oil	Palm Oil	Palm Oil	Chicken Meat
Cashew Nuts	Refined Sugar	Cashew Nuts	Turkey Meat
Refined Sugar	Chicken Meat	Cotton Lint	Refined Sugar
Cotton Lint	Turkey Meat	Chicken Meat	Palm Oil
Chicken Meat	Wheat Flour	Refined Sugar	Prepared Foods
Cottonseed	Apples	Turkey Meat	Apples
Food Wastes	Wheat	Palm Kernel Oil	Confectionary Sugar
Turkey Meat	Prepared Foods	Cottonseed Oil	Wheat Flour
Cottonseed Cake	Peanut Oil	Cottonseed	Wine
Palm Kernel Oil	Tomato Paste	Cotton Lintner	Whole Milk

Source: FAOSTAT

## **Food Standards, Product Registration and Regulations**

There is no well-defined system for the elaboration of food standards and the Codex committee is not fully functional. Benin's food standards are aligned with international CODEX Alimentarius standards. The United States has sponsored focal points (contacts) in the past couple of years to attend regional Codex Meetings.

## **Trade Barriers**

Benin is signatory to all international trade conventions under the aegis of the WTO and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). Also, Benin is a member of the trade agreement between the European Union, Africa, and Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACP-EU), and the regional and sub-regional economic unions such as the Economic Community of West African States (*ECOWAS*) and The West African Economic and Monetary Union (*WAEMU*), and it is party to the African Growth and Opportunities Act (AGOA).

Benin applies a common external tariff (*CET –Tarif Exteriur Common, TEC* in French) together with other countries belonging to the West African Economic and Monetary Union (*WAEMU - l'UEMOA* in French) - Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal, and Togo. The CET establishes four categories of products on which tariffs are zero, five, 10, and 20 percent. Benin's enactment of the CET and its accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) have eliminated many trade barriers.

Benin has signed bilateral trade agreements for the promotion and the protection of investments with the Germany, Tunisia, Switzerland, China, Portugal, Greece, France, and the United States.

Currently imports of all products are allowed and there are no indications that this will change in the foreseeable future. Post has only dealt with a two trade issues since 2010 which were easily and successfully resolved.

## **General Import and Inspection Procedures**

Documents related to import requirements vary depending on the type of the imported goods and they are not specific to food inspection. In general, the documents to be produced by importers before the clearing of goods are the invoice, bill of lading, and pre-shipment inspection certificate issued by BUREAU VERITAS Group, one of the world leaders for controls and inspection, with a network that represents more than 1,000 offices and 330 laboratories (<http://www.bureauveritas.com>), the importer's import license, attestation of origin of the goods (originated from a *WAEMU* or *ECOWAS* member state) and an animal or plant health inspection SPS certificate if appropriate. Further information can be obtained from the "*Direction de l'Application et de la Reglementation*" or Office of Regulation Application of Benin's Customs Service at +229-21318740.

## **Import Duties & Collections**

In general, imports from non *WAEMU* countries are subject to 48% import duty on the value of the goods. On top of these customs duties, importers are required to pay 18% Value-Added-Tax (VAT) at the point of entry. Further information on customs procedures in Benin may be obtained on the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MDEF) website at [www.gouv.bj](http://www.gouv.bj), [www.finances.bj](http://www.finances.bj), and [www.izf.net](http://www.izf.net).

## **Production**

## Commercial Crops

### Cotton

Cotton accounts for nearly 40% of GDP and roughly 80% of official export receipts, therefore cotton exports are vital to Benin's economy and an integral part of the country's development plans and poverty reduction strategies. Cotton seed production is concentrated in the north and center of Benin in an area known as the cotton belt. About two-thirds of the farmers of Borgou department grow cotton, 37 percent of those in Atacora department and 64 percent of those in the central department of Zou. By contrast, in the three departments in the south (Atlantique, Mono, and Ouémé), the percentage ranges from zero to 25 percent. Cotton is grown by small scale farmers and sold to ginning companies, which transform it into cotton lint and/or produce other by products such as cotton seed, cake and oil, etc. whose export has developed strongly in the last few years. After rising to become one of the 20 leading global producers of cotton lint between 2004 and 2006, Benin experienced a sharp fall in production and exports and has not been able to recover its former output levels (which reached a peak of 268,630 mt in 2007/08). For example, in 2010/2011 production was less than one third of the installed ginning capacity of 620,000 tons. Likewise, production of cotton lint was less than half of the level recorded in 2004/2005. Between 72,800-74,000 tons of lint (334,367 bales) were exported in 2011/2012. Benin 2011/2012 cotton production totaled 174,052 tons.

The Government set the cotton farm gate price of 260 CFA francs (\$0.51) per kg for the 2012/2013 season, up from 250 CFA/kg last season and 200 CFA/kg the season before, in an attempt to stimulate more planting. The national cotton company *SONAPRA* indicated that at least 330,000 hectares were planted in the 2012/13 season (campaign), and estimated a production increase of over 50 percent from the last season. The 2012/2013 cotton season was delayed as inputs (fertilizers and seeds) were not in place as expected in March and April. In July 2012 the GOB was arguing with its main fertilizer supplier, *L' Association Interprofessionnel du Cotton (AIC)*, regarding the terms of delivery/and payment for 80,000 tons of fertilizer to start off the 2012/2013 cotton season. Due to the delay in the planting season, the GOB lowered its initial 2012/2013 forecast from 500,000 tons to 350,000 tons. Early reports had 225,000 tons of cotton were ginned from the estimated cotton production for the 2012/2013 campaign (est. 350,000 tons). Similar problems have held back the 2013/14 campaign as well, with cotton deliveries very late to the ginners, so much so that the IMF cautioned Benin over the need for a cotton processing management system that is more responsive to market conditions.

Benin is usually the fourth biggest cotton producer in West Africa, behind Burkina Faso, Mali and Ivory Coast. Cotton production forecasts are often missed because of unpredictable weather (rains). Until June 2012, *AIC* was responsible for coordinating marketing of inputs and seed cotton, facilitating financial and economic claims among the key stakeholders, and was the main importer and distributor of cotton insecticides. However, in mid-2013 the GOB removed *AIC* from its critical role and established a new sector framework, *Cadre Institutionnel Transitoire de Gestion de la Filiere Cotton*, to set guidelines for a new management framework to revive the cotton industry, including defining new terms for public-private partnerships (PPPs).

The GOB's attempt to revitalize the cotton sector, so far, has included making sure that producers/farmers are fully paid for the previous year's crop, consolidating farmer's organizations, creating village cooperatives, providing capacity building to small producers, and fortifying input committees to reach the goal of 600,000 tons of seed cotton production in the next 5 years. This has been an on-going effort since the country's estimated national ginning capacity is 620,000 tons. The GOB also inserted itself into the processing of cotton fibers, by paying ginners a fixed fee of 50 CFA

per kilogram for processing (ginners wanted twice that amount – they previously handled all exports), and took over the export of cotton and cotton seeds. This disrupted normal practices within the ginning industry and the government is now faced with the challenge of rebuilding both production and exports with a dissatisfied ginning industry.

### **Shea**

Shea nuts (Karite) are collected from native, uncultivated trees in the Sahel band of Benin by individuals who either sell the nuts to wholesalers, or produce shea butter for export or for use in local foods (cooking oil) or in the making of skin ointments or soaps for local consumption. A number of women's cooperatives have become involved in shea butter. Shea butter is a substitute for cocoa butter and remains highly sought after on the world market for confectionary or cosmetic use. Shea trees grow widely across West Africa. They only begin to bear fruit after 20 years of growth, do not reach maturity for 45 years, and can produce nuts for up to 200 years after reaching maturity. The long time before nut production has made them unattractive for commercialization. In some areas the trees are shade trees for other crops in certain dry areas. The shea nuts are surrounded by a soft fruit and fall to the ground June through August. The collected nuts are buried in pits which cause the pulp to ferment and disintegrate and the heat produced prevents germination. The nuts are then dried, shelled and winnowed, usually by hand. The kernels are dried further to reduce moisture content from about 40 percent to about 7 percent. The Global Shea Alliance recently held (May 2013) a train-the-trainers session for 40 leading collectors in northern Benin in Parakou to learn best practices for producing high quality shea butter for export. Benin is the world's sixth largest producer of shea nuts and has two processing plants – Sinocog Bohicon is the larger of the two, with a 10,000 metric ton capacity that usually works at 25% utilization per year. The second plant is Sonicog Cononou, with 5,000 metric tons of processing capacity, usually reaching 20% utilization per year. Benin is estimated to produce (collect) about 50,000 metric tons of shea nuts a year, exports about 35,000 mt of nuts per year, and produces a small amount of shea butter for exports, about 100 mt.

### **Cashew Nuts**

Benin's cashew nuts are considered to be the second best in West Africa, after Guinea-Bissau's. The late 1990s saw international demand for cashews increase and stimulate interest in increasing production in Benin. Cashew plantations grew from about 10,000 ha in 1990 to more than 190,000 ha in 2008, according to FAOSTAT data. Some 200,000 growers raise the crops on plots averaging between 1 and 1.5 ha., with growers averaging 1.5 plots each. The largest plots are between 5 and 30 ha, with very few reaching up to 50 ha in size. Cashews can be grown all over the country, but the lower third of the country (from Ketou up to Gougounou), not including the littoral area, is the optimal production area. 2008 production was estimated at about 98,938 metric tons. Exports from Benin reached 116,398 metric tons in 2008, 15% of which included cashew nuts from other countries, such as Nigeria, Togo, and Burkina Faso – all much smaller producers. Cashew nut exports represent about 8% of total export value, 7% of agricultural GDP, and 3% of the national GDP in 2008. The farmgate price in 2008 averaged \$500.00 per ton, with each farmer producing about ½ ton annually. Very few inputs are used, with some pesticides and fertilizer specific for cotton used when diverted.

In the mid-2000s, the non-governmental organization TechnoServe pursued a public-private partnership to establish a processing plant, Afokantan Benin, located south of Parakou, as a joint venture between a Beninese entrepreneur and the leading Dutch cashew kernel broker Global Trading, with support from the Dutch Government PSOM investment program and the African Cashew Alliance. This factory has a capacity of 1,500 – 2,000 metric tons per year and is the only facility processing at any scale. It

produces white kernels which go onto the Netherlands. There are a few other smaller commercial operations, but none operating with substantial impact on the market. Artisanal producers are also active as well, producing for the domestic market and some exports to Nigeria and Togo. Raw nuts are exported to mostly India (70% of total production), with Vietnam, Pakistan, and Singapore (25% shared between them) next, followed by Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, China, and Indonesia. Only 5% remains for local processing or nearby informal trade to Nigeria and Togo of locally processed/packaged cashews. The cashew apples, the fleshy part above the nut, with an estimated production of 600,000 mt per year, go unutilized and could be used to make juice, jam, alcohol or biofuels. Within Benin domestic consumption of the nuts is concentrated to celebratory occasions (weekends, parties, holidays) or for use as traveling gifts.

### **Palm Oil**

Oil palm has been an important crop in Benin since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when palm groves were established to meet the oil demand for soaps in the Western world. Oil palms are indigenous to West Africa, naturally occurring in swampy areas. The many products from the plants (fibers, oils, sap) have been used for centuries by local populations. Commercial usage focuses upon the oil from the meat surrounding the kernels (palm oil), and the oil within the kernel (palm kernel oil). Estimates on the size of the palm plantations at the historical peak in the 1930s put them covering 500,000 hectares. Processing in those days was by hand, with women primarily serving as small-scale producers and processors. Benin undertook an oil palm industrialization program in the 1950s and began to invest in large-scale, public, industrial processing facilities. With independence in 1960, the national government increased the effort and focused on improving productivity by planting around 30,000 hectares of selected oil palm seedlings between 1960 and 1974. Challenges came – rainfall decreased and management problems rose, while external competition from Asian countries pressured profitability, leading the government to back away from the industrialized palm oil sector. The problems hit the small-holder producers as well and the peak number of palm groves dropped from 500,000 hectares to an estimated 300,000 hectares by 2000. Current estimates put the land under cultivation at between 300,000 and 400,000 hectares, mostly in Ouémé, Plateau, Atlantic, Mono, Couffo, and Zou Districts.

The industry's troubles continued during the 1960s and 1970s with the manner in which the government approached the industry – some farmers had their plantations expropriated by the government and were to be compensated with annual rent payments. Farmer unhappiness with the low rents led to the destruction of 2,000 or more hectares of oil palm plantations in the early 1990s in protest. In response the government tripled rent payments and began an oil palm seedling distribution program in 1993 (private nurseries were subsidized to sell seedlings), and made efforts to privatize the large processing facilities and offer support to private sector processors for equipment purchases.

Recent efforts by the Government to revitalize the agriculture sector have included a focus on exploring biofuel production, and oil palm improvements are at the center of this effort. Groups from Malaysia, South Africa, and China have visited Benin to examine the possibilities of investing in the business.

Annual palm oil production has grown from 31,000 metric tons in 1961 to 50,000 metric tons in 2013, averaging about 5% growth per year.

### **Commercial Processing**

Benin possesses limited agricultural processing facilities of any scale. There are a number of cotton gins, an edible oil (cottonseed) processing plant, some smaller palm oil facilities, a sugar refinery, and

some juice processors. Cottage-level processing of a number of agricultural products is wide-spread, but limited to village level production capacity in all but a few cases. Some cooperatives are engaged in shea processing to make shea butter and locally used shea products, especially soaps and skin ointments. This work is important for a number of women's groups and cooperatives, and shea butter has become a more important export crop for Benin. The Fludor cottonseed plant began operations in 1996 but as cottonseed supplies have diminished, switched to processing soybean oil and shea butter. Owned by a German expatriate, it is managed by Indian nationals and sells cottonseed cake and soybean powder and husks for animal feed. The SUCOBE sugar refinery is near Save in Collines Department, next to a 5,000 ha cane plantation and a man-made reservoir supplying irrigation. It is a joint project between the governments of Benin and Nigeria. A Chinese company operates it under a lease agreement.

There are only three small-scaled, under-developed fruit processing units in Benin. One of them, IRA (Initiative pour la Relance de l'Ananas), is located in the country pineapple belt of Allada and produces only pineapple juice. IRA is a cooperative made up of groups of pineapple farmers in Benin. The group was able to access funding through the Millennium Challenge Account compact of U.S. \$200,000 in 2009 to purchase modern processing equipment and now process about 80 tons a day of pineapple into canned juice. The other fruit processors have rudimentary pineapple processing units and utilize (re-use) disposable bottles for their juice packaging. The GOB has set up four vegetable and fruit processing units to process tomatoes, oranges, pineapple, and mangoes to add value to these crops and reduce post-harvest losses.

### **General Agricultural Cultivation and Production Practices**

Benin has a large percentage of land that can be considered grassland cover, over 90%, which is the highest percentage of grassland cover in subsaharan Africa. Benin's land utilization breaks down into the following components - 25% (2.75 m ha) is in forested zones, 23.5 % (2.585 m ha) is arable land that is now used for agriculture or could be, 8% (880,000 ha) is already in permanent crop production, some 4% (440,000 ha) is used as permanent pasture for grazing livestock, and the remainder of 39.4% (4.345m ha) is in other uses (urban areas, coastal, roads, etc.). Land utilization crosses categories, with crop stubble feeding ruminants, and grazing taking place in afforested areas. Livestock is an important component of agricultural production, contributing about 6% of GDP from the husbandry of cattle, goats and sheep, pigs, poultry, grass cutter rodents, and snails. 36% of Benin households engage in some form of raising livestock, and it is particularly important for the North. 87% of households in Alibori Department and 41% of households in Borgou Department depend upon livestock as their main economic activity, and it is very important as an economic livelihood in Donga, Mono, and Zou Departments as well. Estimates of the herd size are as follows - in 2004 stocks were at 1,826,399 cattle, 2,300,000 goats & sheep, 293,000 pigs, and 13,200,000 chickens. Capture fisheries (sea and fresh water) production provides work for 70,000 people and produces 2% of GDP, reaching an estimated high of 40,000 mt harvested in 2005.

On average, Benin farmers cultivate plots between one and two hectares in size, with 85% of farmers growing corn, 30% cassava, 31% yams, 30% sorghum, and interestingly, only 11% grow cotton, the principal cash crop for the country. The largest plots of farmland are found in Borgou, followed by Atacora, Collines, Alibori, Donga, Plateau, Ouémé, Atlantique, Mono, and Couffo in that order. The leading departments with the highest percentage of households engaged in crops or gardens for food production and income are as follows - Atacora 80%, Alibori 70%, Donga 60%, Collines 54%, Borgou 53%, Couffo 44%, Plateau 40%, and Zou 37%.

**Staple Crop Production by Percentage of Households in the Department (FAOSTAT)**

<i>Department</i>	<i>Corn</i>	<i>Cassava</i>	<i>Yams</i>	<i>Millet</i>	<i>Rice</i>
<i>Alibori</i>	77%	6%	15%	48%	10%
<i>Atacora</i>	82%	11%	41%	45%	18%
<i>Atlantique</i>	81%	41%	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
<i>Borgou</i>	94%	26%	74%	8%	n.a.
<i>Collines</i>	96%	66%	58%	5%	15%
<i>Couffo</i>	98%	n.a.	6%	n.a.	1%
<i>Donga</i>	91%	62%	79%	44%	6%
<i>Mono</i>	85%	30%	7%	n.a.	n.a.
<i>Ouémé</i>	n.a.	16%	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
<i>Plateau</i>	95%	55%	17%	n.a.	n.a.
<i>Zou</i>	91%	21%	5%	n.a.	n.a.

A report undertaken by the Council of Private Investors in Benin in 2007 (*discussed in FAO Country Pasture/Forage Resource Profiles – The Republic of Benin*) divided the country into eight agricultural zones in regards to crop cultivation and animal husbandry practices. The zones, working from the north to the south, are as follows:

Zone I – Area comprising Karimana, Malanville, and northern Kandi in Alibori District. Situated along the Niger river, this area has two major types of soil, susceptible to erosion. Major crops produced here include millet, sorghum, and cowpeas. Riverbed areas produce cotton, corn, rice, beans, onions, peppers, leafy vegetables, and a small amount of potatoes. This area has larger amounts of arable land and draft animals are common. The riverbed locations permit much off-season vegetable production, especially peppers and tomatoes which are usually marketed in the two large markets in Karimana and Malanville. Some of this production goes outside the local area via traders to destinations further south or in neighboring countries;

Zone II – Area of Kerou, northeast Kouande in Atacora and Banikouara, Segbana, Gougounou, and southern Kandi, all in Alibori District. Soils here are subject to erosion and major rainfall season is once annually. Cotton is important here, with corn, peanuts, sorghum, yam, and cassava also in production. Shea and cashew nuts are found here as well;

Zone III – Area of Southern Borgou to Donga, including Pehunco, Parakou, N'dali, Perere, Nikki, Dinende, Kalade, and Bembereke. Soil fertility is variable here with leaching as the leading soil issue. Annual rainfall in one period mostly. Shea trees are important here. Crops are primarily sorghum, yams, cotton and corn intercropped. Additional crops include cassava, peanuts, rice and legumes where there is more water. Animal husbandry is important to this area;

Zone IV – Area of Ouake, Copargo, Boukoumbe, Tanguieta, Materi, Natitingou, Toukountouna, Kouande, Cobly, and West Djougou where rainfall is irregular and fluctuates in volume. Predominantly a dry, savannah area with generally infertile soils, except in the permanently moist areas along watercourses. Crops include millet, sorghum, black fonio, bambara groundnuts, cowpeas, and peanuts. Moist areas can sustain cocoyam, water yams, sweet potatoes, rice and assorted vegetables

commercially important during the off-season;

Zone V – This area is composed of Atacora, Borgou, Mono, Ouémé to Zou. The Bassila area in Atacora has large amounts of virgin (uncultivated) land. Area has higher rainfall. The main crops include yams, corn, cassava, peanuts, rice, citrus, and cashew nuts. Shea, almonds, African Locust beans (*Parkia* nuts), and peppers are also produced. Annuals and fruit crops can do well in this area;

Zone VI – Area of Plateau, Atlantique, Mono, Couffo, and Ouémé to Zou. It rains here twice annually, on a heavily degraded hard pan soil that is easy to cultivate. Leading crops are corn, peanuts, cowpeas, cassava, peppers, coffee, mangos, citrus, bananas, legumes, and oil palms. Breeding of ruminants (cattle, goats, sheep) is important here, along with poultry and fisheries. Some private irrigation efforts during the off-season produce legumes and rice;

Zone VII – An area comprising Atlantique, Mono, Ouémé, and Zou. Rainfalls twice a year, on a fertile soil with a high clay content that makes it harder to work. Corn is the major crop, followed by cowpeas, vegetables, and rice. Here poultry and smallholder livestock husbandry is important economically.

Zone VIII – Area of Atlantique, Littoral, Mono, Ouémé. Rain falls twice a year, on very fertile alluvial soils in some areas and on poor sandy soils. Corn is the lead staple crop, cowpeas and vegetables next in importance economically. Corn and cassava are grown in the sandy soil. Arable land is limited in this area due to the major cities being located within it.

### **Livestock**

Cattle, goats and sheep are the primary animals raised in Benin, most found on the northern grasslands. Pasturage for cattle, goats and sheep is whatever natural plant growth occurs in the area, supplemented by crop residues when these are available. Sheep are often tethered while grazing and goats are left to forage on their own. Very few individuals provide cut fodders or concentrated animal feed for their animals. Benin has numerous grasses suitable for grazing ruminants, but during the dry season can experience shortages in areas of suitable plants, or the available plants provide low nutrition. This is the primary reason for the seasonal migration patterns of most animals. Poultry and pigs are also important economically but there are very few large operators and most production is at the household level. Grasscutters (ratlike rodents), rabbits, and African snails round out the livestock assortment.

### **Cattle**

There is no predominant breed of cattle in the country, with is a constant mixing of the herd. Breeds most common in Benin include Lagune (Dwarf West African Shorthorn), Somba (Savannah Shorthorn), Borgou (local cross between Zebu and humpless crossbred), and Zebu. Most of the cattle are raised in a seasonal migration pattern, with a small portion (20% or less) raised in a sedentary manner mostly in the southern portions of the country. Borgou, Alibori, Atacora, and Donga Districts hold most of the cattle. Fulani are the main herders, and often work for hire. Herds are moved from north to south and back, depending upon available forage and water supplies. Herds in the north can be as large as 80 or so animals. Most cattle are raised for meat, some cattle near towns produce milk for sale. A few cattle in the northeast area are raised in small herds with very limited movement (Somba farmers), and a larger group in the southern area are raised with a few animals per household, where the households are in areas demarked by waterways. Here the animals are moved around depending on availability of forage from location to location, household by household. Some villages hire herdsmen to oversee the village animals. Total herd size for the country is estimated at between 750,000 to 1 million animals.

## **Goats and Sheep**

The small ruminants are generally kept by individual households, who usually hold two to five animals. These animals are raised off the land, with very few getting any kind of supplemental feeding or health treatment. The combined herd of goats and sheep is estimated to be between 1.5 to 1.8 million animals. There are two breeds of sheep, the Sahelian (larger) and the Guinean (small). The Sahelian breed predominates among the sheep in the north and reach up to 80 kg.s live weight. Smaller sheep average 30 kg.s in live weight. Goats are found all across the country and are usually either the African Dwarf breed (for meat) or the long-legged Sahelian goat (for milking). Meat goats range in size from 15 to 20 kg.s, while the milking goats average closer to 35 kg.s per animal. More goats are found in the southern part of the country than sheep and are more popular because some there are some cultural and ethnic restrictions against raising sheep. Ownership of goats is popular among women due to the ease of care and are cheaper to own and present less risk compared to other livestock.

## **Examination of Cross-Border Market for Poultry Meat**

Post examined the cross-border market at Seme and met with Benin poultry producers in the greater Cotonou area to assess Benin's domestic poultry industry and the impact from trade. Benin is a major importer of poultry meat and does not consume most of what is imported. Most goes to Nigeria. Poultry meat is scarce in Nigeria and cost of poultry production is also high. Despite this, the GON maintains a ban on legal frozen poultry imports, primarily to protect local producers whereas poultry meat is free for import in Benin. Benin's poultry sector is small and domestic poultry meat production was about 13,000 MT in 2013 but a conservative estimate of poultry meat imports into Benin that year exceeded 160,000 MT (about 6,500 units of 40-foot containers) valued at more than US\$450 million. (Some Benin importers indicated that poultry imports are actually as high as 300,000 tons annually). More than 85 percent of this is shipped to Benin for onward sales into Nigeria—entering the Nigerian market through informal cross-border trading activities, (as does rice, intermediate and consumer-oriented food and agricultural products of all types as well).

Poultry meat importers in Benin want the GON to maintain Nigeria's import ban on poultry meat in order for them to continue to serve the huge and increasing Nigerian poultry meat consumers. However, some poultry meat importers in Benin also own poultry operations mostly for egg production and some poultry meat processing and packaging. Many fish importers are also shifting to poultry meat imports utilizing their existing cold storage facilities and others are expanding their storage facilities particularly around the Benin-Nigeria border, to meet Nigeria's increasing demand for imported poultry products at the border. One poultry meat importer in Benin visited said she was a beneficiary of the U.S. MCA project to get funding for the expansion of her fish import expansion but she utilized the funds to expand her cold storage facilities for poultry meat imports from Canada, Brazil, and three U.S. poultry meat exporters..

Poultry farmers visited said they produce mostly eggs for domestic consumption. For poultry meat, they said they were limited more by the country's market size than cost of production inputs. Although they still have easy and adequate supplies of corn, soybeans and other feed ingredients, they fear the cost of production is rising due mainly to increasing human consumption of these products (particularly corn and soybeans). Generally, Benin's poultry farmers want the GON to remove its import ban on poultry meat in order for them to gain free access into Nigeria's massive market. One of the Benin farms visited is very integrated and stocks about 50,000 birds (chickens), produces other poultry types as well, compounds its own feeds, has its own poultry processing and packaging facilities, and supplies

poultry meat to one of the country's large supermarkets. The farm also runs an aquaculture farm and owns a newly established poultry farm that can hold over 100,000 birds. Currently, the new farm is stocking about 10,000 birds and the firm seeks partners and markets, especially in Nigeria, to optimize its operations.

### **Vegetables**

Vegetables in Benin are produced in many different systems and locations, but can be generally put in two distinct categories: 1) a lowland vegetable farming system in the rural areas and 2) an urban and peri-urban production system. In lowland cultivation traditional vegetables such as tomato, pepper, onion, okra, leafy vegetables are the most dominant type of vegetables produced. In the urban and peri-urban vegetable production system can be both traditional and non-traditional. With the strong economic growth in Benin, the demand for non-traditional (exotic) vegetables such as cabbage, carrot, lettuce, and cucumber has increased. Plot sizes are an average of .25 ha where a variety of different vegetables are grown nearby the larger cities.

Vegetable production includes tomato, pepper, onion, okra across the country; and cabbage, carrot, lettuce, cucumber growing in specific areas suitable for this type of crop. Leafy vegetables are grown year-round where there is water available. Waterways and river valley locations are prime vegetable growing sites, except during the flood season from September to December and the November to March dry season. The Cotonou area has 400 ha of land allocated for peri-urban plots of vegetables, with producers working plots between .25 to .5 ha each. This area has dependable ground water and produces year-round, with most of the production marketed in Cotonou or exported to Nigeria. The largest vegetable farm in Benin (50 ha) is located here in this coastal area just outside of Cotonou in Grand Popo.

Vegetable production is meant for local consumption and export to neighboring countries, especially Nigeria. Import of vegetables from Burkina Faso and Niger increase during the off season between November and March.

Growers sell to wholesalers or retailers by unwritten agreement and almost never sell directly to end consumers. Most production goes to local consumption or over to Nigeria. During the dry season Burkina Faso and Niger produce vegetables for sale in Benin, tomatoes in particular.

### **Fruits**

According to INRAB, considering cost and income intensity, profitability and investment comparison, and financial competitiveness of planted fruits, the best species in Benin are mango, papaya, banana, orange, avocado, guava, and pineapple. Papaya, banana, and orange contribute more to producers' income and profitability whereas increased pineapple production participates in jobs creation. From virtual non-existence in the 1980's to 222,000 metric tons of production in 2009, the pineapple sector now accounts for 1.2% of Benin GDP and 4.3% of the country's agricultural GDP after cotton and cashew nuts, ahead of shea butter and palm oil. The pineapple production zones are located in south and growers fall into two groups, small with 0.5 to 5 ha plots, and large with 5-40 ha plots. Only 2% of Benin's pineapple production is exported to European markets. Some production is processed into juices locally and the rest of the fresh pineapple is exported to neighboring countries, particularly Nigeria.

As of 2009, Benin's pineapple production reached 222,000mt.

## Production Constraints

Farmers in Benin face many obstacles to increasing production. They include rudimentary growing systems, limited access to land in the peri-urban production zones, difficulty in obtaining appropriate land title deed or certificate of land occupancy, a lack of adequate credit, 25% or higher post-harvest losses during peak season production, a lack of coordinated groups to aggregate benefits in marketing and distribution, an absence of appropriate packaging systems for products, and an absence of specific vegetable inputs. Producers utilize the chemical fertilizers and pesticides that are only available for cotton on many other crops, as there are few or no alternatives. Farmers also encounter soil issues - 45% report infertile soils are the greatest problem, a lack of moisture was the next greatest soil issue at 34%, degraded soils were seen as problematic by 32%, and flooding was a problem for 25% of farmers.

- *Inadequate input supply.* A wide range of fertilizers are being used, especially for vegetable gardens. Imported artificial fertilizers, like UREA and NPK, though highly esteemed, are expensive and therefore not widely used. Nitrogen fertilizer is also available as a locally produced brand and is substantially cheaper. However, some farmers cannot afford any of these products, and to enrich the soil they depended partly or wholly on household waste. Urban farmers that have access to chicken manure will use this manure because this is considered to be as effective as artificial fertilizers (high nitrogen content). Although the farmers pay for all these inputs, the costs are considerably lower than for artificial fertilizers;
- *Lack of land title.* The lack of land titles by most small holder farmers hinders the ability to invest in equipment such as drip irrigation, or to get access to loans;
- *Distrust among farmers.* Farmers organized in cooperatives or farmers groups do not regularly work together for sale of their produce. There is a lack of trust among small farmers to aggregate produce and as a result farmers associations are not set up to improve for sales. They like to buy inputs together, but are not organized in selling their produce as a group. Thus, there is a lack of economies of scale to reach bigger and important markets. Aggregating of produce occurs at the traders' level as they develop long term relationships with individual farmers, where farmers are price takers;
- *Pests and disease management.* Farmers face many challenges and have no extension services available. Although the use of chemical pesticides is fairly widespread, the amounts available are generally moderate and limited to those with access to cotton input supplies. Over time, several organic pesticides, notably extracts from the Neem tree, have been successfully introduced by a number of international NGOs. Additives such as wood ash and chicken manure have for a long time been known as repellents and are widely used.
- *Access to finance.* There are no specific agro-loans for small holder farmers. The lack of land title and inadequate book keeping practices of farmers stymies their ability to acquire loans.
- *Dependence on rain.* Most production in Benin is primarily rain fed and in some cases manually irrigated when farms are in close proximity to major water sources. This dependence results in high seasonal availability of produce and lower prices due to an abundance of produce during the rainy season(s).

## **Marketing**

Fresh (wet) markets occur in most towns and villages, usually surrounded by large numbers of small shops selling foods, consumer items, imported foods and goods, clothing, household goods, etc. With a large portion of the population producing much of their own food, particularly for starches, open markets are where the diet is rounded out with items not self-produced. For those with higher incomes, more of the food consumed is purchased at market. Most vegetables are in villages and town markets, which usually have a major day, or multiple days, where traders and retailers are active in selling perishables in particular. Fish, meats, staple starch crops, legumes, soy and milk cheeses, fruits and vegetables are available in the market every week of the year in most places with significant variations in the quantity supplied. Staple crops are usually sold to retailers by wholesalers, who obtain them from the producers. Meat is sold by the butchers who source from the producers. The source of vegetables depends on the season. Regional trade keeps a selection of vegetables available, with price and quantity fluctuations depending on the season. Visits to markets in the Parakou and Nikki areas observed avocados from Lomé in Togo and red onions from Niger. Eastern border markets have many Nigerian traders coming into Benin to purchase fruits and vegetables for sale in Nigeria. Most of these transactions are not captured in either of the countries' statistical records. Vegetables traders/retailers obtain their products either from the intermediary traders or directly at the farm gate if possible. For many items there are unwritten agreements that producers will sell to retailers, not directly to consumers. Intermediaries buy at the farms and transport the products directly to their various market destinations. Women dominate the role of vegetables retailers at these open markets. They either buy directly from the farmers, as they individually or collectively with other women rent transportation to the farms nearby. Vegetable producers market much of their produce in bulk at harvest time because of the highly perishable nature of their products. In general, producers conduct all of their sales immediately after harvest. The long marketing channel of vegetables in the larger peri-urban and urban areas involves several types of intermediaries, from local traders to wholesalers. Studies by INRAB have shown that producers are more inefficient in marketing than in production. There is a lack of market participation of farmers and current barriers to entry by farmers limit their access to markets.

The development of supermarkets in Cotonou, the primary city of Benin, is still extremely low. Erevan is the only major supermarket/hypermarket based in Cotonou. Headquartered in France, Erevan imports 90% of products from France, either by air or sea freight depending on the commodity and level of demand. They pay extra costs to their freight forwarder to include door to door delivery service, since there are no third-party refrigerated transportation providers that provide that service. Erevan pays that extra cost to ensure that their product maintains European Union Standards for food safety and handling when perishable products are being transferred to their store. Some fresh products are locally procured, but this remains very limited.

## **Market Visits**

**Malanville Grain Market:** This market functions twice a week and is located on the bank of the River Niger, in the northeast of Benin and shares the border with Niger Republic and northwest Nigeria, Kebbi State. A bridge spans the Niger River linking Benin to Niger Republic. Massive movement of grains and other commodities in trucks was observed and the offloading of commodities from Benin and neighboring countries was regular. Corn, beans, rice, peanuts, cashews, pineapples, cassava, yams, and other various tubers from Benin were sold to mostly traders from Niger Republic. Traders from the Niger Republic bring different types of beans, including soybeans, to sell in Benin. Corn sold for about \$45 per 100 kg bag (July 2013) at that market while price for the same quantity is approximately \$39 in Nigeria. Like Nigerian farmers, corn farmers in Benin feared becoming uncompetitive if Nigeria

permits free imports of corn.

**Ndali and surrounding area Markets:** The main marketday here is on Saturday. This major east-west major crossroad market's selection of goods there ranged from locally grown staple crops such as yam, corn, tomatoes, rice, eggplant leaves, to beans brought down from Malanville and imported parboiled rice. Price inquiries revealed that for items like onions or soap, the item price is kept constant while adjustments are made on the quantity sold for that fixed price. Dissimilarly, prices for a measure of grains were adjusted based on wholesale purchase prices. Interestingly, cow milk and soy cheese (tofu) were also available. Butchers explained that the cattle killed and sold in this market were either local or brought down from Malanville, and it was thought that some of these cattle pass through Ndali on their way to Nigeria.

West of Ndali up to Sokodumnou village (about 40-50 miles from Ndali center) were dry vast lands featuring piles of harvested cotton and nomadic cattle rearing. Visits to village markets along the road showed the markets were also not regular and states of food items displayed for sale at these markets indicated obvious scarcity and poverty. People met at these markets were predominantly older, with few young ones. Many could not speak French beyond a few words, which is the country's official language, indicating that they received little if any formal education.

**Nikki Market:** Market day here fell on Thursday and is held every 4 days. Similar to Ndali, a variety of goods were being sold on that non-market day. The Nikki market was bigger in size and traffic than the Ndali market, and although the price for an onion bunch was the same, these appeared to be bigger than the bunches observed in Ndali's market. While finding French speakers was easy in Ndali, this posed to be a challenge for asking detailed questions in the Nikki Marketplace.

**Derassi Cattle Market:** Held every Wednesday, the Derassi Cattle Marketplace is located between Nikki and Peonga, on the side of a dirt road. Despite its remote location, it bustles with hundreds of people coming from various locations within Benin and Nigeria. On the particular market day visited, 132 cattle had been sold before noon. An exchange with the market management staff revealed that this was an increase of 30 cattle over the 102 sold the year before according to their record book. In addition, it was explained that the number of cattle sold could reach 180 at the peak of the rainy season, in July, while it dwindles in the dry season, as the cattlemen and their herds move away in search of green pasture and water.

Depending on the size and health status of the cattle, prices range between 60,000 cfa for a small cow and up to 800,000 cfa for a big bull. Similarly, sheep and goats prices range between 15,000 cfa and 60,000 cfa per animal, but can be sold at 100,000 cfa for the Muslim holiday called Tabaski. Because of the nomadic culture of cattlemen, conflicts with local farmers arise over for damaged crops and reduced harvests due to grazing.

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ABC Benin is an American support organization whose members discuss monthly to improve bilateral trade/business between the U.S. and Benin. ABC was established in March 2012, Cotonou Benin.

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Orabank has a large portfolio of clients involved in the agricultural sector (including importers, distributors, retailers, etc).

### **Special Contacts and more information**

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