

Success story from the

FEED THE FUTURE INNOVATION LAB FOR LIVESTOCK SYSTEMS

Feed and small ruminants in a business model that generates revenues and improves livelihoods of smallholder farmers in Niger



Photo credit: Dr. A Whitbread, ICRISAT

Though 90% of the rural population in Niger is livestock owners, the impact of this activity on incomes, nutrition and livelihoods is still very low. At Torodi, a rural district of Niger, smallholder farmers, especially women own an average of two small ruminants. But the main constraint is the availability of feed (cowpea hay, groundnut haulms, cowpea glume and cereal bran), particularly during the dry season. The small ruminant owners rely on crop residues, which are barely enough to cover the needs of their animals. As consequence, their animals are never well-fed, high rates of mortality (30%) and sold at low prices. Incomes generated from livestock rarely cover the cost

of investments and farmers remain in a vicious cycle of poverty and food insecurity.

Raising more animals will need more feed leading to an increase demand for feed. So, reducing mortality through appropriate feeding of animals for better prices was a challenge. In contrast with Torodi, there is better availability of feed at Maradi located at 900 km away.

To support farmers in that way, ICRISAT through USAID-funded project under its program on **Feed the Future Livestock Innovation Lab**, initiated a marketing business model between Torodi and Maradi, namely: *Feed for small ruminant*. Through participative exchanges, the

project team and farmers agree to develop a feed market as a business opportunity providing incomes to both, actors of feed marketing at Maradi and to livestock owners at Torodi and, at the same time solving the constraint of feed scarcity at Torodi.

Assisted by the project, actors involved from three villages of Torodi (Sirimbana, Dioga, Ticko and Patti) and feed actors in two villages of Maradi (Banbon Kori and Karazome) agree to create and manage this small market on feed value chain: collecting feed at Maradi for selling at Torodi. Two small traders from Maradi (Abdalaziz and Habibou) agreed to collect, transport and sell animal feed in different villages of Torodi. Farmers at Torodi also agree to create a feed bank to store and sell feed to individual farmers. Feed traders were surprised and very happy to note how this small market is growing in a short time with the growing demand. << *I used to spend two weeks in Niamey searching for feed markets where I could get good returns. But now I come to Torodi, and in one day I have sold all my feed. I never knew that Torodi presented such a huge opportunity for feed*>>, testified Mr. Habibou, one of the traders.

So far, livestock farmers have access to feed at affordable prices (30% lower than the market price). About 12.6 tones of feed for a market value of \$US 3,600 have been sold through this small market in less than 6 months. <<*This feed business is an excellent initiative to our community. We can now we buy feed in our village. This really contributes to improving the productivity of our animals*, said Mr. Moussa Oumarou, a farmer at Torodi>>.



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