

## Success story

### 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. These 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, there are high rates of mortality (30%) and animals are sold at low market 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 will increase the demand for feed. But improving the quality of animals and reduce mortality for better prices on market is a realistic alternative. In contrast with Torodi, there is better availability of feed at Maradi located some 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,

ICRISAT team and farmers agree to develop a feed business that can provide incomes from the selling of feed and, at the same time increasing the availability of feed.

Assisted by the project, farmers 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 business relationships that aim at bringing feed from Maradi for selling to farmers at Torodi. Two small traders of feed from Maradi (Abdalaziz and Habibou) agreed to collect, transport and sell animal feed in different villages of Torodi. Farmers of Torodi created a feed bank. Feed was stored and sold to individual farmers. Feed traders were surprised and very happy to note how this small market is growing in a short time with the demand of feed. *I used to spend 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 market»,* 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, now we can buy feed in our village. This contributes significantly to improving the productivity of our animals,* said Mr. Moussa Oumarou, a farmer at Torodi.



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