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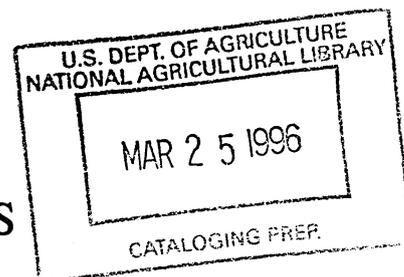
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LIVESTOCK TRADE BETWEEN SAHELIAN AND WEST AFRICAN COASTAL COUNTRIES

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After being virtually ignored for over ten years, the livestock sector is now emerging as a vital economic activity in the development of small-holder agriculture in Sahelian countries. Livestock activities are associated with improvements in agricultural production and can also be key export products. Thus, it is becoming increasingly important to understand the factors which affect the functioning of the livestock sector and the regional trade of livestock products.

Significant changes are occurring in West African countries which are (or were in the past) important outlets for Sahelian (Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger) meat products. Income levels and prices of substitute goods in these importing countries greatly influence markets in the producing regions. For example, large volumes of frozen meat were "dumped" on the African coastal market during liquidation of EEC dairy herds. As a consequence, real prices of meat products were falling at a rate sufficient to allow per capita meat consumption to rise even though incomes were falling. This displacement of Sahelian exports had a considerable impact on the Sahelian cattle sector. Imports of EEC meat have since slowed, and rising income levels and the relatively low present level of meat consumption in coastal countries indicate that there is tremendous potential for market development in these countries, particularly in Côte d'Ivoire.

If one accepts the idea that the regional context should be considered in terms of trade among the Sahelian and West African coastal countries, then there are further arguments to be made for developing the livestock sector in the Sahel. Livestock production, based in part on feed from by-products of processing vegetable oil (which can also be exported) as well as other locally-produced coarse grains, may permit meat production for export to coastal countries where rising incomes and population will yield strong demand. In return, the northern regions of coastal countries, which are developing production of cereals for human consumption, may exchange their cereals for these meat products.