



Feed limits livestock productivity in the West African Sahel

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Cattle feeding on bush hay in the Banizoumbou village of southwestern Niger. Photo by Augustine Ayantunde.

Livestock contribute at least 30% to the agricultural gross domestic product of West African Sahelian countries. Limited supply of quality feed is the most important factor limiting livestock productivity in the Sahel. Having a systematic inventory of available feed resources is the first step towards designing strategies to improve feed quality and quantity, but this regional information is lacking.

In *Agronomy Journal*, researchers conducted a review of the available feed resources in the West African Sahel across different agro-ecological zones to identify the research gaps and strategies to improve availability.

The review showed that the main feed resources for grazing ruminants are pastures and crop residues, which vary markedly across agro-ecological zones and across seasons in terms of type, quantity, and quality. Given that crop residues are among the most important feed resources, there is a need to invest in promoting adoption of proven methods for producing, storing, and improving the quality of crop residues. Strengthening the feed value chain with special emphasis on the role of women is critical for improving the feed resource base in the Sahel, and this entails increasing awareness of the importance of feed quality to create quality-based feed marketing systems.

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