AFRICAN UNION
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FOR ANIMAL RESOURCES

POLICY BRIEF

Cameroon

Mechanising Cameroon's Feed and Fodder Sector

Building Resilience Through Women-Led Centres of Excellence

1. Executive Front Matter

Primary Decision-Makers: Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Animal Industries (MINEPIA), Ministry of Economy, Planning and Regional Development (MINEPAT), National Institute of Statistics (INS), and the Cameroon Feed and Fodder Multi-Stakeholder Platform (MSP).

Decision Required: Formally capitalise the AWARFA-N Centre of Excellence for Fodder Mechanisation, mandate the inclusion of private-sector agro-industries within the national MSP to guarantee off-take markets, and institutionalise the digital National Feed Balance within MINEPIA's CAHIS platform.

Key Messages (Core Diagnosis):

i) **A vital but strained economic pillar:** The livestock sector sustains **30% of the rural population** and contributes up to **13% of the national GDP**, yet it is critically constrained by an unstructured feed supply chain.

ii) **A staggering supply gap:** Cameroon faces a stark **1.8 million MT annual feed deficit**, driven by a national demand of 4.3 million MT against a production capacity of only 2.5 million MT.

iii) **Conflict and climate-induced scarcity:** Regional conflicts (Boko Haram in the Far North, the North-West/South-West crises, and CAR refugees in the East) severely restrict traditional transhumance. Combined with climate change, this mandates an immediate shift from rain-dependent grazing to mechanised fodder preservation.

2. Executive Summary

The compounded impacts of the "Triple C" crises—COVID-19, climate change, and conflict—have exposed the profound fragility of Cameroon's feed and fodder supply chains (AU-IBAR, 2024a). Multiple localised conflicts and an influx of refugees have severely strained natural resources, restricted access to traditional grazing lands, and exacerbated rural poverty. To achieve the ambitious import substitution and food security goals outlined in Cameroon's National Development Strategy (SND30), the sector must aggressively transition away from subsistence pastoralism. The ultimate strategy for resilience lies in mechanised fodder harvesting—specifically, converting wet-season biomass surpluses into commercial dry-season reserves. By capitalising the proposed women-led Centre of Excellence for Fodder Mechanisation and restructuring the national Multi-Stakeholder

Platform (MSP) to include commercial off-takers, Cameroon can transform its feed deficits into a structured, multi-billion CFA franc agro-industry (AU-IBAR, 2024b).

3. Introduction and Context

Livestock is a foundational asset for Cameroon, boasting a national herd of over 10 million cattle and 11 million small ruminants, alongside a dominant poultry and piggery sector that supplies the broader Central African sub-region. However, feed constitutes between 60% and 80% of total livestock production costs. Despite its vast arable land and wet-season biomass, the sector remains highly unstructured and informal. Without an industrialised feed and fodder sector that guarantees year-round quality nutrition, Cameroon cannot lower the prohibitive cost of livestock-sourced foods, nor can it achieve its SND30 strategic objectives of conquering the broader CEMAC and ECOWAS export markets.

4. The Problem: Deficits, Conflict, and an Unstructured Market

Cameroon's feed value chain is trapped in a cycle of seasonal wastage and acute dry-season scarcity, heavily compounded by geopolitical instability:

i) **The 1.8 Million MT Deficit:** The sector operates with a crippling annual deficit. While demand sits at 4.3 million MT, the country only produces 2.5 million MT. This shortage artificially inflates the cost of production across all livestock value chains.

ii) **Conflict and Climate Pressures:** Violent regional conflicts—including the Boko Haram insurgency in the Far North, the socio-political crises in the North-West and South-West, and the influx of Central African Republic (CAR) refugees in the East and Adamaoua regions—have severely restricted traditional transhumance routes. Pastoralists are increasingly confined, leading to overgrazing, severe land degradation, and heightened resource-based tensions between herders and crop farmers.

iii) **MSP and Off-Taker Gaps:** While the current national Multi-Stakeholder Platform (MSP) enjoys strong backing from primary producers and government ministries, it suffers from a critical absence of private-sector agro-industrial processors and commercial off-takers (AU-IBAR, 2025). This missing link prevents the formalisation of binding forward-contracts, leaving fodder producers without a guaranteed market and discouraging private investment in mechanisation.

5. Strategic Interventions: Mechanisation and Women-Led Enterprises

To reverse these losses and build systemic resilience, Cameroon must deploy targeted, scalable operational models championed by women and supported by digital infrastructure:

i) **The Centre of Excellence for Fodder Mechanisation:** To solve the paradox of wet-season waste and dry-season starvation, the African Women in Animal Resources Farming and Agribusiness Network (AWARFA-N) Cameroon has proposed a transformative USD 500,000 Centre of Excellence. This facility will serve as a central hub for practical training, mechanised harvesting, baling, and commercial fodder storage. By equipping women and youth to harvest excess natural grasses and cultivated fodder during peak rainfall, the Centre transitions farmers from vulnerable subsistence herding to profitable commercial agribusinesses (AWARFA-N Cameroon, 2025a; 2025b).

ii) **Data Institutionalisation:** Through the RAFFS Project, MINEPIA is actively transitioning from fragmented, paper-based estimations to robust digital workflows (AU-IBAR, 2025). By establishing a central national server and creating the first unified feed-and-fodder database, Cameroon is positioning itself to accurately track biomass availability, monitor conflict-

disrupted zones, and trigger early warnings for emergency feed deployments (AU-IBAR, 2025).

6. Targeted Policy Recommendations

To unlock the economic potential of the feed and fodder sector and ensure food security in conflict-affected regions, policymakers must implement the following actionable recommendations:

1. **Capitalise the Centre of Excellence:** MINEPIA and international development partners must urgently provide the required blended finance (estimated at USD 500,000) to fully establish the AWARFA-N Fodder Mechanisation Centre. This investment is critical to scaling wet-season harvesting and baling to cover the 1.8 million MT national deficit.
2. **Restructure the MSP for Commercial Contracting:** MINEPIA must mandate the integration of major feed millers, poultry integrators, and agro-industries (e.g., local breweries, SODECOTON, MAÏSCAM) into the national MSP. Bridging this gap will establish the binding forward-contracts necessary to guarantee off-take markets for commercial fodder producers.
3. **Subsidise Fodder Mechanisation Infrastructure:** The Ministry of Finance (MINFI) and MINEPAT must implement targeted tax breaks and import duty waivers for essential fodder mechanisation equipment (tractors, heavy-duty balers, forage choppers). Concurrently, the state must subsidise the construction of climate-controlled regional storage warehouses to eliminate post-harvest losses.
4. **Deploy a Digital Early Warning Ecosystem:** Formalise the inter-agency partnership between MINEPIA and the National Institute of Statistics (INS) to institutionalise the digital National Feed Balance within the **CAHIS platform**. This real-time dashboard must be funded sustainably to track feed availability across conflict zones and trigger strategic reserve deployments before mass livestock mortalities occur.

7. References

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