RAFFS PROJECT

AFRICAN UNION
INTERAFRICAN BUREAU
FOR ANIMAL RESOURCES

FACT SHEET

Actions to Avert Feed-Related Disasters

An action agenda for building resilient, coordinated, and investment-ready feed and fodder systems in Africa

By AU IBAR

Why urgent action is needed

Feed-related disasters are no longer occasional shocks. They are becoming a recurring feature of African livestock systems because feed and fodder sectors remain underdeveloped, weakly monitored, and poorly integrated into policy, investment, and emergency planning. RAFFS Project evidence shows that most countries still approach feed shortages through a **drought-oriented paradigm**, relying on late-stage indicators and humanitarian relief rather than building structured feed systems that can prevent crisis in the first place.

The cost of this delay is high. Feed accounts for **60–70% of livestock production costs**, yet many countries do not undertake regular feed inventories, do not generate national feed balances, and do not issue alerts based on primary feed and fodder indicators. In practice, this means countries can face severe feed deficits without triggering timely corrective action.

What is driving the crisis

The project evidence points to a combination of structural drivers:

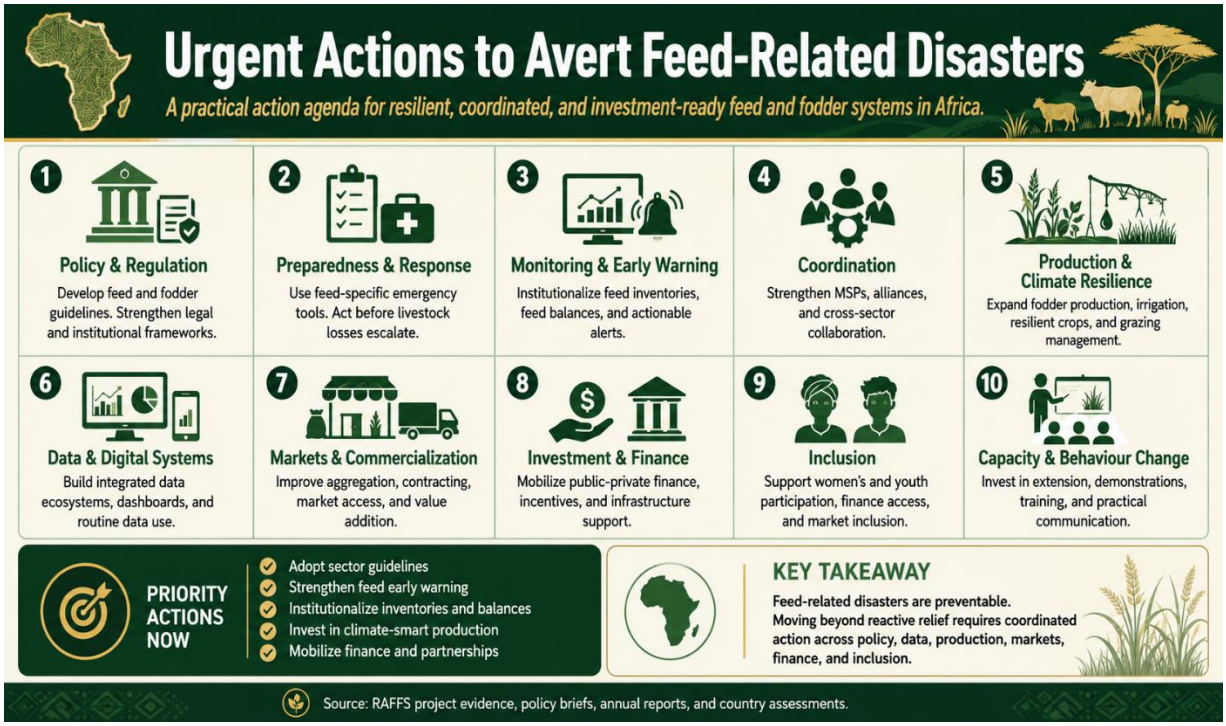
i) **Worsening climatic extremes**, including repeated drought and flood episodes, are intensifying seasonal shortages and raising the frequency of feed-related emergencies.
ii) **Disarticulated feed and fodder sectors** leave livestock systems vulnerable to climate shocks, market failures, and conflict.
iii) **Weak emergency thresholds** still depend too heavily on outcome indicators such as body condition and loss, rather than feed-specific indicators that enable earlier action.
iv) **Poor feed quality and chronic shortages** drive production inefficiencies and make livestock-sourced foods less affordable for the people who need them most.
v) **Weak monitoring and data systems** mean many countries cannot track feed resources well enough to plan, invest, or respond in time.
vi) **Underinvestment** leaves the sector trapped in low productivity, poor infrastructure, and ad hoc response cycles.

THE URGENT ACTION AGENDA

1. Policy and regulatory action: African countries need to move beyond scattered policy references and establish **comprehensive feed and fodder guidelines** that support production, storage, distribution, standards, and sector growth. The continental policy direction already endorsed through RAFFS calls for formal guidelines for the development of feed and fodder sectors or industries as a strategic action for stability, resilience, livelihoods, and youth employment.

2. Emergency preparedness and response reform

Emergency response must shift from waiting for visible livestock decline to using **feed and fodder indicators** that detect scarcity earlier. The project evidence is clear that countries need tools and protocols explicitly based on feed shortages, linked to livestock production and human nutrition goals, and embedded in national disaster preparedness systems.



3. Monitoring, accountability, and early warning: Averting future disasters requires countries and continental institutions to establish a **monitoring and mutual accountability framework** that tracks feed resources regularly, generates annual or biennial status reports, and supports early warning linked to actual remedial actions. This must include routine feed inventories, feed balances, and stronger use of dashboards and data systems.

4. Institutional and coordination action: No country can solve this challenge through isolated action. The evidence strongly supports the establishment of a **continental African Alliance of Multi-Stakeholder Feed and Fodder Associations** and stronger national coordination mechanisms that connect government, finance, technical institutions, business actors, and MSPs. Better coordination is essential for innovation, harmonization, and long-term sector growth.

5. Production and climate-resilience action: Countries must invest directly in **feed production capacity**. Zimbabwe's assessment points to practical measures that are relevant more broadly: intensifying pasture and fodder production, especially under irrigation; fortifying crop residues;

improving natural grazing management; promoting drought-tolerant fodder and small grains; and strengthening public-private partnerships to expand production.

6. Data and digital ecosystem action: Data reform is now central to disaster prevention. Countries need to operationalize **functional digital data ecosystems**, integrate feed and fodder data across institutions, collaborate with national statistics systems, and improve access, dissemination, and use of data. Zimbabwe's recent policy and data work shows that validated indicators, preliminary datasets, dashboard development, and stronger data governance are already emerging as critical priorities.

7. Market, commercialization, and supply-chain action: Feed security will not improve through emergency relief alone. Countries also need to strengthen **market organization and commercialization**, including domestic and export supply chains, contracting models, market intelligence, and value-added products. The project's strategic materials point to actions such as improving aggregation, strengthening market pathways, institutionalizing export intelligence, and building more organized business structures around feed and fodder.

8. Investment and financing action: The project evidence is explicit that urgent resource mobilization is needed. Governments, development partners, banks, and private actors need to support **increased investment, finance, and public-private partnerships** for feed and fodder production, infrastructure, business models, and innovation. This is no longer a sector that can be left to undercapitalized emergency responses.

9. Inclusion and gender-responsive action: Women and youth must be deliberately included in the response agenda. Evidence from Zimbabwe shows that women are active in agriculture and feed-related value chains but remain financially excluded, underrepresented in business associations, and constrained by weak access to assets, finance, and market information. Urgent action must therefore include stronger participation pathways for women and youth in production, data systems, aggregation, logistics, and business development.

10. Communication, capacity, and behaviour change action: Technical reform will not be enough unless it is accompanied by practical learning and behaviour change. The wider project materials point to the need for stronger extension, demonstration, training, and actor-facing communication that helps move feed and fodder from a subsistence mindset to a more organized, commercially viable, and resilient sector. This is especially important where farmers, local officials, and market actors still lack practical pathways for adoption.

What governments and partners should prioritize now

The most immediate priorities are clear:

i) Develop and adopt feed and fodder sector guidelines
ii) Reform emergency response systems to use feed-specific indicators
iii) Establish monitoring and mutual accountability systems
iv) Strengthen MSPs, alliances, and cross-institutional coordination
v) Invest in production, irrigation, grazing management, and climate-smart fodder systems
vi) Operationalize digital data ecosystems, dashboards, and national integration
vii) Mobilize finance and public-private partnerships
viii) Promote women's and youth participation as a core part of sector development

These are not separate agendas. Together, they form the minimum foundation for reducing the frequency and severity of feed-related disasters.

Fast Facts / Action Box

Core problem signals

- Feed accounts for **60–70%** of livestock production costs.
- Many countries do **not** undertake regular feed inventories or feed balances.
- Alerts are often based on **late-stage outcome indicators** rather than primary feed indicators.

Core action categories

i) Guidelines
ii) Emergency response reform
iii) Monitoring and accountability
iv) Alliances and MSPs
v) Data ecosystems and dashboards
vi) Climate-resilient production
vii) Market development and commercialization
viii) Investment and PPPs
ix) Women's and youth inclusion

Bottom line

Feed-related disasters can be reduced, but only if countries move beyond fragmented, drought-only responses. RAFFS project evidence shows that Africa now needs a **structured feed and fodder agenda** built on policy reform, feed-specific early warning, stronger institutions, better data, climate-resilient production, market development, coordinated platforms, and deliberate investment. Relief remains necessary in emergencies, but it cannot substitute for the deeper systems that prevent those emergencies from recurring.