



## ***(Agro)pastoralism in Africa* Symposium held in Senegal**

The partnership programme *Pôle Pastoralisme et Zones Sèches* / Pastoralism and Drylands Unit (<https://www.ppzs.org/>) and the West & Central Africa Regional Support Group for the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (<https://iyrp.info/>) held the *(Agro)pastoralism in Africa* symposium in Saly, Senegal. The symposium, which brought together a total of 170 participants, explored the current issues and perspectives of (agro)pastoralism in Africa and elsewhere. For three days (12–14 November 2024), development practitioners, representatives of pastoralist organisations, researchers, students and a whole range of other international actors exchanged, debated and co-constructed perspectives for the future.

### **Kick-off on 12 November 2024 by Serena Ferrari (Cirad)**

The opening ceremony of the symposium was co-chaired by Serena Ferrari, president of the symposium organising committee, and Babacar Ndione, Senegal's Director of Water, Forests, Hunting and Soil Conservation. They opened the symposium by recalling the challenges facing (agro)pastoral systems in Africa and around the world, challenges that participants would focus on for the next three days.

Igshaan Samuels, Co-Chair of the Global Alliance for the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP), set this event in the context of the preparation for the IYRP in 2026 (<https://www.iyrp.info/west-central-africa>). The symposium contributes to the build-up to this Year by facilitating the meeting of actors and institutions, but also by setting out the current debates.

The symposium organising committee was completed by Pascal Bonnet (Cirad, French Centre of International Cooperation in Research for Development) and Papa Serigne Seck (ISRA, Senegalese Institute for Agricultural Research).



### **Some thematic highlights**

The strength of the symposium was that it addressed a great diversity of themes that are at the heart of the current dynamics of (agro)pastoralism. Interdisciplinarity was the focus in selecting communications and structuring the symposium programme. The selected communications were grouped into seven major themes, completed by a roundtable discussion.

- Theme 1: Economics of (agro)pastoralism
- Theme 2: Deterioration of the security context and cross-border (agro)pastoral dynamics
- Theme 3: How the knowledge of (agro)pastoralists is challenged by current issues
- Theme 4: New technical tools: uses and challenges
- Theme 5: Pastures and fodder
- Theme 6: Management of the commons
- Theme 7: How to anticipate the future of (agro)pastoralism
- Roundtable discussion: (Agro)pastoralism in the world

The dynamism of the moderators ensured that the sessions were interactive and allowed the various issues to be debated.



*Roundtable discussion on (agro)pastoralism in the world*



*Parallel session*

The afternoons of the first two days provided space for organising several side events by a variety of actors, starting from the Regional Milk Platform through the World Bank and the NGO Acting for life (AFL). These sessions were also an opportunity to cover or discover (agro)pastoralism from different perspectives:

- Landscape restoration and resilience of agropastoral systems (World Bank)
- Conflicts involving (agro)pastoralists (AFL/ILRI/SPARC/CGIAR)
- Multistakeholder collective action (ICARDA)
- Milk in West Africa (Regional Milk Platform)



*World Bank side event*

### **Poster session**

The poster exhibition allowed selected participants to present their research in a more visual and educational format. The audience had the opportunity to discover these scientific achievements organised under seven themes:

- Theme 1: Community involvement
- Theme 2: Rangelands
- Theme 3: Agriculture-livestock integration
- Theme 4: Camelids
- Theme 5: Securing mobility
- Theme 6: Animal husbandry practices
- Theme 7: Institutional framework

The authors of the posters took the time to guide visitors to the exhibits along the animated trail.

Following the visits, the visitors voted for the three best posters. The winners were:

- 1<sup>st</sup> place: Young Ambassadors of Pastoralism (*Réseau Billital Maroobé*, RBM)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> place: Seydou Badji
- 3<sup>rd</sup> place: Gérard Xavier Gbenou



### The symposium in a few figures

- 170 participants
- 22 nationalities
- 20 students
- more than 45 communications
- 24 posters presented
- wide representation of people active in (agro)pastoralism: 68 participants from research centres, 43 members of NGOs, 12 academics, 10 members of international organisations, 8 representatives of pastoralist associations/organisations, 3 actors from the private sector, among others.

### From conference rooms... to the field

For the last half-day of the symposium programme, two field visits were offered to participants:

- 1) The first group went in the direction of Fatick to visit the Jambbugum Cooperative and the goat breeding training centre. It was welcomed by local representatives of the Commune of Fatick, as well as several actors involved in *Dynamique pour une Transition Agroécologique au Sénégal* (DytAEL, Dynamics for an Agroecological Transition in Senegal), including women farmers.



2) The second group went to Niakhar along with Olivier Roupsar, agronomist from Cirad, to visit the *Faidherbia-Flux* collaborative observatory – a visit packed with information because this observatory allows long-term monitoring (>10 years) of the microclimate, tree growth, crop yield and exports, net and gross primary productivity, the net carbon balance of the ecosystem, ecosystem respiration, soil greenhouse gas balance (CO<sub>2</sub>, H<sub>2</sub>O, N<sub>2</sub>O, CH<sub>4</sub>), hydrological balance (infiltration, evapotranspiration, sap flow, hydraulic redistributions, groundwater dynamics, etc.), nutrient balance (N, P, K), role of livestock, effects of management options, ecosystem services, etc.



### And some great times

The success of this symposium was also due to the convivial moments arranged, which made it possible to move beyond the conventional frameworks of scientific discussions to delve into freer and more inclusive exchanges.

On the first evening, Bernard Faye led a session on the theme of camelids. He screened the film “The super dromedaries of the desert” – an after-dark session that brought this first day to a very good close.

On the evening of 13 November, the participants were welcomed at a gala event hosted by a traditional Peuhl music group, in keeping with the theme of the symposium. The evening ended after the announcement of the results of the poster competition, the winners of which were mentioned above.



## Conclusion

The (agro)pastoralism symposium was a great adventure that began almost a year ago and was the result of a long process of selecting communications and posters and of scientific and technical organization. This required the collaboration of dozens of actors to make this event a reality.

The organising committee would like to sincerely thank all the participants who took part in the symposium and who made it a success through their dynamism, their active involvement in the discussions and their continuing collaboration.

Special thanks to the interpreters, Ousmane Traore Diagne and Mohamed Benghazi, who guaranteed the international dimension of the event.

A few more items of information for after the symposium:

- You can find the recordings of the plenary sessions on the CaSSECS (Carbon Sequestration and greenhouse gas emissions in (agro) Sylvopastoral Ecosystems in the Sahelian CILSS States) project's YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/@projetcassecs6119/streams>).
- Over the next week, the organising committee will be preparing the final proceedings of the symposium, which will be distributed in early 2025.
- A photo library (including photos and presentations of the speakers) has been made available to the symposium participants.

