

MIS as a tool for food security policies: The experience of Mali

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One of the measures taken to support the liberalization of grain marketing in Mali was the setting up in 1989 of a market information system (MIS) charged with helping regulate and enhance the transparency of the grain market by providing all market players with reliable information.

In 1989, after four weeks of initial dissemination by the MIS of information on the prices in Bamako markets, an internal evaluation showed that price differences between markets on the outskirts of the city and the wholesale markets supplying them had shrunk spectacularly. Consumers were saving 15-20 Francs CFA¹ per kilo of millet, sorghum or maize purchased, *i.e.* approximately 25% of the former price. Given the grain

volumes traded in Bamako, this corresponded to savings of several hundred million Francs CFA. In addition, the markets often cited as the cheapest were drawing more buyers, to the detriment of others.

Today, the Agricultural Market Watch (OMA), which emerged from a restructuring of this initial MIS, is key to Mali's national food security apparatus (DNSA). Thus, OMA recommendations are used by the Mali Office of Agricultural Products (OPAM) – another link in the DNSA – to time the purchases and sales it makes for inventory turnover in national security stocks (SNS).

Other agricultural products have now also entered the OMA portfolio, reflecting the fact that food security is not only a question of cereals. ■

¹ 655, 96 Francs CFA=1 euro.