

Moreover, failure to give priority to distributing food supplies more susceptible to spoilage contributed to the deterioration of these scarce resources. For example, food shipped to Dakar for Mali and Mauritania was not evacuated on a first-in-first-out basis. Instead, in each period, segments of different food shipments which arrived over various periods of time were evacuated. Consequently, it was not uncommon for some grain to remain stockpiled in the Dakar port for 6 months or more. On November 2, 1974, for example, 22,934 metric tons of food were stockpiled in Dakar awaiting evacuation to Mali; 46 percent of this food had been stockpiled at the port for 4 months or more. As the following table shows, this included portions of grain shipments that had arrived as early as April 1974.

Stockpiled Food Supplies at Dakar Port
Awaiting Evacuation to Mali and Mauritania
as of November 2, 1974

For Mali

| <u>Donor</u> | <u>Date of ship- ment's arrival at Dakar</u> | <u>Total amount of shipment</u> | <u>Portion of shipment still in port on November 2, 1974</u> |
|--------------|--|---|--|
| | | | (metric tons) |
| EEC (note a) | April 17 | 2,700 | 2,305 |
| Purchase | April 26 | 15,000 | 4,025 |
| Purchase | May 10 | 14,000 | 1,515 |
| U.S. | May 18 | 4,500 | 717 |
| Purchase | June 23 | 2,000 | 2,000 |
| Purchase | August 22 | 5,000 | 2,720 |
| China | September 2 | 3,035 | 1,565 |
| Purchase | October 1 | 5,000 | 3,087 |
| China | October 1 | 5,000 | <u>5,000</u> |
| Total | | | <u>22,934</u> |

For Mauritania

| | | | |
|-------|--------------|-------|--------------|
| U.S. | June 8 | 4,000 | 601 |
| U.S. | August 18 | 1,542 | 1,063 |
| WFP | August 29 | 4,276 | 967 |
| U.S. | September 10 | 1,892 | 1,061 |
| WFP | September 28 | 5,650 | <u>3,704</u> |
| Total | | | <u>7,396</u> |

a/EEC = European Economic Community.

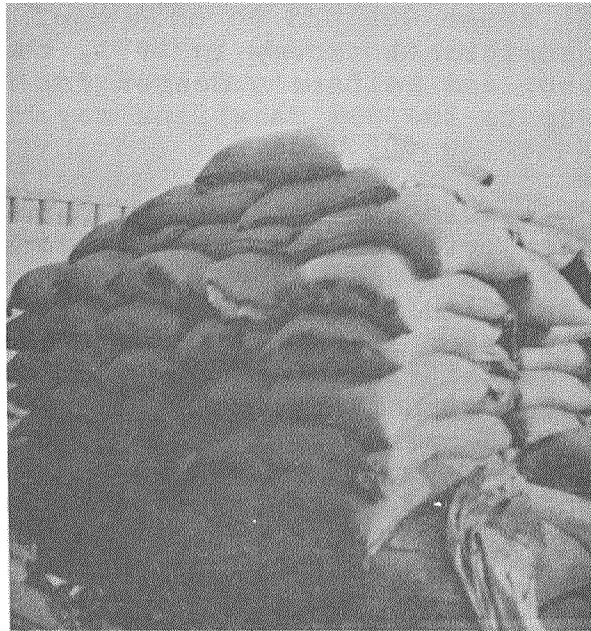
At interior locations within Mauritania and Niger, we noted that the most recently arrived food was usually the first distributed. Food supplies at these locations were stockpiled in warehouses and open storage areas which, in effect, had only one entry/exit point. Therefore, the oldest food remained stored at the back while the newly arrived food was stored at the front and distributed first.

Some of the food awaiting evacuation spoiled and was unfit for human and, in some cases, animal consumption. We do not know how much of the total food provided by the international community spoiled, but we observed hundreds of tons of spoiled food during our visit to one storage location on November 18, 1974. Spoiled food included grain as well as fortified foods provided by the United States and other donors. A large proportion of the highly perishable instant corn-soy milk provided by the United States through the U.N. Children's Fund for preschool children and pregnant and lactating women was not being distributed promptly; in many instances it was stockpiled in open storage or in other unsuitable locations and was not adequately protected.

While it may be that only a small portion of the emergency food was lost through spoilage, a large portion of the grain was infested by insects which ate the nutrient part of the food, leaving little for human consumption. In September 1974, just before our visit, an inspection of grain in the ports of Dakar, Abidjan, and Cotonou revealed that all the grain tested was infested to some degree. (See photo on p. 33.) The inspection report did not mention the quantity of grain involved, but it recommended an extensive fumigation program.

In January 1975, Agency for International Development officials estimated that thousands of tons of donated grain in Niger, Mali, and Mauritania were infested, but the full extent was not known. Some U.S. and other donors' grain had been fumigated, and we were told that AID was investigating the need for fumigating other U.S. grain and was encouraging other donors to perform similar investigations.

In Mali, the increasing concern of OSRO, AID, and the Mali Government over the deterioration of relief food stocks led OSRO to hire a consultant early in 1975 to survey them. The consultant's report, dated in April, states that of 64,000 metric tons surveyed in Mali, 15,000 tons were unfit for human consumption and 34,000 tons required immediate fumigation and restacking to prevent them from becoming unfit. AID later advised us that, with technical assistance from OSRO, a fumigation and restacking program was carried out.



INFESTED GRAIN IN DAKAR IN NOVEMBER 1974.

Inefficient food distribution

Donor actions for insuring the effective use of donated foods varied. The United States, for example, required recipient governments to submit periodic reports on the quantity of food distributed and the number of people who benefited from it. It also required its missions in recipient countries to monitor the distribution program. Other donors required no reporting on distribution of their donated food because they felt this was entirely the responsibility of the recipient governments. In Sahel, however, most of the recipient governments did not maintain adequate records documenting the ultimate use of the food they received from the donors.

Most donors who did concern themselves with monitoring the distribution of their donated food were not able to monitor systematically because their incountry staffs were too small. Since neither WFP nor OSRO monitored distribution, the international community as a whole had little assurance that its donated food was being distributed efficiently and effectively or that it reached all those in need.

Although it will never be possible to determine exactly how many people died because donated food did not reach them, a number of instances have been reported in which food was not reaching all those in need.

From its nutritional survey in 1973, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare's Center for Disease Control estimated that up to 100,000 Sahelians may have died from famine.

The Center for Disease Control, as part of its 1974 nutritional survey, visited numerous villages in Upper Volta, Mali, Mauritania, Chad, and Niger and reported that several villages in three of the five countries had received little or no food supplies for long periods of time. In certain instances, this was attributed to the lack of an efficient distribution system since food was reaching certain villages but not others in the same region.

In a region in Chad, for example, the Center visited 21 villages between May and July 1974 and noted that 9 villages had received some food supplies within 4 months before its visit, 2 had received some food supplies from 4 to 6 months before its visit, and the remaining 10 villages had never received any food supplies. According to the Center's report, many of these villages had adequate food reserves for about 1 week, but others lacked any food reserves, indicating the gravity of the situation.

The UNICEF emergency maternal/child feeding program is a good illustration of how donors were operating with no real knowledge of how much of their food was reaching the people of the Sahel. At the request of the Sahel governments, UNICEF initiated this program in early 1973 to provide a fortified food--instant corn-soy milk--to preschool children and pregnant and lactating women to meet their needs for extra nutrition. AID supported UNICEF by donating 1,175 metric tons of instant corn-soy milk in 1973 and 9,037 tons in 1974.

As late as October 1974, UNICEF reported that it had not yet received detailed reports from at least three Sahel governments on distribution and final use of the corn-soy milk. However, reports submitted by UNICEF field offices on their limited inspection trips and their knowledge of distribution indicate that the program encountered serious problems throughout 1973 and most of 1974.

The most serious and widespread problem reported was the failure of Sahel governments to provide sufficient trucking and/or fuel to get the instant corn-soy milk to the villages.

This resulted in UNICEF having to provide funds, fuel, or trucks for distribution. For example, UNICEF field officials visiting one intermediate distribution center in Senegal in May 1974 found that none of the 400 sacks (each weighing 50 lbs.) of corn-soy milk which had arrived in November 1973 had been distributed to surrounding villages due to a lack of either trucks or fuel. At another intermediate distribution point, they found 782 of 1,000 sacks received in late 1973 were still in stock for the same reasons. This lack of trucking and apparent lack of Senegalese interest in moving the instant corn-soy milk (some 1,600 bags had already spoiled in improper storage in Dakar) ultimately resulted in UNICEF financing and actually distributing all 500 metric tons of the 1974 shipments of the product on its own.

In the case of Niger, UNICEF reported that it had agreed to pay the fuel costs of shipment to final distribution points but the government was unable to provide the needed vehicles. UNICEF estimated that only about 50 percent of the target population had received the intended daily instant corn-soy milk ration through late 1974.

The next most common problem was inability to restrict distribution of instant corn-soy milk to the infants and mothers for whom it was intended. For example, a UNICEF report stated that, in one Senegal village, 400 bags of the product had been distributed to 2,800 infants, 350 pregnant or lactating women, and 3,600 "other persons." The report concluded that evidently more than 50 percent of the product was consumed by adults. It noted that in a communal society what belongs to one is shared with one's family and relatives; therefore, any attempt by UNICEF to designate target groups for the product would be futile. Similar problems were encountered in Mali, where the drought minister wrote UNICEF that it was not possible to restrict distribution to the target groups.

In addition, local officials often were not instructed in the proper way to prepare the instant corn-soy milk for consumption or in the proper ration size. Warnings were not given about perishability, and in some cases local officials saved the corn-soy milk until it was "really needed," with the result that it deteriorated and became unfit for human consumption.

By October 1974, as a result of these types of problems, UNICEF concluded that the Sahel governments were unable to absorb more instant corn-soy milk and took action to sharply curtail the maternal/child feeding program.

A U.N. Under Secretary General inspected refugee centers in Mali and Niger in March 1974 and reported that "* * * it would not be inaccurate to say that the situation of the entire population north of the 14th parallel is critical." He found that conditions in Niger were much more critical than those in Mali. During his visit to the Tchén Tabaraden relief center in Niger, he found that poverty among the 15,000 nomads was overwhelming and some diseases had reached the epidemic stage. The children and old people were the most severely stricken, and their graves encircled the center. He blamed this serious situation on the slowness of the donors' grain arrivals.

A U.N. representative who had accompanied the U.N. team on the above mission told us in December 1974 that the nutritional situation in Niger had improved but there were still some hungry people in the remote nomadic areas. We visited Tchén Tabaraden in December 1974. The refugee camp had been disbanded and only about 200 refugees remained in the area. (See photos on p. 37.) During our visits to this and other interior locations in Mauritania and Niger, we observed that, although some individuals were sick and apparently undernourished, adequate quantities of food supplies appeared to be available. (See photos on p. 38.)

Sale of donated food supplies

Some Sahel governments sold a large portion of the donated food. It is unclear, however, whether this had any adverse impact on the impoverished populace's ability to obtain sufficient quantities of free food supplies.

Although the United States, for example, intended most of its donated emergency food supplies to be distributed without charge, the Sahelian governments were authorized to sell the portion not required for free distribution to help finance internal distribution costs and other mutually agreed upon drought recovery and rehabilitation projects. The United States, however, had no assurance that the needs of people unable to buy grain were filled before any grain was sold. In Niger, for example, AID internal auditors reported in December 1973 that they had visited a refugee camp of 100 people near Agadez and were informed that only one bag of sorghum (weighing about 100 lbs.) had been distributed in October 1973 for the entire camp. At the same time, all the other centers in Niger they visited were selling sorghum.

We learned that Mauritania sold about 60 percent of its U.S.-donated emergency food supplies and Niger--which received the largest share of U.S.-donated food--sold about 75 to 90 percent. Beginning October 1, 1974, the Government of