

kets, but integration has grown in recent years, particularly in the coastal states where egg producers (e.g. in Senegal) increasingly rely on imported maize because of its more reliable availability, prices and quality than local supplies. Capitalizing on the strong potential of this crop to spur further growth will involve, like many of the other value chains reviewed here, efforts to organise the aggregation of supplies from the farm level, improved coordination of production with the needs of processors, and the improved control of quality along the entire value chain in order to compete with imports. Reducing barriers to regional trade will also be important in allowing processors to source maize more easily across national borders.

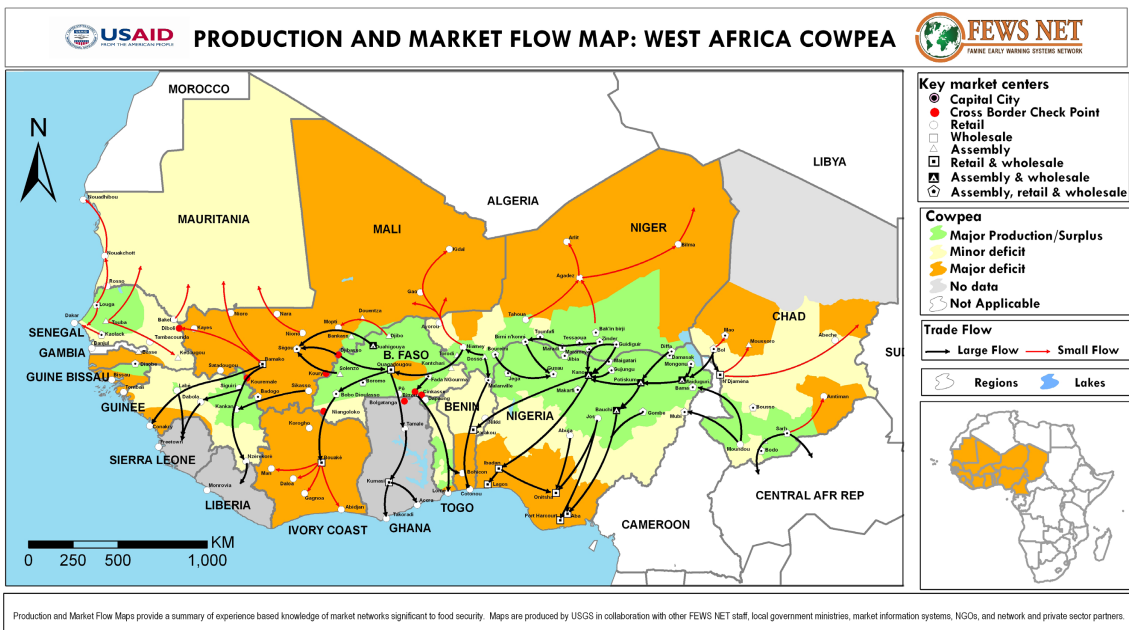
10.3.4 Cowpeas

Part II highlighted the high level and strong growth of pulse consumption in several countries of the region, particularly in Nigeria, Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso and Benin. By far the most important of these pulses is cowpeas. West and Central Africa account for about 80% of the world's harvested area of cowpeas, with Nigeria being the world's largest cowpea producer and its largest importer. Niger is the world's second larg-

est producer. Other producers in the ECOWAS region, in order of importance, include Burkina Faso, Mali, Benin, Ghana, Togo, Senegal, and Côte d'Ivoire (Langyintuoa *et al.*, 2003). Cowpeas are produced predominantly in the drier inland areas of West Africa due to their drought tolerance and the lower insect pressure in these areas, and a well-developed trade moves them south to major coastal markets (Figure 10.3).

Cowpeas growers are likely to face growing demand for their crop for three reasons: (1) cowpea grain provides a relatively low-cost, high-protein source ("poor people's meat") to the large number of low-income consumers in West Africa who are trying, with very low incomes, to upgrade their diets; (2) the high-protein cowpea hay is a valuable livestock feed, and demand for it is growing as forage markets expand in response to the increasing profitability of livestock production, especially in peri-urban areas; and (3) processed cowpea products, particularly cowpea fritters and steamed cakes, are very popular street and snack foods in urban areas such as Accra and Lagos, appealing to the growing, time-poor urban population (Nagai, 2008). As a drought-resistant crop, cowpeas are also likely to be an important part of farmers'

Figure 10.4 Cowpea production and trade flows in West Africa



Source: FEWSNet