

FOSENET
NGO Food Security Network
Community Assessment of the
Food Situation in Zimbabwe
May 2003

*People are still in need of food because people only managed to harvest very little
Chivi*

For the executive summary please go to page 14

Background

The National NGO Food Security Network (FOSENET) involves 24 organisations that collectively cover ALL districts of Zimbabwe, and all types of communities.

FOSENET members subscribe that food distribution in Zimbabwe must be based on a platform of ethical principles that derive from international humanitarian law, viz:

- The right to life with dignity and the duty not to withhold or frustrate the provision of life saving assistance;
- The obligation of states and other parties to agree to the provision of humanitarian and impartial assistance when the civilian population lacks essential supplies;
- Relief not to bring unintended advantage to one or more parties nor to further any partisan position;
- The management and distribution of food and other relief with based purely on criteria of need and not on partisan grounds, and without adverse distinction of any kind;
- Respect for community values of solidarity, dignity and peace and of community culture.

FOSENET Monitoring

As one of its functions FOSENET is monitoring food needs, availability and access through NGOs based within districts and through community based monitors. Monthly reports from all areas of the country are compiled by FOSENET to provide a monthly situation assessment of food security and access to enhance an ethical, effective and community focussed response to the food situation.

FOSENET is conscious of the need to ensure and constantly improve on data quality and validity. Previous reports provide information on steps being taken to ensure and sustain data quality. Validity is checked through cross reporting from the same district, through verification from field visits (currently being implemented) and through peer review from those involved with relief work, including the UN and ZIMVAC, to enable feedback on differences found and follow up verification. **Comment and feedback on this report is welcomed – please send to fsmt2@mweb.co.zw.**

This **eighth** round covers NGO and community based monitoring on nationally for the period **May 2003**. This round of monitoring includes information related to food security-poverty links, coping strategies and production outputs. Input from Fosenet NGOs, UN WFP and ZIMVAC is acknowledged.

On the basis of the cross verification provided by more than one report per district this round of reporting provides evidence by district. While in most areas the cross validation gives confidence in the data, the report indicates where district evidence requires follow up verification and investigation, through both FOSENET and the wider UN, international and national network of organisations working on food security and relief. FOSENET is actively following up on these issues up within these frameworks.

Coverage of the data

The information is presented in this report by district¹. Data is presented for **May 2003** drawn from **145 monitoring reports** from **60** districts from all provinces of Zimbabwe, with an average of **2.4 reports per district**. The data covers the period **May 2003**.

Change in the food situation

Food from local harvests continue to boost food supplies, with 40% of the districts reporting improvement in the food situation in May, less than the 60% reporting this in April. This is due primarily to maize harvests and in two districts improved relief supplies. A further 11% of districts reported a worsening situation, primarily due to falling GMB deliveries and a fall in relief supplies, with inadequate compensation from local production. A third (35%) noted no change.

A greater number of districts reporting no improvement or worsening situations were found in Matabeleland North, Midlands and Manicaland (See Table 1). Urban areas reported an improvement in supplies from parallel markets selling food brought in by rural farmers are taking harvest yields for sale in urban areas.

The results indicate that while harvests continue to provide new food sources, less than half the country reported improvements, while one in ten districts reported that gains from harvest yields were less than the amount of food lost from withdrawn relief supplies.

¹ The term 'district' refers to an administrative district. Reports by constituency are allocated to districts. Fosenet monitors provide information on sentinel sites within districts.

Table 1: Districts with sites reported to have not gained from improved relief or harvest by May were:

Province	District
Manicaland	Chimanimani, Mutare rural, Mutare urban, Mutasa, Nyanga, Chipinge, Chimanimani
Mashonaland East	Chikomba, Murehwa
Mashonaland Central	Shamva
Mashonaland West	Chegutu, Kadoma, Makonde,
Midlands	Gweru rural. Gweru urban, Shurugwi,
Masvingo	Masvingo urban
Matebeleland North	Binga, Hwange rural, Hwange urban, Nkayi, Lupane
Matebeleland South	Gwanda

*Very few people managed to harvest food such as maize, groundnuts, round nuts
Chivi*

Inadequate or absent GMB supplies continue to be noted. Only four districts (7%) reported improvements in GMB deliveries, with some report that these improvements were due to old stocks of yellow maize being cleared.

Food needs

Food security is improving slowly for the wider community but the pattern of vulnerability remains the same. The share of districts reporting that 'everyone' was in need continued to fall from 49% in February/March to 45% in April and again to 37% of districts by May 2003. While vulnerability has declined, the pattern of vulnerability has remained the same as in previous months viz elderly, orphans, children, ill people, people with disability and the unemployed.

The factors most commonly cited to be linked to insecurity were poor harvests, inability to afford food costs, seizure of maize grain by police at road blocks and difficulties for particular groups to access food. Those reported to have problems accessing food included former farm workers, civil servants (teachers and nurses) children, disabled, ill or elderly people and opposition party supporters.

The problem is that GMB and police take away maize from people who bring food from rural areas.

Bulawayo

Harvest failure or poor harvests were reported from 50% of districts, namely Chimanimani, Buhera, Chipinge, Makoni, Mutare rural, Mutasa, Nyanga, Chikomba, Murehwa, Seke, UMP, Hwedza, Marondera rural, Mt Darwin, Makonde, Karoyi,

MONITORING REPORT ROUND 8: MAY 2003

Mhondoro, Zvimba, Gokwe, Gweru rural, Gweru urban, Zvishavane, Mwenezi, Binga, Hwange, Lupane, Nkayi, Umguza, Gwanda.

Food has become a cause of increased population movement, with over half the districts having population movements either to access food, to move to areas of improved supply, to sell harvests, to leave areas where there is political discrimination in food access, to leave unproductive resettlement areas or to seek employment. There is no clear indication of whether the net flows are greater rural to urban or urban to rural.

Food was a cause for movement into or out of districts in 57% of districts. (See Table 2)

Table 2: Districts reporting food related migration in May 2003

Province	District	Reason
Manicaland	Buhera, Chipinge, Makoni, Mutare Rural, Mutare Urban, Nyanga	Migrant workers are to rural areas for food where the harvest was good. Some rural people have left because of political discrimination on food.
Mashonaland East	Mutoko, Hwedza	People now going to rural homes from towns because of the good harvest. Some people left because of political reasons.
Mashonaland Central	Guruve , Mazoe, Mt Darwin, Rushinga, Shamva	Some have come back from resettlement areas because of food shortages, for prostitution at growth points, back from gold panning, or for employment
Mashonaland West	Karoi, Mhondoro	People coming to rural areas because there is food.
Midlands	Gokwe, Gweru Rural, Gweru Urban, Kwekwe Rural, Kwekwe Urban, Zvishavane	People are coming to town for employment. Others are moving for gold panning. Food prices and company closures are making people move to rural areas
Masvingo	Chiredzi, Chivi, Masvingo, Urban, Masvingo Rural, Zaka, Mwenezi	People are coming from resettlement areas to communal areas for relief food or to towns for employment. Women and children are going to rural homes for food.
Matebeleland North	Binga, Hwange rural, Hwange Urban ,Nkayi	Rural people are coming to town for employment. Opposition supporters stopped from buying food from Zanu pf owned shops are reported to be coming in to town for food.
Matebeleland South	Nil	
Bulawayo	Bulawayo Urban	People are coming into town from resettlement areas.
Harare	Harare Urban, Chitungwiza	People are going to rural areas for relief food and harvests, some permanently. People are moving to towns to look for food on the black market..

People were reported to be moving between urban and rural areas (in both directions) and from areas with poor harvests to areas with better harvest yields or increased relief supplies. In Zaka, for example, people were reported to be coming from as far as Gweru and Bulawayo for food. In Midlands people were said to be leaving town as companies were folding up or as food prices became unaffordable, and moving to rural areas of Midlands.

Movement continues to be a critical survival strategy. However with escalating costs, and shortages in fuel and public transport, households are spending more of their scarce resources on movements for food and finding transport more difficult. In May 25 districts (42%) reported transport problems due to high costs, fuel problems and unavailability of public transport, compared to 15 (26%) in April.

It would appear that instead of food moving effectively between rural and urban markets through state and market mechanisms, households are having to move at their own expense to source food. This is worse for urban markets and in areas where rural production has been poor. The shortage and costs of transport has worsened a situation where failure to ensure equitable market flows has left households to 'fend for themselves'.

No food related deaths were reported in May.

Food availability and access

Household food stocks have shown marginal improvements: A reported 23% of households had more than one months food supply, up from 20 % in April . The majority of households still have less than one months supply and 49% were reported to have no food in stock.

As a reflection of scarcities, thirteen districts (21%) still reported households consuming unusual foods or `famine' foods in May (See Table 3).

Table 3. Districts reporting foods not normally consumed , May 2003

FOOD CONSUMED	Districts reporting food consumed
Cooked pawpaw	Buhera, Mutare Rural
Cooked bananas	Mutare Rural
Cassava	Guruve, Chitungwiza, Harare
Water melons	Bulawayo, Hwange, Binga, Mwenezi, Gokwe
Wild fruits	Gokwe, Chivi, Mwenezi, Hwange urban, Shurugwi
Boiled wheat	Chinhoyi, Bulawayo,

Food from Production

Local harvests are making a difference to food access, although as reported in April the costs of seed and fertilizer were noted to have had a negative impact on crop yields. (See Tables 4 and 5)/

In May seed and fertilizer was reported to be unavailable for those trying to secure these resources for the next planting season. Scarcity is driving cost escalation. Prices in May have risen over April prices for seed and fertilizer by about 50% in formal markets and nearly 100% in parallel markets, with parallel market prices about ten times higher than formal markets.

Table 4 : Price differences maize seed and fertiliser, April and May 2003

	Fertiliser cost Z\$/10		Maize seed cost Z\$/10	
	Formal Market	Parallel market	Formal Market	Parallel market
Price range April	350- 1750	500- 3250	300- 5000	800 - 9000
Price range May	520- 5000	1200- 7000	600- 6000	1000 - 15000

Table 5 : Maize seed and fertiliser prices by district, April 2003

District	Fertilizer cost Z\$/10kg		Maize seed cost Z\$/10kg	
	Formal market	Parallel market	Formal market	Parallel market
Manicaland				
Buhera	1200	2000	2000	6000
Chipinge	800 - 1700		2500	5000
Makoni	1300 - 1400	2500 – 3000	3000	5000
Mutare rural	2400		2000 - 3000	5000
Mutare urban	1400 - 4000		3000	7000
Mutasa	2100	3400	3600	5000
Nyanga	1700	2800	4000	5500
Mashonaland East				
Chikomba	1800	2000	5000 - 6000	15000
Goromonzi	1000	1500	3500	5000
Marondera urban	1600			3000
Murehwa	1200 - 1600	1500 - 2000		
Mutoko	1400		1200	

MONITORING REPORT ROUND 8: MAY 2003

District	Fertilizer cost Z\$/10kg		Maize seed cost Z\$/10kg	
	Formal market	Parallel market	Formal market	Parallel market
UMP	1400			
Hwedza	900 - 1700	1300	1160 - 2800	1700
Mashonaland Central				
Bindura urban	1400			
Guruve	1200 - 1400		3800	8000
Mazowe	2200		2000	3200
Rushinga	800 - 2000	1200		1600
Shamva	1200	1600	1200	8000
Mashonaland West				
Chegutu urban				
Chinhoyi			3000	6000
Hurungwe		2000		
Mhondoro	1400	2000	3600	
Zvimba	1800 - 2400		1200	1400
Midlands				
Gokwe	1600	2000	1200 - 1600	1000 - 3200
Gweru urban			3500	
Kwekwe urban		3600		3000
Shurugwi	520	1200	600	1200
Zvishavane	1200			1800
Masvingo				
Chiredzi			1500	
Chivi	1200 - 5000	2000 - 7000	1300 - 6000	1500 - 8000
Gutu				
Masvingo rural		2200		
Zaka	1200	2000	1300	1600
Matebeleland North				
Nkayi				3000
Matebeleland south				
Gwanda	1600			
Bulawayo	2000		5000	5000 - 8000
Harare				
Harare	1400 - 1600	1800	2500 - 4000	4500 - 6000
Chitungwiza			5000	10000

Harvesting was reported to be almost complete. There has been an increase in the number of districts reporting poor harvests in May compared to April. Many districts report that their food stocks from harvests will not last beyond July 2003.

Farming activities were reported to be hampered by the unavailability of inputs (seed, fertilizer and tillage) and crop yields reported to be worst in Mashonaland West, Matebeleland North and Matebeleland South (See Table 6).

Table 6: Reports of land area planted, crop yields, rains and production constraints, May 2003

PROVINCE	Ave % land area planted	Crop yields	Rains	Production problems
Mashonaland East	56%	Average-poor	Erratic rains early in the season, too much rain in the end but very late	Seed and fertilizer made available late after planting
Mashonaland Central	80%	Average	The rains were poor and the timing was bad more rain came at the end of the season	Farmers did not get seed and fertilizer on time
Mashonaland West	n.a	Poor	The rains came later in March and was useless to crops	Seed and fertilizer very expensive and not accessible
Manicaland	55%	Average-poor	Too little during planting improved after crops had wilted	Seed and fertilizer Unavailable or unaffordable
Midlands	80%	Average-poor	Little rains in the beginning and a lot of rain in the end	Seed and fertilizer not accessible politics involved in distribution
Masvingo	78%	Average	Average rains but too late for some crops, Cyclone Japhet saved most crops	Seed and fertilizer in short supply , very expensive on the parallel market
Matabeleland South	60%	Poor – none	Scarce	No seeds and fertiliser
Matabeleland North	43%	Poor	Very erratic came late and crops wilted	No seeds and fertilizer from the shops, fertilizer very expensive.

With very poor harvests in some areas there is a need to identify those households most affected by poor yields and provide input support to ensure that they are able to produce in 2003/4. There was little report of such inputs being organized.

GMB Deliveries

GMB deliveries in May 2003 remained infrequent, with some evidence of a small decrease in volumes of deliveries over April. GMB deliveries are affected by shortfalls in supplies and fuel shortages.

Communities believe that GMB has reduced supplies on the assumption that harvest yields make up the shortfall, but report that poor harvests do not compensate for reduced supplies.

The government is responsible for feeding people so it should share what they have equally, not considering the people's political affiliation.

Harare

The average number of reported deliveries to sentinel wards was 0.60 in May 2003 slightly lower than the 0.67 reported in April 2003. The average volume per delivery has decreased to 7.6 tonnes per delivery, much lower than the 13.9 tonnes per delivery reported in April. Only four districts Marondera rural, Chinhoyi, Chegutu urban, and Chitungwiza reported an improvement in GMB deliveries.

Table 7 shows districts with NO wards reporting ANY GMB food deliveries in the period reviewed, compared with information from previous months.

Table7: Districts with NO sentinel wards reporting any GMB deliveries in May

PROVINCE	May 03	April 03	March 03	February 03
Mashonaland East	Chikomba Goromonzi	Goromonzi UMP	Chikomba, UMP Marondera urban	UMP, Mudzi Chikomba,
Mashonaland Central	Bindura urban Mt Darwin	Nil	Mt Darwin	Nil
Mashonaland West	Chegutu urban Kadoma, Karoi Hurungwe, Mhondoro, Makonde	Chegutu Makonde	Chinhoyi urban Hurungwe, Mhondoro	Norton, Makonde, Zvimba
Manicaland	Buhera, Makoni Rusape urban, Mutare urban	Mutare Urban Nyanga	Nil	Chipinge, Makoni
Masvingo	Gutu, Zaka Mwenezi, Masvingo rural and urban	Masvingo rural Mwenezi	Zaka, Chiredzi Masvingo urban	Zaka, Mwenezi, Masvingo
Midlands	Gweru rural and urban, Chirumhanzu	Chirumhanzu Gweru rural & urban, Mberengwa	Gokwe, Gweru rural, Shurugwi, Zhombe	Shurugwi, Kwekwe rural, Mberengwa
Matabeleland North	Lupane Hwange urban	Nil	Umguza, Hwange	Umguza
Matabeleland South	Nil	Bulilimangwe Insiza	Gwanda	Insiza, Umzingwane

Some parents who have their children's names recorded as MDC supporters have problems accessing GMB food.

Marondera rural

Fuel shortage and political bias are the two obstacles most commonly reported in relation to GMB food access. Political bias in access to GMB grain was reported in 29 (80%) of the 35 districts reporting any GMB delivery,

particularly through party youths and war vets controlling distribution. There appears to be little progress in resolving this bias in access to GMB food.

There has been an upward movement in the GMB price. The reported upper price range of GMB maize in May 2003 of Z\$1400 /10kg is higher than prices in April. Districts with highly inflated reported prices of over Z\$200 /10kg in March 03 are shown in Table 8.

Table 8 : Reported costs of GMB maize, Z\$/10kg

Provinces	Price range in Z\$ / 10kg			Districts reporting GMB prices above \$200/10kg, May 2003
	MAY 2003	APRIL 2003	MARCH 2003	
Manicaland	106 - 380	116 - 300	116-250	Chipinge
Mashonaland East	114 - 450	84 - 126	110-174	Marondera urban, Seke, UMP
Mashonaland Central	116 - 150	120 - 400	116-150	nil
Mashonaland West	120 - 1000	116 - 500	112-260	Chinhoyi, Zvimba, Kariba
Masvingo	120 - 136	116 - 200	116-250	nil
Midlands	112 - 350	116 - 254	112-160	Kwekwe rural, Kwekwe urban
Matabeleland North	108 - 120	112 - 500	100-116	nil
Matabeleland South	100 - 136	100 - 124	116-120	nil
Cities: Harare and Bulawayo (*)	250 - 1400	250 - 300	250-300	Bulawayo, Harare, Chitungwiza

Market supplies

It appears the black market is being allowed by the authorities to thrive Bulawayo

As with the unresolved problem of biased access to GMB supplies, so too have parallel markets for food been allowed to continue.

Parallel market prices have risen in some areas in May and fallen in others compared to previous months. Increased prices in Manicaland, Midlands and Matabeleland North appear to relate to falling relief and GMB supplies not being matched by harvest surpluses. Falling prices in urban areas appears to relate to the reported increase in the supply of maize meal on the parallel markets in the cities bringing prices down.

Parallel market prices for maize meal in Harare, for example, are reported to be \$4000 /10kg down from \$5000/10kg in April, while in Matabeleland North prices are reported to have risen from \$4000/10kg to \$6000/10kg maize meal. (See Table 9)

Table 9: Upper prices of maize meal in parallel markets

Province	Upper prices of maize meal in parallel markets			
	Z\$ / 10kg			
	May- 03	April- 03	March- 03	Dec02/ Jan 03
Manicaland	4000	3000	2500	2250
Mashonaland East	3000	3500	4000	1800
Mashonaland Central	2400	4000	4000	2000
Mashonaland West	2500	2500	3000	2500
Masvingo	2500	3000	6000	2500
Midlands	4500	4000	8000	3000
Matabeleland North	6000	4000	4000	3000
Matabeleland South	1000	n.a	n.a	n.a
Cities	4000	5000	5000	3000

The sale of GMB controlled price grain through parallel markets at profit margins of over \$4000/10kg now seems to have become an institutionalized reality, particularly as harvests yields now flow through the same markets.

Given that controlled price food is flowing into parallel markets, the de facto price of maize meal to poor households is the price prevailing in parallel markets of between \$1000 and \$6000 / 10kg. The paradox of unrealistic controls on one source of grain and unregulated prices in another has set up a worst case scenario for the poor, particularly the rural poor who have not been able to secure adequate harvests. It provides price incentives for maize to flow from controlled price to unregulated markets, and into parallel markets in the cities where purchasing power is greater. The winners are those making superprofits out of such flows.

Relief food

Relief food continues to be the major source of rural food, but has been cut back. Although seven districts(11%) noted an improvement in relief supplies, 29% reported that supplies remained the same and 27% that relief was stopped or quantities of relief reduced. It seems communities were not adequately prepared for relief withdrawals.

Relief supplies have come to and end. People were shocked to hear of the abrupt end Mutasa

In four of these districts the quality of food provided worsened as oil and beans were withdrawn (Buhera, Makoni, Nyanga, Goromonzi). It is not clear why these high energy food sources were specifically withdrawn as this particularly compromises vulnerable groups like children. In other areas (Mutare rural, Mutasa, Chikomba, Bindura urban, Mt Darwin, Chinhoyi, Gokwe, Gweru rural, Kwekwe rural, Zvishavane, Chivi, Mwenezi, Zaka) all supplies were stopped or scaled down due to harvests.

Since people have harvested poor yields or none, they wish if the relief agency would continue helping to November while people conserve the poor harvests they have obtained to help them in the planting season. People called for a meeting with the ward councillor and were informed that there shall be no more food distribution. Food shall be sold in shops at government controlled prices. People were handed over free 5kg maize meal bags as the last lot for distribution.

Makoni

Although needed, no provisions were reported to be made where relief was withdrawn to identify those still vulnerable and maintain feeding in these groups.

Relief supplies should continue, as the harvest is not favorable, majority of people had poor harvests.

Mutare rural

While relief is consistently reported to be more fairly accessible than other food sources for those in need, 32% of districts reported some problem with access. This was particularly noted for former farm workers, settlers and urban areas.

In many urban areas there is little or no relief, despite increased need. The urban food crisis has been raised in previous Fosenet reports and is now confirmed through recent UN WFP reports. Fosenet monitoring indicates that the scale of the response still does not match the size of the problem.

Relief agencies and Donors should seriously and urgently consider aiding urban societies as these are hard hit by famine and unemployment levels have risen alarmingly.

Bulawayo

Its high time people in town should also be given food relief. School children should also be given food like Maheu and porridge while at school.

Mutare urban

Interference by political leaders with relief distribution was reported in four districts. Some reports noted that some village heads are abusing the lists so that they favor their relatives or they get much of the food themselves. These and other problems are noted in Table 10.

While maize allocation has improved there is still an element of fear amongst those who get relief food from NGOs since it is presumed by Zanu pf members that these agencies are from the opposition.

Chipinge

Table 10: Reported problems in accessing relief in districts, May 2003

District	Problems reported
Chikomba, Gokwe, Gwanda	Agencies have scaled down supplies
Marondera Urban	Those who are not Catholics can not access catholic relief
Seke, Mhonodoro, Zvimba, Mazowe, Chipinge	Political leaders or youth are interfering with the distribution asking for their members to be given first priority.
Bindura, UMP, Lupane, Mutasa	Workers, teachers, nurses are left out as they are said to be high income earners
Shurugwi	There is a problem of firewood to cook the porridge supplied
Chivi, Gutu, Zaka	Headmen are favouring themselves, relatives, refuse to accept certain names and leave out the truly affected
Masvingo urban	The aged and the poor are not assisted.
Mwenezi	Sometimes corruption throws out intended beneficiaries
Makoni	Those not vetted the first time are not getting food

There is some frustration that the ideas that communities have are not being asked for or listened to, nor are communities being adequately supported to respond to the problems in markets that they are facing, such as in the report below:

'This ward has permanent sources of water like dams and canals that can be used for irrigation. Government is concentrating on previously irrigated farm lands. Communities with sources of water should be assisted with seed, fertiliser, irrigation equipment. supplies of sugar, cooking oil, bread and other commodities which are price controlled are so erratic in our area, these are usually sold at the parallel market. People should be advised not to sell all their harvest quickly even if the prices are very good. The communities do not have enough harvest to take them to the next harvest. Seminars and workshops should be held to advise people not to quickly dispose of the food they have grown.'

Mutasa

People felt that now, when food supplies were improving, was the time to actively engage communities on strategies for food security, to avoid dependency on relief. People want to avoid future food insecurity. For withdrawing relief agencies and for state agencies there is a challenge that still seems largely unaddressed to respond to this desire.

I want to say people must be given seeds instead of food because they will never work

Mhondoro

Permanent solutions to food shortages can be found in the use of irrigation since the ward has a large river. The local irrigation scheme should be revived

Chivi

Summary

This report outlines information drawn from 145 monitoring reports from 60 districts from all provinces of Zimbabwe for May 2003.

Household food stocks have shown marginal improvements but the majority of households still have less than one months supply, with half estimated to have no food in stock. Thirteen districts still reported households consuming unusual foods or 'famine' foods.

Food insecurity in May is attributed to poor harvests, inability to afford food, seizure of maize grain by police at road blocks, political bias and difficulties for particular groups to access food.

Harvesting was reported to be almost complete. While local harvests have boosted food supplies, harvest outputs are plateauing and reported to be poor in half of the districts monitored. The worst harvests were reported from Matabeleland North, Midlands and Manicaland. Many districts report that stocks from harvests will not last beyond July 2003.

There is a need to identify households most affected by poor yields and provide inputs to ensure that they can produce in 2003/4. There was little report of such inputs being organized.

Seed and fertilizer were reported to be unavailable in May for those trying to secure resources for the next planting season. Scarcity is driving cost escalation. Seed and fertilizer prices have risen in May over April by about 50% in formal markets and nearly 100% in parallel markets, with parallel market prices about ten times higher than formal markets.

GMB deliveries were infrequent, with some evidence of a small decrease in volumes of deliveries over April. GMB deliveries were affected by shortfalls in supplies and fuel shortages.

Communities believe that GMB has reduced supplies on the incorrect assumption that harvest yields make up the shortfall.

Food has become a cause of increased population movement, with people moving in over half the districts either to access food, to areas of improved food supplies, to sell harvests, to leave areas where there is political discrimination in food access, to leave unproductive resettlement areas or to seek employment.

Instead of food moving effectively between rural and urban areas through state and market mechanisms, households are having to move at their own expense to source food. Given the shortage and costs of transport, stronger measures are needed to ensure optimal market flows of available foods.

Parallel market prices have risen in some areas in May and fallen in others compared to previous months. Increased prices in Manicaland, Midlands and Matebeleland North relate to falling relief and GMB supplies not being matched by harvest surpluses. Falling prices in urban areas relate to a reported increase in the supply of maize on the parallel markets in the cities.

The real cost of maize meal for households is its cost in parallel markets, now between \$1000 and \$6000 / 10kg. Unrealistic controls on one source of maize meal and unregulated prices in another has set up a worst case scenario for the poor. It provides price incentives for maize to flow from controlled price to unregulated markets, and to flow into parallel markets in the cities where purchasing power is greater. While these market flows are unchecked, individuals bringing family members maize meal in urban areas are having maize confiscated.

Relief food continues to be the major source of rural food, but has been cut back in about a quarter of districts. Communities were not adequately prepared for these relief withdrawals.

No provisions were reported where relief was withdrawn for the necessary steps of identifying those still vulnerable in order to maintain feeding in these groups.

In many urban areas there is little or no relief, despite increased need. The urban food crisis has been raised in previous Fosenet reports and is now confirmed through recent UN WFP reports. The scale of the response still does not match the size of the problem.

This round of monitoring highlights the fears and concerns communities have over poorly designed policies. Communities fear that harvests have been over-estimated and relief and GMB supplies reduced without adequate preparation. They are concerned about inadequate access to and the cost of inputs for the coming planting season. They are concerned about sharp withdrawals in relief supplies. These concerns signal that communities are not being adequately consulted, informed or involved in food security strategies.

While harvest yields improving supplies, people felt that now was the time to actively engage communities on strategies for food security, to avoid dependency. People want now to carry out activities like improving irrigation and accessing inputs to avoid future food insecurity. For withdrawing relief agencies and for state agencies there is a challenge to respond to this desire.