

# **FOSENET NGO Food Security Network**

## **Community Assessment of the Food Situation in Zimbabwe November 2003**

**For the executive summary please go to page 11**

**Please note the next Monitoring Report will be for January 2004 and will be a broader monitoring of social welfare at community level, including food security.**

### **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 security. The monitoring is implemented by the institutions in the Monitoring Working Group (none of which are directly involved in relief work) through NGOs based within districts and community based monitors. Monthly reports from all areas of the country are compiled to provide a monthly situation assessment of food security and access to enhance an ethical, effective and community focussed response to the food situation. Monitoring reports have now been done since July 2002, with trend analysis in January 2003 and September 2003. The monitoring indicators will be reviewed in December and new areas of data collection initiated in January 2004, while keeping selected indicators for time trends analysis. Queries and feedback on these reports is welcomed and should be directed to FOSENET monitoring at [fsmt2@mweb.co.zw](mailto:fsmt2@mweb.co.zw) or (263-4-) 708835.

This thirteenth round of NGO and community based monitoring nationally covers the month **November 2003**. This round of monitoring includes information related to food access, food security-production- poverty links and coping strategies.

## Coverage of the data

The monitoring information is collected from sentinel wards within districts. It is presented by district, to provide for two or more site reports on any indicator. Data for the period **November 2003** is drawn from **142 monitoring reports** from **58 districts** from all provinces of Zimbabwe, with an average of **2.4 reports per district**.

## Change in the food situation

*The prices of maize and maize meal are becoming more and more expensive of which very few people are managing to buy the food.*

*Gweru*

### **Two thirds of districts report a worsening food supply situation, a small reduction from October 2003 and primarily due to relief supplies.**

About 9% of the districts reported an improvement in food supplies to the sentinel wards, this was an insignificant rise from the 7% reported in October. The slight increase in food availability is reported to be due to the resumption of relief activities in both rural and urban communities. Over two thirds (68%) of the districts report a worsening food supply situation compared to (75%) reported in October and (74%) in September. The number of districts reporting no change has increased as a fall in own stocks is replenished by relief supplies.

**Table 1: Districts with sites with worsening food situations, November 2003**

Province	District
Manicaland	Buhera, Mutare urban, Mutare rural, Chimanimani
Mashonaland East	Marondera rural, Goromonzi, Mudzi, Mutoko, Murehwa, Hwedza, UMP
Mashonaland Central	Mt Darwin, Mazoe, Guruve
Mashonaland West	Chinhoyi, Kariba, Makonde, Norton
Midlands	Chirumhanzu, Gweru Rural, Gokwe, Zvishavane
Masvingo	Chivi, Chiredzi, Masvingo rural, gutu
Matabeleland North	Binga, Lupane, Hwange, Tsholotsho, Victoria Falls, Nkayi
Matabeleland South	Bulilimangwe, Matobo, Gwanda urban, Gwanda rural, Insiza
Cities	Bulawayo, Harare, Chitungwiza

## Food Needs

**The pattern of vulnerability has remained the same, viz: The elderly, the unemployed, people living with AIDS, displaced farm workers and orphans. There is further report of displacement of farmworkers and new report of farming activities being disturbed by violence around political activity.**

*People are now leaving for rural areas where relief food is distributed*

*Kwekwe*

**In and out migration has been reported in 47% of the districts. This represents a slight decrease from the 53% reported in October. The reports indicate that the increase in costs of travel have affected movements, including for food.**

People are reported to be moving from rural to urban areas to seek employment, and from urban to rural areas due to the high cost of living. Rural-urban movements are also reported to be taking place as people look for rural maize to sell on the parallel market in urban areas. Some migration from urban to rural areas is also reported to be due to movements for gold panning (see Table 2).

**Table 2: Districts reporting food related migration in November 2003**

Province	District	Reason
Manicaland	Buhera, Chimanimani, Mutare rural, Mutare urban, Makoni	From rural to urban areas to look for employment, to sell food on the parallel market, to stay with relatives because of rural food shortages. Urban to rural areas after losing jobs, to look for food, to grow own food.
Mashonaland East	Murehwa, Mutoko	From urban to rural areas because of cost of living. Rural to urban areas to look for employment.
Mashonaland Central	Mazoe	People leaving rural areas because of food shortages, some farmworkers leaving because of job loses after acquisition of farms by the state.
Mashonaland West	Zvimba, Norton	From urban areas to rural after losing jobs and running away from the high cost of living
Midlands	Chirumhanzu, Gokwe, Kwekwe rural, Zvishavane, Gweru urban	From towns to rural areas to look for food and for gold panning. From resettlement to urban and rural areas to look for relief food. To urban areas for employment, including some female migration for commercial sex work because of food shortages.
Masvingo	Gutu	People from town coming to look for maize
Matebeleland North	Hwange rural, Lupane, Nkayi, Binga, Victoria falls, Tsholotsho	From rural to urban areas seek jobs. Moving up and down looking for food. Some looking for fertile soils to grow crops
Matebeleland south	Insiza, Umzingwane, Gwanda	Women who had been living in towns coming back home. Out to South Africa to look for employment. Orphans from rural areas to towns to look for food.
Cities	Bulawayo, Harare	Out of Zimbabwe to South Africa and Botswana because of unemployment. Urban to rural areas to access food aid.

Difficulties with transport continue to be reported in 40% of districts. This is an improvement over the 55% reported in October and 83% in September, and is reported to be due to improved access to fuel supplies. Spare parts are now reported to be limiting factor in transport availability, together with high fares for transport.

## **Food availability and access**

*People have used some of the maize they had harvested for seed and they are now in need of maize for consumption. Generally people are facing difficulties to afford the rapidly increasing prices in food.*

*Shurugwi*

**Food prices in the formal and parallel market continue to rise beyond the reach of many. People are reported to be hungry even when the staple foods**

are available on the market. GMB food which is relatively more affordable is widely reported to be scarce.

*The prices of maize grain and maize meal are becoming more and more expensive AND very few people are managing to buy the food. People have changed their feeding habits so that the little they can afford will last longer. The majority can not afford commodities such as bread.*

Gweru Urban

*NGOs are no longer bringing food, GMB is also not doing anything*

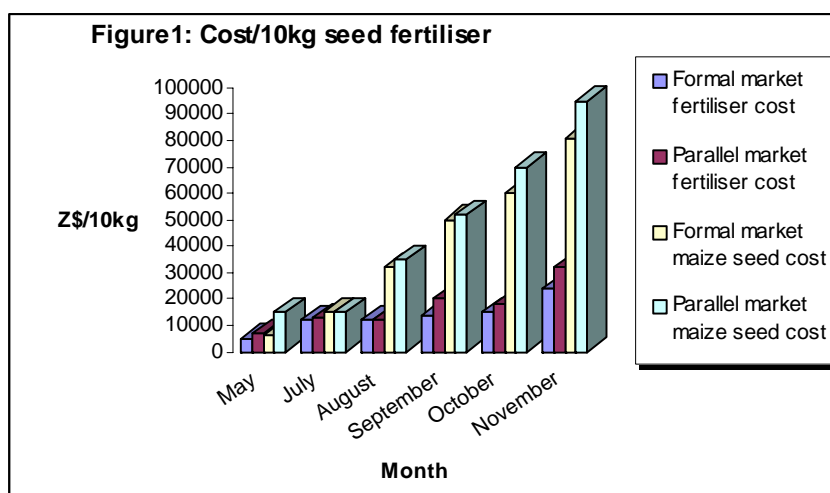
Murehwa

## Food from Production

**Fertiliser availability has improved over the past month. A third of the districts report fertilizer available on the local market compared to the quarter that reported this in October. Maize seed supply has however fallen as 28% of districts report seed availability compared to the 35% reported in October.** The demand from planting probably lies behind the fall in seed supply.

**Inadequate supplies, high demand and inflation continue to push the fertilizer and maize seed prices up by between 30 - 40% in the past month.** Figure 1 shows the inflation in fertilizer prices since May. Table 3 shows the inflation in maize and fertilizer prices in the same time period.

Maize seed is now reported to sell for a median of \$60 000/10kg in the formal market and \$67 500/10kg on the parallel market. (see Table 3 below) The formal and parallel market prices have begun to converge. Table 4 below gives comparisons for selected districts where information was available for both months of cost inflation over the past month.



**Table 3: Price differences maize seed and fertilizer, May to November 2003**

Month	Fertiliser Cost Z\$/10kg		Maize seed Cost Z\$/10/kg	
	Formal market	Parallel Market	Formal market	Parallel Market
Price range May	520- 5000	1200- 7000	600 - 6000	1000- 15000
Price range July	2000-12000	3000-13000	4000 – 15000	3250- 15000
Price range August	2400-12000	6000-12000	9000 - 32000	12000- 35000
Price range September	4600 -14000	5000- 20000	20000- 50000	20000- 52000
Price range October	7400 -15000	9000 -18000	30000 -60000	35000- 70000
Price range November	7800 -24000	9000 - 32000	40000 -81500	40000 -95000

*Most people are not able to afford the seed prices*

*Hwange*

**Table 4 : Maize seed and fertilizer prices for selected districts, formal and parallel markets, October and November 2003**

District	Fertiliser Cost Z\$/10kg		Maize Seed Cost Z\$10/kg	
	November. 03	October. 03	November. 03	October . 03
<b>Manicaland</b>				
Chipinge	20000-24000	12000	45000 - 55000	55000 - 60000
Makoni	9000 - 18000	12000- 15000	50000 - 65000	41000 - 50000
Mutare rural	10000 -16000	7400	50000 - 90000	
<b>Mashonaland East</b>				
Chikomba	10000 - 17200	7000 - 13000	40000 - 60000	40000 - 52000
Goromonzi	12000 - 15000	7000 - 9000	60000 - 80000	40000 - 54000
marondera rural	15000 - 18000	10000- 18000		35000 - 45000
Marondera urban	15200	7600	55000 - 60000	35000
Mutoko	10000 - 15000	7000 - 13200	50000 - 54000	35000 - 60000
<b>Mashonaland Central</b>				
Bindura Urban	10000 - 12000	8600 - 10000	33000 - 40000	36000 - 42000
Guruve	15000 - 18000	7000 - 12000	52000	32000 - 48000
<b>Mashonaland West</b>				
Mhondoro	12600 - 13000	7000 - 13000	60000 - 70000	24000 - 48000
Norton	20000		55000	38000 - 60000
<b>Midlands</b>				
Gokwe	13000 - 18000	7000 - 15000	40000 - 90000	25600 - 40000
Gweru urban	16000		45000	35000 - 60000
Shurugwi	10000 - 12000		45000 - 65000	48000
<b>Cities</b>				
Bulawayo	10000 - 40000		40000 - 75000	35000 - 40000
Harare	10000 - 20000		40000 - 75000	35000 - 40000

**Households continue to experience shortages of fertilizer and draught power inputs. Some seed distribution activities are reported to be taking place in districts.**

Table 5 indicates that draught power and fertilizer shortages could limit yields, although seed distribution activities reported from districts have improved planting.

**Table 5: Household access to tillage /draught power, seed, fertiliser November 2003**

Province	Average % households with access to tillage/draught power	% Districts reporting NO availability of seed	% Districts reporting NO availability of fertiliser
Manicaland	38	50	25
Mashonaland East	25	18	55
Mashonaland Central	n.a	n.a	25
Mashonaland West	n.a	50	50
Midlands	n.a	0	44
Masvingo	n.a	n.a	83
Matebeleland North	20	100	100
Matebeleland South	25	n.a	83

n.a = less than two reports per district

## **GMB Deliveries**

*Only known party officials buy GMB maize at \$800 per 50kg. The rest if they get it buy it at \$11 000per 50 kg bag.*

*Chirumhanzu*

GMB deliveries are reported to be inconsistent in some districts and completely absent in others. **Only 17% of districts were reported to have had GMB deliveries during the month.**

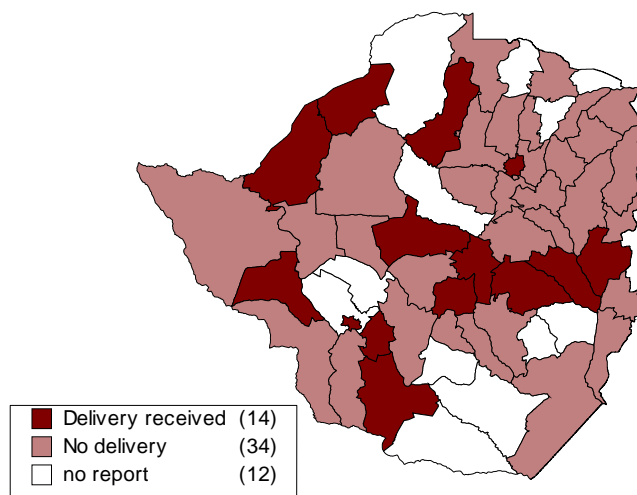
The average number of reported deliveries to sentinel wards was 0.15 deliveries per site, close to the 0.1 deliveries per site reported in October and half of the 0.22 deliveries per site reported in September. A reported volume of deliveries of 1.2 tonnes per site was double the 0.61 tonnes per site in October. Thirty -four districts (58%) reported no GMB deliveries at all. (see Figure 2 below)

*People are not getting any GMB food. They get their supplies after 4 – 6 months and they will share one 50kg bag per 3 households.*

*Lupane*

**No changes were noted in GMB prices (See Table 7 below). Reports from three districts (Tsholotsho, Chirumhanzu and Lupane) indicated cases where the two tier pricing system used by the GMB was being applied differently for different members of the community.**

**Figure 2: Frequency of GMB Deliveries November 2003**



*People are no longer willing to attend Zanu pf meetings, they now call people to come and register for GMB grain and hold meetings instead. People are no longer sure of the truth because at times the maize is sold at such meetings.*

*Gokwe*

**Table 7 : Reported costs of GMB maize, Z\$/10kg**

Province	Price range in Z\$/10kg		
	November 03	October 03	Sept-03
Manicaland	2600 - 3000	210 - 2600	2600 - 3000
Mashonaland East	3000	1700 - 3000	1100 - 3000
Mashonaland central	2600	2200 - 3000	1900 - 2300
Mashonaland West	300 - 2200	300 - 2600	2600 - 3000
Midlands	1600 - 2400	320 - 3000	2600
Masvingo	1900	800 - 3000	2200 - 2400
Matebeleland North	160 - 2000	138	2160 - 3000
Matebeleland South	140 - 1200	1200	2200
Cities; Harare and Bulawayo	1900 - 2600	216 - 2600	2720

### **Market Supplies.**

*Maize meal is sometimes available but very expensive*

*Bulawayo*

**Commercial food availability is better than it was at the same period last year, using maize meal and cooking oil as indicator foods. Escalating prices continue to be the major problem in accessing commercial food. (see Table 8)**

**Table 8 : Reported market availability of foods, Nov 02 and Nov 03**

% of districts reporting food present	Maize meal		Oil	
	Nov 03	Nov 02	Nov 03	Nov 02
Manicaland	85	30	100	66
Mashonaland East	80	50	80	50
Mashonaland Central	50	n.a	50	n.a
Mashonaland West	50	0	100	50
Masvingo	n.a	25	n.a	100
Midlands	100	n.a	100	n.a
Matabeleland North	75	0	100	20
Matabeleland South	100	40	100	60

**The parallel market is reportedly serving as a major source of food as well as a source of income for urban residents.** In rural areas people who are denied access to GMB maize have been noted to resort to the parallel market to buy maize grain supplied by local political and traditional leaders at high prices.

**Table 9: Upper prices of maize meal in parallel markets, Oct 03 - Nov 03**

Province	Upper prices of Maize meal in parallel Markets Z\$/10kg			
	Nov 2003	Oct 2003	Sept 2003	Nov 2002
Manicaland	15000	15000	9000	1250
Mashonaland East	12000	15250	10000	1800
Mashonaland central	20000	17000	10000	2000
Mashonaland West	16000	14000	9000	1000
Midlands	12500	16000	10000	1800
Masvingo	10000	12000	8000	1500
Matabeleland North	10000	8000	8000	1800
Matabeleland South	15000	14000	n.a	1250
Cities; Harare and Bulawayo	15000	15000	7500	1500

n.a = not available

## Relief food

*We would like to thank the NGO for the food aid it is offering . If it were not for them we would have died long back.*

*Lupane*

*People who had gone to resettlement areas have come back because food aid is not available in those areas.*

*Matobo*

**Relief was reported to have resumed in thirty six districts (62% of districts). Relief activities are now widely reported in major urban areas for the first time. Lack of relief in resettlement areas was noted in reports.**

Communities are reported to have welcomed the urban school child feeding programmes.

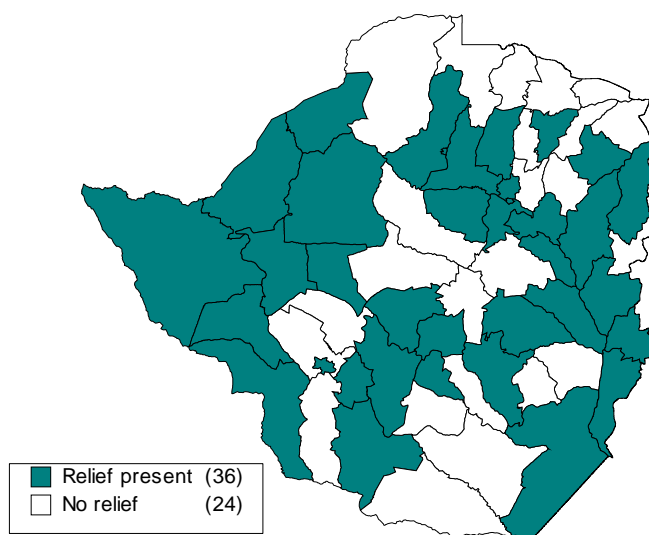


The reports indicate that relief organizations are now increasing their operations in the districts with more wards being serviced (See Figure 3).

Districts reporting relief activities were:

Manicaland:	Buhera, Chimanimani, Mutare rural, Makoni, Mutare urban
Mashonaland East:	Marondera urban, Marondera rural, Seke, Hwedza, Mutoko
Mashonaland Central:	Mazoe
Mash West:	Kariba, Makonde, Mhondoro
Midlands:	Gokwe, Gweru rural, Gweru urban, Shurugwi, Zvishavane,
Masvingo:	Masvingo rural, Masvingo urban, Gutu, Chiredzi
Matebeleland north:	Binga, Hwange ,Tsholotsho, Lupane, Victoria Falls, Nkayi
Matebeleland south:	Gwanda, Bulilimamangwe, Umzingwane, Insiza, Gwanda
Cities:	Bulawayo, Harare

**Figure 3: Districts reporting relief activities**



*The responsible authority had to do some thing to secure food for its people who are already starving I would urge people to go and ask their district administrator to source food for them since there are donors who are willing to help.*

*UMP*

**The cash for work programme was reported to be taking place in half of the districts, an increase on the 22% reported in October.**

**Reports of political interference with food distribution were made from 19% of districts, with reports coming from all provinces.** Table 10 below indicates some of the reported problems.

In relation to general food distribution from national sources (GMB and government relief) there are reports of beneficiary lists being compiled at political party meetings, purported opposition supporters being left off lists, food being used in political campaigns and deserving cases not accessing food.

In relation to relief food, there are reports of people being left off lists, some dissatisfaction with beneficiary selection criteria, interference by for political party activists both in stopping relief food being distributed or attempting to take over the distribution of food.

**Table 10: Reported problems in accessing food in districts, November 2003**

District	Issues reported
Makoni, Mutare Rural	Food is given to certain households and yet everyone needs food. Politicians are involved in food distribution.
Marondera rural, Hwedza, Ump, Seke, Murehwa	The unemployed are not getting the food. Parents with working children are not getting food. Relief food is no longer supplied. Authorities are failing to bring in donors. War vets are involving themselves in food distribution.
Bindura, Mazoe, Mt Darwin	Politics involved in distribution, undeserving people receiving food. The relief food is not coming anymore
Mhondoro	Food relief should cover all the people
Gokwe, Gweru rural, Shurugwi, Zvishavane	Relief food is being used for political campaigns. Employed TB patients are not receiving the food meant for TB patients. People with just five cattle are not given food aid.
Chiredzi	Politicization of food distribution activities
Hwange rural, Lupane, Nkayi	Selection of beneficiaries done on political affiliation. Supplies are inconsistent
Gwanda rural, Insiza, Umzingwane	Those in charge are allocating themselves other peoples shares. Party Politics is involved in the distribution.
Harare	Corruption amongst people who distribute the food. Ruling party activists want to be involved in the distribution. Inconsistent supplies of food.

## Community responses

*Some men and women have left for gold panning because they had no other ways to feed their children.*

*Gokwe*

**Reports of asset sales to raise money to buy food were made from twenty six districts (45%), equal to that reported in October.** Asset sales include household goods, particularly electrical goods, furniture, clothes and livestock. The impact of these sales, the trends on school access, particularly with rising fee levels, and the impact on wider household social welfare and poverty will be explored in more detail in the January monitoring. This and future rounds of monitoring will now widen the review of household wellbeing in Zimbabwe to examine the wider issues related to social and economic wellbeing and to food security. Past rounds of food security monitoring have highlighted that household and community food security are directly linked to wider economic and social factors, with economic inflation, poverty, AIDS and ill health, transport costs, social and political marginalization undermining food security, and poor food security and some food seeking activities undermining health, education access, household assets and leading to deepening poverty. The food security monitoring is thus

now widening in 2004 to a wider civic monitoring to inform the wider range of relief and recovery strategies needed to address these issues.

## Summary

Two thirds of districts report a worsening food supply situation, a small reduction from October 2003, with the improvement primarily due to relief supplies.

The pattern of vulnerability has remained the same, viz: The elderly, the unemployed, people living with AIDS, displaced farm workers and orphans. There is further report of displacement of farmworkers and new report of farming activities being disturbed by violence around political activity.

In and out migration has been reported in 47% of the districts. This represents a slight decrease from the 53% reported in October. The reports indicate that the increase in costs of travel have affected movements, including for food.

Food prices in the formal and parallel market continue to rise beyond the reach of many. People are reported to be hungry even when the staple foods are available on the market. GMB food which is relatively more affordable is widely reported to be scarce. Only 17% of districts were reported to have GMB deliveries during the month.

Fertiliser availability has improved over the past month. A third of the districts report fertilizer available on the local market compared to the quarter that reported this in October. Maize seed supply has however fallen as 28% of districts report seed availability compared to the 35% reported in October. Some seed distribution activities are reported to be taking place in districts. Inadequate supplies, high demand and inflation continue, however, to push the fertilizer and maize seed prices up by between 30 - 40% in the past month.

Commercial food availability is better than it was at the same period last year, using maize meal and cooking oil as indicator foods. Escalating prices continue to be the major problem in accessing commercial food. The parallel market is reportedly serving as a major source of food as well as a source of income for urban residents.

Relief was reported to have resumed in thirty six districts (62% of districts). Relief activities are now widely reported in major urban areas for the first time. Lack of relief in resettlement areas was noted in reports. The cash for work programme was reported to be taking place in half of the districts, an increase on the 22% reported in October.

Reports of political interference with food distribution were made from 19% of districts, with reports coming from all provinces.

Reports of asset sales to raise money to buy food were made from twenty six districts (45%), equal to that reported in October. The impact of these sales, the trends on school access, particularly with rising fee levels, and the impact on wider household social welfare and poverty will be explored in more detail in the January monitoring. This and future rounds of monitoring will now widen the review of household wellbeing in Zimbabwe to examine the wider issues related to social and economic wellbeing and to food security. Past rounds of food security monitoring have highlighted that household and community food security are directly linked to wider economic and social factors,

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