COMMUNITY MONITORING PROGRAMME

integrating the
FOSENET Food Security monitoring

Community Assessment of Socioeconomic Development and Food Security in Zimbabwe
September 2004

For the executive summary please go to page 15

This report is based on monitoring of social and economic development indicators at community level by the Community Monitoring Programme. Monthly monitoring is complemented by a more detailed focus on particular issues in quarterly monitoring. Proposals for issues to monitor are welcomed and should be sent to fsmt2@mweb.co.zw

Background

The Community Monitoring Programme aims to provide community based information to inform programmes aimed at socio-economic development and food security in Zimbabwe.

Civil society organizations have through the monitoring group of the National NGO Food Security Network (FOSENET) been monitoring food security in Zimbabwe since July 2002. In 2004 this monitoring was widened to cover other social and economic conditions, recognizing the wide range of conditions influencing social and economic wellbeing. The Community Monitoring Programme is implemented through NGOs based within districts and through community-based monitors. Monthly reports from all areas of the country are compiled to provide a monthly situation assessment of food security and social welfare to enhance an ethical, effective and community focussed response to social and economic challenges and to inform civil society- state interactions on social and economic development.

This nineteenth round of monitoring nationally covers the month of **September 2004**. It is drawn from **173 monitoring reports** from **57 districts** from all provinces of Zimbabwe.

The monitoring information is collected from sentinel wards within districts. Data presented is cross validated through two or more site reports on any indicator. Training, review by monitors and peer review is being continuously implemented in 2004 to improve both coverage and data quality.

Queries and feedback on these reports is welcomed and should be directed to the Community Monitoring Programme at fsmt2@mweb.co.zw

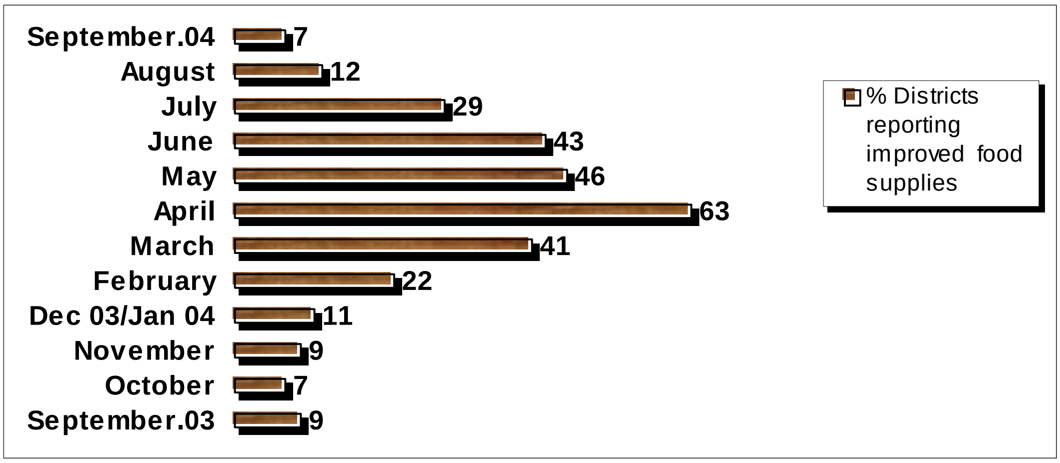
The food security situation

Household food availability was reported to fall in the month of September.

The share of districts reporting improvements in food supplies continued to fall, with only 7% of districts reporting improvements in supplies in September 2004, falling monthly from the 63% reported in April 2004. This is similar to the pattern found in 2003, with 9% of districts by September 2003 reporting improved food supplies. Conversely 56% of districts reported a worsening situation, an increase on the 46% reported in August 2004, although less than the 74% reported in September 2003.

In September 2004, the districts with sites that noted improvements in food supplies were in Bindura, Shamva, Murehwa and Chimanimani districts. The improvements were reported to be due to increased GMB deliveries to the wards in these districts.

Figure 1: Share of districts reporting improving food supplies September 2003 to September2004

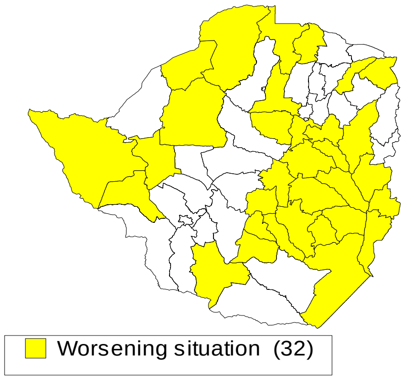


Sites reporting worsening situations came from all provinces, including traditionally grain surplus areas (See Figure 2).The number of districts has risen since August 2004, covering districts reported in August and including new districts in September 2004.

Falling household food supplies were reported to be due to harvest stocks from the last season running out , without a corresponding increase in alternative food sources, such as from GMB or relief supplies. This is compounded by rising prices of commercial foods.

Figure 2: District sites reporting worsening food situations in August 2004 and September 2004

September 2004



August 2004

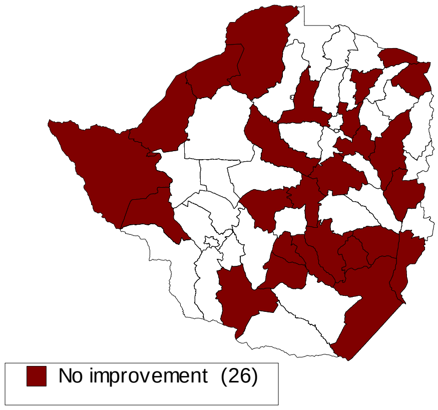


Table1: Share of sites reporting improved and worsening food supplies January 04 to September 04

Month	% districts reporting improved food supplies	% districts reporting worsening food supplies
September 2003	9	74
December 03/January 2004	11	79
February 2004	22	58
March 2004	41	59
April 2004	63	29
May 2004	46	37
June 2004	43	34
July 2004	29	43
August 2004	12	46
September 2004	7	56

Table 2: Districts with sites reporting worsening food situations in September 2004

Province	District
Manicaland	Makoni, Buhera,Chipinge,Mutasa
Mashonaland East	Chikomba, Hwedza, Marondera rural, UMP
Mashonaland Central	Guruve, Mazowe
Mashonaland West	Chegutu, Hurungwe, Zvimba, Kariba
Midlands	Mberengwa, Shurugwi
Masvingo	Chiredzi, Chivi, Masvingo rural, Zaka, Masvingo urban,
Matebeleland North	Lupane, Tsholotsho, Umguza, Hwange
Matebeleland South	Gwanda

Reports indicate that the deterioration in food supplies has spread across all provinces, including the main grain producing areas of Mashonaland, Midlands and Manicaland.

While urban areas report readily available commercial supplies, this is at high prices that are reported to be unaffordable for poor households.

Some people are suffering of hunger because they did not harvest enough food. Food needs are still very high because people received little rainfall last year.

Mt Darwin

The share of households sourcing food from own harvest is still relatively high, with half (52%) of the districts reporting this food source in September 2004. This has, however , fallen since August 2004, when 61% of districts reporting this as a food source (See Figure 3). Harvest stocks have been the main source of food for rural communities, but now appear to be diminishing .

Figure 3: Share of districts reporting own production as source of food January 04 – September 04

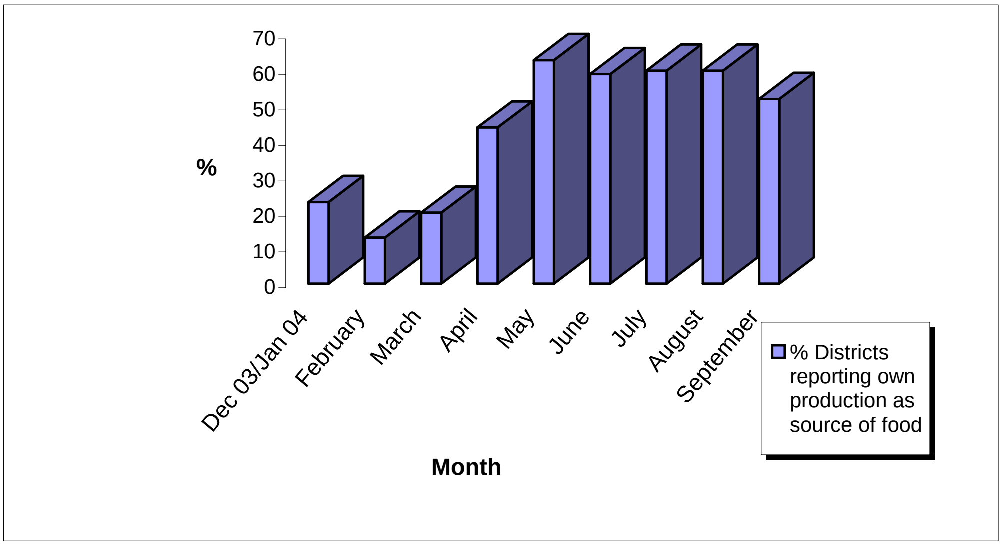


Table 3: Districts reporting households sourcing food from own production

Month	% districts reporting
December 03/January 2004	23
February 2004	13
March 2004	20
April 2004	44
May 2004	63
June 2004	59
July 2004	60
August 2004	61
September 2004	52

Food stocks at household level are reported to have fallen since August 2004, with 81% of households reported to have stocks of one month or less, compared to 70% in August 2004 (See Figure 4).

It would appear from the data that household food availability has fallen rather sharply in September 2004 compared to previous months, but this would need to be further assessed based on reports in October 2004.

Figure 4: Share of households with stocks of less than a month January 04 – September 04

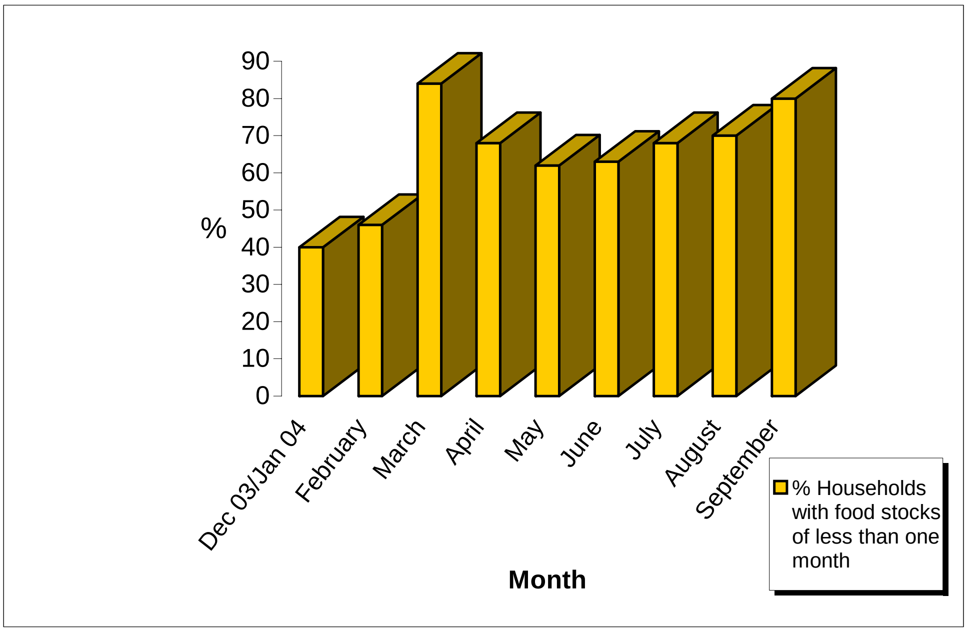


Table 4: Share of households with stocks of less than one month January 04 to September 04

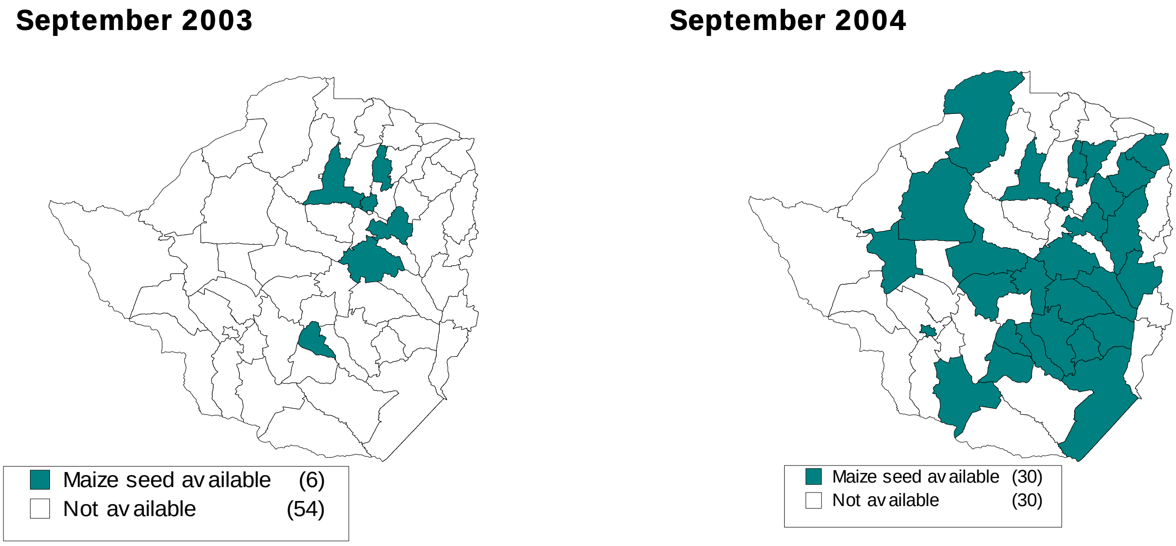
Month	% households
December 03/January 2004	40
February 2004	46
March 2004	84
April 2004	68
May 2004	62
June 2004	63
July 2004	68
August 2004	70
September 2004	80

Production Inputs

The supply of agricultural inputs has improved compared to last year.

Reported maize seed availability has improved slightly compared to August 2004, with 52% of districts reporting maize seed available compared to 46% in August 2004. This is significantly higher than the 13% maize seed availability reported a year ago, in September 2003. Government set new maize seed prices in early September 2004 and there appears to be some improvement in supplies of maize seed. Of concern however is the reported problem that while maize seed is available in most urban centers in districts, it is still not widely available in rural wards, implying additional transport costs to access seed.

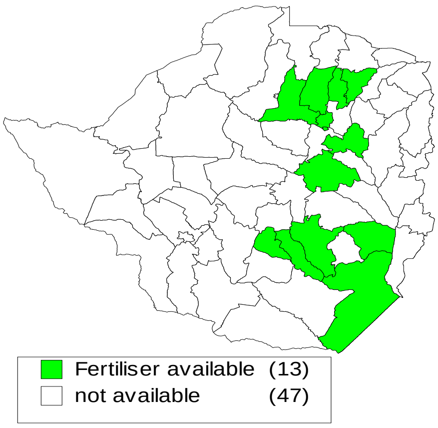
Figure 5: Maize Seed availability September 2003 and September 2004



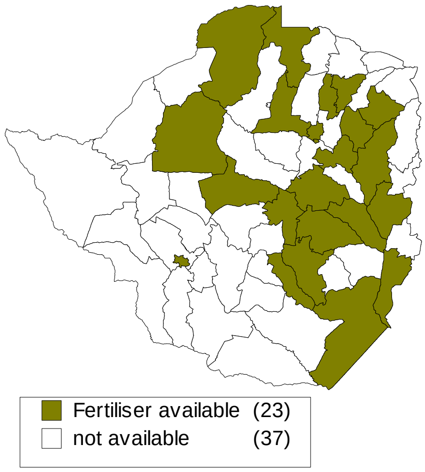
Fertiliser availability is also reported to have improved since September 2003. Fertiliser was reported available in 40% of districts compared to 25% in September 2003. (See Figure 5)

Figure 6: Fertilizer availability September 2003 and 2004

September 2003



September 2004



Reported prices of maize seed and fertilizer, while significantly higher than last year, have remained relatively constant since July 2004.

Figure 6: Reported cost of maize seed January 04 – September 04

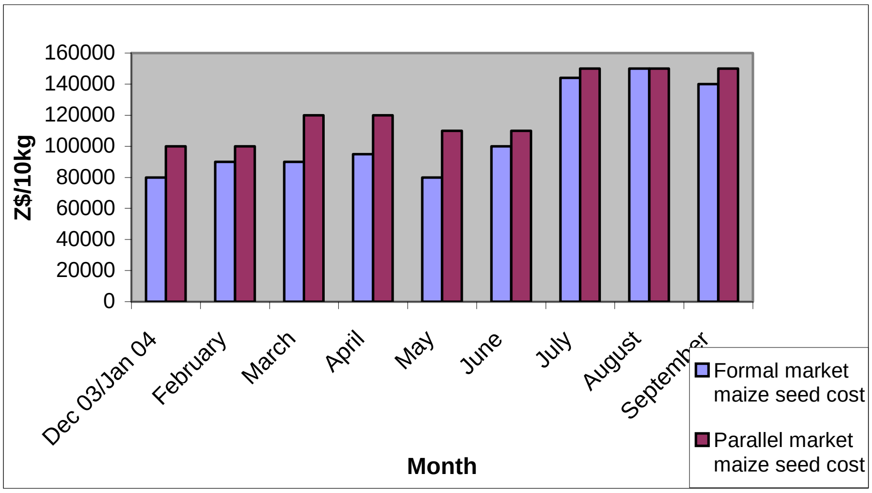
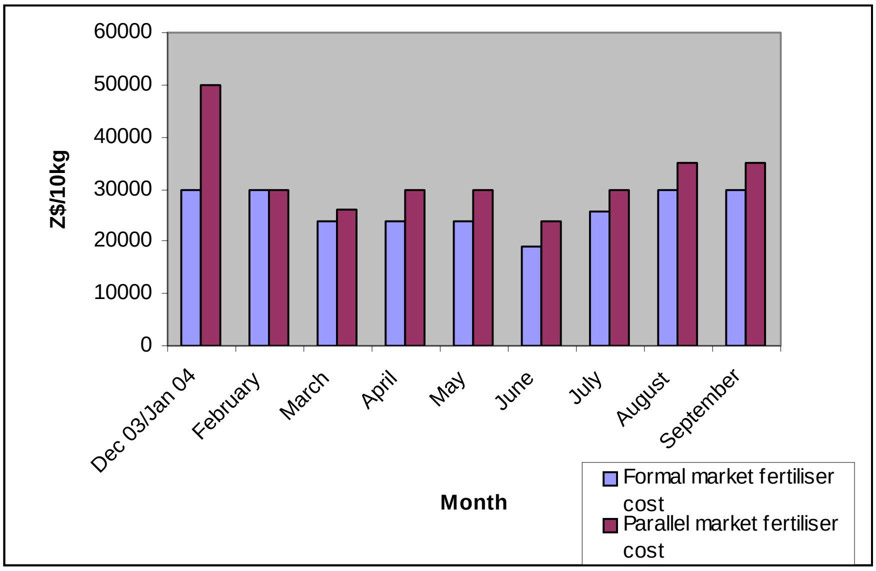


Figure 7: Reported cost of fertilizer January 04 - September 04



Community monitors report however that current prices for maize seed and fertilizers are too high for those rural farmers who have limited options for sourcing available cash to buy inputs. The short season hybrid seed varieties are reported to be selling at above $140 000/10kg and some new seed varieties (Tsoko) are reported to be selling at an average $60 000/10kg. For fertiliser, prices as high as $30 000/10kg in the formal market have been reported from study sites.(See Table 5)

Table 5: Reported prices of maize seed and fertilizer August 2003- September 2004

	Fertiliser Cost Z$/10kg		Maize seed Cost Z$/10/kg	
Month	**Formal market**	**Parallel Market**	**Formal market**	**Parallel Market**
August 2003	4000-12000	4000-12000	9900-30000	9800-30000
Price range January 04	10400 -30000	14000-50000	20000- 80000	35000-100000
Price range February 04	9000 -30000	13000-30000	29000- 90000	40000-100000
Price range March 04	12000- 24000	14000-26000	38000-90000	45000-120000
Price range April 04	12000 - 24000	16000 - 30000	40000 – 95000	52000 - 120000
Price range May 04	12000 - 24000	14000 - 30000	36000 – 80000	65000 – 110000
Price range June 04	14000 - 19000	19000 - 24000	45000- 100000	70000 - 110000
Price range July 04	14000 - 25600	19000 - 30000	63200 - 144000	75000 - 150000
Price range August 04	14000 - 30000	17000 - 35000	70000 - 136000	105000 - 150000
Price range September 04	14000 - 29000	16000 - 30000	56000 - 140000	100000 - 150000

GMB Deliveries

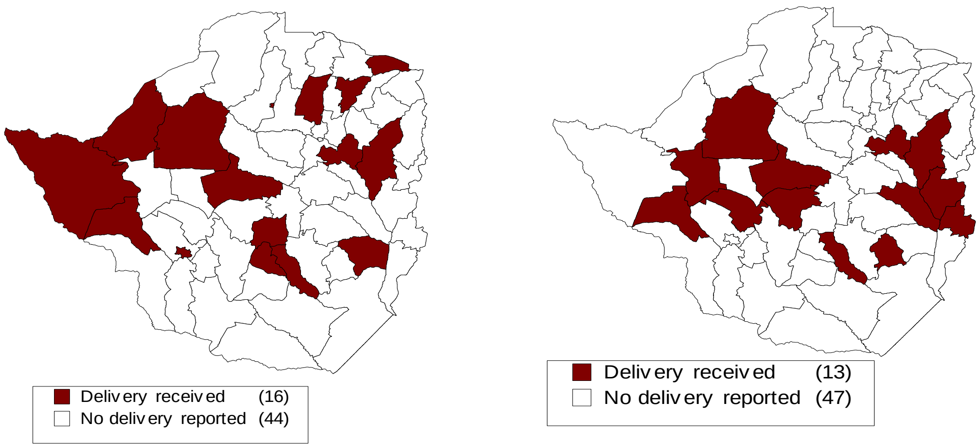
Housebreaking for food is on the increase which is a visible indication of present hunger in the area. The GMB should at least bring one supply per month of deliveries.

Makoni

GMB deliveries were reported in sites in 23% of the districts in September 2004. This is an increase on the 11% reporting this in August 2004. Reported deliveries in September 2004 are less than the 30% of districts with sites reporting GMB deliveries in September 2003.

Figure 8: Frequency of GMB deliveries September 2004

September 2003 **September 2004**



An average of 0.19 deliveries per sentinel ward and an average delivery volume of 1.8 tonnes was reported in September 2004, slightly higher than the 0.10 deliveries and 0.35 tonnes reported in August 2004. These reported levels are not very much different from to the 0.22 deliveries and 2.7 tonnes reported in September 2003.

Community monitors report the view that GMB should increase delivery coverage and frequency as many rural households now face dwindling grain stocks.

Reported GMB grain prices remained at the same levels as in August 2004 but prices of as high as Z$8 400/10kg were reported from Mashonaland East . **The prices found in the community monitoring are similar to those found in the FEWSNET, Zimbabwe Monthly Food Security Update , September 2004 which notes that GMB maize is selling at between Z$32 000 to Z$40 000/50kg.**

Table 6: Reported costs of GMB maize, Z$/10kg

Province	Price range in Z$/10kg		
	September 04	August 04	September 03
Manicaland	6400 – 7200	6800	2600 – 3000
Mashonaland East	7000 – 8400	5200	1100 – 3000
Mashonaland central	8000		1900 - 2300
Mashonaland West			2600 – 3000
Midlands	7000	5200 – 6800	2600
Masvingo	6000 – 6800	6800 – 7000	2200 – 2400
Matebeleland North	6000 – 7000		2160 – 3000
Matebeleland South		6800	2200
Cities; Harare and Bulawayo	7000		2720

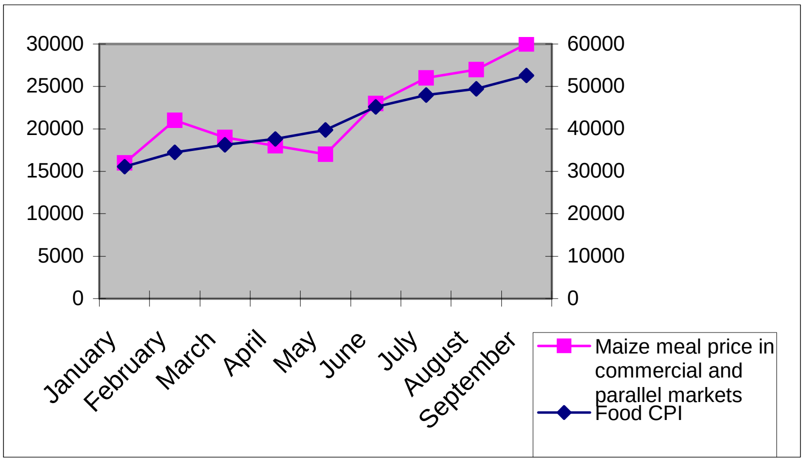
Commercial food

Prices of food are too high, many people cannot afford.

Mutasa

Commercial maize meal prices have increased since August 2004, and a third (31%) of sentinel wards report that a half to three quarters of households in their ward have difficulty paying current maize meal prices. Prices of up to Z$30 000/10kg maize meal are reported. Hence while commercial food availability is reported to be higher than it was at the same period last year, price is a barrier to household access in the poorest households (See Figure 9 and Table 7)

Figure 9: Maize meal prices January 04 – September 04



Very few families can still afford two decent meals per day.

Mutare urban

Oil was reported to be available across most districts, with some shortfalls reported in Mashonaland Central.

Table 7: Reported market availability of foods, September 2003 and September 2004

% districts reporting food present	Maize meal		Oil	
	September 04	September 03	September 04	September03
Manicaland	57	50	85	50
Mashonaland East	100	50	100	75
Mashonaland Central	66	43	66	85
Mashonaland West	90	67	90	67
Masvingo	71	25	75	75
Midlands	87	70	71	80
Matabeleland North	100	50	100	83
Matabeleland South	100	n.a	100	n.a

Table 8: Upper prices of maize meal in parallel markets September 2003 and September 2004

Province	Upper prices of maize meal in commercial and parallel markets Z$/10kg			
	September04	August 04	July 04	September 03
Manicaland	30000	25000	25000	9000
Mashonaland East	30000	25000	24000	10000
Mashonaland Central	25000	25000	25000	10000
Mashonaland West	22500	24000	30000	9000
Midlands	30000	21000	35000	10000
Masvingo	29000	30000	30000	8000
Matabeleland North	20000	25000	21000	8000
Matebeleland South	16500	25000	25000	n.a
Cities: Bulawayo and Harare	30000	20000	20000	7500

n.a =not available

Humanitarian Relief

MPs should meet NGOs in order to help starving people

Chikomba

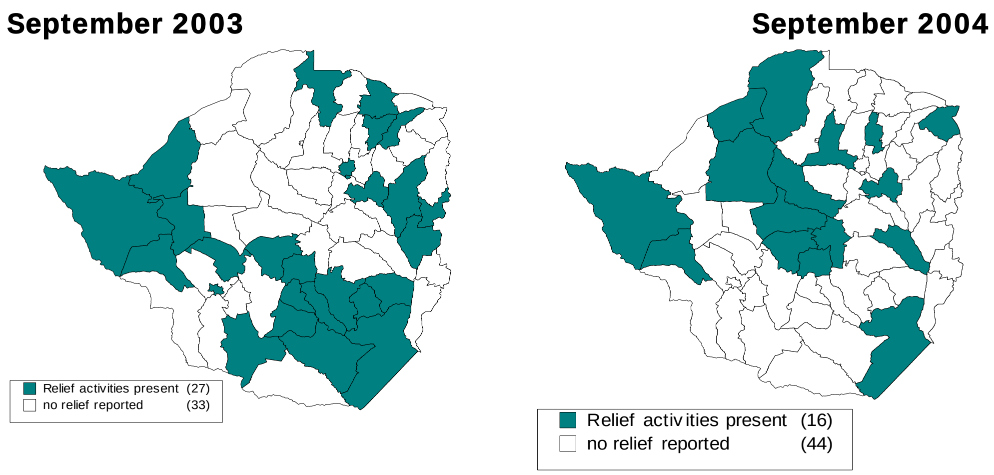
Relief activities continue to be reported in a quarter of districts, as has been the case since July 2004, and less than the 45% of districts where these activities were reported in September 2003 See Figure 10)**.**

These activities were reported to cover school child feeding, TB and HIV/AIDS patients feeding by local NGOs and Church based organisations.. No general food distribution was reported in September 2004.

Relief activities both government and NGO seems to have stopped and the prices of maize meal remain the major concern to the people.

Bulawayo

Figure 10: Distribution of relief activities September 2004 and September 2004



The government cash for work was reported to have stopped in 16 districts (28% of districts) due to funding problems.

Social Conditions

Availability of indicator drugs (antibiotics, analgesics) in local clinics is reported to have increased to 79% of sites reporting the drugs available, from the 63% reported in August. (See Figure 9)

Almost all districts (94%) reported that their local clinics have trained nurses. Clinic fees continued to show very wide ranges, with urban areas paying higher fees than rural areas. (See Table 9) **Safe water supplies at clinics continue to be reported as a problem in some areas, with only 33% of sites in Mashonaland West and 42% in Midlands reporting that their clinics have a safe water supply at the clinic.**

Table 9: Reported clinic fees, and provision of staff and safe water at clinics by province September 2004

Province	Clinic fee range Z$ September 2004	% sites reporting Clinic with nurse	Clinic with safe water
Manicaland	1900 – 10000	75	62
Mashonaland East	1000 – 26000	88	60
Mashonaland Central	500 – 6000	83	67
Mashonaland West	120 – 20000	100	33
Midlands	120 – 7500	100	42
Masvingo	300 – 10000	100	50
Matebeleland North	120 – 36000	100	50
Matebeleland south	2000 – 5500	100	50
Bulawayo, Harare	450 – 20000	100	100
Total	120 - 36000	94	57

n.a = not available

The reported level of school fees and levies have not changed compared to levels reported in August 2004, and vary widely across areas . (See Table 10**)** School fees ranged from $200 to $150000, Levies from $1500 to $150000

Table 10: School Fees and levies per term reported by province September 2004
This needs to give the August 2004 data for each as well. Please complete

Province	Fees range	Levies range
Manicaland	300 - 25000	4000 – 30000
Mashonaland East	300 - 80000	1500 – 40000
Mashonaland Central	5000 - 60000	5000 – 45000
Mashonaland West	250 - 30000	5000 – 100000
Midlands	200 - 150000	5000 – 150000
Masvingo	500 - 60000	2000 – 20000
Matebeleland North	3500 - 13000	5000 – 11000
Matebeleland South	2000 - 6000	2000 – 6000
Bulawayo, Harare	240 - 30000	5000 - 81000

Community and social responses

Strategies used by communities in September followed the same pattern used in August 2004, including.

- **Strategies to boost incomes:** Work for food (Chivi, Bindura, Chikomba, Goromonzi, Guruve, Mazowe, Chinhoyi, Gweru rural, Chiredzi).Gold panning (Mudzi, Bindura, Guruve, Umguza, Chivi).Petty trading,(Bulawayo, Marondera, Murehwa, Gweru, Kariba) dig and sell river sand(Chinhoyi) market gardening(Murehwa, Seke, Chinhoyi, Mutoko, Gokwe, Mberengwa) Growing crops on small irrigation plots (Chimanimani, Zvimba)

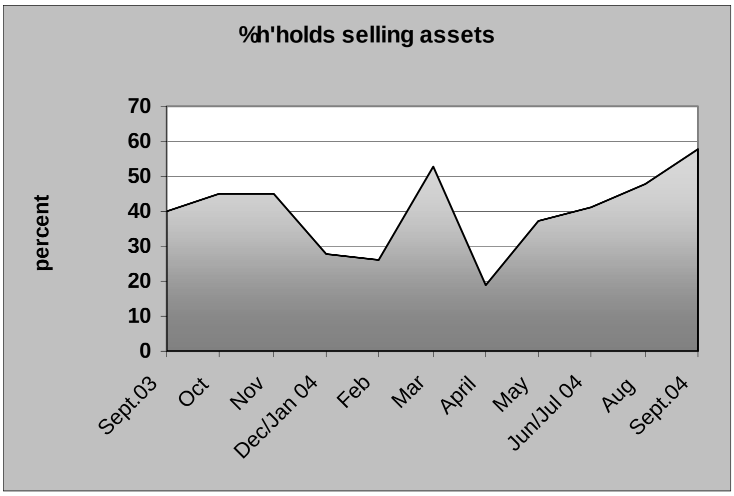
- **Strategies to use savings:** Household asset sales have been reported in 58% of districts in September 2004. Reported asset sales included furniture, livestock, clothes, utensils).

- **Strategies to cut spending and consumption:** Buy in smaller quantities (Harare, Bulawayo, Mutare) Work with food committees (Guruve)

- **Strategies to pool or reduce costs:** Form groups and buy in bulk (Marondera, Buhera)

Reported household asset sales have risen in September compared to previous months. Cost pressures at this time of year appear to be growing. Reduced household food supplies, high costs of farming inputs, pressure to buy farming inputs for the planting season and high costs of commercial foods appear to put significant combined pressures on low income urban and rural households at this time of year. **In 2003 households were reported to liquidate assets at an increasing level up to about November, when pressures to purchase seed and farm inputs may have started to tail off.**

FIGURE 11: HOUSEHOLD ASSET SALES SEPTEMBER 2003 TO SEPTEMBER 2004



Source: CMP reports September 03 to September 04

It will be important to assess the extent to which this is repeated in 2004. It will also be important to assess how far this is driving increased poverty, falling production capacities and social wellbeing and which households are most affected. The data suggests that seed availability and cost in rural areas and for the lowest income households continues to be an important bottleneck to breaking a poverty cycle.

Some rich people are oppressing the poor people by pretending that the area has enough food when people find it difficult to get a day's meal.

Gokwe

Twenty –two districts (39%) reported population movements between districts in September 2004, an increase compared to the 26% of districts reporting these movements in September 2003 and similar to the 41% reporting this in August 2004. Reported movements are mainly for employment, including increasing reporting of migration to other countries, as well as movements between resettlement areas and rural areas, to do gold panning to supplement income, and movements to escape violence and harassment.

The reported reasons for these population movements in September 2004 follow the same patterns as for August 2004 these were:

- To seek employment (Buhera, Gweru, Marondera, Mutare)
- For gold panning (Bindura, Gweru, Kwekwe, Chivi, Shamva)
- Movement out of districts due to political violence (Makoni)
- To neighbouring countries to look for employment (Chiredzi, Zaka)
- Moving away from former occupied farms which have now been taken over by the state (Karoyi, Norton)

Reports of community meetings with elected representatives have increased slightly compared to the previous month. Meetings with with elected representatives were reported from 32 districts (56%) in September 2004, an increase on the 48% of districts reporting this in August 2004. **Meetings covered a range of community issues, including food security, election campaigns, AIDS committees, cash for work and urban council rates.**

Summary

Household food availability was reported to fall in the month of September.

The share of districts reporting improvements in food supplies continued to fall, with only 7% of districts reporting improvements in supplies in September 2004, falling monthly from the 63% reported in April 2004. Reports indicate that the deterioration in food supplies has spread across all provinces, including the main grain producing areas of Mashonaland, Midlands and Manicaland.

Falling household food supplies were reported to be due to harvest stocks from the last season running out , without a corresponding increase in alternative food sources, such as from GMB or relief supplies. This was compounded by reports of rising prices of commercial foods.

The share of households sourcing food from own harvest is still relatively high, with half of the districts reporting this food source in September 2004. This has, however, fallen since August 2004, when 61% of districts reporting this as a food source. Harvest stocks have been the main source of food for rural communities, but now appear to be diminishing. Food stocks at household level are reported to have fallen since August 2004, with 81% of households reported to have stocks of one month or less, compared to 70% in August 2004.

The supply of agricultural inputs has improved compared to last year.

Reported maize seed availability has improved slightly compared to August 2004, with 52% of districts reporting maize seed available compared to 46% in August 2004. This is significantly higher than the 13% maize seed availability reported a year ago, in September 2003. Government set new maize seed prices in early September 2004 and there appears to be some improvement in supplies of maize seed. Of concern however is the reported problem that while maize seed is available in most urban centers in districts, it is still not widely available in rural wards, implying additional transport costs to access seed.

Fertiliser availability is also reported to have improved since September 2003.

Reported prices of maize seed and fertilizer, while significantly higher than last year, have remained relatively constant since July 2004.

Reported GMB deliveries appear to be lower than in 2003, but have increased since last month. GMB deliveries were reported in sites in 23% of the districts in September 2004, an increase on the 11% reporting this in August 2004. Reported deliveries in September 2004 are less than the 30% of districts with sites reporting GMB deliveries in September 2003. Community monitors report the view that GMB should increase delivery coverage and frequency as many rural households now face dwindling grain stocks.

Reported GMB grain prices remained at the same levels as in August 2004, although prices as high as Z$8 400/10kg were reported from Mashonaland East . The prices found in the community monitoring are similar to those found in the FEWSNET, Zimbabwe Monthly Food Security Update , September 2004 which reports that GMB maize is selling at between Z$32 000-Z$40 000/50kg.

Commercial maize meal prices have increased since August 2004, and a third (31%) of sentinel wards report that a half to three quarters of households in their ward have difficulty paying current maize meal prices. Prices of up to Z$30 000/10kg maize meal are reported. Hence while commercial food availability is reported to be higher than it was at the same period last year, price is a barrier to household access in the poorest households.

Relief activities continue to be reported in a quarter of districts, as has been the case since July 2004. This is less than the 45% of districts where these activities were reported in September 2003.

Availability of indicator drugs (antibiotics, analgesics) in local clinics is reported to have increased to 79% of sites reporting the drugs available, from the 63% reported in August. Safe water supplies at clinics continue to be reported as a problem in some areas, however, with only 33% of sites in Mashonaland West and 42% in Midlands reporting that their clinics have a safe water supply at the clinic.

Reports of community meetings with elected representatives have increased slightly compared to the previous month. Meetings covered a range of community issues, including food security, election campaigns, AIDS committees, cash for work and urban council rates.

Survival strategies used by communities in September followed the same pattern used in August 2004, including strategies.

- to boost incomes: Work for food; gold panning; petty trading; digging and selling river sand; market gardening; growing crops on small irrigation plots
- to use savings, particularly household asset sales
- to cut spending and consumption, such as by buying goods in smaller quantities and
- to pool or reduce costs, such as by forming groups and buying in bulk

Reported household asset sales have risen in September compared to previous months. Cost pressures at this time of year appear to be growing. Reduced household food supplies, high costs of farming inputs, pressure to buy farming inputs for the planting season and high costs of commercial foods appear to put significant combined pressures on low income urban and rural households at this time of year. In 2003 households were reported to liquidate assets at an increasing level up to about November, when pressures to purchase seed and farm inputs may have started to tail off. It will be important to assess the extent to which this is repeated in 2004. It will also be important to assess how far this is driving increased poverty, falling production capacities and social wellbeing and which households are most affected. The data suggests that seed availability and cost in rural areas and for the lowest income households continues to be an important bottleneck to breaking a poverty cycle.