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Liberalised Markets and Rural Households

Brief 4

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Based on Monthly Monitoring Surveys, February 1997 - May 1997

by

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1 Introduction

This report is the fourth briefing of results generated by a research study examining liberalised agricultural markets and rural households. The research was initiated in June 1996, which coincide with the beginning of smallholder marketing activities following a generally good 1996 harvest and continued for 16 months ending in September 1997. This briefing covers the four month period February – May 1997. In Zimbabwe's agricultural calendar these months cover the pre harvest and harvest periods of rainfed agriculture.

1.1 Objectives

The primary objectives of the research are to gain a better understanding and a more detailed picture of how liberalised markets are functioning in smallholder farming areas and how this affects rural households as producers and consumers. In addition , the characteristics of private traders and nature of investment of traders in marketing services in rural areas are being investigated. Although the reform of maize marketing is probably the most important of all adjustment policies for smallholder producers and consumers, the study also covers markets for smallholder cash crops such as cotton and oilseeds and other food crops such small grains . In addition, the markets for livestock, labour, agricultural inputs and horticultural crops are also being monitored.

1.2 A brief note on Methodology

The research is based on a number of RRA case studies covering thirteen smallholder farming Districts, including:

District	Province	Natural Region
Murehwa	Mashonaland East	11-111
Chikomba	Mashonaland East	111
Mudzi	Mashonaland East	1V
Hurungwe West	Mashonaland West	11-111
Chegutu	Mashonaland West	11-111
Mt Darwin	Mashonaland Central	11-1V
Masvingo	Masvingo	111-V
Mutasa	Manicaland	1-111
Gokwe South	Midlands	111-1V
Beitbridge	Matabeleland South	V
Umzingwane	Matabeleland South	1V
Binga	Matabeleland North	111b; 1V and V
Bubi	Matabeleland North	1V

The survey areas were purposively selected to include both high and low potential areas with emphasis on the lower potential areas where 65 – 70 per cent of smallholder farmers live. The advantages of this approach is that it captures the regional variation in the impact of market liberalisation on rural households.

Data is being collected using a number of different techniques from the RRA/PRA tool kit but the core of the study is a monthly monitoring survey (See Appendix 2, Working Brief 1), conducted with the assistance of Agritex Extension Officers, using observation and key informant interviews.

1.3 Report Layout.

The third brief follows a similar format and covers the same topics as earlier briefs. Tabulated data compiled form monthly monitoring surveys for the period February – May 1997 are privided in Appendix 1 and are interpreted and discussed in the main body of the brief. Topics covered include:

- agricultural marketing activities and marketing channels – crops
- producer prices - grain
- marketing constraints
- characteristics of private buyers
- livestock marketing
- grain purchases by rural households
- consumer prices of grain and roller meal
- activities of small scale hammer mills
- sources of cash for purchasing staple food
- labour markets and casual wage rates

This working brief also continues to develop the tentative hypotheses regarding the main impacts of market reforms on rural households first presented in Working Brief 2.

1.4 Summary of Results

Marketing Activities: Agricultural markets continued to be relatively inactive in February and March. Transactions were mainly local and little produce moved any distance except in the case of seasonal horticultural crops destined for urban markets. By May, when the agricultural harvest was fully underway most areas reported growing market activity and widespread presence of private traders. In some areas the marketing season began with a greater number of private traders than had ever been observed before with traders interested in a very wide variety of crops.

Maize prices: Maize prices were generally higher in the pre harvest period than in the preceding months reflecting dwindling surpluses in local markets as some families depleted their grain stocks. Prices showed considerable variability between survey areas with prices generally being highest in the low rainfall areas and lowest in the better rainfall areas. In ten out of thirteen survey areas there is evidence that producer maize prices exceeded the GMB floor price during February and March thereby offering incentives for local producers to store maize for selling to local deficit households in the lean pre harvest period. In three areas local producer prices did not reach the GMB floor price even during the pre harvest period and producers realised relatively low returns from selling in local markets at this time of year. There is evidence to suggest that in the pre harvest period, producers with surplus maize received better prices in local markets than selling to private traders. The latter were usually buyers of last resort if no local market could be found. In May, when the 1997 harvest was fully underway, there was a definite fall in maize prices across all survey areas. In the immediate post harvest period large buyers such as GMB and National Foods were generally not accepting maize from the smallholder sector due to it's high moisture content. AS a result there was limited competition in maize markets that were dominated by small private traders offering low prices.

Characteristics of Private Buyers: The number and variety of buyers in agricultural markets continues to grow with a number of new entrants identified, particularly in the better rainfall areas. There is evidence that some of the larger traders, particularly those buying cotton, are now beginning to invest in infrastructure and storage facilities in some areas. Investment in transport is one of the most common investments made by both large and small traders since buyers like produces face considerable constraints in moving commodities due to lack of transport and poor roads. Competition to buy some smallholder crops was very strong with reports of certain cotton buyers competing in service provision in order to attract smallholder cotton sellers.

Marketing Constraints: Transport continues to be the most frequently cited marketing constraint across all survey areas and for all agricultural commodities. Cotton buyers have done the most to assist in this area.

Livestock Marketing: Livestock markets in some areas continued to be disorganised and erratic which affected farmers ability to dispose of animals and market competition. In survey areas in the South of the country and Midlands, where Rural District Councils are generally responsible for organising sales, sale pens were operating in a fairly organised and regular manner. In these areas the main buyers were the CSC, private abattoirs and large scale commercial farmers. However, in most Survey areas in Mashonaland, livestock markets were disorganised and irregular, and as a result most sales were privately negotiated.

Purchase of staple grains: The proportion of households purchasing grains in the pre harvest period rose in many survey areas and in areas such as Beitbridge was estimated at more than 90 per cent of households. However, in some of the survey areas in Mashonaland the proportion of households purchasing grain was estimated at less than ten percent which is consistent with the majority of households in these areas consuming grain largely form their own stocks following a relatively good 1996 harvest. In most Survey areas, except for a couple in Matabeleland, staple grain purchases continued to be almost entirely maize grain which consumers milled at local hammer mills. Demand for industrially milled maize meal was minimal in most areas.

Consumer Price of Maize: Consumer prices varied considerably between survey areas reflecting local supply and demand and were generally highest in the low rainfall areas of Matabeleland and lowest in the better rainfall areas of Mashonaland. Comparisons are made between the cost of purchasing and processing maize grain and the local retail price of industrially milled maize meal using low, medium and high cost scenarios. The findings demonstrate that even in areas where consumer maize prices were highest savings could be realised by purchasing grain and processing it at local hammer mills.

Activities of rural hammer mills: There was no obvious decline in local hammer mill activity during the pre harvest period which is consistent with the majority of households continuing to meet their staple food requirements using own or purchased grain (predominantly maize) processed at local hammer mills. Some small hammer mills are now capable of milling a more refined maize meal product similar to that produced by industrial millers. This is attractive to rural consumers and there is evidence that such operations are providing stiff competition to other hammer mills in the locality and in some case leading to closures.

Sources of cash Income for purchasing food: There continued to be a clear difference between the average and poorest households in main income sources. Income from sale of agricultural commodities (including livestock and vegetable sales) continued to dominate the top three income sources for the average household in most survey areas. In contrast, income from casual work was the main source of income for the poorest households. Vending (vegetables, crafts,) was also a common source of income for poorest households. Remittances were mentioned for both groups but were more frequently placed in the top five and ranked higher for average households compared to the poorest households.

Casual Work and Wage rates: Most casual work available in the pre harvest period was agricultural work for local households associated with weeding and harvesting of crops. The daily rate for seasonal agricultural work was relatively low at Z$10-15 per day indicating a low opportunity cost for labor in rural areas.

2. Results

2.1 Marketing Activities and Marketing Channels.

The main crops marketed and farmer participation in marketing over the period February – May 1997 is shown in Table 1.

The sharp fall off in marketing activities observed in the previous review period (October – January) continued in most areas through February and March confirming that the majority of rural households had disposed of surplus produce in the post harvest period and remained primarily with stocks for home consumption. The only exceptions to this generalised picture of inactivity were in the markets for horticultural produce which were characterised by activity in specific months in specific areas when a crop that farmers in that area specialised in came into season (e.g. bananas in February and March and avocados in April from the Honde valley in Mutasa District and water melons in Beitbridge from March onwards). Some farmers in Murewa were also sending horticultural crops such as tomatoes and greens to urban markets. However in most areas it was not until April/May, when some early fieldcrops were harvested, that produce markets became more active.

Where sales of grain crops, such as maize, took place during February and March, transactions were predominantly between farmers and local households and occasionally local millers or small traders. Large buyers had either left the area or closed buying points by the end of year once it was obvious that the bulk of smallholder surpluses had been sold. In some areas key informants indicated that market liberalisation , by removing the restrictions on private traders, had increased the availability of marketing channels in the off season. For example, an Agritex Officer in Mount Darwin commented that ' liberalised markets enabled farmers to dispose of grain even at this time of year (March) when the GMB is still closed". In Mudzi, private dealers from Harare traveled to the area during February and March seeking maize for resale in Harare. It was noted that these dealers were not the same ones who had bought maize at harvest time.

A few exceptions to the generalisation concerning the local nature of most market transactions are given below:

In one survey area (Binga) it was reported that small traders were buying maize cheaply in one part of the District (Lusulu) where there was a surplus and moving it to deficit areas. However, in most other Districts there were few reported cases of notable movements of grain within Districts. It is hypothesised that the price differential between areas of Binga District, that prompted internal trading, arose from a situation that is less common in other Districts. Namely, surplus producers in parts of Binga District had limited access to grain markets during the post harvest period due to remoteness and poor road infrastructure and therefore retained their surpluses. (In most other smallholder areas farmers would have had greater opportunities to dispose of surpluses post harvest.) Due to excess supply, local market prices were depressed. However , once farmers in drier parts of the District began to run out of grain in the pre harvest period (early 1997) grain prices rose in deficit areas , stimulating the movement of grain into these areas from other parts of the District where grain supply was better and prices lower. Initially, small traders from outside the District were the main mechanism by which maize was moved form one part of the District to another but as information about market opportunities reached surplus producers they themselves and local traders began to get involved in moving grain from one area of the District to deficit areas.

Most survey areas seemed to have some grain available on local grain markets during the pre harvest period. However, one area in the drier part of the country (Umzingwane), reported that negligible maize was available in local markets and most deficit households were purchasing mealie meal from local retail outlets or local millers. Beitbridge District might be expected to be in a similar situation but there was some grain in the District that had been brought into the area by farmers from Masvingo District. In addition, irrigated maize began to come onto the market in March. However, Beitbridge survey area did register an increase in use of industrially milled mealie meal by deficit households in this period.

In April, agricultural markets became more active as early harvested field crops such as beans, tobacco, cotton, sunflower, fresh groundnuts and sweet potatoes started to enter the market. It was also common in many areas to see people vending produce along highways. For instance, in Murehwa women could be seen selling Bambara nuts, groundnuts and sweet potatoes along the highways and in Beitbridge vendors selling water melons were a common sight along highways from April onwards. Many areas reported the presence of private traders and evidence of preparations for crop buying. For instance in Hurungwe West , by April, Cottco had already appointed local agents (including some Extension Workers !) to purchase cotton and Cargill was making preparations for buying cotton. There was also evidence of private traders carrying out scanning exercises locating good purchasing centers or collection points for crops. In Murehwa, local business men at small business centers were observed making preparations to buy grain – erecting temporary storage structures.

In many Districts much of the initial activity in grain (predominantly maize) markets was associated with farmers 'flushing out granaries ' and selling off old maize stocks to make room in storage for new stocks. This is a common activity from about March onwards once farmers are sure that the current harvest is sufficient to meet their needs. For example, in Chikomba survey area it was noted that there was a noticeable decline in traders purchasing maize between February and April, although there was sudden increase in maize on the market as a result of farmers flushing out granaries in anticipation of a good harvest. The main buyers of old maize were local consumers. A few enterprising producers in Chikomba took old maize by scotch cart or bus to Chivu urban to sell to urban households. In Murewa, farmers also sold off old maize from about February onwards once the harvest began to look promising. The maize was mainly sold in 20 litre tins to local workers such as teachers and civil servants at Murewa Growth point. In Mudzi, it was noted that there was a "granary clearance sale " of maize from surplus households in March. However the grain was of poor quality (pest damaged).

In some areas traders were reported to be buying old maize (e.g. Mutasa, Mt Darwin) but generally it was reported that most sales were to local consumers or to livestock owners for feed. For instance, in Bubi, in the South of the country, old sorghum was reportedly of poor quality and sold for low prices frequently for chicken feed.

By May, when the agricultural harvest was fully underway most survey Districts reported growing market activity at Growth Points and the widespread presence of private traders. In some areas (e.g. Hurungwe West), it was observed that the marketing season commenced with a wider range of marketing channels than in the previous season and market demand for a wider variety of crops, with a number of new entrants. For example, four companies competed for the cotton crop in Hurungwe West – Cargill, Cottco, Cotpro and Boka . In some areas, such as Mudzi , there was strong competition in the groundnut market with GMB, Dura Marketing and Midlands Buyers competing for the crop and pushing prices up. However, GMB was reported to be the only reliable buyer of groundnuts in Murewa and promised farmers that they would be paid within a maximum of 9 days. This they were doing. It was also reported that private traders were responsible for broadening the marketing structure by buying a wider variety of crops than had been bought in the past by traditional marketing channels such as the GMB. Private traders were seeking out crops such as Paprika and sweet potatoes.

Maize producers were reluctant to sell maize to the GMB following their experience in 1996 when a lot of early delivered maize had been rejected due to high moisture content and there had been long delays in payment. In Murehwa it was noted that by May some farmers wanted to sell their maize crop to Metro Peach and large scale commercial farmers but were constrained by lack of transport.

In Mt Darwin a local private company, Galatian Enterprises, was still buying old maize in May and not new maize because the moisture content of new maize was still too high. The GMB was also not buying smallholder maize in May due to high moisture content. In Gokwe South it was reported that National Foods were not accepting 'damaged old maize'.

2.2 Maize Producer Prices

Maize producer prices over the pre harvest period (February - May 1997) are shown in Table 2. In interpreting this data it is relevant to note that the price ranges illustrate some of the prices at which maize was exchanged during this period based on market observations and producer questioning in a generally thin market. The data are subjective and were not obtained using any type of formal sampling method and should not be used to derive any form of average price. The price ranges are used to provide an approximate indication of:

- prices relative to the GMB floor price (Z $60 per 50kg Grade A),
- seasonal price movements,
- regional differences in prices,
- differences between buyers in prices offered, and
- the extent to which prices dip post harvest.

Maize prices were generally higher in the pre harvest period than in the preceding months reflecting dwindling surpluses in local markets and increasing demand from local households as some families depleted their grain stocks. In ten survey areas out of thirteen there is evidence that producer maize prices paid by private traders and/or local households between February and March, frequently exceeded the GMB floor price of Z$60 per 50 Kg. Generally prices were highest in the drier survey areas in the South of the country (Beitbridge, Bubi and Umzingwane) where prices between Z$ 70 - 85 per 50 kg were common. In Binga, a low rainfall area, prices were very variable within the District but reached the equivalent of Z$ 100 -115 per 50 kg bag in parts of the District during February and March , the leanest months. In other low rainfall areas (such as Masvingo and Mudzi) the producer maize price varied between Z$ 65 - 75 per 50 kg bag whereas in slightly better rainfall areas (Murehwa, Chegutu, Chikomba) producer prices demonstrated less tendency to rise above the GMB floor price and varied between Z$ 50 - 65 per 50 kg bag. Of the three survey areas (Hurungwe West, Gokwe South and Mount Darwin) where producer prices showed very little tendency to exceed the GMB floor price, one (Hurungwe West) is in a better rainfall area and generally well known as a surplus maize area and the other two (Mount Darwin and Gokwe South) although in natural region 111 -1V, had relatively plentiful local supplies following the 1996 harvest and little pressure on prices in local markets in the pre harvest period. Maize prices in these three areas tended to vary in the range of Z$ 35 - 50 per 50 kg bag. Therefore, maize markets in these areas provided negligible opportunity for producers to sell any remaining surpluses at better prices than those offered earlier by the GMB or the larger private buyers. The prevailing prices suggest in fact that producers would have realised relatively low returns from selling into local maize markets at this time of year. On the other hand, carrying extra grain stocks provided households with additional food security against a potentially bad harvest in the next season. Once producers were sure that the additional stocks were not needed the maize was disposed of in local markets to make room to store new maize. Farmers probably judged that the loss in earnings from not selling all their surplus immediately after harvest was outweighed by the value they placed on reducing the risk of not being able to meet own food requirements in the following season.

Where price information is recorded separately for private traders and local households it is generally evident that producers with maize for sale at this time of year realised a higher price through selling to local deficit households than by offering their maize to private traders. Farmers with surplus maize to sell usually turned to private traders or local retailers only as a last resort when little local demand existed. This generalisation about the differential between prices offered by local households and private traders appears to hold across both low rainfall and better rainfall survey areas. The fact that in the early months of 1997 local markets tended to be more profitable than selling to traders probably explains why few traders ventured into the rural areas in the pre harvest period. However, the scenario would have probably looked different if the 1996 harvest had been a poor one as in the previous year. Following a reduced 1995 harvest due to drought, deficit households faced stiff competition from traders in purchasing maize in the early months of 1996 and local maize prices in the pre harvest period were relatively high (See Stack, 1996).

The preceding price data illustrate that maize prices show considerable variability between survey areas reflecting local supply and demand that in turn is strongly influenced by climatic factors. As a broad generalisation maize prices tend to be highest in the low rainfall, grain deficit areas and lowest in the better rainfall maize surplus areas. Seasonal price variations offer incentives in some deficit areas, for producers to store maize for selling later in the season and economic opportunities for private traders to move maize from low priced to high priced areas. Maize prices are highest in the poorest rainfall areas where surpluses are less and where demand in the pre harvest period is likely to be greatest since smallholders in the drier rainfall areas show a greater propensity to run out of grain before the next harvest than those in better rainfall areas. In these high grain price areas there is a clear economic incentive for producers with surpluses to retain their surplus for resale in the pre harvest period, particularly if producers face high transport costs in selling maize to the GMB. In addition, these areas provide the greatest opportunities for maize traders to meet the strong demand for maize on the local market.

In other survey areas, where prices exceeded the GMB price but not by such a large differential, the incentive to retain maize for re sale later in the season or for traders to get involved in meeting local demand is less obvious. By the time market uncertainty and the cost of storage and/or transport is taken into consideration profitable trading opportunities may be limited. In areas such as Hurungwe West, where maize surpluses are quite common and the maize price shows negligible tendency to rise above the guaranteed GMB price of Z $60 per 50 kg bag, there is no incentive for farmers to store surpluses for sale locally later in the season. If the GMB and other large private buyers continue to offer pan seasonal prices, smallholders in such areas are better off disposing of the bulk of their surpluses in the immediate post harvest period or seeking alternative higher price markets if for some reason they have surpluses to dispose of later in the season. These areas may also be a potential source of reasonably priced maize for traders to purchase for resale in adjacent lower rainfall areas or in urban markets.

In May, when the 1997 harvest was fully underway and local households were able to meet their requirements from own production, there was a definite fall in maize prices across all survey areas. (In some areas prices had already begun to fall off in April). The level to which prices fell varied between survey areas. Prices were lowest in the more favorable areas such as Hurungwe West where producer prices offered by private traders dropped to Z$ 25 - 30 per 50kg bag at harvest time whereas in the drier areas, such as Bubi, private traders were offering around Z$ 45 per 50 kg bag. Due to the fact that the smallholder maize crop still has a high moisture content in May the large buyers such as GMB and National Foods were generally not yet accepting maize from this sector. As a result, there was limited competition in the maize market exemplified by few alternative marketing channels available to producers in the immediate post harvest period. Private traders dominated the maize market in the immediate post harvest period and this together with increased supply contributed to the low maize prices.

Some Agritex researchers commented that it was noticeable that farmers have gained more marketing skills through a couple of seasons of experience of market liberalisation and were now commonly comparing prices offered by different traders and seeking out price information. Such price information makes it easier for producers to assess better the cost and benefits of selling to different traders especially in situations where producers accept lower prices in exchange for market services such as packaging and transport and quick payment. However, further investigations would be required to establish whether there is evidence to indicate greater awareness and use of price information by producers across all types of survey areas or whether this is limited to producer in the better rainfall and/or more accessible areas. In addition, insufficient information is available to establish the extent to which producers greater awareness of price differentials between various buyers improves their bargaining position and/or enables them to delay marketing until prices improved. Experiences in the previous season suggest that quite a few producers who sold commodities at low prices in the immediate post harvest did so because they wanted to meet urgent cash requirements (including raising cash to meet the cost of marketing the balance of their surplus in more profitable markets). In addition most of those making urgent sales faced few alternative markets outlets.

2.3 *Characteristics of Private Buyers*

Agricultural Market liberalisation has led to diversification in agricultural markets. As noted in earlier working briefs, there are now a wide variety of different types of commodity buyers in Zimbabwe's smallholder areas. These include small traders buying or bartering small quantities of crops or livestock, small local millers and general dealers at rural service centers, small - medium size private companies operating in one or more provinces, and national companies such as the privatised Marketing Boards and Industrial Millers with depots throughout the country.

Not all the operators in agricultural markets started operations in response to market liberalisation. Some buyers of agricultural commodities such as GMB and some local general dealers and traders, were already buying crops before market liberalisation whilst others have entered the arena since markets were decontrolled. In many instances established businesses simply expanded operations to include commodity buying. Some local dealers at growth points, large scale farmers in adjacent areas and large companies such as National Foods and Metro Peach are in this category. Whilst in other cases, the buyer is a new entrant to the market and agricultural market liberalisation is directly responsible for birthing a new business operation. Most of the village, district and regional level milling operations would fall into this category and there are also new companies at regional and national level that have been established to buy and sell crops.

Examples of the many different types of smaller traders and private companies can be found in most survey areas and throughout the country. However, larger buyers, such as GMB and the Industrial Millers have more widespread operations in survey Districts in Mashonaland and the Midlands - more favorable production areas. Some of the larger buyers are present in other provinces but because smallholder surpluses are less widespread in the lower rainfall regions larger buyers tend to be concentrated at Provincial or District centres and they are not easily accessible to a wide cross section of smallholder producers. For example, surplus producers in Binga District would have to transport crops 150 - 200 km to reach one of the bigger buying agents such as GMB.

In general, all but the smallest traders provide some form of employment for local people as a result of their trading activities. Such employment includes work as loaders, security guards, buying agents, general hands.

During the period leading up to the 1997 harvest, traders began to move into the rural areas in preparation for purchasing commodities from the 1997 harvest. Reports from various survey areas suggest that the number and variety of buyers in agricultural markets continues to grow. For example, in Hurungwe West an Agritex Officer observed that the marketing season commenced with a wider range of marketing channels than in the previous season and market demand for a wider variety of crops, with a number of new entrants. This may not be true across the whole country but it is certainly evident that businesses are still adjusting to the opportunities of agricultural market liberalisation.

In Masvingo it was reported that traders are showing an interest in buying crops such as nyimo and groundnuts which previously were grown by women farmers mainly for subsistence. This has resulted in increased participation of women in marketing.

In previous briefs it was noted that in contrast to local traders, such as small millers and general dealers, there was little evidence that the larger traders were investing in infrastructure or reinvesting profits in rural areas. Many of the medium - larger buying operations were not making much new investment in permanent collection or storage facilities in many of the smallholder areas they operated in. Instead, buyers or their representatives visited an area to buy commodities, set up temporary storage shelters and withdrew once the marketing season was over. For example, Galatian Enterprises in Mt Darwin has been operating from a tent. This situation may be changing in some areas as preparations for purchasing the 1997 harvest included the establishment of more permanent collection or storage facilities by some operators, particularly those in the cotton market. For example, in Murehwa, Cottco fully renovated a hall at a local business center (Dandara) and erected security fencing in preparation for purchasing cotton. In Chegutu, Mt Darwin and Gokwe South, traders were also reported to have established big storage structures for crops. It is hypothesised that over time traders are increasing their investment in infrastructure and reinvesting profits in rural areas.

Investment in transport, such as lorries and pickups are the most common investments made by both large and small private traders since buyers like producers face considerable constraints in transporting produce due to lack of transport and poor roads. This season it was noted that some traders operating in Gokwe South had invested in large lorries to move grain and cotton. These lorries were also hired by GMB and Cottco to move purchased crops out of the District.

Private buyers vary in the extent to which they are vertically integrated operations with facilities to process the crops they purchase. Many of the small to large scale milling operations and cotton buyers are purchasing crops for processing. However, a number of both large and small traders, are purchasing crops for resale. Some traders plan to sell crops to processors such as National Foods or larger commodity brokers such as GMB whilst others plan to sell grain in deficit rural areas or in urban areas. For example, in Gokwe South, some private buyers were purchasing maize during April and May, and storing it for later resale to GMB and National Foods in anticipation of price increases. In addition, some traders in Gokwe South planned to resell purchased grain in deficit areas of Matabeleland South.

Small traders who barter goods for crops are common in most survey areas. Although the exchange rate is not always very favorable for the producer (See Working Brief Number 2 for examples), vendors help to provide essential goods at the doorsteps of rural communities. The extent of barter trading tends to vary over the season and between areas. Bartering tends to more common in less accessible areas where there are few alternative marketing channels and /or few retail outlets resulting in opportunities for traders to do business and strong producer demand for barter deals. Further, bartering tends to be more common in the months immediately following harvest. There were few reports of barter deals around harvest time (April, May) probably because there were more traders and buyers in the market and little demand for barter deals. However, there were reports that some agents of Cargill were moving around smallholder farming areas bartering agricultural inputs for grain. In the previous season it was observed that both the traders and the households involved in barter deals tend to be at the poorest end of their respective groups and were also often women. If some of the larger buyers are getting involved in this sort if trade this is a new development that may need monitoring.

Competition to buy the smallholder cotton crop has been very strong since the marketing season began. There is evidence of some buyers adopting marketing strategies aimed at increasing market share. For example, in Hurungwe West, Cottco is trying to increase its market share by providing better services such as cotton packs on credit through its agents, assistance in orgainising transport and shorter queues at depots. Generally increased competition in markets has been welcomed by rural farmers as experience indicates that this leads to improvements in services amd better prices for the producer.

2.4 Marketing Constraints Crops

Transport difficulties continue to be the most frequently reported marketing constraint for field crops, horticultural produce and livestock in all survey areas (See Table 10). Non availability and/or high cost of transport are commonly cited reasons for producers not being able to take their produce to preferred buyers or in the case of horticultural and poultry producers preferred urban markets. In some instances this results in farmers selling produce at less favorable prices through the marketing channel most accessible to them. These channels are often the general dealers or private traders at local growth points who act as intermediaries for one of the larger private buyers. Sometimes transport difficulties mean that the producer is dependent on demand generated by local households or local institutions.

Although investment in new vehicles by transporters and private trading operations is visible in most survey areas (See example from Gokwe South cited above), transporters are severely constrained by the high cost associated with operating on poor roads and uncertain producer demand.

Both producers and transporters try to overcome transport difficulties in a number of ways. For instance, traders or buying agents arrange collection points for produce or livestock. Some operators send a buying agent ahead who organises a collection route. Farmers organise themselves into groups, sometimes with the assistance of Agritex or NGO's, and then send information to traders and or transporters to let them know that they have produce available for sale or collection. Examples of cooperation between buyers and producers in overcoming transport difficulties are most common in the cotton market especially in survey areas such as Hurungwe West, Gokwe South, Mount Darwin, and Chegutu where there is greater competition between buyers to purchase the smallholder cotton crop.

Maize producers in most survey areas were complaining of low maize prices offered by private traders at the start of the 1997 marketing season (May). In some areas (Chegutu, Mt Darwin, Binga) low prices were associated with lack of competition in the market. In one of the lower rainfall survey areas (Binga) the absence of large buyers was specifically noted. Similarly, prices for oilseeds such as groundnuts and sunflowers were reported to be poor in some areas (Mount Darwin, Masvingo, Gokwe South) at the start of the season.

In livestock markets, low prices and long distances from selling points, were also common constraints particularly in marketing beef cattle. In many areas producers are still unhappy with cattle marketing channels in general since CSC handed over the responsibility of organising cattle sales to the Livestock Development Trust (A Government body with committees at National, Provincial and District level, whose responsibilities include managing and organising sale pens,). At some sale pens, where there are no cattle scales, farmers are very unhappy about the various methods, such as weigh bands, used to judge the weight and condition of their cattle.

2.5 Livestock Marketing Activities

Livestock markets in smallholder areas, particularly those for cattle, continue to experience many problems. The Livestock Development Trust is now responsible for organising and managing sale pens but there is no uniformity across survey areas in how, and by whom, sale days are being run. In most survey areas in the Midlands or the South of the country, (e.g. Gokwe South, Beitbridge, Umzingwane, Bubi), the Rural District Council (RDC) has been orgainising livestock sales. In other survey areas in Mashonaland (e.g. Mount Darwin, Hurungwe, Chegutu, Murewa,) the RDC is not actively involved in orgainising sales and private buyers usually orgainise sales using the CSC calendar in liaison with the Veterinary Department and Agritex. For example, in Mount Darwin, a private company (Midlands Buyers) has taken over from CSC in organising sale days.

The estimated proportion of households in each survey area selling different types of livestock and main buyers are shown in Table 3.

Cattle marketing continued to be on a very low scale (less than 10 per cent households marketing) between February - May 1997, except in survey areas in Matabeleland (Beitbridge, Bubi and Umzingwane) where livestock markets were more active (10 -25 households marketing cattle). Once the harvesting and marketing of crops commenced (April/May) involvement in livestock marketing declined, particularly in the better rainfall areas of Mashonaland. For example, an Agritex Officer from Hurungwe West commented that "once farmers start marketing crops the livestock sector is completely ignored ".

In areas where there was little activity, the main buyers of cattle were local butchers and local households and the majority of sales were privately negotiated (Table 3). Mount Darwin and Masvingo were exceptions and in these areas the majority of sales were at sale pens and Midlands Buyers were the main buyers of cattle. In both these areas sales were reported to be very erratic. In contrast, in Beitbridge, Umzingwane, and Bubi, where cattle markets were more active, most of the sales took place at sale pens and the main buyers were CSC, LSCF and Private abattoirs (Table 3). Further, sales were generally reported to be well organised and took place on scheduled dates.

It is hypothesised that the level of organisation in cattle markets influences the level of marketing and that in areas where the operation of sale pens are erratic, marketing is lower. If there is evidence to support this hypothesis then it follows that lack of organised markets for cattle in some smallholder areas may encourage farmers to hold larger herds than they want to and prevent them implementing desirable herd management strategies. This is likely to contribute to a decline in herd quality and could further exasperate environmental degradation, particularly during the dry winter months.

Goat markets are not formally organised in most survey Districts except in Bubi and Beitbridge in Matabeleland. Following fairly active goat markets in the pre Christmas period goat markets were fairly quiet during February - May. In most areas less than 10 per cent households marketed goats over this period although in Bubi and Beitbridge an estimated 25-49 per cent households marketed goats in most months (Table 3). In Bubi the main buyers of goats are private traders whereas in Beitbridge the CSC is the main buyer. The CSC also bought goats in Binga District but in most other areas goat sales are predominantly private transactions between farmers and local or urban households.

Only in Bubi were poultry markets reported to be fairly active. In all survey areas most poultry sales were to local households or local workers although a few producers sold to Institutions, private traders and in Urban markets. It was reported that one of the marketing constraints facing farmers is that buyers in urban markets prefer hybrid poultry breeds and not the indigenous poultry that is more common in rural areas.

An indication of local livestock prices over the period February - May 1997 is given in Table 4.

Most areas reported cattle prices as fairly firm particularly form March onwards and prices per beast seemed to be slightly higher than in previous months. Cattle prices varied over a wide range from Z$1500 - 4500 per beast in most areas although a few prices outside of this range were reported. In some areas key informants noticed a definite difference between buyers in prices paid and reported the price range for different buyers separately. For example, in Bubi, CSC was paying between Z$ 4000 - 4500 per beast whereas LSCF paid between Z$2500 - 3000 per beast. In Binga, CSC and private traders were paying between Z$2000 - 5300 per beast whereas local butchers paid between Z$1500 - 3000 per beast. As a broad generalisation, prices paid by local butchers were lower than those paid by other buyers and the prices paid by the CSC better. However it should be noted that the CSC operates a strict grading procedure and only cattle of a good weight and quality reach the higher prices. Most farmers prefer selling to the CSC because the grading procedure is transparent and cattle scales are used, this is generally not the case with private traders and local butchers.

Goat prices were reported as fairly steady over the survey period. Prices per live animal varied over a wide range from Z$80 - 300 but breed and size of goat differs considerably across survey areas. Beitbridge for instance is a well known goat area and goats in this part of the country can be 60 -120 kgs live mass compared to the smaller breeds weighing between 30 -60 kgs live mass in parts of Mashonaland. Where different price ranges were reported for different buyers, it shows that households who marketed to the CSC or private traders were likely to have received better prices than those who sold to local households.

The price range for poultry was Z$20-40 per bird and tends to be higher for hybrid breeds which are heavier than indigenous poultry.

The impact of market liberalisation on livestock markets is still relatively difficult to assess since not only are farmers still recovering from the 1994 drought but the markets themselves are still disorganised in some parts of the country following changes in responsibilities for organising and managing sale pens. In most survey area, Agritex researchers assess the situation as either fairly static or falling involvement in livestock markets. In some areas such as Gokwe South farmers are reported to be still building up herds through purchase of animals from neighbouring LSCF or other farmers. However, in Beitbridge, smallholder participation in livestock markets is reported to be greater and the offtake rate higher for both cattle and goats since market liberalisation. This is despite the fact that herds in this part of the country were seriously depleted in the drought of 1994. In Beitbridge, livestock sales for both cattle and goats are reportedly well organised by the DRC, more regular than in the past, more widely advertised and attracting an increased number of buyers. A downside of this positive scenario reported for Beitbridge is that ease of marketing has encouraged more livestock theft, especially of goats.

It is also hypothesised that, in both cattle and smallstock markets, private buyers (including the CSC, private companies and small private traders) tend to offer higher prices than those paid by local households and local butchers. This contrasts with the prevailing picture in grain markets in the pre harvest period when deficit local households are likely to be more remunerative markets than private traders.

2.6 Purchase of Staple Grains by Rural Households

The estimated proportions of households in each survey area purchasing grains over the four month period February 1997 - May 1997, are shown in Table 5.

In most survey areas in Mashonaland (Murehwa, Chikomba, Hurungwe West, Mount Darwin, Mudzi) and also in Mutasa (Manicaland), Gokwe South (Midlands) and Masvingo (Masvingo), the proportion of households purchasing grain in February was estimated at less than 10 per cent, showing no increase over the previous months. In a couple of these areas (Murehwa and Mutasa) the percentage of households purchasing grain rose to 10 -25 % per cent in March and April (the immediate pre harvest period) but fell back to less than 10 per cent once harvesting began in May. These findings are consistent with the majority of households in these areas consuming grain largely from their own stocks following a favourable 1996 harvest. Chegutu District, also in Mashonaland, continued to show a higher proportion of households purchasing grain than in other survey areas in Mashonaland, with some 25 - 49 per cent of households purchasing in March and April.

The proportion of households purchasing staple grains was highest in Survey Districts located in less favourable rainfall areas of Matabeleland North and South with Beitbridge reporting the highest figures. From February onwards, it was estimated that more than 90 per cent of households in Beitbridge were purchasing staple grains. This figure began to fall as some early crops became available for harvest in April. Households in Umzingwane showed the second highest propensity to purchase staple grains with 75 - 89 per cent and 50 -74 per cent of households purchasing grain in February and March respectively.

In most Survey Districts staple grain purchases continued to be almost entirely maize grain. The exceptions were in Binga where small grains and industrially maize meal make up about half of the purchases and in Beitbridge and Umzingwane where industrially milled maize meal accounted for 20 -30 per cent of grain purchase from February onwards. Up until February there was sufficient maize grain in local markets in Beitbridge to meet demand from deficit producers. However, from February onwards the availability of grain in local markets declined sharply as traders sources of supply dried up and local surpluses from irrigation schemes were depleted.

It is evident that, apart from some areas of Matabeleland, the market for industrially milled maize in rural areas has suffered a serious decline since market liberalisation. Deficit farmers prefer to purchase maize grain for milling at local mills rather than buying maize meal from retail outlets. Even in grain deficit areas, such as Beitbridge, the market for maize meal is very seasonal, as initially in the post harvest period traders are able to supply local markets using maize grain from surplus areas.

Two main factors have contributed to the shift away from industrially milled maize. Firstly, the prolific growth of small scale milling operations in rural areas has provided increased facilities for households to process own grain and purchased grain. Secondly, there has been an increase in the availability of maize for purchase in deficit areas, which is largely due to the freedom both traders and producers now have to move grain from surplus to deficit areas as required. Both these factors contrive to offer consumers greater choice in how to make up food shortfalls. In most areas, in most months household food deficits can generally be made up more cheaply by purchasing grain (normally maize) in local markets rather than buying maize meal from local shops. (See costings in next section). In recent months, it has also been reported that many of the local hammer mills are now able to mill a refined maize meal product similar to parlenta and not simply straight run meal. This places local hammer mills in a very competitive position vis a vis urban industrial mills.

2.7 Consumer Prices of Grain and Roller meal

The consumer prices of maize, small grains and roller meal, during the pre-harvest period (February - May 1997), are shown in Table 6. Grain Prices are given per 20 litre tin (15 - 17 kgs maize grain) which is a very common local unit of exchange and probably provides the most accurate indication of consumer prices. Consumer prices are given in a separate table to producer prices because even in local markets within a single Survey area the price faced by consumers is higher than the producer price due to several factors including different units of sale, role of middlemen and locational factors. In interpreting this data it is relevant to note that the consumer price ranges given illustrate some of the prices at which grains were bought in local markets or from individual sellers based on market observations and consumer questioning in a generally thin market. The data are subjective and were not obtained using any type of formal sampling method and should not be used to derive any form of average price. The price ranges are used to provide an approximate indication of:

- seasonal movements in consumer price of local staples,
- differences in prices between grains
- regional differences in consumer prices,
- local price of grain relative to the price of industrially milled roller meal in local shops.
- local price of grain relative to the GMB selling price (Z$1550 per tonne or 24.80 per 16 kgs (approx weight of a 20 litre tin)

The seasonal pattern of consumer price movements follows a similar trend to that exhibited by producer prices. Consumer prices of all grains were generally higher in the pre harvest period than in the preceding months reflecting dwindling surpluses in local markets and increasing demand from local households as some families depleted their grain stocks. However, a steep climb in consumer prices was not evident in all areas in the pre harvest period. In the better rainfall areas of Mashonaland, such as Hurungwe West and Mount Darwin and in Gokwe South in the Midlands, consumer maize prices were between Z$15 - 25 per 20l. These prices are slightly up on the preceding months but still generally below the GMB selling price, indicating good local grain supplies and relatively low cost maize for rural consumers. Generally consumer prices were highest in the drier survey areas in the South of the country (Beitbridge, Bubi and Umzingwane) where maize prices between Z$30-35 per 20 litre were common. In Binga, a low rainfall area, prices were very variable within the District but reached Z$40 - 45 per 20 litres in parts of the District during February and March , the leanest months. In some other survey areas (such as Mudzi and Chegutu) some consumers were paying as much as Z$ 35 per 20 l maize grain. These prices are above the GMB selling price (equivalent to approx Z$ 24.80 per 20 litres) and indicate that there are opportunities for traders to purchase maize form the GMB for resale to consumers in these areas.

Markets for small grains were very thin with little supply on local markets resulting in no price information from most survey areas. Only Bubi District regularly reported the consumer price for sorghum which was Z$30 per 20 litres , little different from that of maize grain. Some rapoko, which is generally used for beer brewing was available in markets in Murehwa at a consumer price of Z$ 65 -70 per 20litres.

The preceding price data illustrate that consumer maize prices show considerable variability between survey areas reflecting local supply and demand, which in turn is strongly influenced by climatic and locational factors. A price comparison between local grain and industrially milled roller meal shows that , even in Survey areas where maize grain prices were relatively high, it was generally cheaper for consumers to purchase maize grain and process it at local hammer mills than to purchase roller meal from a local retail outlet. The following high, middle and low cost scenarios are illustrative:

A. High Cost Scenario (Low rainfall areas of Matabeleland)
(Retail price of roller meal approx Z$ 58 - 85 per 20 kgs)

Cost of locally milled maize per 20 kg equivalent

		Z dollar
Purchase price	(20 litre tin)	25 - 35
Milling cost	(20 litre tin)	3 - 5
sub -total		28 - 40

Conversion to 20 kgs roller meal equivalent (x 1.36) 38.08 - 54.4

B. Middle Cost Scenario (Manicaland, Masvingo, and parts of Mashonaland)

(Retail price of roller meal approx Z$ 54 - 70 per 20 kgs)

Cost of locally milled maize per 20 kg equivalent

		Z dollar
Purchase price	(20 litre tin)	20 - 30
Milling cost	(20 litre tin)	3 - 5
sub -total		23 - 35

Conversion to 20 kgs roller meal equivalent (x 1.36) 31.28 - 47.6

C. Low Cost Scenario (Better rainfall areas of Mashonaland (Hurungwe West and Mount Darwin) and Gokwe South (Midlands)

(Retail price of roller meal approx Z$ 54 - 68 per 20 kgs)

Cost of locally milled maize per 20 kg equivalent

		Z dollar
Purchase price	(20 litre tin)	15 - 20
Milling cost	(20 litre tin)	2.5- 3.0
sub -total		17.5 - 23

Conversion to 20 kgs roller meal equivalent (x 1.36) 23.8 - 31.28

2.8 *Activities of Rural Hammer Mills*

The processing of grain at two hammer mills per survey area continued to be monitored during the February - May period to provide information on seasonal changes in activities and the scale of local milling operations. Throughput data are shown in Table 7. Some of the factors that need to be taken into account when interpreting this data are that some hammer mills do not keep accurate records and many business owners are reluctant to reveal details of their operations. In addition, throughput at one mill can vary considerably from month to month due to breakdowns or the presence of absence of competition from other hammer mills.

If there was a strong swing towards using industrially milled roller meal in the pre harvest period we would expect milling activities to show a clear seasonal pattern and to fall off in the pre harvest period. However, even in survey areas in the drier rainfall areas such as Beitbridge, Bubi and Umzingwane there is little evidence to indicate that throughput dropped between February and April. In Masvingo District one hammer mill owner reported a slight drop in milling activities in April and May which he put down to the reluctance of consumers to buy last seasons poor quality grain for milling. The more favourable rainfall areas such Hurungwe and Mount Darwin, milling activities showed no obvious trends although they were very variable from month to month. The data are consistent with rural households meeting the bulk of their staple food needs from maize grain, from either own stocks or purchased and support earlier findings which indicated that the use of industrially processed maize meal by rural households had declined since market liberalisation.

Local hammer mills are relatively low cost operations to set up and run and this has encouraged new entrants into the market. Often there are several hammer mills at a single growth point and so competition for business is stiff. As a result, it is not uncommon for hammer mills to go out of business. For example, in Gokwe South it was reported that one mill had closed down (Jongwe brothers) and another (Chidhaya) had opened at the same growth point. In Mutasa, it was reported that the demand for services at some local mills was declining as new entrants in the local market installed hammer mills that were capable of removing the bran and producing a more refined product similar to commercially milled roller meal. This is an interesting development as many observers of the rural hammer mill scene have pointed out the nutritional advantages of the straight run maize milled by hammer mills. However, it would appear that given the choice, rural consumers are likely to use hammer mills with more advanced machinery that mill a more refined product.

2.9 *Sources of cash Income for poorest households*

The main sources of cash used by rural households to purchase food during the pre harvest period (February – May 1997), broken down by type of household, are shown in Table 8. The data show how poor and average households funded food purchases during the pre harvest period which is when the greatest proportion of rural households are likely to have depleted own food stocks and are most dependent on purchases for meeting staple food requirements.

In most survey Districts there continued to be a clear difference between average and poorest households in the main sources of cash used to purchase food. Income from the sale of agricultural commodities of one type or another continued to be the dominant source of income for the average household in most Districts but is only reported as the main income source for poor households in one of the better rainfall areas (Gokwe South). In most survey areas agricultural income for the average household was predominantly from crop sales but in two survey areas in Matabeleland (Beitbridge and Binga) , sale of small livestock (predominantly goats) were the most important sources of revenue from agricultural activities. In eleven out of thirteen survey areas income from some type of agricultural activity also features as the second most important source of income for the average household. In contrast, sale of agricultural commodities only feature among the top two income sources for the poorest households in seven of the thirteen survey areas and in most instances such sales refer to sales of goats, poultry or fruit and vegetables. For the poorest households casual employment is the single most important source of cash for purchasing food. Petty trading or vending (vegetables, crafts, melons, beer, second hand clothes, firewood, and wild fruits) were also common sources of income for the poorest households. Remittances were mentioned for both groups but were more frequently placed in the top five and ranked higher for average households compared to the poorest households.

2.10 Casual Work available and Wage Rates

Casual work is an important source of income for the poorest households particularly during the pre harvest period when many poor households have depleted their own stocks of grain and are dependent on purchases or exchanging labor for grain.

The main forms of casual work available in each Survey District at this time of year and the rates of pay are given in Table 9. As might be expected, agricultural work related to weeding and harvesting are the most common jobs available. Such work was usually available in most areas but the rate of pay was very low (Z$ 10-15 per day was common), particularly for work on farms of other local households. In fact, a number of key informants pointed out that the number of days that a person would have to work in order to purchase a 20 litre tin of maize had now reached at least two days in most areas (See Chegutu). Casual work associated with road or building construction was generally better paid than agricultural work but was not available in all survey areas.

Among the list of casual work mentioned in Table 9 are a number of jobs associated with private marketing including loading and off loading trucks, scouting for crops for traders and guarding grain for private traders. This indicates that market liberalisation is also providing some casual employment for local households.

An additional employment effect associated with market liberalisation has also been identified by some key informants and is specifically associated with the involvement of women farmers in marketing and trading. It has been observed, in Chikomba and other areas, that women, who are marketing their own crops or who are earning cash from trading, have a high propensity to employ women/girls from poorer households to take over some of their chores at home (e.g. preparing food for school children, taking care of homestead). In addition, they are likely to use some of their profits from marketing to employ women or girls to assist them with harvesting, threshing and bagging maize during March and April. So, cash in the hands of some women is being used to lighten their workloads and to create employment for women/girls from poor households. Although such employment effects are very small and the jobs created are menial tasks they are evidence of a multiplier effect associated with market liberalisation that has so far received little attention.

3. Conclusion and Tentative Hypotheses

The information presented in three earlier Working Briefs and this brief cover the 12 month period June 1996 - May 1997. [1] A number of tentative hypotheses regarding liberalised markets and rural households were identified in previous briefs and are further developed here.

- There has been an increase in the number and variety of private traders involved in both buying and selling agricultural commodities since market liberalisation. In many areas this has provided producers with a wider choice of alternative marketing channels and in deficit areas traders have been responsible for providing rural consumers with staple grains at competitive prices.

- Participation in crop marketing by rural households has increased since market liberalisation as a result of the removal of regulations governing both buyers and sellers. Buyers in rural areas no longer have to be licensed and farmers can now sell through marketing channels that do not require them to be card holders of parastatal marketing boards. The latter has particularly benefited women farmers who have noticeably increased their participation in marketing since market liberalisation.

- Increased participation of private traders in agricultural marketing has generated new market opportunities for minor crops such as oilseeds, sweet potatoes, beans and paprika. This has led to increased marketing and renewed interest in producing these crops, especially although not exclusively, by women farmers.

- Private traders enter into barter arrangements with local households exchanging goods for grain and other commodities. The exchange rate is not always favourable for the producer but vendors have increased the availability of essential goods at the doorstep of rural communities. Both the traders and households involved in barter deals tend to be at the poorest end of their respective groups.

- Removing restrictions on private traders has increased the availability of marketing channels in the off season.

- Market opportunities for small grains are limited and have not been enhanced by market liberalisation. In some areas the withdrawal of GMB facilities has increased the cost and difficulties associated with marketing small grains.

- Livestock markets in rural areas are still responding to the decontrols and show the greatest potential for improvement in efficiency. In areas where Rural District Councils are actively involved in organising sales, markets are operating fairly efficiently but in other areas markets are disorganised and often characterised by non-competitive practices on the part of buyers.

- In all areas maize producers are adopting a marketing strategy of selling through multiple channels. A common strategy in the better rainfall areas is for producers to sell some maize surplus immediately after harvest to raise money for immediate needs; to sell a larger proportion to the GMB or other larger buyer at relatively higher prices but frequently delayed payment and; to remain with a small surplus to provide additional food security that can be sold to local households or private traders in the pre harvest period once the forthcoming harvest looks good. In lower rainfall areas producers also often sell a proportion of their crop at harvest to obtain cash to meet immediate needs and then remain with a larger proportion of their surplus to dispose of in more lucrative markets. In the case of surplus producers in lower rainfall areas alternative markets include both large and small private buyers but producers may also decide to store maize to sell locally at some time in the future in anticipation of price increases.

- In many of the better rainfall areas there are limited opportunities at any time of the year for households to dispose of maize on the local market at prices better than those offered by private traders or large commercial buyers. Therefore in better rainfall areas, there are minimal incentives for producers to retain more grain than they require for their own household consumption and limited demand for improved storage facilities at the household or village level. In contrast, in low rainfall areas there are opportunities for surplus producers to dispose of maize to local households at prices above those offered by private traders particularly in the pre harvest period.

- Marketing channels for cotton are very competitive with alternative buyers adopting various strategies, including improved service provision, to increase their market share

- The main direction of movement of rural grain surpluses is still from rural areas to urban centres. However, some private traders operating in lower potential areas are moving grain both between and within Districts from surplus to deficit areas. The awareness amongst traders and producers about such trading opportunities is growing but trade is constrained by lack of information, transport constraints and the lower buying power of rural deficit households vis a vis urban households.

- The high cost and limited availability of road transport is the single most important marketing constraint facing both rural producers and private traders. Lack of market information is the next most important marketing constraint.

- Small private traders, such as storeowners and millers based at local growth points, show the greatest evidence to date of reinvesting profits from agricultural trading in rural areas. Investments in transport (lorries and pickups) and expansion of existing businesses are the most common investments.

- Investments in rural areas by larger buyers are increasing in smallholder areas where buyers are confident that smallholders can deliver a surplus.

- There has been a rapid expansion in small scale hammer mills in rural areas and new investments continue. The market is very competitive. Some new hammer mills are capable of milling a refined maize product and preference by rural consumers for this product is growing. In the future, such mills are likely to displace the older type hammer mills.

- Deficit households in rural areas are predominantly consuming maize grain, purchased and processed locally. The market in rural areas for industrially milled roller meal has declined sharply and shows no signs of recovery.

- In most smallholder areas maize grain can be purchased and processed locally at a lower cost than the retail price of industrially milled roller meal, even in drier rainfall areas where maize prices are higher. This statement is generally true throughout the year, including the pre harvest lean period when grain prices tend to rise. Rural consumers therefore realise positive benefits from market liberalisation through access to cheaper maize meal. However, such gains have been eroded by inflation and in real terms food deficit households face increasing food costs compared to five years a go

- Earnings form casual labour followed by petty trading in commodities such as fruit and vegetables, second hand clothes, gold, beer, firewood are the most common sources of cash for the poorest households in rural areas. The opportunity cost of labour, as indicated by daily wage rates, is very low suggesting widespread underemployment in rural areas.

- New jobs in rural communities are being created as a result of market liberalisation but these tend to be seasonal casual employment or low paid jobs working for other rural households.

- Market liberalisation has had some gender specific impacts including increasing the involvement of women farmers in marketing and trading which in turn has increased their access to cash for consumption or investment purposes. However, as some women crops, such as sweet potatoes, become more marketable, control over the production and marketing of these has switched to the household head.

The above hypotheses are not exhaustive and many need to be substantiated with further information. They are presented for discussion and as an informed contribution to the debate among policy makers, researchers and other interested parties concerning liberalised markets and rural households

1. See Working Brief 1 (November 1996) and Working Brief 2 (March 1997) for details of monthly monitoring surveys over the period June 1996 - January 1997. See Working Brief 3 November 1997) for a summary of Focus Group reports of poor, non poot and women farmers from 13 Districts of Zimbabwe.

Main Crops Marketed, Farmer Participation in Marketing and Main Buyers by Survey District, February 1997 - May 1997

Survey District	Nat Reg	Crop Sold	% Households Marketing				Main Buyer							
							1st				2nd			
			Feb	March	April	May	Feb	March	April	May	Feb	March	April	May
Murehwa (Mash East)	11-111	Tomatoes	<10	<10	10-25	10-25	Harare Mkt	Harare Mkt	Harare Mkt	Harare Mkt	Marondera	Marondera	Marondera	Marondera
		Rape	<10	<10	10-25	10-25	Harare Mkt	Harare Mkt	Harare Mkt	Harare Mkt	Marondera	Marondera	Marondera	Marondera
		Okra	<10	<10	-	-	Harare Mkt	Harare Mkt	-	-	Marondera	Marondera	-	-
		Guavas	<10	<10	-	-	Harare Mkt	Harare Mkt	-	-	Marondera	Marondera	-	-
		Maize	-	-	-	25-49	-	-	-	Pvt Trd	-	-	-	LSCF
		Sunflwer	-	-	-	10-25	-	-	-	Pvt Trd	-	-	-	GMB
		Groundnuts	-	-	<10	10-25	-	-	Murehwa GP	GMB	-	-	Harare Mkt	Marondera
		Sweet potatoes	-	-	10-25	10-25	-	-	Harare Mkt	Harare Mkt	-	-	Marondera	Marondera
		Bambara nuts	-	-	<10	<10	-	-	Murehwa GP	Harare Mkt	-	-	Harare Mkt	Marondera
		Sugarcane	-	-	<10	-	-	-	Murehwa GP	-	-	-	L hhlds	-
Chikomba (Mash East)	111	Maize	<10	<10	<10	<10	L hhlds	L hhlds	Inst.	L hhlds	Inst.	Pvt Trd	GMB	Pvt Trd
		Groundnuts (Fresh)	<10	<10	<10	10-25	Pvt Trd	Ext. hhlds	Ext hhlds	Ext hhlds	L hhlds	L hhlds	L hhlds	L hhlds
		Sweet potatoes	-	<10	<10	10-25	-	L hhlds	Ext hhlds	Ext hhlds	-	Ext hhlds	L hhlds	L hhlds
		Beans	-	10-25	10-25	<10	-	Inst	Ext hhlds	Ext hhlds	-	Ext hhlds	Inst.	L hhlds
		Leafy vegetables	-	-	<10	<10	-	-	L hhlds	L hhlds	-	-	Pvt Trd	Pvt Trd
Mudzi (Mash East)	1V	Maize	10-25	<10	<10	<10	Pvt Trd	Pvt Trd	Pvt Trd	Pvt Trd	-	L hhlds	-	GMB
		Groundnuts (Fresh)	-	-	10-25	25-49	-	-	Pvt Trd	Pvt Trd	-	-	GMB	GMB
		Cotton	-	-	-	<10	-	-	-	Cotco	-	-	-	-
		Sunflower	-	-	-	<10	-	-	-	Pvt Trd	-	-	-	GMB
Hurungwe West (Mash West)	11-111	Maize	<10	<10	<10	10-25	Pvt Trd	Harare Miller	Pvt Trd	Harare Miller	-	Pvt Trd	Harare Miller	Metro Peech
		Cotton	-	-	10-25	75-89	-	-	Cotco	Cargil	-	-	Cargil	Cotco
		Sunflower	-	-	10-25	25-49	-	-	TSF	Metro Peech	-	-	Pvt Trd	-
		Tobacco	-	-	75-89	10-25	-	-	-	TFS	-	-	Boka AF	Boka AF
		Groundnuts (Fresh)	-	-	-	<10	-	-	-	Metro Peech	-	-	-	-
		Sorghum	-	-	-	10-25	-	-	-	Metro Peech	-	-	-	Chibuku
Chegutu (Mash West)	11-111	Maize	<10	<10	<10	10-25	L hhlds	L hhlds	L hhlds	Rwizi	Pvt Trd	-	-	Pvt Trd
		Groundnuts (Fresh)	<10	<10	<10	-	Pvt Trd	Pvt Trd	Pvt Trd	-	-	-	-	-
		Guavas	<10	-	-	-	Travellers	-	-	-	Pvt Trd	-	-	-
		Nyimo	-	<10	-	<10	-	Pvt Trd	-	-	-	-	-	-
		Sunflower	-	-	-	<10	-	-	-	Rwizi	-	-	-	Metro Peech
		Cotton	-	-	-	<10	-	-	-	Cargil	-	-	-	Metro Peech
		Tobacco	-	-	-	<10	-	-	-	ZTA	-	-	-	-
		Paprika	-	-	-	<10	-	-	-	Pvt Trd	-	-	-	-
		Tomatoes	-	-	-	<10	-	-	-	Harare	-	-	-	L hhlds
Mount Darwin (Mash Central)	11-1V	Maize	<10	<10	<10	<10	L miller	L miller	L miller	L miller	L vendor	L vendor	L vendor	L vendor
		Groundnuts	-	-	-	<10	-	-	-	GMB	-	-	-	-
		Sunflower	-	-	-	<10	-	-	-	GMB	-	-	-	-
		Cotton	-	-	-	<10	-	-	-	Cotco	-	-	-	Cargil
Mutasa (Manicaland)	1-111	Maize	25-49	25-49	25-49	neg	L hhlds	L hhlds	Pvt Trd	L hhlds	L hhlds	Pvt Trd	Pvt Trd	Pvt Trd
		Bananas	10-25	50-74	50-74	25-49	Pvt Trd	Pvt Trd	Pvt Trd	Pvt Trd	L hhlds	L hhlds	L hhlds	L hhlds
		Cucumbers	<10	-	-	-	Pvt Trd	-	-	-	L hhlds	-	-	-
		Pumpkins	<10	-	-	-	Pvt Trd		-	-				-
		Beans	-	<10	10-25	neg	-	Pvt Trd	Pvt Trd	L hhlds	-	L hhlds	L hhlds	Pvt Trd
		Covo	-	10-25	<10	<10	-	L hhlds	L hhlds	Pvt Trd	-	Pvt Trd	Pvt Trd	L hhlds
		Avocado	-	neg	10-25	10-25	-	Pvt Trd	Pvt Trd	Pvt Trd	-	-	L hhlds	L hhlds
		Sugarcane	-	-	<10	10-25	-	-	Pvt Trd	Pvt Trd	-	-	L hhlds	L hhlds
		Rape + tsunga	-	-	-	10-25	-	-	-	Pvt Trd	-	-	-	L hhlds
[illegible]	111-1V	Maize	-	<10	<10	-	-	L hhlds	L hhlds	-	-	-	L vendors	-
		Wheat	<10	-	-	-	Nat miller	-	-	-	L hhlds	-	-	-

		Groundnut (Fresh)	<10	-	-	10-25	L vendors	-	-	Pvt Trd	-	-	-	GMB
		Sweet potatoes	<10	-	-	-	Travellers	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		Green mealies	<10	-	<10	-	Travellers	L vendors	L vendors	-	-	-	-	-
		Bambara nuts	-	10-25	<10	<10	-	-	L vendors	L vendors	-	-	-	GMB
		Cotton	-	-	-	10-25	-	-	-	COTO	-	-	-	COTCO
		Tomatoes	-	-	-	<10	-	-	-	Pvt Trd	-	-	-	L vendors
Gokwe South (Midlands)	111-1V	Maize	10-25	<10	<10	50-74	-	Nat Foods	Pvt Trd	GMB	-	GMB	Nat Foods	Nat Foods
		Cotton	-	-	25-49	75-89	-	-	Cargil	COTCO	-	-	COTCO	Cargil
		Sunflower	-	-	<10	<10	-	-	PIPA	PIPA	-	-	GMB	Nat Foods
		Groundnuts	-	-	<10	<10	-	-	GMB	GMB	-	-	-	-
		Vegetables	-	-	-	<10	-	-	-	Gokwa GP	-	-	-	-
		Castor Beans	-	-	-	<10	-	-	-	Nat Foods	-	-	-	-
Bubi (Mat North)	1V	Maize	<10	<10	<10	<10	L hhlds	L hhlds	L hhlds	L hhlds	Pvt Trd	Pvt Trd	-	Pvt Trd
		Sorghum	<10	<10	<10	<10	Lhhlds	Lhhlds	Lhhlds	Lhhlds	Pvt Trd	Pvt Trd	-	-
		Mhunga	<10	<10	<10	-	L hhlds	L hhlds	L hhlds	-	Pvt Trd	Pvt Trd	-	-
		Chomoller	<10	<10	<10	<10	L hhlds	L hhlds	L hhlds	L hhlds	Pvt Trd	Pvt Trd	-	-
		Rape	<10	<10	<10	<10	L hhlds	L hhlds	L hhlds	L hhlds	Pvt Trd	Pvt Trd	-	-
Binga (Mat North)	1V-V	Maize	<10	<10	<10	-	Pvt Trd	Pvt Trd	Pvt Trd	-	L hhlds	L hhlds	L hhlds	-
		Sorghum & P Millet	<10	-	-	-	L hhlds	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		Bananas	-	<10	-	-	-	Pvt Trd	-	-	-	L workers	-	-
		Cucumbers	-	<10	-	-	-	Ext hhlds	-	-	-	L workers	-	-
		Cotton	-		-	<10	-	-	-	Cargil	-	-	-	Cotco
		Sweet potatoes	-	-	-	<10	-	-	-	L workers	-	-	-	L hhlds
		Tomatoes	-	-	-	<10	-	-	-	L hhlds	-	-	-	L workers
Umzingwane (Mat Norht)	1V	Maize	<10	<10	<10	<10	L hhlds	L hhlds	Bulawayo	L hhlds	Bulawayo	Bulawayo	L hhlds	-
		Tomatoes	<10	-	-	-	l hhlds	-	-	-	Bulawayo	-	-	-
		Groundnuts	-	<10	<10	-	-	Bulawayo	Bulawayo	-	-	L hhlds	-	-
		Sweet potatoes	-	<10	<10	<10	-	-	Bulawayo	Bulawayo	-	-	L hhlds	L hhlds
		Bambara nuts	-	-	<10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Beitbridge (Mat South)	V	Maize	<10	<10	<10	<10	L hhlds	L hhlds	L hhlds	L hhlds	-	-	-	-
		Water Melons	-	10-15	25-49	25-49	-	Highway Trv	Highway Trv	Highway Trv	-	Urban Mkt	Urban Mkt	Urban Mkt
		Vegetables	-	-	-	<10	-	-	-	L hhlds	-	-	-	Urban Mkt

Source: RRA Surveys

Pvt Trd Private Traders (usually middleman)
Ext hhlds Households from outside district and urban households
Inst Institutions e,g hospitals, shcools, police stations etc
Nat National
L hhlds Local households
. Named private Company (often and user but not always)
neg negligible

Table 2: Maize Producer Prices by Buyer Survey District, February 97 - May 1997

Survey District	Nat Reg	Buyer	Prices $/50kg bag Grade A								Transport Cost $/50kg	Comments
			FEBRUARY		MARCH		APRIL		MAY			
			$	rel* imp	$	rel* imp	$	rel* imp	$	rel* imp		
Murehwa (Mash East)	11-111	Pvt Company L hhlds	 55-65		 65-75		 50-65		50 40-42	1	5-6	Murehwa farmers transport their produce to Murehwa Business Centre
Chikomba (Mash East)	111	GMB L hhlds Pvt Company Pvt Traders	- 50-63 50-63 -	 1 2	60 50-63 - -	3 1	- 50-63 - -	 1	35-38 - 35-38	 1 2	ns - own -	@GMB Depot @Farmers home @Rural service centres collecting from farmers
Mudzi (Mash East)	1V	Pvt Traders L hhlds	33-85 75	1	40 75	2 3	40 ns	1	42 ns	3	own -	@Rural service centres in District @Farm gate
Hurungwe West (Mash West)	11-111	Pvt Traders Jati Millers Pvt company L hhlds	38 - - 50	3	35 38 - 60	3 3	25 30 - 25-35	3 3	30 35 35 25-30	3 2 1	- - - -	@Local business centres @Local business centres @Local business centres
Chegutu (Mash West)	11-111	L hhlds Rwizi Pvt company	63-88	3	63-88	3	63-88	3	- 50 50	- 1 1	- - -	@Farm gate @Rwizi business centre @Metro Peech Depot
Mount Darwin (Mash Central)	111-1V	Pvt company Pvt Trd	40-50 -	2	40-50	2	50 -	2	45 38	2	- -	@Collect at the farm gate @Collect at the farm gate
Mutasa (Manicaland)	1-11	Ext hhlds Pvt Trd	63	2	50 50	1 3	50-63 38-50	1 3	50-75 38	1 3	2-4	@Farm gate or other villages @Farm gate or collection points along roads
Masvingo (Masvingo)	111-1V	L hhlds	65-75	3	50-65	3	50-75	3	50-55	3	-	@Farm gate
Gokwe South (Midlands)	111-1V	Nat Foods GMB Pvt Trd L hhlds	68 60 45 ns	1 2 3	50 52 - 38	2 3 3	55 60 35 ns	2 3 1	53 60 35 ns	2 1 2	5-7 5-7 own	@Nat Foods Depot @GMB Depot @Local business centre @Farm gate
Bubi (Mat North)	1V	L hhlds Pvt Trd	80-90 75	2 3	80-90 75-80	3 3	80-90 -	3	80-90 45	3 3	own own	@Farm gate @Farm gate
Binga (Mat North)	1V-V	Pvt Trd L hhlds	30-115	3 3	30-100	3	25-85 -	3	25-75	3	own	@Local business centres and pay incash @Farm gate
Umzingwane (Mat South)	1V	L hhlds Pvt Trd	80 75	- 3	80 75	- 3	80 75	- 3	50-75 75	 3	-	@Farm gate
Beitbridge (Mash South)	V	L hhds	75-85	2	70-85	2	65-85	3	65-85	3	own	@Irrigation schemes

Source: RRA Monthly Survey

Notes
- * Relative importance buyer was coded according to whether informants classified the buyer as large (1) medium (2) or small (3) in terms of quantity of maize purchased in the district
- ** Prices vary considerably between different parts of the district
- ns no information supplied

Table 3: Percentage of Households Selling Livestock and Main Buyers by Survey Disrtict, February - May 1997

Survey District	Nat Reg	Livestock Sold	% Households Marketing				Main Buyers							
							1st				2nd			
			Feb	March	April	May	Feb	March	April	May	Feb	March	April	May
Murehwa (Mash East)	11-111	Cattle	<10	<10	<10	<10	L But	L But	L But	L But	L hhlds	L hhlds	L hhlds	L hhlds
		Broilers	<10	<10	<10	<10	L hhlds	L hhlds	L hhlds	L hhlds	Pvt buy	Pvt Buy	Pvt Buy	Pvt Buy
		Pigs	<10	<10	<10	<10	L But	L But	L But	L But	L hhlds	L hhlds	-	L hhlds
Chikomba (Mash East)	111	Cattle	<10	<10	<10	<10	L But	L But	L But	L But	CSC	CSC	CSC	CSC
		Goats	<10	<10	<10	<10	L hhlds	L hhlds	L hhlds	L hhlds	-	-	Pvt Buy	-
		Poultry	<10	<10	<10	<10	U hhlds	U hhlds	U hhlds	L hhlds	L hhlds	Ins	Inst.	-
		Pigs	<10	<10	<10	<10	L hhlds	L hhlds	Colcom	L hhlds	Colcom	Colcom	L hhlds	Colcom
Mudzi (Mash East)	1V	Cattle	<10	<10	<10	<10	Pvt Buy	Pvt Buy	Pvt Buy	Pvt Buy	L hhlds	L hhlds	CSC	-
		Goats	<10	<10	<10	<10	Pvt Buy	Pvt Buy	Pvt Buy	Pvt Buy	L hhlds	L hhlds	L hhlds	L hhlds
		Poultry	<10	<10	<10	neg	Pvt Buy	L hhlds	L hhlds	-	L hhlds	-	-	-
Hurungwe West (Mash West)	11-111	Goats	<10	neg	neg	neg	L hhlds	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		Cattle	neg	neg	neg	neg	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chegutu (Mash West)	11-111	Cattle	<10	<10	<10	<10	L But	L But	L But	L But	-	L hhlds	-	-
		Goats	<10	<10	<10	<10	L hhlds	L hhlds	Lhhlds	L hhlds	-	-	-	-
		Poultry	<10	<10	<10	<10	L hhlds	Pvt Buy	L hhlds	L hhlds	Pvt But	L hhlds	-	-
Mount Darwin Mash Central)	11-1V	Cattle	<10	<10	<10	<10	Mid Buy	Mid Buy	Mid Buy	Mid Buy	CSC	Pvt Buy	Pvt Buy	Pvt Buy
		Goats	<10	<10	<10	<10	Pvt Buy	L hhlds	Pvt Buy	Pvt Buy	-	Pvt Buy	L hhlds	L hhlds
		Pigs	neg	<10	neg	neg	-	L Buy	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mutasa (Manicaland)	1-111	Cattle	neg	neg	neg	neg	-	-	-	Pvt Trd	-	-	-	L hhlds
		Poultry	10-25	<10	10-25	10-25	L hhlds	L hhlds	L hhlds	L hhlds	Pvt Trd	Pvt Buy	Mutare Mkt	Mutare Mkt
		Goats	neg	neg	neg	neg	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
		Pigs	neg	neg	neg	neg	-	-	L But	-	-	-	Mutare Mkt	
Masvingo (Masvingo)	111-1V	Cattle	<10	<10	neg	<10	CSC	Tenda meats	-	Pvt Buy	Midlands Buy	Pvt Buy	-	CSC
		Goats	<10	<10	<10	<10	L hhlds	Pvt Buy	L workers	Pvt Buy	-	-	Pvt Buy	CSC
		Poultry	neg	neg	<10	neg	-	-	L workers	-	-	-	L hhlds	-
Gokwe South (Midlands)	111-1V	Cattle	neg	neg	<10	neg	-	-	Pvt Buy	-	-	-	CSC	-
		Goats	<10	neg	neg	<10	L hhlds	-	-	U hhlds	-	-	-	L hhlds
		Poultry	neg	<10	-	<10	-	U hhlds	-	U hhlds	-	L hhlds	-	L hhlds
Bubi (Mat North)	1V	Cattle	<10	<10	<10	<10	CSC	CSC	LSCF	LSCF	-	LSCF	CSC	CSC
		Goats/Sheep	25-49	25-49	25-49	<10	Pvt Trd	Pvt Trd	Pvt Trd	Pvt Trd	L hhlds	L hhlds	L hhlds	L hhlds
		Poultry	25-49	25-49	25-49	10-25	L hhlds	L hhlds	L hhlds	L hhlds	-	-		Pvt Trd
Binga	1V-V	Cattle	<10	<10	<10	<10	LSCF	CSC	L But	CSC	L hhlds	Pvt Trd	L workers	Pvt Buy
		Goats/Sheep	<10	<10	<10	10-25	CSC	CSC	L workers	CSC	L worker	Pvt Trd	L hhlds	L hhlds
		Poultry	<10	<10	<10	<10	L workers	L workers	L workers	Pvt Buy	L hhlds	Pvt Trd	Pvt Trd	Pvt Trd
Umzingwane (Mat South)	1V	Cattle	<10	10-25	10-25	<10	Pvt Abb	Pvt Abb	Pvt Abb	Pvt Abb	L But	CSC	CSC	CSC
		Goats	<10	<10	<10	<10	L hhlds	L hhlds	L hhlds	L hhlds	-	-	-	-
		Poultry	<10	<10	<10	<10	L hhlds	L hhlds	L hhlds	L hhlds	-	-	-	-
Beitbridge (Mat South)	V	Cattle	10-25	10-25	10-25	10-25	CSC	CSC	CSC	CSC	L But	L But	L But	L But
		Goats/Sheep	50-74	10-25	10-25	25-49	CSC	CSC	CSC	CSC	L But	L But	L But	L But
		Poultry	10-25	<10	<10	<10	L hhlds	L hhlds	L hhlds	L hhlds	-	-	-	-

Source: Monthly RRA Surveys

CSC Cold Storage Commission
L hhlds *Farm - farm sales*
Pvt Buy Private Buyers, usually operating an abattoir and sometimes with own retail outlet
L But Local Butcher
But
Pvt Trd Private Traders, probably acting as middlemen, unlikely to own abattoirs
L workers Local people in formal employment e.g civil servants

Table 4: Local Livestock Prices by Survey District, February 97 - May 97

Survey District	Nat Reg	Beef		Goats $ per head	Pigs		Broilers $ per bird	Comments
		$ per head	$ per kg live mass		$ per head	local butcher $ per kg		
Murehwa	11-111	1500-2500 (L But)	na	100-150	na	12-15	30-40	Price of pig meat was recorded in March only. Beef price per head was mentained in the same range from Feb to May.
Chikomba	111	na	8-11 (CSC) 8-13 (Pvt Buy) 8-13 (L But)	160-200 (L hhlds)	240-400 (L hhlds) 300 (Colcom)	8-15 (L hhlds)	30-38	Prices of beef became firm in March. Price of broilers was relatively high in March (Easter Holiday)
Mudzi	1V	1500-2000 (Pvt Buy & L hhlds)	na	100-120 (Pvt Buy and L hhlds)	na	na	30-35	Cattle and goat prices fairly steady throughout the period from Feb to May 1997.
Hurungwe West	11-111	900-2500	na	100-150	na	na	25-30	Minimal sales.
Chegutu	11-111	1500-3000 (L But)	15-19 (L But)	80-180 (L hhlds)	na	na	30-40	Goat and beef prices were firm in Feb, March and April. Broilers' price was also firm in March and April.
Mount Darwin	11-1V	1200-4500 (Pvt Buy)	na	50-150 (Pvt Buy) 30-120 (L hhlds)	na	10 (L But)	na	Price of beef cattle firmed in Feb, March and April No price was recorded for May.
Mutasa	1-111	na	na	130-200 (L hhlds)	300-400 (L But)	10 (Pvt Buy)	30-32 (Pvt Buy) 35-40 (L hhlds)	Prices of pigs were only given for April. Price of broilers rose in March (Easter Holiday).
Masvingo	1V	na	9 (Pvt Abb)	180 (L hhlds) $7/kg (Pvt Abb)	na	na	na	Prices given for beef and goats are for the month of March at a private abttoir (Tenda meat). Prices for other types of livestock were not recorded.
Gokwe South	111-V	2000-3000	na	100-150	na	na	20-35	Minimal sale.
Bubi	1V	4000-4500 (CSC) 2500-3000 (LSCF)	na	200-300 (Pvt Trd) 100-200 (L hhlds)	na	na	15-30 (L hhlds) 35-40 (Pvt Trd)	Goat prices were steady in the months of Feb and March. Price of broilers was firm at $30 in Feb, March and April but fell to $15 - $20 for local households in May.
Binga	1V-V	1500-3000 (L But) 2000-5300 (CSC + Pvt Buy)	7,72-8,55 (CSC)	120-250 (CSC & Pvt Buy) 80-150 (L hhlds + L workers)	na	na	20-35 (L workers, Pvt Trd, & L hhlds)	Livestock prices were given for March and April. Prices for Feb and May were not recorded.
Umzingwane	1V	2500-4500	13-15 (U But) 9-13 (Pvt Abb)	80-10/kg (L hhlds) 100-250	na	na	30-35 (L hhlds)	Beef prices became firm in April and May. Prices of goat meat were constant form Feb to May
Beitbridge	V	2500-4500	12 (CSC) 10 (Pvt But)	6,65/kg (CSC) 5,50/kg (Pvt Buy) 5,0/kg (L hhlds) 100-250	na	na	30-35 (L hhlds)	Beef prices were firm in the period from Feb to May.

Source: Monthly RRA Surveys

Note
- na — no price information available from RRA Survey
- Pvt Buy — Private Buyer
- L But — Local Butcher
- Pvt But — Private Butcher

Table 5: Percentage of Households Purchasing Staple Grain and Consumer Prices by Survey District, February 97 - May 97

Survey District	Nat Region	% Households Purchasing Staple Grain				Maize Grain as % Purchases				Price of Grain 20 litre tin (Z$) **			
		FEB	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	FEB	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	FEB	MARCH	APRIL	MAY
Murehwa	11-111	<10	10-25	10-25	<10	98	99	98	98	22-25	25-30	20-25	16-17
Chikomba	111	ns	<10	<10	<10	95	85	80	85	20-25	20-25	20-25	15-20
Mudzi	1V	10-25	<10	<10	<10	100	100	100	100	13-30	20-35	20-35	20-35
Hurungwe West	11-111	<10	<10	10-25	<10	80	80	60	100	15-25	14-15	10-12	12-14
Chegutu	11-111	25-49	25-49	<10	10-25	99	99	99	99	20-35	25-35	25-35	20-25
Mount Darwin	111-1v	<10	<10	<10	<10	80	90	90	95	15-20	15-20	15-20	15-30
Mutasa	1-111	<10	10-25	10-25	<10	90	90	75-89	90	25-30	20-25	20-25	20-30
Masvingo	111-1V	<10	<10	<10	<10	100	100	100	100	20-25	30	20-25	20-27
Gokwe South	111-1V	<10	<10	<10	<10	99	100	100	100	15-25	15-20	14-20	12-20
Bubi	1V	25-49	25-49	25-49	10-25	95	94	90	89	30-35	30-35	30-35	30-35
Binga *	1V-V	10-25	<10	<10	<10	70	50	50	88	10-45	10-40	10-35	10-30
Umzingwane	1V	75-89	50-74	10-25	10-25	80	80	100	100	30-35	30-35	30-35	20-30
Beitbridge	V	>90	>90	75-89	75-89	60-70	60-70	60-70	60-70	30-35	30-35	25-35	25-35

Source RRA Monthly Surveys

Notes * Prices vary considerably between different parts of the District (some traders purchased maize grain at Z$ 10-15 per 20 litre tin in Lusulu and resold for Z$ 30-40 in deficit parts of district)
** 1 20 litre tin is approximately 15 - 17kgs maize grain

Table 6: Comparative Consumer Prices of Different Grains and Commercially Milled Roller Meal, February 97 - May 97

Survey District	Nat Reg	Grain Price per 20 litre tin (Z$)*																Milling Cost $ per 20 litre tin				Roller M Z$20
		FEB				MARCH				APRIL				MAY				FEB-MAY				Local Miller
		Mz	Sg	Mh	Rp	Mz	Sg	Mh	Rp	Mz	Sg	Mh	Rp	Mz	Sg	Mh	Rp	Mz	Sg	Mh	Rp	
Murehwa (Mash East)	11-111	22-25	na	na	65-70	25-30	na	na	65-70	20-25	na	na	63-67	16-17	na	na	55-60	1.2 - 3.2	1.5 - 3.2	na	1.5 - 3.2	48 - 56
Chikomba (Mash East)	111	20-25	na	na	na	20-35	na	na	na	20-25	na	na	na	16-20	na	na	na	3.5 - 4.0	na	na	3.5	40 - 50
Mudzi (Mash East)	1V	13-30	na	na	na	20-35	na	na	na	20-35	na	na	na	20-35	na	na	na	3.5 - 4.0	na	na	na	na
Hurungwe West (Mash West)	11-111	15-20	na	na	na	14-15	na	na	na	10-12	na	na	na	12-14	na	na	na	2.5 - 3.0	na	na	na	4.5
Chegutu (Mash West)	11-111	20-35	na	na	na	25-35	na	na	na	25-35	na	na	na	20-25	na	na	na	2.0 - 3.5	na	na	na	na
Mount Darwin (Mash central)	111-1V	15-20	na	na	na	15-20	na	na	na	15-20	na	na	na	15-30	na	na	na	3.00	na	na	na	na
Mutasa (Manicaland)	1-111	25-30	na	na	na	20-25	na	na	na	20-25	na	na	na	20-30	na	na	na	3.0 - 5.0	na	na	3.6 - 4.5	na
Masvingo (Masvingo)	111-1V	20-25	na	na	na	30	na	na	na	20-25	na	na	na	20-27	na	na	na	2.0 - 3.50	3.0 - 3.5	na	2.5 - 3.5	na
Gokwe South (Midlands)	111-1V	15-25	na	15	na	5-20	na	50	na	14-20	na	na	na	12-20	na	na	na	2.0 - 2.50	na	na	na	na
Bubi (Mat North)	1V	30-35	30	30	na	30-35	30	30	na	30-35	30	30	na	30-35	20	na	na	1.50 - 2.40	2.40	2.4	na	na
Binga (Mat North)	1V-V	10-45	na	na	na	10-40	na	na	na	10-35	na	na	na	10-30	na	na	na	3.50 - 4.50	3.5 - 4.5	3.50 - 4.50	3.5 - 4.5	na
Umzingwane (Mat South)	1V	30-35	na	na	na	30-35	na	na	na	30-35	na	na	na	20-30	na	na	na	2.50 - 3.00	na	na	na	na
Beitbridge (Mat South)	V	30-35	na	na	na	30-35	na	na	na	25-35	na	na	na	25-35	na	na	na	3.00 - 5.00	3.25 - 6.0	3.25 6.0	3.25 - 6.0	na

Source RRA Survey

Notes na Not available from RRA Surveys - May not be on sale in the District at this period * 1 20 litre tin is approx 15 -17kg maize grain

Table 7: Some Examples of Local Hammermills throughout by Survey District, February 97 - May 97

Survey District	Nat Region	Mill	Maize in 50kg bags				Small grains, Wheat and other in 50 kg bags			
			Feb	March	April	May	Feb	March	April	May
Murehwa (Mash East)	11-111	Muzarabani	618	794	882	326	4	2	6	1.5
		Mupfanya	282	271	390	480	6	2	nil	3
Chikomba (Mash East)	111	Musekiwa	101	165	197	538	45	58	70	29
		Musemwa	102	103	126	218	25	18	43	22
Mudzi (Mash East)	1V	Chipanyanza	938	589	473	426	na	na	na	na
		Madkeke	890	245	212	385	na	na	na	na
Hurungwe West (Mash West)	11-111	Hippo Mill	100-200	140-180	140-160	800	na	na	na	na
		Sunny Mill	80-200	130-160	140-200	600	na	na	na	na
Chegutu (Mash West)	11-111	Chematamba	231	334	442	73	na	na	na	na
		Zimani	209	205	233	261	na	na	na	na
Mount Darwin (Mash Central)	11-1V	Muoni	950	2400	420	120	na	na	na	na
		Matope	750	1800	566	480	na	na	na	na
Mutasa (Manicaland)	1-111	Dzatsa	413	406	451	279	4	2	2	2
		Matsaira	245	412	335	28	3	2	1	1
Masvingo (Masvingo)	111-1V	Mandava	30	632	18	60	3	51	9	3
		Rufaro	20	28	13	34	5	4	1	2
Gokwe South (Midlands)	111-1V	Maguranye	144	144	288	216	1	na	na	na
		Chidhiya	1351	1313	1499	1747	5	na	na	na
Bubi (Mat North)	1V	Inkosikazi	260	248	209	235	121	96	91	23
		Tana Project	399	371	350	314	na	na	na	na
Binga (Mat North)	1V-V	Kutwa Kwamana	282	627	802	911	118	4	10	9
		ZFU Mill	471	211	1322	1065	43	16	3	13
Umzingwane (Mat South)	1V	Sizanani	689	736	935	1200	na	na	na	na
		Tobela Mandela	512	954	723	804	na	na	na	na
Beitbridge (Mat South)	V	Kavadengeno	1500	1700	1500	2000	250	200	800	800
		R & F Miller	400	800	1000	1200	50	50	na	75

Source: Monthly RRA Survey

Notes na Not available but probably negligible in the case of small grains.
Jongwe Brothers mill closed down and a new mill (Chidaya grinding mill) is being monitoring at the same growth point

Table 8: Main income sources used to purchase food by average and poorer households, by Survey District, February 97 - May 97

District	Nat Region		1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
lurehwa (Mash East)	11-1V	Av	Garden and orchard Projects	Poultry Projects	Remittances	Fruit & Vegetable vending	Selling second hand clothes
		Poor	Vegetable and Fruit Vending	Casual work	Selling second hand clothes	Garden and orchard projects	Remittances
:hikomba (Mash East)	111	Av	Livestock and Crop Sales	Remittances	Crafts and crotcheing	Trading in second hand clothes	Lobola
		Poor	Casual work	Sale of small livestock poultry	Remittances	Crafts	Lobola
ludzi (Mash West)	1V	Av	Remittances	Crop and liestock saless	Casual work	na	na
		Poor	Casual Work	(small) livestock sales	Brick moulding	Crafts	Remittances
lurungwe (Mash West)	11-111	Av	Maize sales	Other crop sales (Cotton)	Vegetable sales	Livestock sales	Vegetable vending
		Poor	Casual work	Maize sales	Vegetable vending	Handicraft	Brick moulding
:hegutu (Mash West)	11-111	Av	Casual work	Selling poultry	Exchange labour	Selling vegetable	Beer brewing
		Poor	Casual work	Beer brewing	Fruit and vegetable vending	Selling firewood	na
lount Darwin (Mash Central)	11-1V	Av	Crop sales	Livestock sales (cattle)	Vegetable sales	Sale of maize grain	Remittances
		Poor	Gold panning	Casual work	Brick moulding	Vegetable vending	na
lutasa (Manicaland)	1-111	Av	Crop sales	Remittances	Livestock sales	Casual work	Selling eggs
		Poor	Casual work	Crop sales	Remittances	Livestock sale	Hand craft
lasvingo (Masvingo)	111-1V	Av	Crop sales	Livestock sales	Remittances	Casual work	Beer Brewing
		Poor	Casual work	Fruit sales	Beer Brewing	Craft	Vending
okwe South (Midlands)	111-1V	Av	Crop sales	Vegetable sales	Selling milk	Trading in second hand clothes	Livestock sales
		Poor	Crop sales	Casual labour	Gambling	Vegetable sales	Woodwork, crafts
ubi (Mat North)	1V	Av	Employment	Grain sales	Remittances	Remittances	Poultry sales
		Poor	Vegetable vending	Casual labour	Gambling	Vegetable sales	Woodwork, crafts
inga (Mat North)	1V-V	Av	Goat sales	Cattle sales	Craft	Remittances	Beer brewing
		Poor	Vegetable vending	Indigenous Poultry	Exchange labour	Craft	Selling wild fruits & herding
mzingwane (Mat South)	1V	Av	Employment	Crop sale, (maize, sweet-potatoes)	Craft	Casual work	na
		Poor	Casual work	Social welfare	Gold panning	na	na
eitbridge (Mat South)	V	Av	Sale of small ruminants	Cattle sale	Remittances	Commodity trading	Selling water melons
		Poor	Commodity trading	Crafts	Selling water melons	Remittances	Social welfare

ource: Monthly RRA Surveys

otes na no additional sources given

Table 9: Types of casual Work Available and Wage Rates by Survey District, February 97 - May 97

District	Nat. Reg	Nature of work	Month	Employer	Wage Rate $	Unit
Murehwa (Mash East)	11-1V	Weeding	Feb	L hhlds	10-15	per day
		Cotton spraying	Feb-May	L hhlds	15-25	per day
		Lifting groundnuts	Feb	L hhlds	10-18	per day
		Herding cattle	Feb	L hhlds	8-10	per day
		Harvesting Maize	March, April	L hhlds	10-20	per day
		Brick moulding	March-May	L hhlds	180-280	per 1000
		Picking cotton	April,May	L hhlds	15-25	per day
		Shelling maize	May	L hhlds	14-20	per day
Chikomba (Mash East)	111	Tobacco Picking	Feb	LSCF	15-17	per day
		Weeding	Feb, March	L hhlds	10-12	per day
		Herding Cattle	Feb-May	L hhlds	200	per month
		Tobacco Grading	March-May	LSCF	15-20	per day
		Guarding Crops	March, April	LSCF & SSCF	10-15	per day
		Harvesting	April, May	L hhlds	10-15	per day
		Brick Moulding	May	L hhlds	120-160	1000 bricks
Mudzi (Mash East)	1V	Weeding	Feb	L hhlds	70-80	per acre
		Brick Moulding	Feb	varied	140-170	perr 1000 bricks
		Road construction	Feb-April	DDF & DANIDA	400-600	per month
		Other construction work	April	PTC/ZESA/other	400-600	per month
		Harvesting	April	L hhlds	15	per day
		Loading	April	GMB/Transpoter	0.50	per day
		Casual work	May	L hhlds	10-15	per day
Hurungwe West (Mash West)	11-111	Reaping Tobacco	Feb, March	LSCF	15	per day
		Cotton picking	March April	Cotton Growers	10	per day
		Loading cotton bales	April, May	Transporters	15-20	per day
		Grading Tobacco	April	LSCF	10	per day
		Loading maize bags	May	Transpoters	15	per day
		Security guarding	May	Grain Traders	30	per day
Chegutu (Mash West)	11-111	Picking/Reapign Tobacco	Feb	LSCF	14	per day
		Weeding	Feb	LSCF	14	per day
		Weeding	Feb	L hhlds	1 x 20 litre tin maize	per 2 dys
		Picking Potatoes	Feb	LSCF	14	per day
		Harvesting Paprika	March, April	LSCF	14	per day
		Guarding Tobacco	March	LSCF	14	per day
		Lifting Groundnuts	March, April	L hhlds	20 litre tin maize	per 5 x 20 litre tins
		Picking Cotton	May	L hhlds & LSCF	0.50	per kg
		Maize shelling	May	L hhlds	1 x 20 litre tin maize	per 5 bags shelled
Mt Darwin (Mash Central)	11-1V	Reaping tobacco	Fe March	L hhlds	15	per day
		Tobacco curing	Feb March	L hhlds	15	per day
		Weeding	Feb	Lk hhlds	15	per day
		Tobacco grading	March-April	L hhlds	15	per day
		Brick moulding	April may	L hhlds	150	per 1000 bricks
		Selling vegetables	April	L hhlds	100	per month
		Selling second hand clothes	April	L women	100	per month
		Cotton picking	May	L hhlds	0.25	per kg
Mutasa (Manicaland)	1-111	Pruning/Planting	Feb	Wattle Company	400	per month
		Tea picking	Feb April	Eastern Highlands & ARDA	0.26-0.28	per kg
		Cattle herding	Feb	L hhlds	10	per animal per month
		Weeding	Feb	L hhlds	10	per day
		Casual work	March	L hhlds	10-15	per day
		Debarking and planting	March May	Wattle company	16	per day
		Making fireguards	April, May	LSCF	350	per month
		Loading timber	April	LSCF	350	per month
		Flowers	April	LSCF	350	per month
		Trench digging	April	Pungwe river project	na	na
Masvingo (Masvingo)	111-1V	Maize Harvesting	March	L hhlds	12	per day
		Groundnut harvesting	March, May	L hhlds	12	per day
		Maize dehusking	April	L hhlds	12	per day