

FOSENET NGO Food Security Network

Community Assessment of the Food Situation in Zimbabwe October 2003

For the executive summary please go to page 11

Background

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

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

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

FOSENET Monitoring

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

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

Coverage of the data

The monitoring information is collected from sentinel wards within districts. It is presented by district, to provide for two or more site reports on any indicator. Data for the period **October 2003** is drawn from **144 monitoring reports** from **55 districts** from all provinces of Zimbabwe, with an average of **2.6 reports per district**.

Change in the food situation

Most people are resorting to selling livestock in order to purchase food

Nyanga

The food situation is critical at the moment food reserves are fast diminishing forcing those who have maize to charge exorbitant prices which most people can not afford.

Chirumhanzu

Three quarters of the districts continue to report a deteriorating food supply situation. Food stocks from last season's harvest are now widely reported to have run out. Staple food prices are widely reported to be unaffordable in both formal and informal markets. Relief supplies have not yet had a strong impact on food availability.

Generally the situation has been good but of late food situation was beginning to get worse.

Chinhoyi

The number of districts reporting improvements in food supplies in October 2003 has further fallen to 7% , from 9% of districts in September and 14% of districts in August.

The few districts that reported improvements in food supplies noted that this was a result of relief food and some increase in the frequency of GMB deliveries, but this was very limited. Three quarters (75%) of districts report a worsening food supply situation, compared to 74% in September and 59 % in August. The districts reporting a worsening situation are evenly spread across the country.

Table 1: Districts with sites with worsening food situations, October 2003

Province	District
Manicaland	Buhera, Chipinge, Makoni, Mutare rural, Nyanga
Mashonaland East	Chikomba, Hwedza, UMP, Marondera urban, Marondera rural, Murehwa, Goromonzi
Mashonaland Central	Guruve , Mount Darwin, Shamva, Mazoe, Bindura urban
Mashonaland West	Chinhoyi , Kariba, Norton
Midlands	Chirumhanzu, Shurugwi, Gweru rural, Gokwe, Redcliff, Mberengwa, Zvishavane
Masvingo	Bikita, Chiredzi, Masvingo rural
Matebeleland North	Lupane , Hwange, Binga, Tsholotsho
Matebeleland South	Gwanda, Bulilimamangwe, Umzingwane
Cities	Bulawayo, Harare, Chitungwiza

Food Needs

Groups reported to be in most need are those that have always been noted as vulnerable: The elderly, orphans, the unemployed, people living with AIDS and displaced farm workers. The problem of displaced workers is reported to have continued due to the ongoing farm acquisitions.

Opposition supporters have problems accessing GMB food even those who won council elections have no access to GMB maize.

Zvishavane

In and out migration has increased In over half of the districts (53%) there has been in or out migration compared to 41% in September. People move from rural to urban areas to hunt for jobs and are leave urban areas to rural because of company closures. Households are reported to be leaving towns permanently as they fail to cope with the escalating urban cost of living. Urban residents go to rural areas in search of maize, while rural youths are reported to have resorted to gold panning as the only way to raise money to buy food (See Table 2).

Many people are getting into illegal gold panning because the GMB is delaying to hand over payments to the farmers

Bindura

Table 2: Districts reporting food related migration in October 2003

Province	District	Reason
Manicaland	Buhera, Makoni, Mutare rural, Mutasa	Young boys and girls out to look for employment. Some families going to new resettlement areas
Mashonaland East	Goromonzi, Marondera rural, Marondera urban, Murehwa, Mutoko	Former farm workers joining communal areas. People going to urban to seek employment. Some coming into areas to look for food.
Mashonaland Central	Guruve, Mount Darwin, Shamva	Farm workers victims of the current farm invasions. People going out for gold panning. To urban areas for employment
Mashonaland West	Mhondoro, Norton, Zvimba	From urban to rural because of urban high cost of living. From other areas looking for food.
Midlands	Chirumhanzu, Gokwe, Gweru Urban, Gweru Rural, Mberengwa, Shurugwi, Zvishavane	Going out for gold panning to raise money for food. Some going to settle at irrigation schemes. Out to look for food in other areas.
Masvingo	Bikita	Going out to other areas to buy food
Matebeleland North	Hwange, Lupane	The elderly going to urban areas to live with relatives. Coming in to sell maize on the parallel market.
Matebeleland south	Bulilimangwe	Looking for employment in neighbouring countries so as to buy food
Cities	Harare, Bulawayo, Chitungwiza	To urban areas for employment. From urban to rural areas because of high prices in town. To other countries for employment.

While transport continues to be a problem, with 55% of the districts reporting transport difficulties, there has been an improvement over the 83% reporting transport problems in September. Fuel is coming in through private importers, however now high

costs of transport are being reported as barriers to movement in both rural and urban communities.

Food availability and access

Food from Production

To those giving the people food I would want to say now its high time you give them seed for planting than just food eat.

Mhondoro

Most farmers are stranded without maize seed , tillage and fertiliser.

Hwedza

Seed and fertilizer availability has improved somewhat. In 35% of districts seed is reported to be available commercially, although only a quarter districts (24%) reported that fertilizer was available on the local market.

The seed distribution for agricultural loan has started. People were asked to form groups of ten but those believed to be opposition supporters are being denied the chance to join the groups by the group leaders.

Guruve

Some of the improvement in supply can also be attributed to seed distribution schemes reported to have started. There is some report from monitors of bias in access to seed, including exclusion of opposition supporters.

Insufficient supply and high demand has pushed the prices up. **Maize seed prices are reported to have risen by a further 20% in less than thirty days and are now reported to be up to \$60000/10kg in the formal market.** (See Table 3 below)

Table 3: Price differences maize seed and fertiliser, April to October 2003

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

The continued price increase is shown in Figure 1 below, while the distribution of prices across districts is shown in Table 4.

Many reports indicated that people want support for seed and fertilizer at this stage farm more than for food handouts.

There is need for relief in farming inputs.

Marondera rural

Despite promising good rains, next year appears as if it is going to have a poor harvest due to shortage and or cost of inputs.

Shurugwi

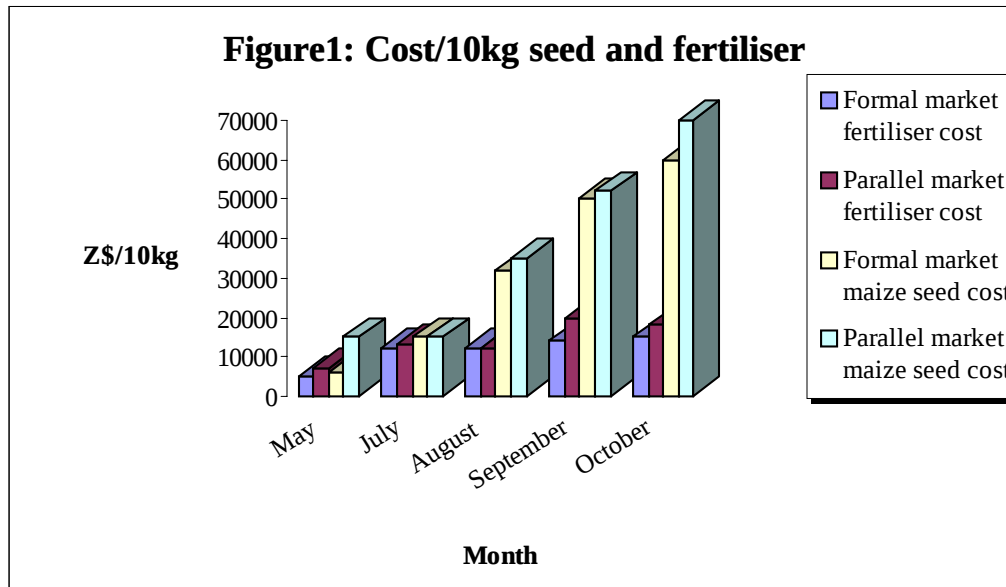


Table 4 : Maize seed and fertilizer prices for selected districts, formal and parallel markets, August and October 2003

District	Fertiliser Cost Z\$/10kg		Maize seed Cost Z\$/10 / kg	
	October 03	September03	October 03	September 03
Manicaland				
Chipinge	12000		55000 - 60000	
		12000		
Makoni	12000 - 15000		41000 - 50000	25000
Mutare rural	7400	7600 - 12000		38000 - 52000
Mashonaland East				
Chikomba	7000 - 13000	6000	40000 - 52000	20800 - 30000
Marondera rural	10000 - 18000	5000 - 18000	35000 - 45000	
Marondera urban	7600	7600 - 9400	35000	28500 - 35000
Goromonzi	7000 - 9000	6000 - 7000	40000 - 54000	38000 - 40000
Mutoko	7000 - 13200	7000	35000 - 60000	35000
Mashonaland Central				
Bindura Rural	8000 - 12000	8000	33000 - 50000	20000
Bindura urban	8600 - 10000	5600	36000 - 42000	40000
Guruve	7000 - 12000	5600 - 10000	32000 - 48000	25000 - 40000
Shamva	11800 - 13000	5600 - 7200	45000	30000 - 38000
Mashonaland West				
Mhondoro	7000 - 13000		24000 - 48000	

Norton		5000	38000 - 60000	38000
Midlands				
Gokwe	7000 - 15000	15000	25600 - 40000	20000 - 40000
Mberengwa	10000	5000 - 6000		20000 - 30000
Gweru rural	15000	6400 - 10000	34000 - 60000	
Gweru Urban		7600	35000 - 60000	35000
Shurugwi		5000 - 6400	48000	35000 - 39000
Zvishavane		6600	45000 - 60000	20000 - 30000
Masvingo				
Bikita	7400 - 9000	7000 - 9000	34000	34000
Masvingo rural	14000		36000 - 50000	
Urban				
Bulawayo	8000 - 10000	7200		35000 - 40000
Harare	6000 - 12800	5000 - 8600		35000 - 40000

Fertilizer, seed and draught power shortages are major challenges to household and national food security (See Table 5). Community demand for input support schemes have been responded to through limited seed assistance programmes. **Highest availability is reported in Midlands, lowest in Mashonaland East.**

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

Province	Average % households with access to tillage / draught power	% Districts reporting NO availability of seed	% Districts reporting NO availability of fertiliser
Manicaland	48	63	75
Mashonaland East	48	50	30
Mashonaland Central	n.a	0	83
Mashonaland West	n.a	57	71
Midlands	60	80	100
Masvingo	50	75	75
Matebeleland North	27	75	100
Matebeleland South	n.a	67	100

n.a = less than two reports per district

People who are benefiting from the GMB input loan scheme are selling the fertiliser and seed.

Chipinge

There is however some report of people selling seed and fertilizer from the GMB input loan scheme that would need to be further investigated.

GMB Deliveries

No GMB supplies to the majority, no relief food at all

Kwekwe

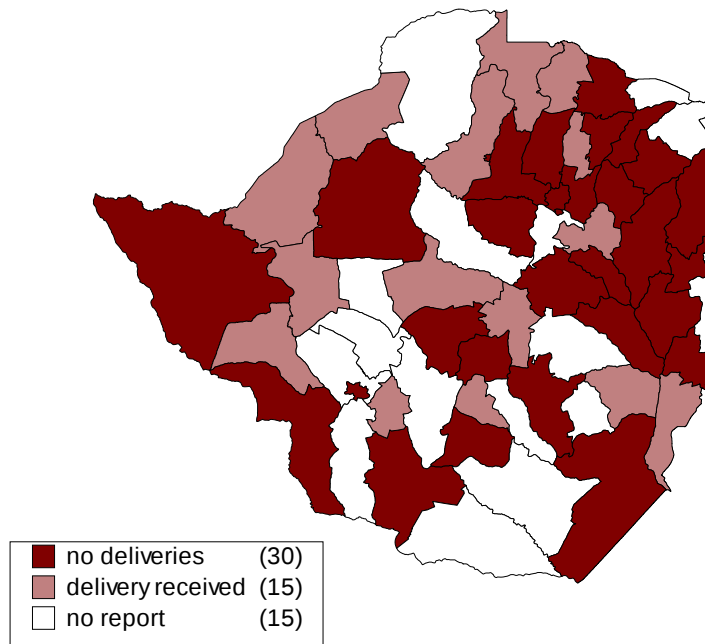
GMB deliveries are reported to have improved in a quarter of districts (27%) and reported to have remained low or fallen in the remainder.

The average number of reported deliveries to sentinel wards was 0.1 compared to 0.22 in September and 0.18 in August. Deliveries of 0.61 tonnes

on average per ward were reported, a marked decrease on 2.7 tonnes in September and 2.3 tonnes in August. Monitoring sites in thirty districts (55 %) reported no GMB deliveries at all. (See Figure 2 below)

World Vision is the only hope for people to survive the GMB is nowhere to be seen.
Gwanda

Figure 2: Frequency of GMB Deliveries October2003



No major changes were reported in GMB grain prices in October. (See Table 7).

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

Province	Price range in Z\$/10kg		
	October 03	Sept-03	Aug-03
Manicaland	210 - 2600	2600 – 3000	2600 – 3000
Mashonaland East	1700 - 3000	1100 - 3000	2600 – 3000
Mashonaland central	2200 - 3000	1900 - 2300	1900 – 2300
Mashonaland West	300 - 2600	2600 - 3000	2600
Midlands	320 - 3000	2600	2230 – 2600
Masvingo	800 - 3000	2200 - 2400	1300 – 2400
Matebeleland North	138	2160 - 3000	
Matebeleland South	1200	2200	2300 – 2600
Cities; Harare and Bulawayo	216 - 2600	2720	

No districts reported grain sales to GMB this month. Reports of grain sales on the parallel market continue. In these markets farmers get higher prices and receive immediate cash payments , now desperately needed to purchase inputs.

Market Supplies.

*Food is now available in shops but prices are too high for ordinary people to afford
Bulawayo*

Commercial food availability is slightly better than at the same period last year, using maize meal and oil as indicator foods. High prices are reported to be the major obstacle in accessing commercial market food. (See Table 8)

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

% of districts reporting food present	Maize		Oil	
	Oct 03	Oct 02	Oct 03	Oct 02
Manicaland	63	60	100	60
Mashonaland East	40	13	100	75
Mashonaland Central	n.a	0	50	n.a
Mashonaland West	100	0	100	n.a
Masvingo	n.a	n.a	50	20
Midlands	75	0	100	n.a
Matabeleland North	75	n.a	100	33
Matabeleland South	n.a	20	n.a	50

The parallel market, although very expensive, is the commonly reported source of maize meal and sugar in urban areas. The parallel market is also preferred to the formal market because people can buy maize meal and sugar in smaller quantities, thus needing less cash to meet requirements for a day's meal.

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

Province	Upper prices of Maize meal in parallel Markets Z\$/10kg			
	Oct 2003	Sept2003	Aug 2003	Oct 2002
Manicaland	15000	9000	10500	2000
Mashonaland East	15250	10000	8000	1800
Mashonaland central	17000	10000	10000	1300
Mashonaland West	14000	9000	5000	1200
Midlands	16000	10000	10000	1330
Masvingo	12000	8000	10000	1000
Matabeleland North	8000	8000	8000	1000
Matabeleland South	14000	n.a	n.a	1200
Cities; Harare and Bulawayo	15000	7500	7500	2200

n.a = not available

Relief food

Efforts should be made to ensure that relief food from organisations such as the World Vision is brought back. Otherwise people will starve.

Murehwa

We appeal for assistance of supplementary feeding scheme in all schools. The target should be from grade 1-7 and facilities should be put in place for those children who are not in school.

Masvingo rural

Calls for the resumption of food aid was reported from all provinces. Nearly half (40 %) of districts reported some relief activities in the sentinel wards. These relief programmes are limited to the elderly above 60, children under 5 years, school child feeding for Grade 1-7 and people living with AIDS. There are reports in some districts of poor people being excluded, reported to be due to smaller quantities of food distributed and screening methods.

There are complaints on how the donors are conducting their business and many poor families are being left out. People want a better screening method to be used because the poor are being left out .

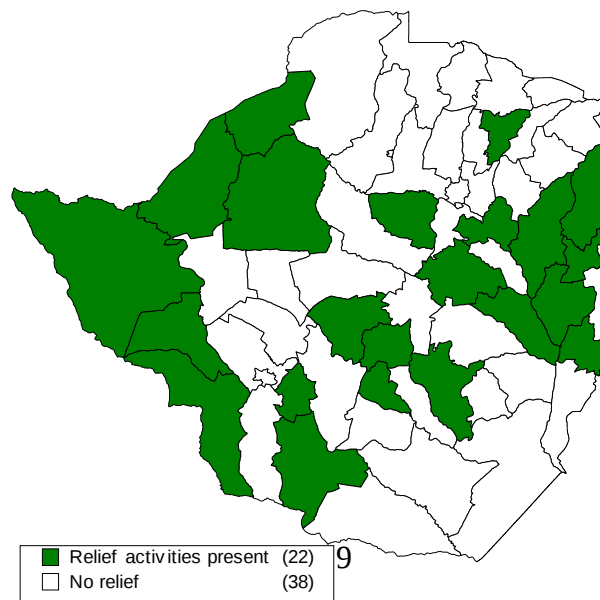
Gokwe

Reports indicate that relief organizations are operating at a lower scale, with reduced quantities of food and fewer beneficiaries. Fewer wards are being serviced than before. Communities are reporting that many people who benefited from relief in 2002 are now not covered.

Districts reporting relief activities were (See Figure 3) :

Manicaland:	Buhera, Chimanimani, Mutare rural, Mutasa, Nyanga, Makoni
Mashonaland East:	Marondera urban, Chikomba
Mashonaland Central:	Shamva
Mash West:	Kariba, Mhondoro
Midlands:	Gokwe, Gweru rural, Zvishavane, Shurugwi
Masvingo:	Masvingo rural
Matebeleland north:	Binga, Hwange ,Tsholotsho
Matebeleland south:	Gwanda, Bulilimamangwe, Umzingwane

Figure 3: Districts reporting relief activities



There continue to be reports of barriers in access to relief, including failure to deliver relief, political interference, people being excluded in distribution methods. **There was significantly higher reporting than in previous rounds of people not being happy with households perceived to be eligible being left out of more limited relief efforts.** (See Table 10).

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

District	Issues reported
Chikomba, Marondera urban	No supplies coming, no deliveries due to fuel shortages
Shamva	Politicians involvement in the distribution
Mhondoro	Unfair distribution by those in charge
Gokwe	Only those above 60yrs benefiting, traditional leaders causing problems as they favour their relatives
Gweru rural	Some people being excluded on political grounds their kraal heads refusing to register them
Shurugwi	No food to opposition supporters
Masvingo rural	Agencies not taking any new cases many are being left out
Bulilimamangwe	Food given to those believed to be the poorest but everyone is poor these days.

Reports of political interference and unfair distribution of relief were made in five districts.

Drought relief under public works is supposed to be \$5000 per household, but some families get up to four times as much.
Umzingwane

The cash for work programme was reported to be present in 22% of the districts, a much lower figure than the 60% reported in September.

Districts reported some several problems linked to the cash for work including :

- o The programme being organized by ruling party supporters and recruiting their party members only.
- o Some individuals earning much more than others for the same work done
- o The programme stopping as funds run out or failing to start, although funds were provided
- o The average amount earned per month of Z\$5000 not adequate to buy a 50kg bag of GMB maize (selling at \$11000 - \$13000 in some areas).

The AIDS fund is not benefiting the targeted group what ever is given for them ends up in the councillor's and other officials' pockets at times they give to their relatives.

Ruwa

Community responses

More frequent report is being made from both rural and urban monitoring sites of residents disposing of assets to raise money for food. Nearly half (45%) of districts reported asset sales which include: livestock, furniture, clothes , TVs, radios and cellphones. **The sale of livestock reported in eight districts to buy food or inputs represents significant levels of asset loss for rural households.**

Summary

Three quarters of the districts continue to report a deteriorating food supply situation, especially for the elderly, orphans, the unemployed, people living with AIDS and displaced farm workers.

In and out migration has increased, with over half of the districts affected as people move primarily to hunt for maize and jobs, to avoid the escalating urban cost of living and for rural youth, to do gold panning as the only way to raise money to buy food.

Seed availability has improved somewhat with a third of districts reporting seed to be available commercially, but only a quarter districts reporting that fertilizer was available. Highest availability is reported in Midlands, lowest in Mashonaland East.

Some of the improvement in supply can be attributed to new seed distribution schemes. This has improved access to seed, although with some report of exclusion of opposition supporters and of people selling seed obtained from this scheme.

Insufficient supply and high demand has pushed the prices up. Maize seed prices are reported to have risen by a further 20% in less than thirty days and are now reported to be up to \$60000/10kg in the formal market.

Many reports indicated that people want support for seed and fertilizer at this stage far more than for food handouts.

GMB deliveries are reported to have improved in a quarter of districts and reported to have remained low or fallen in the remainder. There were also no major changes reported in GMB grain prices in October. The average number of reported deliveries to sentinel wards was 0.1 compared to 0.22 in September and 0.18 in August. Deliveries of 0.61 tonnes on average per ward were reported, a marked decrease on 2.7 tonnes in September and 2.3 tonnes in August. Monitoring sites in half of the districts reported no GMB deliveries at all.

While grain sales to GMB are reported to have stopped this month, there are some continuing sales reported to the parallel market, particularly as farmers try to secure cash for inputs.

Commercial food availability is slightly better than at the same period last year, using maize meal and oil as indicator foods. High prices are reported to be the major obstacle in accessing commercial market food. The parallel market is also preferred to the formal market because people can buy maize meal and sugar in smaller quantities, thus needing less cash to meet requirements for a day's meal.

Calls for the resumption of food aid was reported from all provinces. Nearly half (40%) of districts reported some relief activities in the sentinel wards. These relief programmes are limited to the elderly above 60, children under 5 years, school child feeding for Grade 1-7 and people living with AIDS.

Reports indicate that relief organizations are operating at a lower scale, with reduced quantities of food and fewer beneficiaries. Fewer wards are being serviced than before. Communities are reporting that many people who benefited from relief in 2002 are now not covered. There are reports in some districts of poor people being excluded due to smaller quantities of food distributed and screening methods used. There was some dissatisfaction with people perceived to be eligible being left out of more limited relief efforts.

The cash for work programme was reported to be present in 22% of the districts, a significant fall on than the 60% reported in September. Cash for work programmes are reported to be facing problems of insecure financial flows, variable payments to people for the same work and inadequate payments to purchase a 50kg bag of maize meal for the household.

More frequent report is being made from both rural and urban monitoring sites of residents disposing of assets to raise money for food. The sale of livestock reported in eight districts to buy food or inputs represents significant levels of asset loss for rural households.