

Highlights



Methodology

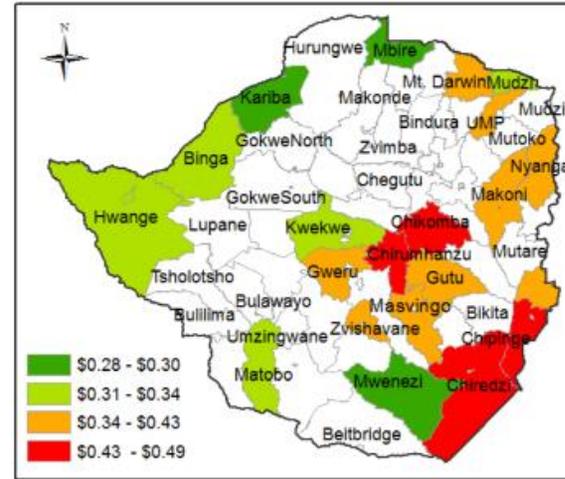
A total of 92 markets were monitored through face-to-face and telephone interviews from 27 districts (Figure 1). A minimum of 4 markets were interviewed per district and the district values represent the averages of those markets. The districts are from cereal surplus and deficit regions

Maize Grain Price and Availability

Maize grain was reported to be available in 67% of the monitored markets. In the previous report, maize grain was reported to be available in 77% of the markets. This decline falls within the expected trend in a lean season after a year of huge deficit following the El Niño influence. Average maize grain prices (\$0.41/kg), increased by 8% in the current reporting week compared to the first three weeks of the month which had an average price of \$0.38/kg.

Most of the maize grain available on the market was being traded by informal traders sourced their products from Harare and northern districts and mostly sold their commodities in open market spaces. Some suppliers also reported sourcing the commodity from nearby countries mainly Zambia and South Africa whose prices have also gone up recently. Informal cross border trading also accounts for a significant supply of the commodity.

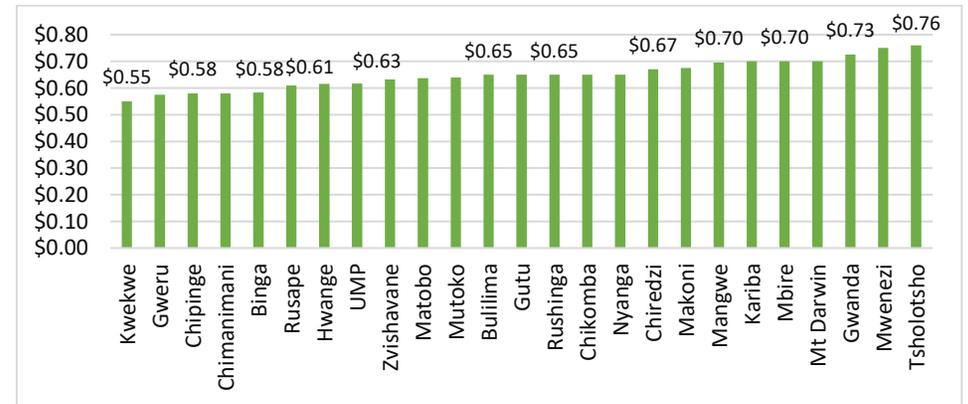
Figure 2: Average Maize Grain Prices / kg



The current average maize grain prices of \$0.41/kg are equivalent to those of 2016 at an average price of \$0.42/kg. Higher maize grain prices were reported in Chirumhanzu (\$0.48/kg), Chikomba (\$0.49/kg) and Chipinge (\$0.48/kg) (figure 1).

Maize meal was reported to be available in 71% of the markets. The average price for unrefined maize meal was reported at \$0.65/kg and this price has been stable since the start of 2017. Highest maize meal prices were recorded in Tsholotsho with an average price of \$0.76/kg (figure 2).

Figure 1: Average Maize Meal Prices/ Kg



Maize meal was reported to be supplied mainly by wholesalers and also from neighbouring countries mostly from South Africa in the southern districts.

The Grain Marketing Board (GMB) remain a reliable source of both grain and mealie meal across the country. The GMB continues to sell maize at subsidised price of \$15/50kg bag both at GMB depots and at existing functional sales points.

Small Grains Availability and Prices

The most common small grains available on the markets were sorghum and pearl millet. Compared to previous week, more markets (25%) of the markets were selling the commodities compared to 14% the previous week. Sorghum was selling at an average price of \$0.43/kg and pearl millet was selling an average price of \$0.49/kg.

Small grains are mainly consumed as a substitute to maize grain and they are mostly common in maize grain deficit areas of Masvingo and Matabeleland. Also small grains are bought for beer brewing and other social events purposes. Most of the small grains traded were sourced from farmers both within and outside the district.

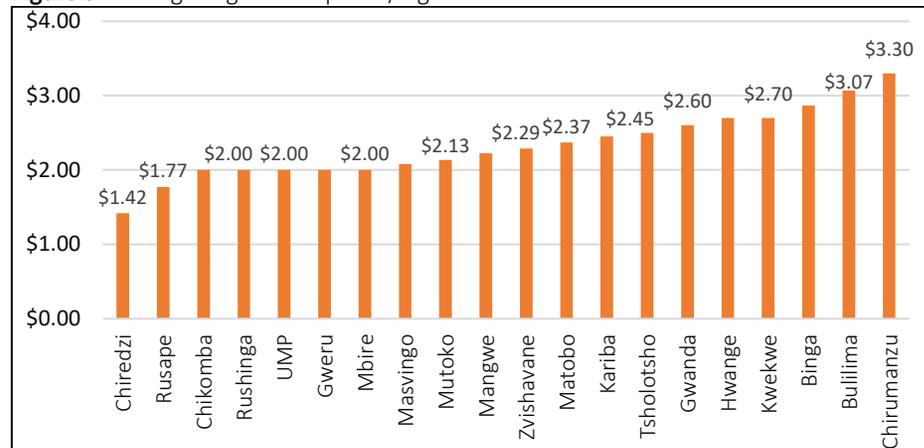
Other small grains like wheat and finger millet were reported to be available in a few markets and where selling at an average price of about \$1 per kg.

Basic Commodities Prices and Availability

Cooking oil was readily available in all markets monitored and has remained stable over the last 6 months with minimal price differentials. The average price for the reporting period was \$1.85/L. Pulses were readily available in all markets monitored with cowpeas selling at an average price of \$1.07/kg, a slight decrease from the 6month average of \$1.13/kg. Sugar beans was being sold at price of \$2.32/kg across all the markets covered and was reported available by 66% of the traders (**figure 3**).

It is important to note that green mealies and other produce such as fresh sugar beans were available in most markets as well as early season fresh produce is starting to enter the market. Supply is however still low.

Figure 3: Average sugar bean prices/ Kg



Cash Availability

Cash availability was reported to be a challenge by most traders and some mobile money agents were not able to offer cash out services. Those agents that were offering cash out services were imposing a daily limit and some as low as \$15 per day. The situation has remained static, neither deteriorating nor improving.

Recommendations

- To continue monitoring availability and prices of cereals in all the district where WFP is providing cash assistance.
- To keep track of the source market availability of key commodities.
- To monitor cash availability in areas where WFP is providing assistance through mobile money cash transfers