COMMUNITY MONITORING PROGRAMME
integrating the
FOSENET Food Security monitoring

Community Assessment of Food Security and the Social Situation in Zimbabwe

April 2005

For the executive summary please go to page 2
This report covers a broader monitoring of food security and social welfare at community level by the Community Monitoring Programme. In 2005 the CMP is implementing quarterly monitoring of food security complemented by quarterly monitoring of specific areas of social welfare. Feedback and comment on this report and proposals for issues to be monitored are welcomed and should be sent to fsmt2@mweb.co.zw

Background

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

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

This twentieth round of civil society and community based monitoring nationally covers the month of **April 2005**. It is drawn from **153 monitoring reports** from **45 districts** from all provinces of Zimbabwe, with an average of **3.2 reports per district.**.

The monitoring information is collected from sentinel wards within districts. Data presented is cross validated through two or more site reports on any indicator. Training, review by monitors and peer review is continuously implemented to improve both coverage and data quality. **Queries and feedback on these reports is welcomed and should be directed to the Community Monitoring Programme at fsmt2@mweb.co.zw**

Summary

Sentinel sites in almost all provinces reported a deteriorating food supply situation, with widespread report of crop failure due to poor rains in the 2004/2005 season. Reporting of deteriorating supplies from 82% districts compares with 29% of districts reporting this in April 2004. Sites report that shortfalls in food supplies arise primarily due to unavailability in 2005 of the early harvest yields that usually contribute to improved food availability from March onwards.

While all provinces are reported to be affected the greatest share of sites reporting deteriorating food supplies are from Matabeleland north, Masvingo and Midlands.

87% of households were reported to have food stocks of a month or less, higher than levels reported in April 2004 (68%) but approximately the same as reported in March 2004 (84%).

A large proportion of households are reported to be sourcing food from commercial sources both in rural and urban areas.

GMB deliveries were reported in sites in 49% of the districts in April 2005, over double that reported in September 2004 (23%) and in April 2004 (21%). Price increases of GMB grains are reported to pose a cost barrier for the poorest households.

Commercial supplies of maize meal, bread and sugar were reported from the wards to be significantly lower than in April 2004.

Relief activities were reported in twelve districts (27% of districts), including the government cash for work programme and some NGO feeding of school children, pregnant women and people living with AIDS. In April 2004 29% districts reported the Government cash for work programme and 62% NGO and UN relief activities.

Population movements were reported in a quarter of districts, and were reported to be due to loss of employment, high accommodation rentals (urban- rural movement) or to secure employment or for trade (rural –urban and to neighbouring countries).

While availability of indicator drugs (antibiotics, analgesics) in local clinics is reported to have fallen from 79% sites in September 2004 to 67% of sites in April 2005, clinic fee levels are reported to have remained relatively constant since March 2004.

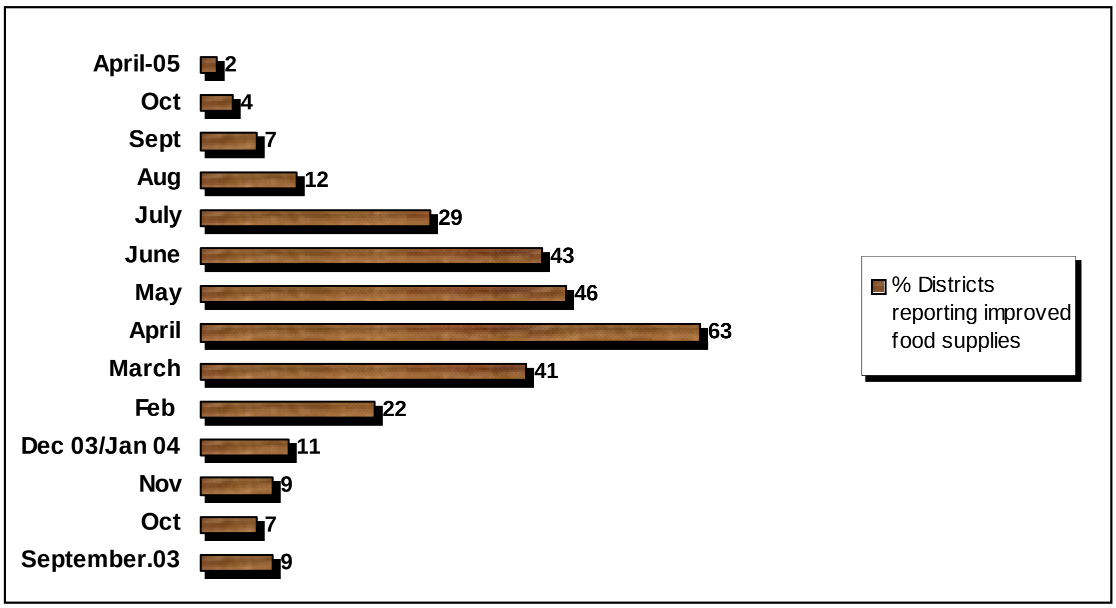
Prices of indicator goods in a basket of food, hygiene products, health and medical care services and items and essential services were found to differ little between urban and rural areas, except for accommodation rentals. Reported prices for these health basket goods rose by between 44% and 79%, with bath soap and rentals showing highest increases. Condom prices are reported to have fallen.

The food security situation

Sentinel sites in almost all provinces reported a deteriorating food supply situation, with widespread report of crop failure due to poor rains in the 2004/2005 season.

Over three quarters of districts (82%) reported a deteriorating food supply situation in April. Figure 1 below shows that in previous years April has been reported as the period with the highest share of districts reporting improved food supplies, as harvest yields boost household supplies. **The report of deteriorating supplies from 82% districts is atypical for this time of year and compares with 29% of districts reporting this in April 2004.** This is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Share of districts reporting *improving* food supplies September 2003 to April 2005



Sites report that shortfalls in supplies primarily arise due to unavailability in 2005 of the early harvest yields that usually contribute to improved food availability from March onwards. Urban sites report that maize meal was widely available in commercial markets in January to March 2005, but that supplies began to fall in April 2005 and that stocks out were reportedly more frequent.

Table 2 and Figure 2 compare the share of sites reporting improved and worsening food supply situations January 04 to April 05. **While reports indicate that all provinces are affected by falling supplies, the greatest share of sites reporting deteriorating food supplies are from Matabeleland north, Masvingo and Midlands.**

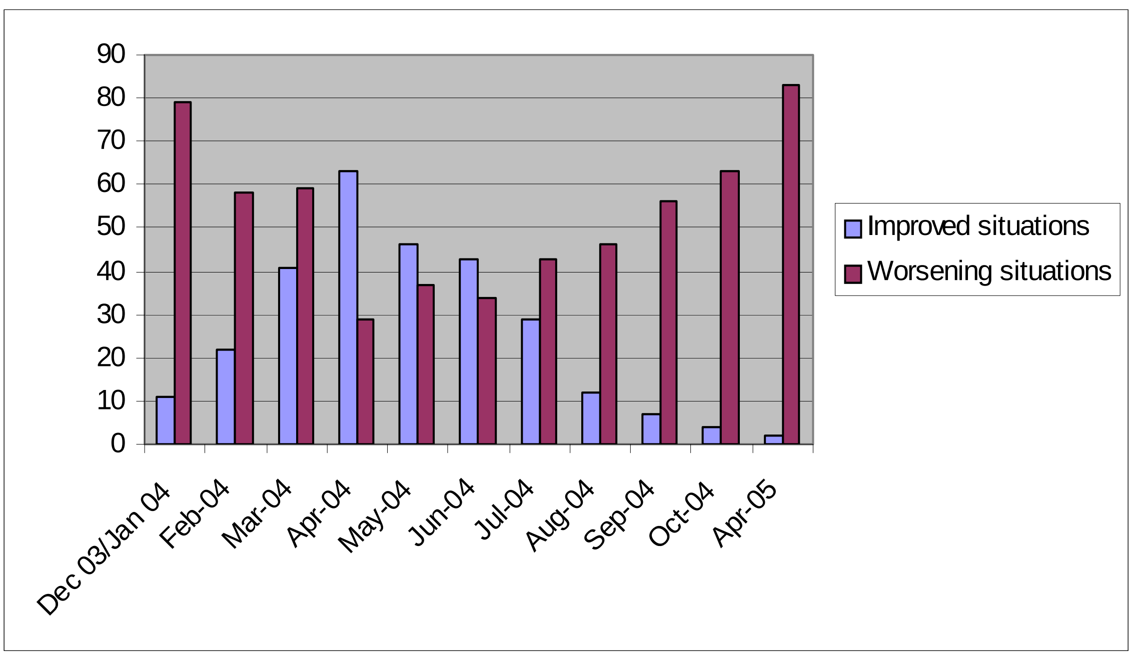
Table1: Share of sites reporting improved and worsening food supplies January 04 to April 05

Month	% districts reporting improved food supplies	% districts reporting worsening food supplies
September 2003	9	74
December 03/January 2004	11	79
February 2004	22	58
March 2004	41	59
April 2004	63	29
May 20	46	37
June 2004	43	34
July 2004	29	43
August 2004	12	46
September 2004	7	56
October 2004	4	63
April 2005	2	83

Table 2: Districts with sites with worsening food situations, April 2005

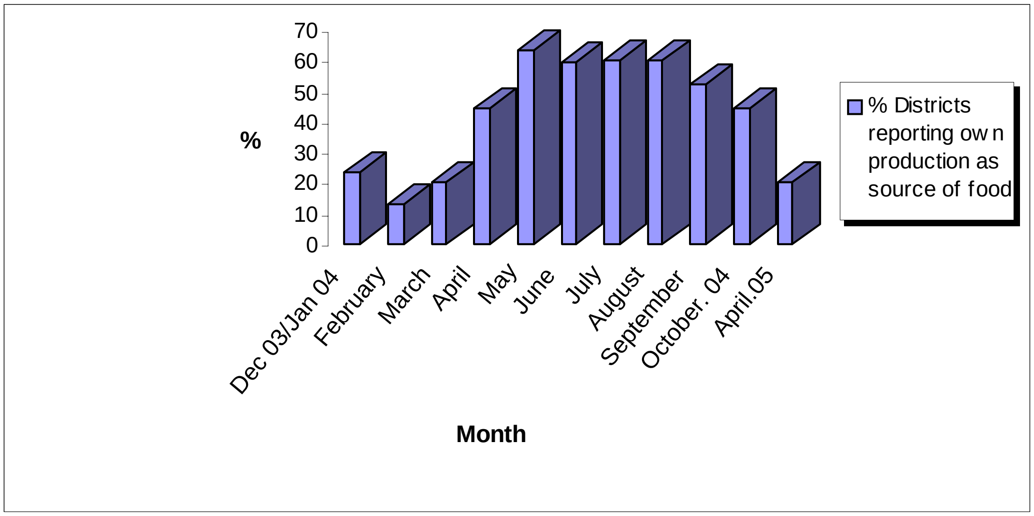
Province	District
Manicaland	Buhera ,Chipinge, Makoni , Nyanga
Mashonaland East	Chikomba, Hwedza, UMP
Mashonaland Central	Bindura, Mazowe, Mt Darwin, Rushinga
Mashonaland West	Hurungwe, Kadoma, Kariba, Zvimba
Midlands	Chirumhanzu, Gokwe, Mberengwa,Gweru rural
Masvingo	Chiredzi, Chivi, Masvingo rural, Chiredzi, Zaka
Matebeleland North	Binga, Bubi, Hwange, Nkayi, Tsholotsho
Matebeleland South	Beitbridge, Matobo, Bulilima, Mangwe, Umzingwane
Cities	Harare, Bulawayo

Figure 2: Share of sites reporting improved and worsening food supply situations January 2004 to April 2005



Reports from sentinel sites indicate that the share of households sourcing food from own harvest is low, with 20% of districts reported to be using this as a food source in April 2005. This has, fallen since September 2004, when 52% of districts reported this as a food source, and compares unfavourably to the 44% reported in April 2004 (See Figure 3).

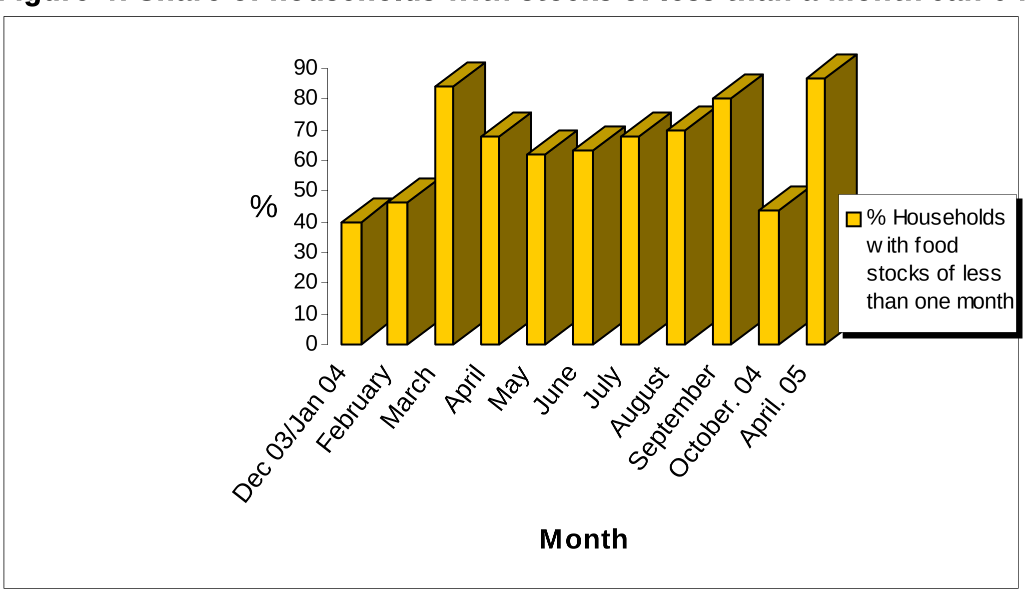
Figure 3: Share of districts reporting own production as source of food January 04 – April 2005



Poor availability from own production reflects problems with production yields. Three quarters (76%) of districts reported that households in the wards planted maize and nearly two thirds (62%) of these districts reported that the crop yield is poor to none. In April 2005 there were no reports of gains in supplies from crop harvests.

Site reports note that **87% of households were reported to have food stocks of a month or less. This is significantly higher than the 68% of households with stocks of one month or less reported in April 2004 but approximately the same as the 84% reporting this in March 2004** (See Figure 4).

Figure 4: Share of households with stocks of less than a month Jan 04 – April 05

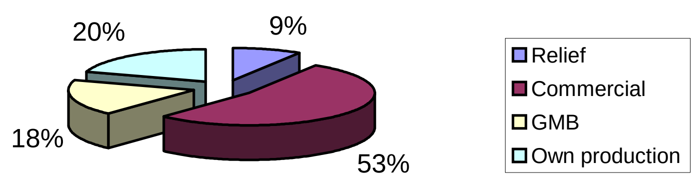


An average of 55% of households were reported in April 05 to have no food stocks and a further 32% have stocks to last a month or less.

A large proportion of households are reported to be sourcing food from commercial sources both in rural and urban areas.

More than half 53% of sites reported households depending on commercial sources for food, compared to a fifth (20%) of households sourcing food from own production, and 18% reporting the Grain Marketing Board (GMB) as a food source. Only four districts (9%) noted food from relief programmes. (see Figure 5 below).

Figure 5: Main source of food in April 2005



Production Inputs

Production inputs are not usually in high demand at this time of year. Supplies of fertilizer and maize seed were available in about two fifths of districts.

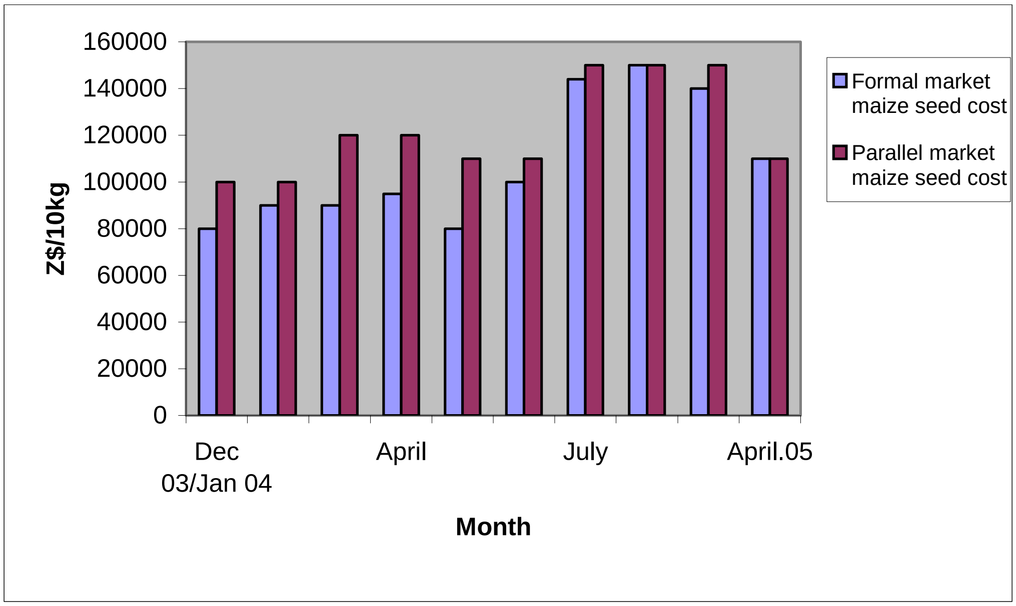
In April 2005 38% of districts reported fertilizer available, a lower level compared to 48% in April 2004. Half of districts (49%) reported maize seed available, higher than the 37% of districts reporting this in April 2004. The lower demand of these inputs during this period of the year could be reason why some outlets are not stocking these inputs and thus the lower level of availability.

Table 3: Reported ranges of prices of maize seed and fertilizer, April 03, April 04 and April 05

	Fertiliser Cost Z$/10kg		Maize seed Cost Z$/10/kg	
Month	**Formal marke**	**Parallel Market**	**Formal market**	**Parallel Market**
Price range April 03	300- 3200	600- 3000	400- 4800	720- 10000
Price range April 04	12000- 24000	16000 - 30000	40000 - 95000	52000 - 120000
Price range April 05	24000 - 40000	48000 - 60000	50000 – 110 000	100000 -110000

Reported upper prices of maize seed and fertilizer have increased by 16% and 66% in formal markets. **Reported maize seed prices in formal markets have increased little since April 2004 and fallen from peak prices in July-September 2004.**

Figure 6: Reported cost of maize seed January 04 –April 05



Water (rain and irrigation) is reported to have been a primary constraint in the past harvest. Most sites (89%) reported that the rains received in their areas during the farming season were below normal. Only 11% of districts reported households having access to irrigation, and this covering few households, while 80% of sites noted that none of the households in their areas accessed irrigation.

Access to credit has also been a reported constraint for some farmers. Sites in eighteen districts (40%) reported that households had access to credit, but that this was limited to only a few households, while sites in 24% of districts reported that none of the households in their wards were accessing credit. As input costs rise, access to credit becomes a more important concern to secure inputs for the season. In the September / October 2004 monitoring report, when planting was taking place monitors reported that input prices for maize seed and fertilizers were too high for rural farmers with limited options for sourcing cash to buy these inputs. At that stage new government maize seed prices had not yet been reflected in price or supply. While fertiliser prices remained stable since June 2004 they too were reported to be high for many farmers.

Draught power was also reported to be a constraint in the past farming season, with 40% of districts reporting that only a few households could access draught power.

GMB food deliveries

Twenty two districts reported some GMB maize deliveries in April. Community reports note that GMB maize deliveries were frequent in March but declined in April.

GMB deliveries were reported in sites in 49% of the districts in April 2005. This is an increase compared to the 23% reporting this in September 2004 and significantly higher than the 21% reporting this in April 2004.

The average frequency of deliveries per ward was 0.3 and average delivery volume 2.3 tonnes. This compared with 0.2 deliveries per ward and 1.5 tonnes per delivery reported in April 2004.

Communities report that households have had difficulty affording GMB maize, with prices of Z$10 000 per 10kg of grain being reported.

Table 4: Reported costs of GMB maize, Z$/10kg April 2005

Province	Price range in Z$/10kg			
	April 05	September 04	April 04	April 03
Manicaland	7000 – 10000	6400 – 7200	1220 -5400	116-250
Mashonaland East	7000 – 10000	7000 – 8400	4400 - 7000	110-174
Mashonaland central	6000 – 10000	8000	1700 - 6400	116-150
Mashonaland West	7000	n.a	3200 - 4400	112-260
Midlands	6600	7000	1600 - 2600	112-160
Masvingo	6600	6000 – 6800	2600 - 4000	116-250
Matebeleland North	6000	6000 – 7000	1440 - 5400	100-116
Matebeleland South	6000 – 6600		1300 - 2000	116-120
Cities; Harare and Bulawayo	n.a	7000	2200 - 2400	250-300

n.a = not available

Prices of GMB maize were reported to be higher in Manicaland, Mashonaland east and central. Prices of GMB grain are reported to have risen by an average of 90% since april 2004.

Commercial food

Commercial maize meal prices have increased since April 2004 across all provinces.

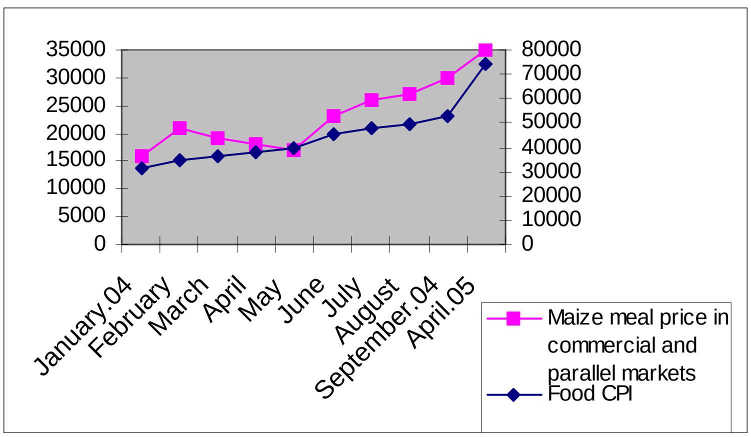
The reported price of maize meal in formal and informal markets averaged Z$24000 per 10kg, over double the price of GMB maize grain.

Table 5 : Upper prices of maize meal in parallel markets March 04 and March 05

Province	Upper prices of Maize meal in commercial and parallel markets Z$/10kg		
	April 2005	April 2004	April 2003
Manicaland	26 000	18 000	2 500
Mashonaland East	24 000	20 000	4 000
Mashonaland central	24 000	20 000	4 000
Mashonaland West	20 000	14 800	3 000
Midlands	25 000	20 000	8 000
Masvingo	26 000	20 000	6 000
Matebeleland North	17 500	15 000	4 000
Matebeleland South	25 000	20 000	n.a
Cities; Harare and Bulawayo	35 000	15 000	5 000

n.a = not available

Figure 7: Maize meal prices January 04 – April 04



High prices remain a problem for the urban poor as they are primarily dependent on commercial sources for food . Monitors in half (49%) of sites reported that between a quarter and a half of households in their sites cannot afford these commercial maize meal prices.

Commercial supplies of maize meal were reported from the wards to be significantly less available than in April 2004. This may reflect the overall production shortfalls noted earlier. Oil availability was also lower, but not to such a significant extent. **Reported sugar and bread availability in markets was also relatively low at about two thirds of districts.** Reported market availability of maize, bread and sugar was lowest in Mashonaland Central and Matebeleland North provinces (see Table 4a and b).

Table 4a : Reported market availability of foods, April 04 and April 05

% of districts reporting food pres	Maize meal		Oil	
	April 05	April 04	April 05	April04
Manicaland	50	80	67	60
Mashonaland East	60	71	80	86
Mashonaland Central	50	100	75	50
Mashonaland West	50	100	50	100
Masvingo	20	50	60	100
Midlands	50	50	83	100
Matabeleland North	40	50	80	100
Matabeleland South	43	100	86	100

Table 4b : Reported market availability of foods, bread and sugar April 05

% of districts reporting food present	Bread	Sugar
	April 05	April 05
Manicaland	67	67
Mashonaland East	60	60
Mashonaland Central	50	50
Mashonaland West	75	75
Masvingo	83	100
Midlands	60	60
Matabeleland North	40	60
Matabeleland South	71	86

Humanitarian Relief

Relief activities were reported in twelve districts (27% of districts), including the government cash for work programme and some NGO feeding of school children, pregnant women and people living with AIDS.

In April 2004 29% districts reported the Government cash for work programme and 62% NGO and UN relief activities. In April 2005 no general feeding programmes were reported. There are thus significantly fewer districts in 2005 on relief than in 2004, and relief is primarily focused on vulnerable groups.

The districts reporting relief were Buhera, Chipinge, Makoni, Mutare, Mazoe , Mt Darwin, Gweru rural, Chiredzi, Zaka, Binga, Bubi, Matobo.

Social Conditions

Population movements were reported in eleven districts (24% of districts) similar to the 27% of districts reported in April 2004. **People are reported to be moving due to loss of employment in urban areas (urban- rural movement) and from rural to urban areas as youths move to towns with the hope of securing employment. Within urban areas movements from low to high density areas are motivated by increased rentals.**

People are also moving to neighbouring countries to look for employment and to buy goods for resale.

Reported availability of indicator drugs (antibiotics, analgesics) in local clinics is reported to be at 67% of clinics, lower than the 79% of sites reporting drugs available in September 2004. This level of drug availability has been stable since March 2004.

Table 5: Wards with clinics with nurse and antibiotics by province

Province	**Clinic fee range**		
		Clinic with nurse	Clinic with antibiotics
Manicaland	2000 – 13000	100	50
Mashonaland East	1500 – 15000	100	60
Mashonaland Central	3000 – 5000	75	50
Mashonaland West	2000 – 4500	75	75
Midlands	5000	83	67
Masvingo	1200 – 5000	80	60
Matebeleland North	1000 – 5000	80	80
Matebeleland South	1200 – 5000	86	57
Bulawayo, Harare	14000 -15000	100	100
Total	1000 - 15000	87	67

Clinic consultation fee levels are reported to vary widely, with a national range of Z$1 000 to Z$15 000 per visit. **Reported clinic fee levels have remained relatively constant since March 2004.** Higher fees are paid in urban areas than in rural areas. Urban areas also have higher levels of qualified nurses at local clinics than in rural areas.

In September 2004 the CMP carried out a pilot survey of prices of a basket of goods necessary for health at household level. This covered food, hygiene products, health and medical care services and items and essential services. The total cost of the health basket for a family of 4.2 persons in September 2004 was Z$1 023 386.

In April 2005 prices of selected goods from this health basket were monitored. These were goods that were cost drivers in the September survey (ie were seen to be driving household health costs up) or goods that household reported that they stopped consuming due to cost.

Table 7 shows the reported price differences between September 2004 and April 2005. **Reported prices did not differ widely between rural and urban areas, except for rented accommodation** for which average reported rural prices were **Z$67000** while the average urban prices were **Z$220 000**. It was reported that accommodation remains scarce in urban areas and that increases in rentals have forced people to leave low density areas to relocate to high density areas.

Table 6: Reported prices of indicator Health basket goods, September 2004 and April 2005

Item	**Average price Z$** APRIL 05	**Average price Z$** SEPTEMBER 04	**Price difference %**
150g bath soap	7000	4000	75%
500ml peanut butter	13000	9000	44%
500g dried beans	8000	5000	60%
Packet of 3 condoms	100	178	-44%
10 paracetemol tablets	12000	n.a	
Bus fare to nearest centre	15000	n.a	
Rental 1 room per month	120000	67000	79%

n.a =not available

Reported prices of indicator health basket goods have risen by between 44% and 79% since September 2004, with bath soap and rentals showing highest increases. Condom prices are reported to have fallen.

Reported school fee levels also showed wide variances across provinces , with fees reportedly ranging from Z$300 to $60 000 and levies $5 000 to $150 000. Twenty two districts (49%) reported children not attending school due to fee barriers, although the numbers were reported to be relatively low.

Table 7: School fee level per term by province April 2005

Province	Fees range	Levies range
Manicaland	2000 – 60000	10000 – 45000
Mashonaland East	3000 – 30000	10000 – 25000
Mashonaland Central	4000 – 50000	7000 – 45000
Mashonaland West	3000 – 95000	45000 – 60000
Midlands	5000 - 55000	5000 – 70000
Masvingo	5000 – 40000	5000 – 45000
Matebeleland North	2000 – 20000	5000 – 20000
Matebeleland South	4000 – 50000	5000 – 45000
Bulawayo, Harare	300 - 30000	25000 -150000
Total	300 - 60000	5000 - 150000

Community and social responses

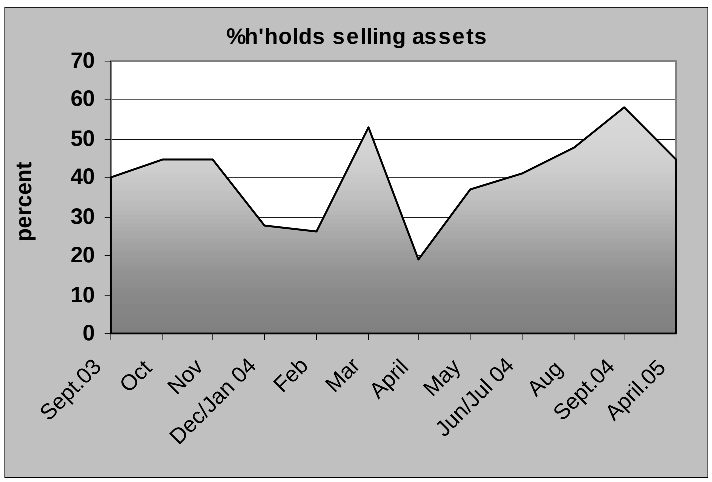
Strategies used by communities in April 05 included.

- **Strategies to boost incomes:** Buying and selling (Mutare, Bulawayo, Harare,) Market gardening(Mutare,Murehwa,Mazowe,) Working in the fields (Buhera, Hwedza, Gweru)

- **Strategies to use savings:**Livestock sales(Gwanda, Buhera, Chiredzi, Hwedza, Masvingo rural, Hwange, Kariba)
- **Strategies to cut spending and consumption:** Reduce number of meals(Nyanga, Zvishavane)

Asset sales were reported from eighteen districts (45%), lower than levels in September 2004 (58%) and higher than reported levels in April 2004 of 19%. Households were reported to be selling assets to meet the cost of living and of food. A fifth (22%) of districts in rural areas reported sales of livestock, whilst urban areas are reported to be selling clothing, household furniture and electrical appliances. (See Figure 8 below).

Figure 8: Household Asset Sales September 2003 To April 2005



Source: CMP reports September 03 to April 05