Introduction and Methodology

This report summarizes findings collected from 94 markets in 26 districts through face-to-face and telephone interviews. 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 (figure 2).

Maize Grain Price and Availability

77% of the interviewed traders reported availability of maize grain. Maize grain prices remained unchanged from the last reporting week with an average price of $0.38/kg across all markets monitored (figure 1).

The current average maize grain prices of $0.38/kg are about 11% higher than those of the same time 2016 and equivalent to the 2 year and 5 year averages. Higher maize grain prices were reported in Nyanga (figure 2).

The average price for unrefined maize meal price was reported at $0.61/kg a decrease from $0.64/kg reported in the previous weeks. Highest maize meal prices were recorded in Tsholotsho, Gwanda, Mangwe and Mudzi districts at an average price of over $0.70/kg.

Most of the maize grain available on the market was being traded by informal traders who sell their products in open spaces.

These informal traders reported sourcing the maize grain from Zambia, Gokwe North and from Grain Marketing Board (GMB) within the district where the GMB sales points where functional. Maize meal was mainly sold by formal general dealers and local grain millers. Maize meal was reported to be delivered by wholesalers.
The most common small grains available on the markets were sorghum and pearl millet. However only 43% of the interviewed traders reported availability of the two commodities. Sorghum was selling at an average price of $0.41/kg and pearl millet at $0.54/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. Most of the small grains traded were from farmers from 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/kg.

Cooking oil was readily available in all markets monitored at an average price of $1.83/L. Pulses were readily available in all markets monitored with cowpeas selling at an average price of $2.57/kg and sugar beans at $1.02/kg across all the markets covered (figure 3).

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

Cash availability was reported to be a challenge by most traders and some mobile money agents were not able to offer cashing out services. Those agents that were offering cash out services were imposing a limit and some as low as $15 per day.

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.