Zimbabwe Monthly Food Security Monitoring Report

August 2016

WFP
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vam
food security analysis

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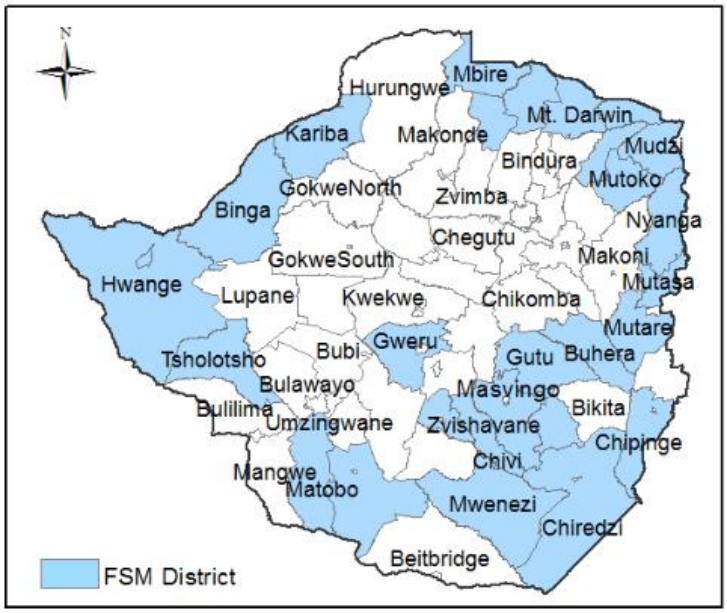
1. Highlights

- Food access indicators i.e. food consumption, coping strategies, household hunger scale and dietary diversity have improved slightly compared to July 2016 and this could be as a result of the scaling up of the lean season assistance by the various players.
- Cereal prices were reported to be stable and in some districts going down slightly.
- Midlands's province reported poor household food access indicators i.e. poor consumption and high coping strategies.
- Matabeleland south continuous to record the highest prices of $0.57/kg which is about 50% higher than the national maize grain average of $0.38/kg.
- The cash transfer value of $7 need to be closely monitored in all cash districts to ensure it remains adequate to purchase the intended basket.

Methodology

A total of 387 households were interviewed from 27 districts up from 24 districts which were covered in July 2016 (figure 5). The assessment also covered 96 traders from 55 markets and 44 community focus group discussions.

Figure 1: FSM July 2016 Districts



In each district the team targeted the same wards and villages that were randomly selected in round 1 of the food security monitoring. One ward representing the worse off wards and 1 ward representing the better off wards. Three tools were administered as follows:

1. Household Interviews – from the 2 wards a total of 14 households were interviewed i.e. 10 from the worse off ward and 4 from the better off ward. In districts were WFP is providing assistance, the sample assured that both beneficiary and non-beneficiary households are targeted.

2. Focus Group Discussions – 2 FDGs were conducted per district from the 2 selected wards i.e. 1 ward from worse off areas and 1 from better off areas.

3. Traders/ markets interview – the team conducted markets interviews for the same traders that are interviewed for the weekly price monitoring using the markets monthly monitoring tool.

Of the 387 households interviewed 43% were female headed households whilst 57% were male headed households and only 17% were WFP beneficiary households.

2. Food and Nutrition Security Situation

In all the 24 district being monitored the food security situation was reported to be deteriorating compared to July 2016.

2.1 Household Consumption Pattern and Dietary Diversity

The **Household Food Consumption Score** (FCS) is a food consumption indicator that is used as a proxy for household food security. Food consumption indicators are designed to reflect the quantity and quality of people's diet. The FCS is a measure of dietary diversity, food frequency and the relative nutritional importance of the food consumed. A high food consumption score indicates high probability of a household achieving nutrient adequacy.

The findings of the food security monitoring show that most households had reduced the number of meals consumed by children under 5 years old with 35% of WFP beneficiaries reporting that the children were consuming at least 3 meals compared to 24% of the non-beneficiary households. 73% of beneficiary households reported that this was their usual consumption compared to 57% of non-beneficiary households.

More household reported borderline food consumption (62%) compared to 11% that reported a poor food consumption which is slightly lower compared to July 2016 where 16% reported a poor food consumption. The difference between male and female headed households that reported a poor food consumption reduced in August compared to July 2016 (**Figure 3**).

Figure 2: Food Consumption Score

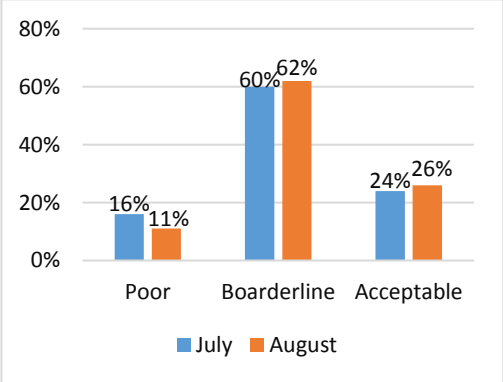
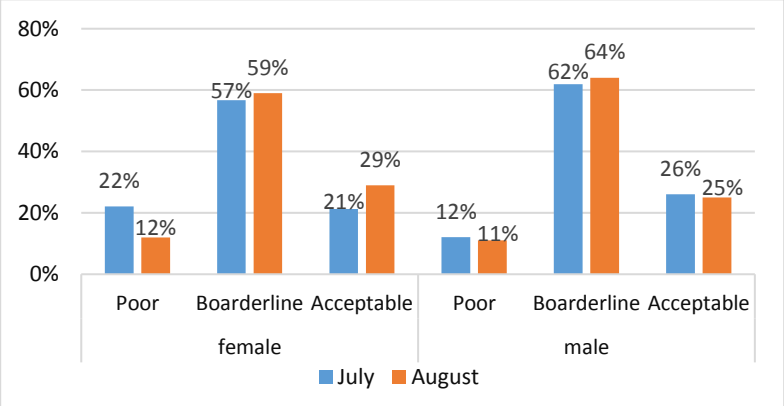


Figure 3: FCS by sex of household head



The sample size was not adequate to report at district level but the analysis at district level can be used as pointers for further assessments. There are some districts with at least 45% of the interviewed households (14 households) reporting a poor food consumption and these include Buhera (50%), Chirimhanzu (50%), **Chivi (79%),** Masvingo (50%), Matobo (50%) and Guruve (58%). Other districts that had a higher number of households reporting a poor consumption have slightly improved.

Household Dietary Diversity Score (HDDS) is the measure of the number of food groups consumed by a household over a specified recall period and it gives an indication of the quality of the household diet. 44% of the interviewed households compared to 57% in July reported a low dietary diversity (**figure 4**) and this

could be as a result of increased coverage of assistance from the government and its developmental partners. More male headed household reported low dietary diversity (**figure 5**).

Figure 4: Household dietary diversity

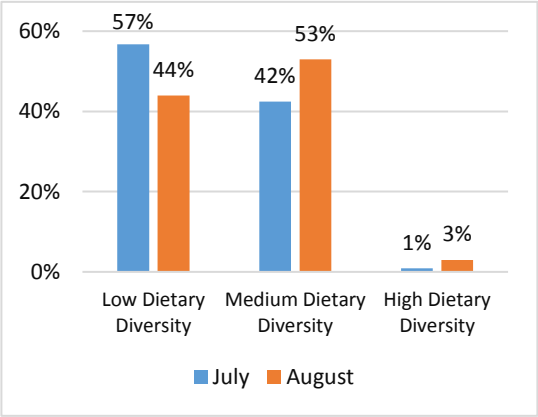
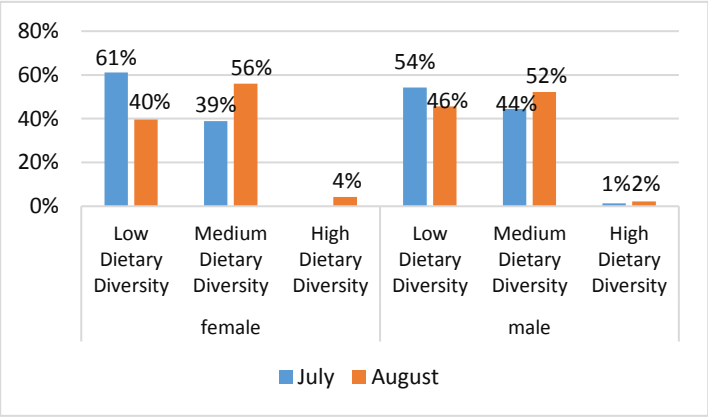


Figure 5: Hhold dietary diversity by sex of hhold head



2.2 Household Hunger Scale

The household hunger scale is an indicator to measure household hunger in food-insecure area. A higher hunger scale indicates that the household is facing challenges in accessing food. 6% of households reported a higher hunger scale compared to 4% reported in July (**figure 6**). More female headed household (76%) reported low hunger scale compared to male headed households (67%) (**figure 7**).

Figure 6: Household hunger scale

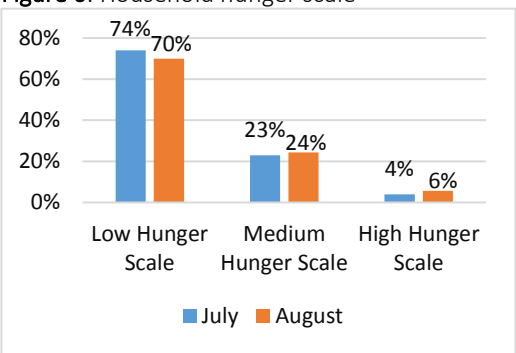
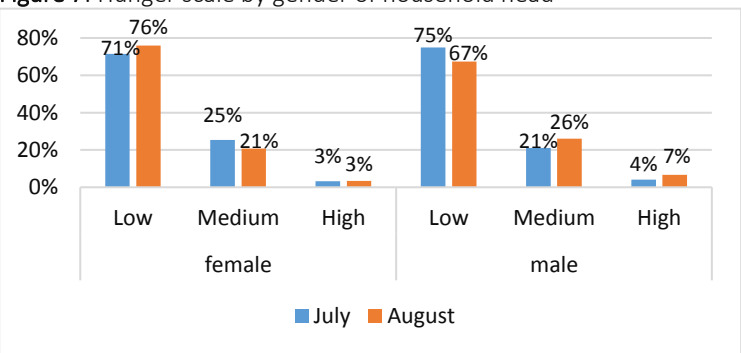


Figure 7: Hunger scale by gender of household head



2.3 Household Coping Strategies

The consumption coping Strategy Index (or the reduced CSI) measures the behaviors adopted by households when faced with difficulties in covering their food needs.

69% of the household reported having difficulties in accessing food and this was reported equally by both male and female headed households. The most common coping strategies that households engaged in were; reducing meals (54%), limiting portion sizes (42%) and reducing adult consumption (36%). Female headed household (65%) resorted to reduce adult consumption so that the children may eat compared to male headed households (53%).

22% of households reported high coping strategy index compared to 39% in July 2016 (**figure 8**). 9% of female headed households reported high coping strategies compared to male headed households (**figure 9**). WFP beneficiary households reported low coping strategies in comparison with non-beneficiary households.

Figure 8: Household Coping Strategy Index

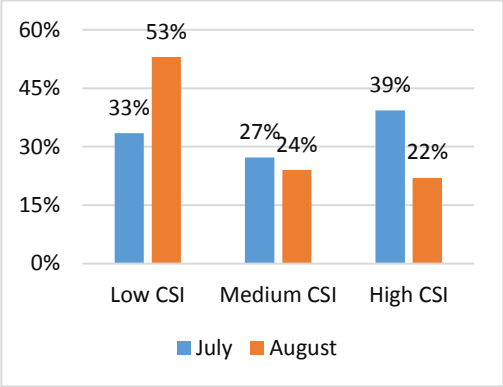
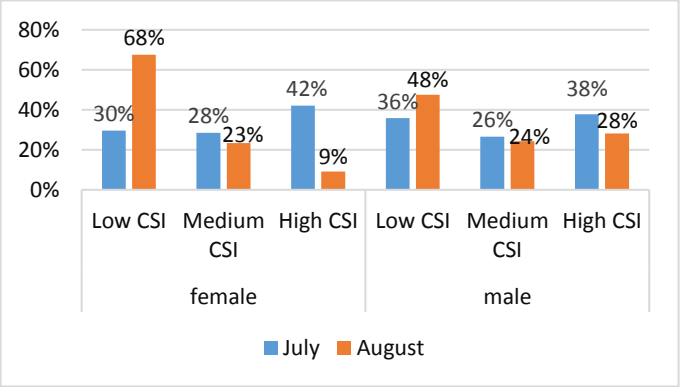


Figure 9: CSI by Sex of head of household



Some districts had more than 50% of the interviewed households reporting high coping strategies, i.e. Buhera (73%), Guruve (50%), Gutu (80%) and Mount Darwin (56%).

2.4 Livelihood Based Coping Strategies

The livelihood based coping strategies gives a better understanding of the longer-term coping capacity of households. Some behaviors adopted by households when they face difficulties in covering their food needs have a negative impact on their future ability to be food secure, for example, engaging in the sale of productive assets. Livelihood based coping strategies are classified into stress, crisis and emergency coping strategies. **Table 1** shows the behaviors considered under each category.

Table 1: Actions under each category

Category	Actions done in order to buy food
Stress	Sold household assets, Borrow money from a formal lender or sold more animals (non - productive) than usual
Crisis	Reduce non-food expenses, sold productive assets or means of transport or withdrew children from school.
Emergency	Sold house or land, sold last female breeding livestock or begging

From the responses it was observed that 87% of the households were not engaging in any negative coping strategies up from 57% reported in July 2016 (**figure 14**). There was no difference between male headed households and female headed households, they were both engaging equally in negative coping strategies (**figure 15**).

Figure 10: HH adopting livelihood based coping strategies

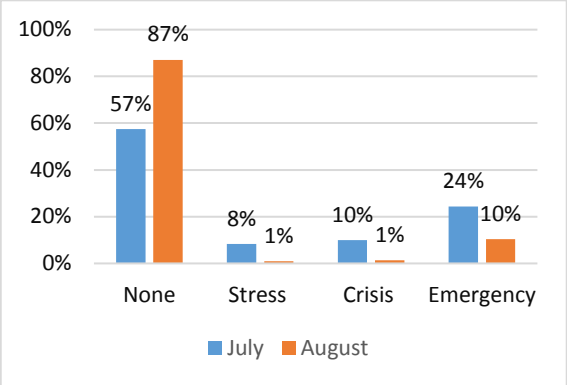
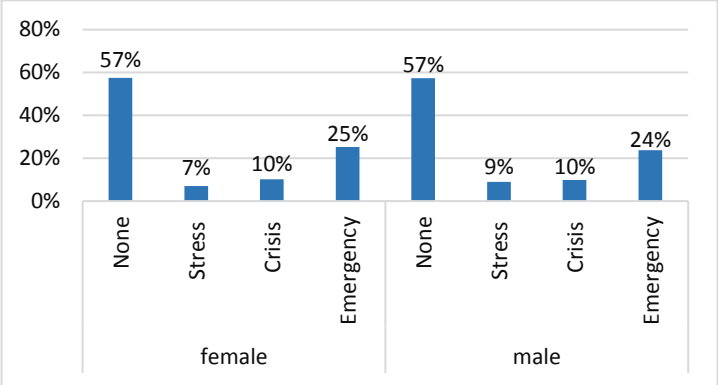


Figure 11: livelihood based coping strategies by gender of hhold head



Kariba (77%) and Mwenezi (78%) recorded the highest number of households resorting to emergency coping strategies. Binga (64%) and Mutoko (43%) also recorded high percentages of households resorting to emergency coping strategies.

3. Food Availability

3.1 Household Stocks

Most of the districts indicated that household staple cereal stocks which is mainly maize in most districts were decreasing and most households were reported to have less than a month supply. The main source of the staple cereal was reported to be purchases followed by other sources. **Table 2** shows the percentage households with stocks for different food commodities, the average quantities, main source and the number of months the stocks are expected to last. Most of the stocks were expected to last less than a month and they were mainly from purchases and food assistance.

Table 2: Household stocks, sources and adequacy

Commodity	Percentage hholds with stocks	Stocks	Main Sources	Adequacy
Maize grain	53%	25kg	Purchases and gvt assistance	1 month
Sorghum	15%	7kg	Non-gvt food assistance	1 month
Millet	6%	50kg	own production	1 month
Rice	5%	2kg	Purchases	4 days
Cowpeas	6%	5 kg	own production	2 months
Beans	5%	3.3kg	Purchases and non-gvt food assistance	1 month

3.2 Cereal availability on markets

- Maize grain was reported to be readily available by 40% of the traders which is higher compared to July 2016 where 36% of the traders reported availability of the commodity.
- Unrefined maize meal was reported to be readily available by 62% of the traders.
- Rice was reported to be available in all markets.

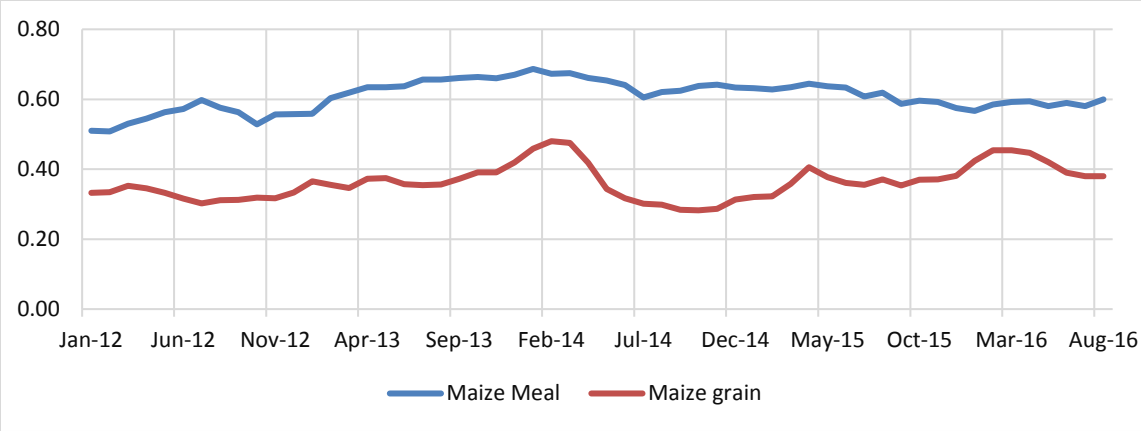
- Other grains like wheat and small grains were not available in most markets.
- Other commodities like sugar beans and cooking oil were reported to be readily available in most markets.

4. Food Access

4.1 Food Commodities Prices

Maize grain has continued to be cheaper compared to maize meal (figure 19). Maize grain was reported to be selling at an average of $0.38/kg compared to $0.60/kg for maize meal, this represents a price difference of about 57%.

Figure 12: Average maize grain and maize meal prices



***Data Source**: FEWSNET*

- National average maize grain prices of $0.38/kg for August 2016 are similar to those of June and July 2016.
- The average price of $0.38/kg for August 2016 are similar to those of August 2015 and 10% higher than the 2yr average of $0.34/kg and 14% higher than the 5yr average (Figure 13).
- Higher maize grain prices were reported in Matobo at $0.57/kg.
- The average maize grain prices for the southern cereal deficit provinces i.e. Masvingo, Matabeleland South, parts of Manicaland and parts of Midlands for the reporting month is $0.44/kg and this represent 21% higher than the northern cereal surplus areas with an average price of $0.36/kg (figure 15).
- Matabeleland south continuous to record the highest prices of $0.57/kg which is about 50% higher than the national maize grain average of $0.38/kg (figure 15).
- National average maize meal prices have been relatively stable over the years with the 2016 prices being 7% lower than those of 2015, 10% lower than the 2yr average and almost the same as those of the 5yr average (figure 14).

Figure 13: National Average Maize Grain Price trends

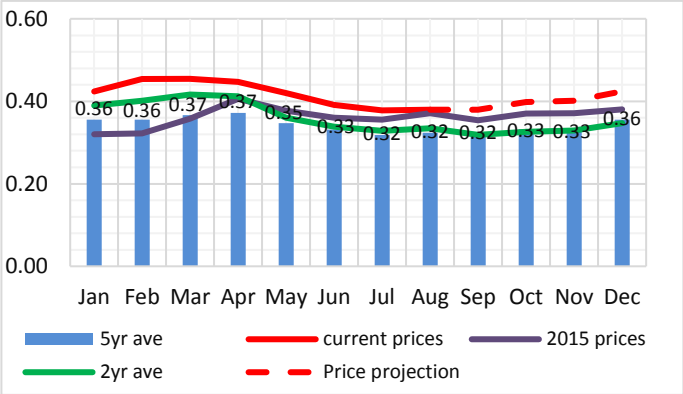
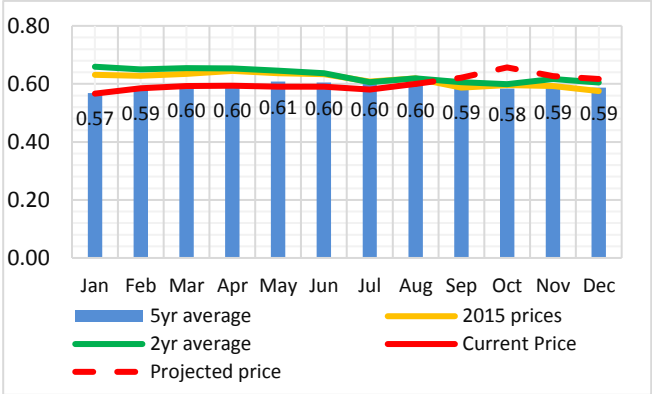


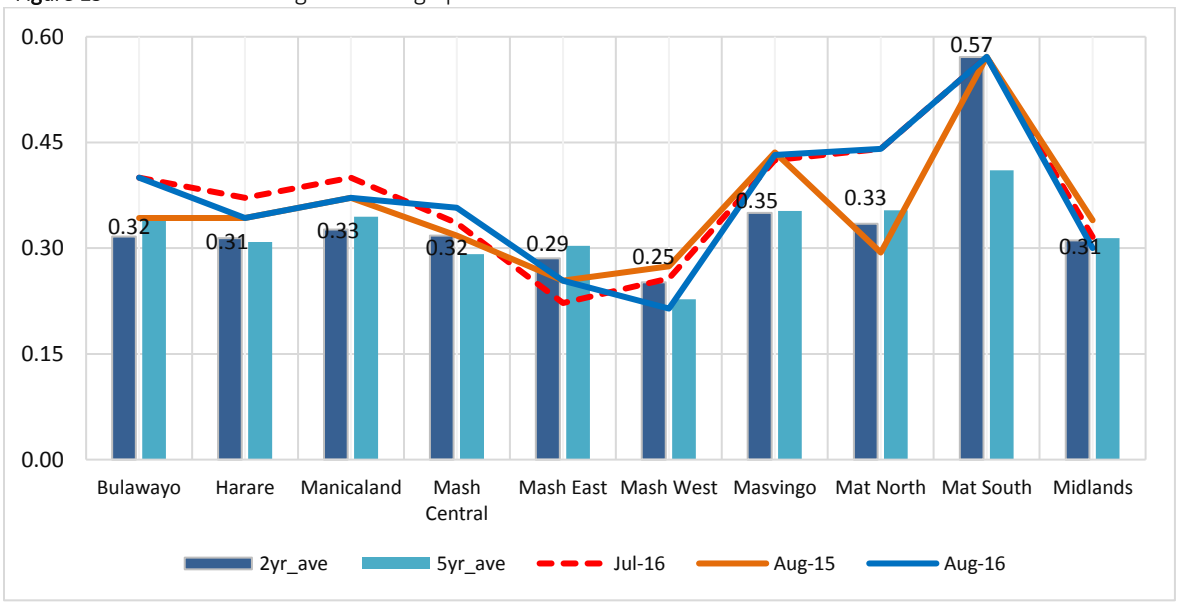
Figure 14:National Average Maize Meal Price Trends



Data Source: FEWSNET and WFP FSM

- Matabeleland South recorded the highest average maize grain prices of $0.57/kg followed by Matabeleland North ($0.44/kg) and Masvingo ($0.43/kg). The average price for Matabeleland South for the reporting quarter of $0.57/kg has been reported in the province since the second quarter of 2015 and is about 48% higher compared to the second quarter of 2014, 20% higher than the 2-year average and 34% higher than the 5-year average. Least prices were recorded in Mashonaland east (maize producing area) at $0.22/kg which is about 72% lower than the national average of $0.38/kg.

Figure 15: Provincial maize grain average price trends



Data Source: FEWSNET

- Districts from Matabeleland North and South recorded the highest maize grain and maize meal prices (**figure 16 and 17**).

Figure 16: Maize grain July 2016 prices per district

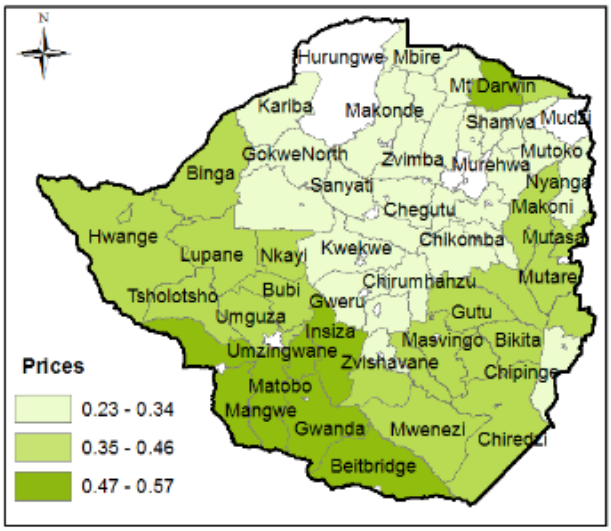
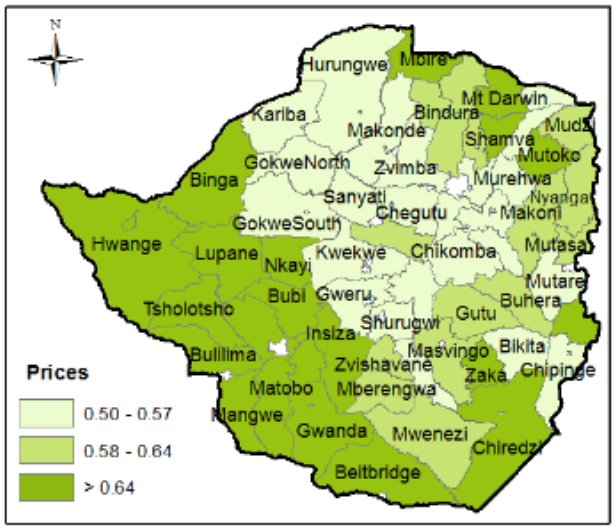


Figure 17: Maize meal July 2016 prices per district



- Prices of sugar beans were ranging from $2/kg to about $3/kg and those of cooking oil ranged from about $1.50/L to about $1.87/L.

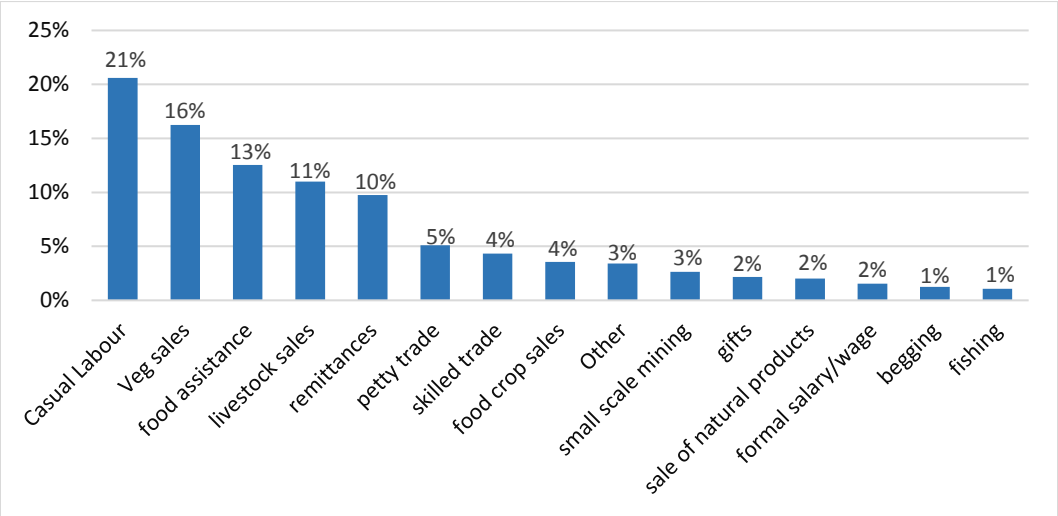
4.2 Sources of Income

4.2.1 Main Sources of Income

Casual labour continues to be the main source of income reported by 21% of the interviewed households (**figure 18**). Vegetable sales were reported to be the second most important source of income reported by 16% of the households. Water for irrigation activities was reported to be available in most districts although inadequate and households were reported to stand in long queues to access water for all purposes.

Other important sources of income include food assistance (13%) and this was reported mainly by districts that are receiving cash as the modality of assistance followed by livestock and livestock products sales (11%) and remittances (10%).

Figure 18: Most reported sources of income



4.2.2 Livestock Terms of Trade

Livestock ownership was reported to be very low as most families do not own larger stocks as was indicated in the July report. Most households interviewed from the worse off wards owned a few chickens and goats only. Due to low cattle ownership most households are most likely to sale poultry and eggs or goats for income. Livestock prices have remained relatively stable since the beginning of the second quarter of 2016 for most of the monitored districts. This might be a result of improved availability and quality of grazing pastures in those districts. High cattle prices were recorded in Hwange ($424) and Mutasa ($400) and low cattle prices were reported in Masvingo ($150), Guruve ($150) and Muzarabani ($190). Cattle quality were reported to be decreasing in Masvingo and other drought prone districts due to the deteriorating quality as a result of shortages and poor quality of grazing pastures. Goat prices were ranging from $40 in Gweru to $10 in Mbire. Poultry was being sold at an average price of $3 (table 3).

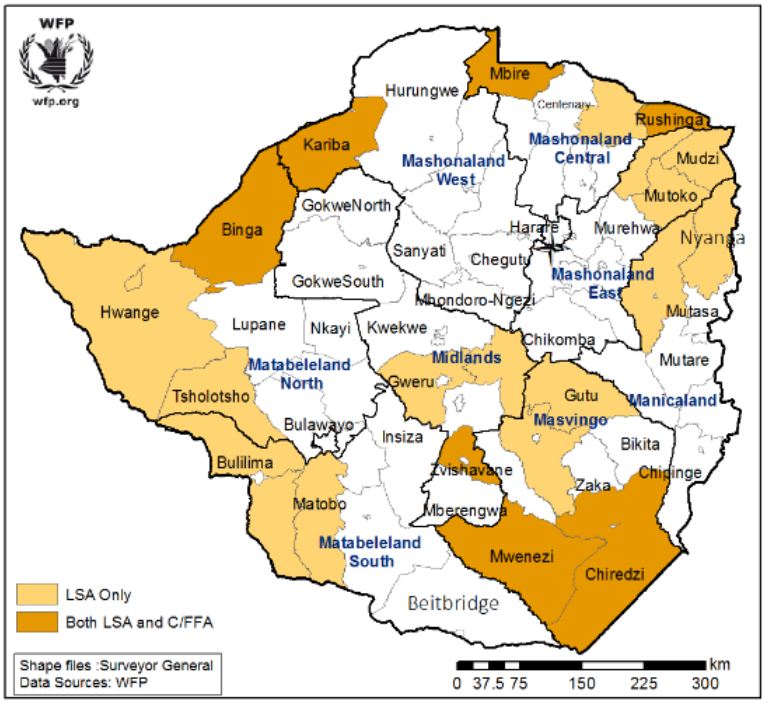
Table 3: Average livestock prices

District	Ave cattle price	Ave goat price	Ave chicken price
Binga	$350.00	$25.00	$5.00
Buhera	$305.00	$21.00	$5.50
Chipinge	$255.00	$22.50	$3.50
Chiredzi	$265.00	$25.00	$4.00
Chivi	$255.00	$30.00	$4.00
Guruve	$180.00	$15.00	$3.00
Gutu	$325.00	$40.00	$6.00
Gwanda	$350.00	$32.50	$4.50
Gweru	$375.00	$40.00	$5.00
Hwange	$425.00	$30.00	$5.00
Masvingo	$150.00	$17.00	$3.00
Matobo	$350.00	$32.00	$4.00
Mbire	$200.00	$10.00	$2.00
Mount Darwin	$210.00	$17.50	$2.25
Mudzi	$250.00	$25.00	$4.00
Mutare	$350.00	$27.50	$5.00
Mutasa	$400.00	$32.50	$5.50
Mutoko	$250.00	$25.00	$5.00
Muzarabani	$190.00	$20.00	$2.75
Mwenezi	$250.00	$27.50	$4.50
Nyanga	$300.00	$25.00	$5.00
Tsholotsho	$300.00	$30.00	$5.00
UMP	$295.00	$25.00	$5.00
Zaka	$250.00	$22.50	$4.50
Zvishavane	$325.00	$35.00	$5.00
Average	**$286.20**	**$26.10**	**$4.32**

5. WFP Assistance

WFP is currently planning to scale up its assistance from the current 309 547 beneficiaries in 12 districts that were covered under the lean season assistance as of August 2016 to a total of 22 districts and reaching out to about 887 239 beneficiaries as from October 2016 (**figure 19**). This is in line with the findings of the 2016 rural ZimVAC which shows that food insecurity prevalence will increase from the current 20% for the July to September quarter to about 33% from October to December 2016.

Figure 19: WFP districts as of October 2016



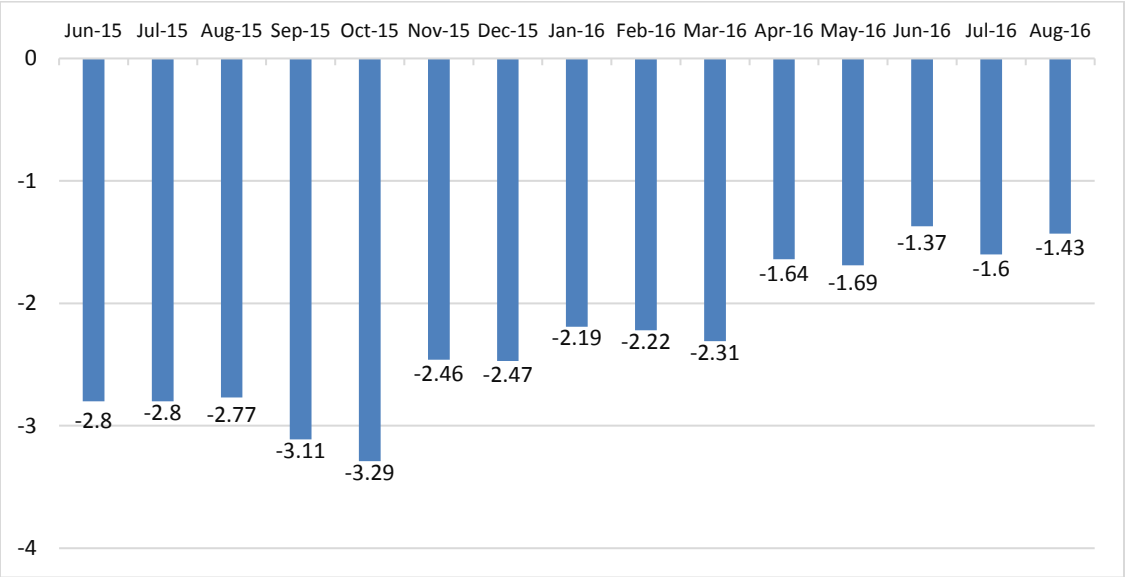
Various partners are also providing assistance in a number of districts.

6. Economic Environment

The economic environment has continued to be supressed with an inflation rate of -1.7% as of June 2016[1] (**figure 21**). Poor liquidity and low incomes continues to be a major challenge being faced by poor households.

[1] http://www.tradingeconomics.com/zimbabwe/inflation-cpi

Figure 20: Inflation figures[2]



Cash availability from mobile money agents was observed to be fairly available in most rural districts.

7. Conclusion and recommendations

- The food access indicators i.e. food consumption, dietary diversity, coping strategies and household hunger scale have shown a slight improvement as compared to July 2016, this maybe as a result of increased food assistance by the government and its partners which is improving household food access.
- Cereal prices have remained relatively stable despite the low production, and might be a result of various factors including low demand due to liquidity challenges, increased food access due to food assistance and other factors which reduce demand as availability has not increased significantly.

It is therefore recommended that WFP:

- continues to monitor prices and commodity availability in cash districts even though the situation is currently stable.
- monitor availability of cash from mobile money agents and trader's acceptability of payments for commodities through mobile money.
- conduct a cash and voucher market assessment to update the findings of the 2015 assessment and establish the best modality of assistance for each districts as the situation is deteriorating in most markets due to various factors including liquidity challenges.
- With the coming in of the lean season, the food security situation needs to be constantly monitored and if possible update the projected number of food insecure populations.

[2] www.zimstat.co.zw