

Trade and Market Bulletin Central Darfur



Darfur Development and Reconstruction Agency

Covering the Quarter March to May 2014 • Vol. 1, No. 4 • www.dra-sudan.org • mzakaria065@gmail.com



Headlines

- During this quarter cereal prices increased in almost all monitored markets across the state, reflecting the poor harvest in 2013/14 and high local demand. The Wadi Salih Zone (Um Dukhun, Bindisi, Mukjar and Garsilla) reported the highest millet prices, while the lowest prices were reported in the Azoom area (Abata, Zalingei and Treij). Average quarterly millet prices in Um Dukhun market increased by 15% this quarter compared with the last quarter, reflecting the resumption of the cereal trade with Nyala and Ed Daein, while millet prices increased by 10% in Zalingei market.

- Livestock price trends varied from one market to another across the state. Prices decreased in Zalingei and Um Shalaya markets, influenced by the quality of the animals, which have lost weight due to lack of fodder, a normal seasonal trend. Prices fluctuated in the Azoom area (Abata and Treij) according to livestock availability around the respective markets as these are not traditionally livestock production areas. Prices increased in the Wadi Salih Zone (Garsilla, Mukjar, Bindisi and Um Dukhun) in May 2014 as security improved and livestock were traded from these markets to Omdurman. For example, the quarterly average price of cattle increased by 5% in Garsilla and Mukjar markets compared with the last quarter, and by 30% in Bindisi market.
- Cash crop prices continued to soar this quarter, exceeding the record highs reported in the last quarter. This reflects the impact of the poor harvest, aggravated by the off-season. Groundnut prices increased sharply in most monitored markets: the quarterly average price increased by 33% in Zalingei compared with the last quarter and by 23% in Garsilla market. Likewise, dried okra and dried tomato prices increased substantially during the quarter: in Zalingei the average quarterly price of dried okra increased by 58% compared with the last quarter.
- In terms of fresh fruit and vegetables, onion prices were generally low and stable in March and April, but increased dramatically in May 2014, reflecting annual seasonal trends. The price of fresh tomatoes also started to rise during the quarter. All monitored markets in Central Darfur reported availability of mangoes this quarter, which coincides with the mango harvest. Central Darfur is famous for its mango production and supplies the other Darfur states. Although mango prices are low, SDG 5 to 7 per dozen, this constitutes a significant source of income for a short period during the harvest season for those who have access to mango trees.
- Most trade routes linking Central Darfur's main markets were stable this quarter. The trade route connecting Zalingei with Um Dukhun market resumed normal functioning after cessation of localised hostilities. The newly paved road connecting Zalingei with El Geneina is currently being used by upgraded buses, reducing the journey time for passengers.
- During this quarter the most important sources of daily labouring were construction and brick-making. Agricultural work ceased as this is the dry season.

Recommendations

- Food security indicators have continued to deteriorate, in particular high and rising cereal prices, although the security situation has improved to some extent in the Wadi Salih Zone; close monitoring of food security is therefore recommended, especially for the many families affected by conflict.

Participating CBOs and the markets they monitor

Sudanese Environment Conservation Society (SECS)
Zalingei

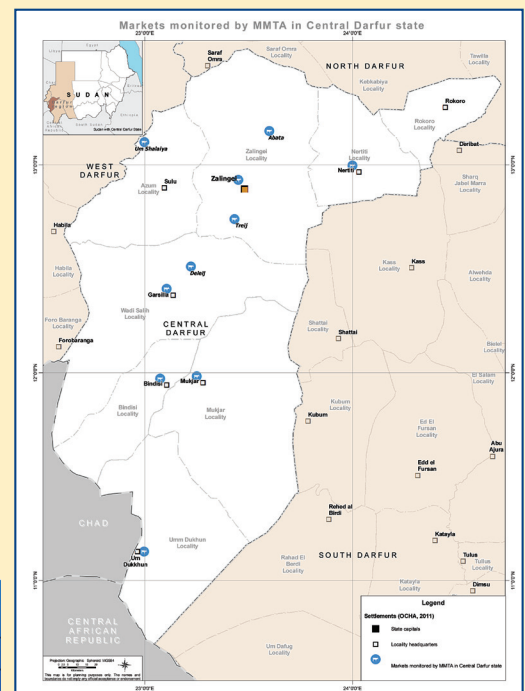
Darfur Development and Reconstruction Agency (DRA)
Umshalaya

Almanar
Nerteti

Daro Baida
Garsila and Delaig

Albaraka Agriculture Organisation (AAO)
Bendisi, Umdukhn and Mukjar

Arebow Charity Organisation (ACO)
Abatta and Tereig



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and unusual flow of cereals out of Central Darfur to South and East Darfur this quarter, despite attempts by the Central Darfur state government to control the flow of cereals out of the state. Many trucks have been loaded with cereals in Zalingei and Garsilla for transportation to Nyala. This has reduced cereal stocks in Central Darfur and contributed to rising prices. Treij market, for example, reported a shortage of cereal stocks during the quarter; it is normally supplied from Garsilla, but now cereals are being transported directly to Nyala from Garsilla.

Cereals

Cereal prices rose this quarter in all monitored markets. This was due to high local demand and poor supply because of the bad 2013/2014 harvest season, which exacerbated the normal seasonal rise in cereal prices at this time of year, as some cereals are stored for consumption during the rainy season. See Figure 1. Quarterly average millet prices increased by 21% in Nertiti market, 15% in Um Dukhun market and by 10% in Zalingei market compared to last quarter. See Figure 2.

Other factors contributing to the rise in cereal prices include the ban imposed by the authorities in Saraf Omra on transporting cereals out of Saraf Omra locality, an important area of production. This reduced the flow of cereals to Zalingei, Abata and Um Shalaya markets. There has also been a substantial

The Wadi Salih Zone (Bindisi, Mukjar, Um Dukhun and Garsilla), traditionally the main millet production area in Central Darfur, recorded the highest cereal prices this quarter because of the reasons described above, and as a consequence of the conflict. Mukjar registered a particular shortage of cereals in the market after the intervention of Catholic Relief Services (CRS), which engaged in local purchase of cereals for subsidised sale to households. This appears to have fuelled some speculative hoarding by traders, pushing prices up. The lowest cereal prices were reported in the Azoom area (Abata, Treij and Um Shalaya), despite traditionally being an area of consumption, as the security situation was relatively more stable. Supply from a number of different locations was therefore better to these markets.

The price of food aid sorghum increased slightly, but was generally stable in most monitored markets because of the continued distribution of food aid by WFP during the quarter.

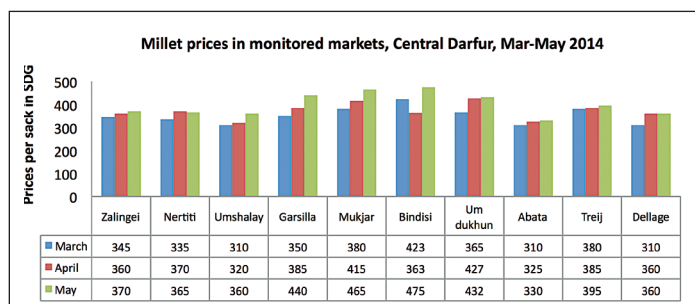


Figure 1: Millet prices in monitored markets, Central Darfur, March to May 2014

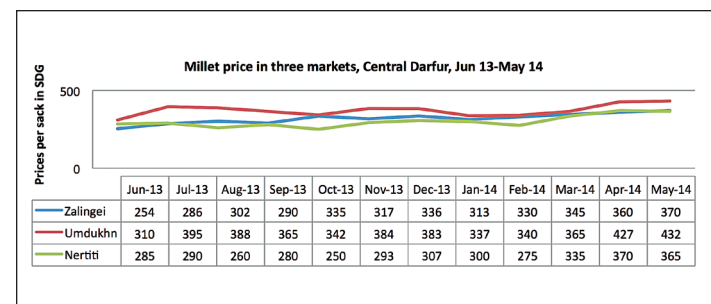


Figure 2: Prices of millet in three markets, Central Darfur, June 2013 to May 2014

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Livestock

Trends in livestock prices have varied from one market to another across monitored markets this quarter, reflecting the impact of localised factors. For instance, Zalingei and Um Shalaya markets reported a downward trend in cattle prices. This was because weight loss reduced the quality of the animals, which often happens between April and July as grazing is poor and the price of fodder increases. As a result some animals trekked far from the main towns, such as Zalingei, in search of better grazing, which reduced supply close to market. Although reduced supply would ordinarily cause prices to rise, the poor quality of the remaining cattle meant that prices dropped instead. On the other hand cattle prices followed an upward trend in both Um Dukhun and Dellage markets, a reversal of the trend last quarter, because a new reconciliation agreement was signed, which improved the security situation in the Wadi Salih Zone. Animal traders and their agents took advantage of this and began buying livestock from Central Darfur's traditional markets and trekking them to Omdurman for sale.

The remaining markets saw livestock prices fluctuate according to local conditions. Prices at markets located in the Azoom area (Abata and Treij), not a production area, were most likely affected by the localised movement of livestock: prices increased when livestock moved away from market and

decreased when they came closer. Markets located in the Wadi Salih Zone (Garsilla, Bindisi, Mukjar and Um Dukhun) were impacted mainly by the presence of livestock traders and their agents, the positive impact of which outdid any negative impact of uncertainty around the security situation. For instance, the quarterly average price of cattle this quarter rose by 30% in Bindisi market, 5% in Mukjar and 5% in Garsilla compared with last quarter. See Figure 3.

Sheep prices appeared stable in most monitored markets with little variation between markets due to local factors. However, there was a spike in prices in Abata during March as animals were moved out of the area to avoid conflict in Abata. Similarly sheep prices rose in Bindisi during April for the same reason. See Figure 4.

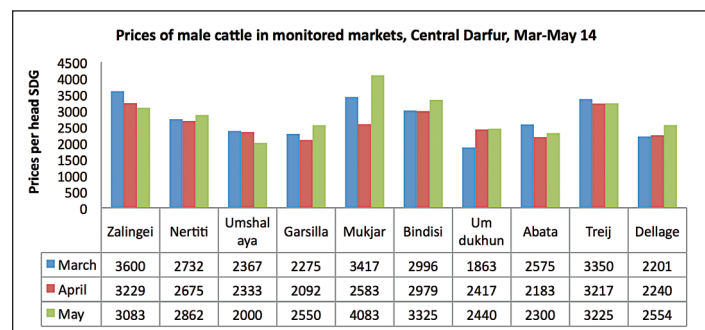


Figure 3: Prices of male cattle in monitored markets, Central Darfur, March to May 2014

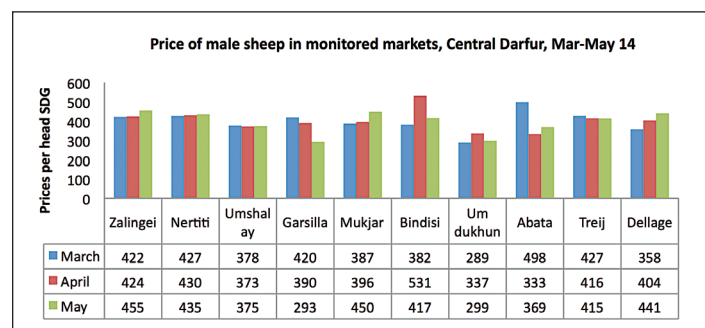


Figure 4: Male sheep prices in monitored markets, Central Darfur, March to May 2014

Transportation: Access and Costs

Most trade routes linking the main markets in Central Darfur were stable this quarter. The trade route connecting Zalingei with Um Dukhun market returned to normal after there was some improvement in the security situation. Checkpoints along these roads continue to charge high rates to passing trucks. The newly paved route linking Zalingei with Geneina is currently being used by buses, reducing travelling time for passengers.



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The price of groundnuts and cooking oil rose sharply due to a lack of supply coming from the production area of Um Dukhun, which affected the price of cooking oil across the whole of Central Darfur state. For example, quarterly average prices increased by 33% in Zalingei market and 23% in Garsilla market compared to last quarter. See Figure 5.

The price of dried tomatoes also increased compared to last quarter across all monitored markets, also due to lack of supply. However, some people imported dried tomatoes from Nyala and the Chad border region, which slowed the price rise. The highest prices were recorded in Dellage and Garsilla, and the lowest in Um Dukhun and Nertiti.

The price of dried okra also rose sharply this quarter, particularly during March and April, again due to lack of supply. In Zalingei market the quarterly average price of dried okra increased by 58% compared with last quarter. See Figure 6. As a result, many households are attempting to grow okra locally, for example within their compounds.

Cash Crops

Cash crop prices continued to soar this quarter due to lack of stock (because of the continued impact of the poor 2014 harvest season compounded by this quarter being the off-season), and the effects of grazing by livestock.

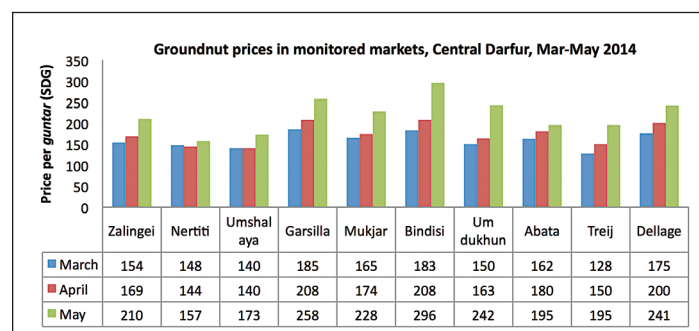


Figure 5: Groundnut prices in monitored markets, Central Darfur, March to May 2014

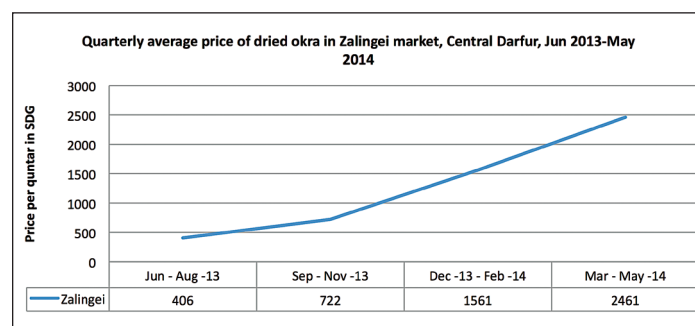


Figure 6: Quarterly average price of dried okra in monitored markets, Central Darfur, June 2013 to May 2014

Daily Labouring

Construction operations and brick-making were the main source of daily labouring this quarter. As it is the dry season, agricultural activities did not contribute to daily labouring opportunities.

Table 1: Daily labouring activities, Central Darfur, March to May 2014

Activity	Wage rate (SDG per day)	Gender
Building work	20 - 25	Women/men/children
Brick-making	20 - 30	Women/men/children
Restaurant and tea services	15 - 20	Women/children
Domestic services - Zalingei	15	Women

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Fruits and Vegetables

Seasonal trends led to fluctuating fruit and vegetable prices this quarter. Onion prices varied from one market to another reflecting the influence of transportation costs, loading and off-loading costs and other fees. Generally, however, onion prices in almost all monitored markets dipped in April, the peak of the harvest season, before rising again in May as the harvest season began to tail off. See Figure 7. The price of fresh tomatoes also increased, particularly in May, across most monitored markets, reflecting seasonality.

This quarter is the height of mango season in Central Darfur and almost all monitored markets recorded availability of mangoes. Central Darfur has several different harvesting seasons

depending on location: in the Wadi Salih zone (Garsilla, Dellage, Mukjar and Bindisi) mangoes are harvested from February until the end of April/early May; in the Azoom zone (Zalingei, Abata and Um Shalaya) they are harvested from April until the end of June/early July; and in Jebel Mara they are harvested from July until the end of October. These differences in harvest time explain local price fluctuations. For example, in Bindisi the price of mangoes increased in May as harvest season tailed off. See Figure 8. Mangoes are considered very cheap compared to other fruit such as oranges: a dozen mangoes costs SDG 5 while a dozen oranges costs SDG 30. Central Darfur is a major mango production area supplying most other parts of Darfur, so despite their short harvest season mangoes can contribute a great deal to the income of those households with mango trees.

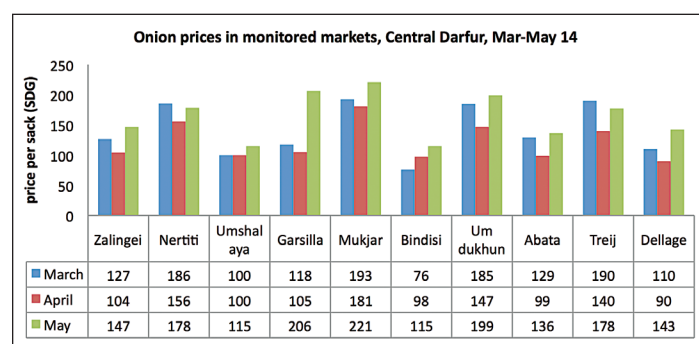


Figure 7: Onion prices in monitored markets, Central Darfur, March to May 2014

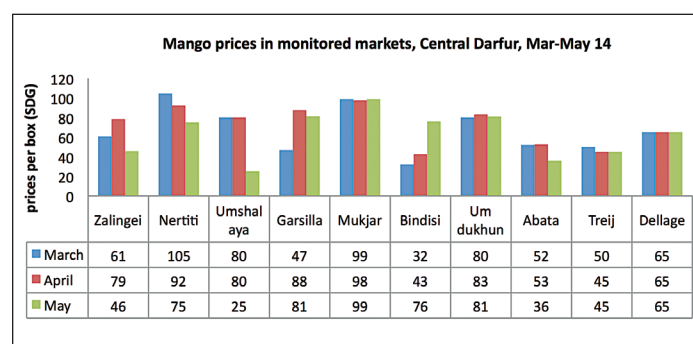


Figure 8: Mango prices in monitored markets, Central Darfur, March to May 2014

Background and methodology

The goal of this community-based market monitoring initiative is to deepen analysis and understanding of the shifting patterns of trade and markets in Darfur, on an ongoing basis for key agricultural and livestock commodities, to identify how livelihoods and the economy can be supported through trade, and to identify peace-building opportunities through trade. Five CBOs/NGOs plus DRA are monitoring 10 markets across Central Darfur on a weekly basis. Quantitative data, for example the price of Darfur's main cereals, livestock, cash crops and fruits and vegetables are collected weekly as well as qualitative data, for example on sources of supply. Some data are collected on a monthly basis, for example transport costs, transport routes and the impact of the conflict on flows of commodities. DRA holds quarterly analysis workshops with the CBO enumerators.



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Feinstein International Center

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Ministries with which DRA has a technical agreement in Central Darfur:

1. Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Resources and Irrigation
2. Ministry of Finance, Economy and Labour

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