

truck-owners who are prepared to haul the purchase immediately to the urban market.

To gain a general overview of marketing in the study area, observations were made in four heterogeneous villages which are marketing centers. Government records for crop auction and livestock sales were copied down for two villages with large market places. Through this study we identified a number of important marketing institutions including the village shop, periodic vendors attending weekly markets, the government administered crop market, and the government administered livestock market.

Two kinds of crop marketing systems were found. The most prevalent is the system in which the crop's price is determined in auction, after which the farmer's produce is weighed. The government prefers this procedure because the tax rate is precisely assessed. The other kind of system relies on an estimation of the weight and price of the crop according to a formula set by the district council. This procedure results in a lower tax estimation than the weighing and auction system, but it appears to be well suited to small, isolated markets where the extra incentive of reduced taxes encourages crop buyers to visit the market.

Smuggling - that is the illegal conveyance of certain crops, particularly sesame, from the farm gate to crop buying agencies in el-Obeid without the full assessment of taxes - is believed to be a widespread practice. Farmers as well as crop merchants are seen to benefit from it.

Millet, the subsistence crop, is supplemented by the importation to the region of sorghum (feterita) grown principally on the mechanized farming schemes at Habila, South Kordofan. Only the wealthier households are able to satisfy the ideal of eating from their own millet stores throughout the year. This is because only they have enough equity to purchase the labor to cultivate a large field of millet. Alternatively, they buy millet from farmers who are in need of cash. Most families buy feterita at least during the dry season in order to save their millet for rainy season consumption. A prevailing belief is that feterita is an undesirable food for the rainy season. During this period of hard physical labor, only millet can provide the required nutriment. Information from the sample of forty households suggests that the typical farm family supports itself on its own millet for only about four months in the year. The rest of the time it buys feterita.

A preliminary analysis of crop marketing channels revealed a number of incentives and constraints for the participants. For example, farmers whose production is small or who lack equity are typically unable to hold their crops off the market until the post-harvest rise in prices occurs. They have to begin selling their crops immediately after the harvest to pay their consumption bill. Better-off farmers, on the other hand, may be able to reserve their crops several months in anticipation of a rise in prices.

From government records of livestock sales it is possible to gauge the dramatic effect which the seasonal presence of nomads is having at a large rural market. A conclusion to be drawn is that the relation between nomad and farmer, who are frequently in conflict over access to forage and water, is complimentary when it comes to livestock marketing.