

During the past year the highest prices encountered at the grain market occurred in August, 1981; the lowest prices were in February, 1982. Table 26 presents the high and low prices for several kinds of grains.⁸⁴

Table 26. High and Low Prices of Sorghum, Millet and Wheat at el-Obeid Grain Market (1981-1982)

Month	Year	Quantity	Feterita	Habbashiya	Millet	Wheat
(High) Aug.	1981	1 mid	1.200	1.250	1.400	1.400
		1 sack	36.000	37.500	41.000	41.000
(Low) Feb.	1982	1 mid	0.600	0.850	1.100	1.400
		1 sack	18.000	24.000	32.000	39.000

There has been a 50% reduction in the price of feterita,⁸⁵ a 36% reduction in the price of habbashiya, a 22% reduction in the price of millet, and a 5% reduction in the price of wheat between the middle of the rainy season and the middle of the dry season. The price of feterita, which again is the most frequently consumed variety of commercial grain, rises sharply in July and stays high until November when the local millet harvest reduces the demand for it. Most of the feterita is sold at el-Obeid between December and June. By early July the quantity of feterita in that market has dwindled. Most of the feterita is then in the hands of rural storekeepers and retailers. The price in el-Obeid increases owing to the small supply and rural sellers adjust their prices upwards. Needless to say, rural merchants take advantage of this price increase by stockpiling feterita beforehand.

Marketing of Cereal Grains at the Village Level

There are essentially two separate marketing systems for cereal grains in the rural areas. The first of these distributes locally-produced sorghum and millet. Although these are primarily subsistence crops, some of the harvest is sold between farmers and by farmers to village merchants. This most often occurs during the early harvest season when the price of millet--owing to the influence of el-Obeid market--exceeds that of all other crops. In this case millet (also local sorghum) is sold in small quantities--a mid or two at a time--to buy goods from the merchant's shop, or to pay off a loan. An example from Umm Ramad will serve to show the advantage which this practice

⁸⁴ Since habbashiya and dabar sorghums are roughly equivalent in price only habbashiya is shown in the table.

⁸⁵ Seventy percent of the feterita crop planted at Habila was harvested this year; the estimate for last year is that the yield was only 50% due to lack of rain and pest attack.