

charge is based on the el-Obeid price plus a mark-up for transportation costs. The merchant's profit derives from the fact that the price of feterita will increase dramatically with the onset of the rainy season. As the harvest approaches, the demand for feterita will decline, because farmers will begin eating their own millet and sorghum while it is in the dough stage (fariik). The merchant's strategy at this period is to be rid of his feterita stocks in order to use the empty sacks and storage space for gathering cash crops while the harvest progresses. The merchant may not restock feterita for several months afterwards because the demand is low.

The ideal, which only the wealthier households satisfy, is to eat millet throughout the year either from the family's own stocks or from purchases from village merchants. We have already noted that the wealthier merchants routinely do this. Farmers that are less well off are compelled to buy feterita at least for the dry season in order to save their millet for rainy season consumption. The general belief is that feterita is "light" (khafiif) and "cold" (baarid) making it an undesirable food for the rainy season, a time when farmers are engaged in the heavy labor of weeding their fields. For this work they need a "heavy" (tagiil), "hot" (sukhan) staple, which millet is, to give them the strength to work hard. During the rainy season, too, when meat is not affordable due to the farmer's low purchasing power,⁸⁷ millet 9asiida can be eaten with oil rather than a meat sauce because it is filling, high in fiber, and good tasting. Feterita, on the other hand, is so bland that villagers prefer to eat it with a meat sauce for flavor.

Of the forty households which were surveyed at el-Kharta, el-Geifil, and Umm Ramad, thirty-two (80.0%) had purchased feterita in the past year. The range of purchases varied between two and eighteen sacks; the mean number of sacks purchased was 8.6 (Table 27).

Table 27. Distribution of Feterita Purchased by Household

<u>Sacks of Feterita Purchased</u>	<u>Number of Households</u>
1-5	8 (25.0%)
6-10	15 (46.9%)
11-15	6 (18.8%)
16 and more	3 (9.4%)
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⁸⁷At this season poorer farmers have no source of income except their hired labor.