

income. Consequently, their farming production is low and they are unable to grow enough millet to feed themselves. They also lack capital to purchase feterita in bulk when the price is low.

2. Feterita is bought in quantities of one to three sacks at a time, usually during the seef (hot, dry season) and perhaps the khariif (rainy season). Probably the majority of farmers adopt this strategy, making adjustments in the quantity of feterita they buy from year to year depending on the yield obtained from their millet crop. This strategy coordinates well with cash crop sales in the period of January to June. Hence, it depends on the farmer being able to save his cash crop until the price increases later in the marketing season. This coincides with the period when feterita prices are at their lowest.

The Marketing of Major Cash Crops

The survey of village merchants, which is presently underway, is intended to provide quantitative information about the flow of cash crops in the various marketing channels and the price mark-ups and costs in each channel. Our purpose here is to discuss the marketing system of cash crops in qualitative terms and to point out some of the major constraints and incentives which shape the behavior of different classes of marketers. Figure 1 is a diagram of the marketing system for cash crops in the el-Obeid area. The diagram illustrates that the flow of crops from rural producers, through intermediary institutions or dealers such as the rural branch market, village merchant, and agents/assemblers, to crop agencies based at el-Obeid. Alternatively, crops may be marketed at the el-Obeid government market where export agents--usually local big merchants--are the principal buyers. Most of the sesame nuts and karkadee are exported to a large degree although they too have a local market particularly if world prices for these commodities are low. Gum arabic is strictly for export as the Gum Arabic Company⁸⁸ is the sole buyer at Port Sudan. The marketing system shown in Figure #1 applies generally to all these cash crops. It remains to be learned from the village merchant survey what quantitative differences exist owing to the incentives or constraints which cause marketers to use different marketing channels for different crops at different times of the season.

⁸⁸Fifty-one per cent of the shares are publically owned.