

Table 29. A Qualitative Analysis of Crop Marketing in the El-Obeid Area

<u>Seller</u>	<u>Buyer</u>	<u>Channel</u>	<u>Incentives and Constraints</u>
Farmer	Village Merchant	Direct Sale	The farmer trades small amounts of crops (one to two mids at a time) to obtain commodities from the merchant's shop. This is the most important marketing strategy for most farmers early in the post-harvest period when the prices of crops are still low. For poorer farmers whose production has not been good, this may be the only means they use for marketing crops. Essentially, their crops are a substitute for cash.
		Branch Market Sale	The farmer sells in quantity (i.e., one or more sacks at a time). This marketing strategy is more prevalent later in the marketing season when prices for crops at el-Obeid have risen thereby forcing up prices at the branch markets. The village merchant who bids in the branch market is closely constrained in the price he can offer. It must not exceed the median price at el-Obeid Crop Market less the cost of transportation from the village to el-Obeid. This price is what the crop agency at el-Obeid will pay the merchants. (They will also reimburse the gushuur tax.)
Farmer	Agent/Assembler	Direct Sale	A direct sale by farmers to an agent/assembler is most likely to occur late in the marketing season (March-May). At this time the farmers open their storage pits before the on-set of the rains and sell the remainder of their crops in order to pay for land clearing and planting as well as to buy feterita while the price is still low. Truck-operator agents may haul feterita to the village in order to make a direct exchange of sorghum for sesame. The produce is taken from the farmers' pits and put directly in the agent's sacks. The agreement to buy from farmers in this manner is made ahead of time so that the agent is assured of filling his truck.