

which breed abundantly during the rainy season in the higher rainfall belt to the south. A third reason is that the villages in the el-Obeid area have better stocked markets where nomads can purchase needed supplies. Also, a number of cheese factories are located in the area so that nomads may sell their animal's milk.⁹¹ Finally, August and September are a time when nomads may buy livestock from settled farmers who are in need of cash to pay for hired labor. After September livestock sales fall off precipitously when nomads begin a return migration towards their winter pastures in the south. Then from November until May, sales are at their lowest.

Figure 3 presents the number of livestock of each kind sold at Abu Haraz market. The same general trend that was evident from the previous graph is noted here. The largest number of all kinds of livestock are sold during August and September. Sheep are sold in the greatest numbers, followed by cattle and then by goats.

Up to six times as many sheep are sold as either cattle or goats during these months.⁹² Cattle sales are only slightly more numerous than goat sales. Both sheep and cattle sales show a strong relation to the presence of nomads. That is, the sales of these animals increase abruptly in August and decline equally abruptly after September.

The sale of goats, on the other hand, takes place over a longer period, May to October. Cultivators generally sell goats during this period to pay for farming expenses and consumption goods. The goats are bought by wealthy farmers, butchers, and nomads. Goats are often sold during the hot, dry season because their owners cannot afford to water them.

Donkeys and camels show a sharp seasonality of sales similar to that of sheep and cattle. Horse sales appear in November and December when these animals are in demand for pulling carts to transport crops or to haul water.

Figure 4 indicates the average monthly prices of cattle, sheep and goats at Abu Haraz market. These data must be viewed with caution. The market records do not usually specify the age of the animal and the sex may also be unspecified particularly when a number of animals are sold in a single transaction. Keeping these limitations in mind, the graph indicates considerable uniformity in goat prices when compared with cattle for example. Possibly this is owing to the fact that the prices of goats are not as sensitive to nomad involvement in the market as is the case with cattle. The rainy season surge in the supply of cattle shows on this graph as a tendency for prices to be low in August and September. Then, beginning in October, the price of cattle rises as the nomads depart from the market with their animals. Prices remain generally high⁹³ until the onset of the khariif when the nomads and their herds return.

The pattern of prices for sheep in Abu Haraz market is much less pronounced than for cattle. The most remarkable feature is that sheep prices

⁹¹Abu Haraz has two cheese factories.

⁹²Many of the transactions involving sheep at this time are multiple sales of two to ten animals.

⁹³We are unable to explain the dip in cattle prices which occurred in March 1981.