be explained by the fact that farmers often retain their sesame crop until April or May before selling it to help pay for farm expenditures in the coming cropping season. Aside from being a form of short-term savings, this strategy enables farmers to keep enough seed in reserve to meet planting requirements. This pattern would account for the findings presented in the Table above.

In addition to reserving their own seeds, 35 percent of the farmers were purchasing sesame seeds as well. About an equal number of farmers purchased seed from other farmers as from merchants. An examination of seed purchasers indicates that the majority were poor farmers. A possible reason for why poor people are purchasing sesame seed is that they often have to sell most of their sesame crop early to pay off debts, buy food, water and other household necessities. These early sales make it difficult to retain adequate seed reserves for the coming cropping season, so these farmers are often forced to use what little money they have to purchase seed. If additional seed purchases are required for replanting these poor farmers are often forced to borrow from another farmer or a merchant at high interest rates.36a

Most farmers in our sample obtained their groundnut seeds for planting from a Government sponsored seed distribution program which was implemented by the Farmers' Union. The Farmers' Union distributed groundnut seed to farmers in several villages in Kordofan. The only stipulation was that farmers had to return to the Farmers' Union an equal amount of seed after harvest. Fifty-eight percent of the farmers surveyed obtained their seed in this manner.

Aside from this seed source, 42 percent of the farmers reserved their own groundnut seed for planting. Only three farmers purchased groundnut seed. Two purchased seed from the El Obeid Market while one purchased seed from a local merchant. The relatively small number of farmers who purchased seed may be due to the unavailability of groundnut seed from other farmers or merchants. This also may account for why groundnuts are usually only planted once.

As for sorghum, 73 percent of the farmers got their seed for planting from their own reserves. This pattern is understandable if one considers the fact that sorghum seeds are somewhat scarce in many of these villages in this area. Farmers have had some difficulty in obtaining sorghum seed from local merchants as well as from other farmers. For this reason, one

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36a The classic sheel (usury) credit system of the Sudan still serves as an important source of seed for many poor farmers. Here sheel is a kind of crop mortgaging. The lender gives the poor farmer an amount of seed on the condition that he is repaid in kind a two-fold, or greater, amount after the harvest. An alternative seed lending arrangement, which is commonplace nowadays, is to peg the values of the seeds loaned out and repaid according to their current market prices. The borrower may repay his loan in seed or in money. In recent years, seed loaned in this manner has generally earned the lender a rate of return between 150% and 200%. Defaults as well as long delays in repayment are problems the lender must anticipate if he makes seed loans.