entails. In the first week of December, 1981, at Umm Ramad, a mid of millet brought 1,000 at merchants' shops while local sorghum brought 0.800 per mid. The prices of cash crops did not measure up. Groundnuts brought 0.200/mid, sesame 0.800/mid, and karkadee 0.200/rootl. Generally speaking, farmers do not like to sell millet, it being their preferred staple. But, for poorer households the high price is too enticing. In recent years, at Umm Ramad, groundnuts have been the main crop for meeting household expenses at the village store. If we assume that the daily cost of food for a household is 2.000, then last December it would take ten mids of groundnuts at Umm Ramad to purchase a family's daily needs. The same value of goods could be obtained for two mids of millet. Thus, a family may prefer to sell millet in small quantities when its price is high as needed for consumption while saving groundnuts in anticipation that the price will rise.

This strategy was even more attractive this season when the price of groundnuts failed to rise early and dramatically as had happened the season before. Selling millet for consumption needs also makes sense because feterita is the main substitute for the more expensive millet. At Umm Ramad, at the same time that millet was being sold to village merchants for 1.000/mid, feterita could be bought from el-Obeid market for 0.085/mid and it would become less expensive during the next few months.

The locally produced millet and sorghum that village merchants buy from their neighbors are saved for consumption by the merchant's own household. Any surplus is stored and sold during the year to anyone who wants millet or zunaari for food or as seed for planting.

Another marketing channel for locally-produced millet and sorghum is seen in the merchants' sale of these crops to flour mills in el-Obeid after arrangements are made with the mill owner. The mill owner is anxious to acquire millet or sorghum in this manner because the local crop does not carry the very high tax (4.650/sack) assessed on cereals shipped from Habila or Kosti. However, the government prohibits this type of sale, so, to disguise his purchases of sorghum and millet the village merchant may ask several small agents to buy for him in the periodic market. The agents (called kayyaal) are paid for the millet or sorghum which they have purchased at the going market price plus a small commission for each sack that they collect.

The second marketing system of cereal grains in the rural areas is distribution of sorghum, almost exclusively feterita which is grown on the rainfed mechanized schemes at Habila. Village merchants buy feterita in bulk and sell it to farmers by the mid or by the sack. Normally, the merchant's strategy is to stockpile feterita at his shop during the months when its price is low, January until June. He begins selling feterita to villagers during the dry season and continues doing so during the rainy season when farmer's stocks of grain are depleted. The price that he will

86Because of this the merchant is often able to eat millet and local sorghum throughout the year even though he does not plant an amount sufficient for his needs. Zunaari abyad, a local sorghum, is white and is preferred over the red feterita for that reason.