

Six-month Trade and Market Bulletin Central Darfur



Darfur Development and Reconstruction Agency

Covering March to August 2016 • www.dra-sudan.org • jamilalla@yahoo.com



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Headlines:

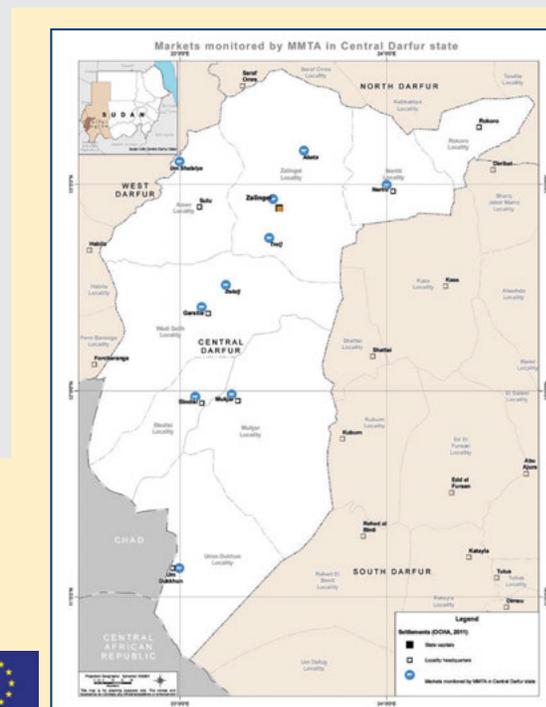
- Cereal prices were stable in most production and consumption markets in Central Darfur during the six months (March to August, 2016), falling in June/July when the new rainy season started, and rising again in August, reflecting availability and the prospects for the next harvest. Overall prices were higher in 2016 than 2015.
- Livestock prices, especially sheep and cattle, were mostly stable in the main livestock markets in Central Darfur between March and August 2016. Livestock trading resumed in the Um Dukhun area and agents of large-scale livestock traders from Omdurman returned to Central Darfur, both indicators of increased trading with greater stability.
- The supply of dried okra and dried tomatoes has been affected by conflict in Jebel Marra, pushing prices up in some monitored markets.
- Onion prices have followed normal seasonal patterns, with a wide variation between the production season and off-season.
- Orange prices were most stable in production areas such as Nertiti, but rose in consumption markets like Zalingei in the rainy season when trade flows were disrupted. Central Darfur supplied Omdurman through the El Ingaz Road, and also supplied Chad and other Darfur states.
- Demand for daily labouring opportunities was mainly from the agricultural sector. Wage rates remained stable.
- Some of the internal roads in Central Darfur were affected by Wadis flooding, especially during July to August 2016. However, the El Ingaz Road connecting Darfur with Omdurman is functioning well. The number of checkpoints have been reduced although this has not brought transportation costs down.

Recommendations:

As security improves and economic opportunities open up, livelihoods of communities that are emerging from stressed conditions into recovery mode should be supported.

Specifically:

- With improved security and an upsurge in the livestock trade in Central Darfur, ways of supporting this trade should be sought, including improved infrastructure of livestock markets (for example through improved availability of water, food and latrines), improved animal health services and improved mobility between markets.
- Investment in all-weather roads in Central Darfur would greatly improve trade flows from production to consumption areas, especially during the rainy season when flowing wadis disrupt trade routes, push prices up, and negatively affect market integration.
- The extreme seasonality of onion prices, in terms of availability and price fluctuations, could be addressed through the improvement of storage facilities (for example cold stores).



Participating CBOs and the markets they monitor

Sudanese Environment Conservation Society (SECS)
Darfur Development and Reconstruction Agency (DDRA)
Almanar
Daro Baida
Albaraka Agriculture Organisation (AAO)
Arebow Charity Organisation (ACO)

Zalingei
Umshalaya
Nertiti
Garsila and Delaig
Bendisi, Umdukhn and Mukjar
Abatta and Tereig

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Cereals

The agriculture sector in Central Darfur is totally dependant on rainfall, which is a major factor influencing the market price. Parts of Central Darfur like the Azum zone - Zalingei, Abata and Um Shalaya - are famous for millet and local sorghum production. The Wadi Salih zone which includes Garsilla, Dellage and Mukjar is famous for the production of millet, supplying other Darfur states.

Cereal prices were stable from March to July 2015 following high production in the 2014 agricultural season. See Figure 1. But from August to November 2015, prices rose steadily after the delay in rainfall in 2015, especially in consumption areas like Zalingei. The local authorities intervened from July 2015, distributing millet from the strategic reserve to their staff: one or more sacks per employee, to be paid for in installments. This increased supply and helped to stabilize prices, although they rose once again with conflict in the Jebel Marra between December 2015 and February 2016. This had a knock-on effect on cereal availability and food security in most parts of Central Darfur, and interrupted cereal trade flows out of Jebel Marra to other states such as North Darfur.

During the six month period of March to August 2016 cereal prices in Central Darfur's main markets (Zalingei, Um Shalaya, Bindisi, Abata, Nertiti) were generally stable. Prices decreased in June and July 2016 after heavy rain and with greater stability in the Jebel Marra area, but slightly increased in August, which is the usual seasonal trend, as seen also in 2015. See Figure 1. Overall there is likely to be an increase in price in the coming months until the next harvest season. Figure 2 shows how much higher cereal prices have been between March and August 2016 compared with the same 6 months of the previous year, 2015.

State government has directives in place to prevent the movement of cereals from Central Darfur to other Darfur states. Despite this, during the March to August period the informal trade in cereals to other states, including to Nyala town, increased as cereal traders used small 4WD vehicles like Land Cruisers instead of heavy trucks for transportation, avoiding the main routes and checkpoints.

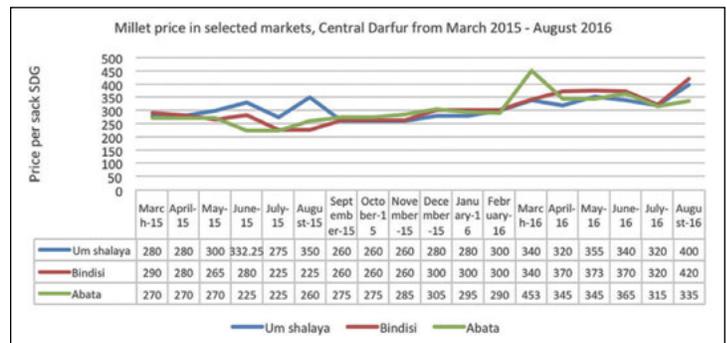


Figure 1 Millet price in selected markets, Central Darfur from March 2015 to August 2016

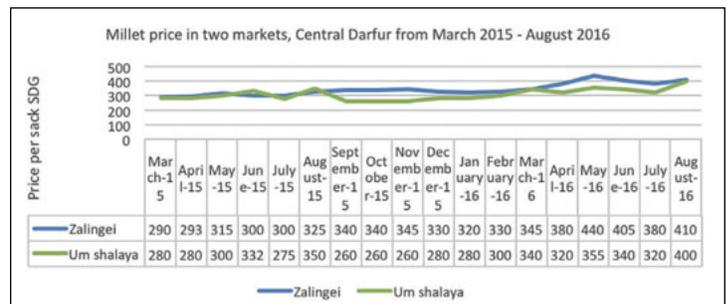


Figure 2 Millet price in two markets, Central Darfur from March 2015 to August 2016

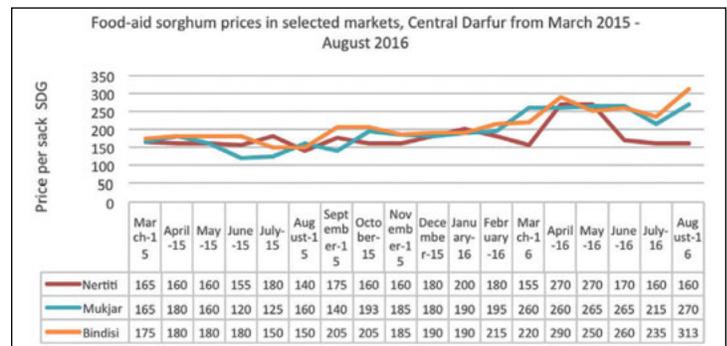


Figure 3 Food-aid sorghum in selected markets, Central Darfur from March 2015 to August 2016

In response to fluctuating rainfall which can negatively impact food security, the Ministry of Agriculture distributes seeds, purportedly of higher quality and shorter duration of production. This programme was stepped up in 2016 with the sale of seed in the market. In July 2016 the Ministry of Agriculture also established a research farm for cereals in the Azum area to support production of improved seeds for Central Darfur, and to train farmers in using those seeds. Some institutions, including the Agricultural Bank, distribute agricultural inputs to some producers at reduced rates or on credit, to be paid in installments, in Zalingei, Dellage and Garsilla.

Figure 3 shows food-aid sorghum prices which also rose between March and May 2016, but fell in June, July and August in Nertiti when there were WFP food aid distributions.

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Livestock

Central Darfur is an important area for animal production, including cattle and sheep. It has rich pasture for grazing and has a long border with Chad and Central Africa, as well as linking with West Darfur and South Darfur. Each year, during June to August, pastoralists migrate with their animals from the wetter areas in the south to the dry lands in northern areas. This can cause a fall in supply and increase in price at the beginning of the migration season until the end of the migration season (in October) when the animals return, bringing stability back to the prices. There is some evidence of this trend in Zalingei. See Figure 4. Pastoralists who had moved with their livestock into Central African Republic during the conflict, appear to be returning to Central Darfur, to the Wadi Salih area, now that the situation has stabilized along the border. But they have not moved back into the Jebel Marra area, even though the situation has recently stabilized there, thus causing local prices to rise because of lack of supply. Despite an annual livestock vaccination campaign, animal health is generally poor.

During the last six months (March to August 2016) Um Dukhun was the main supplier of cattle. Many traders were able to resume their activities in Um Dukhun after stability returned to the area. There are other important markets for livestock including Zalingei, Treij and Bindisi as these markets had been developed and used as substitution markets for animal supply when the conflict took place in the Um Dukhun area during 2014.

Generally, livestock (cattle and sheep) prices were relatively stable during the previous 18 months in these main livestock markets, especially cattle prices. See Figure 4. Sheep prices

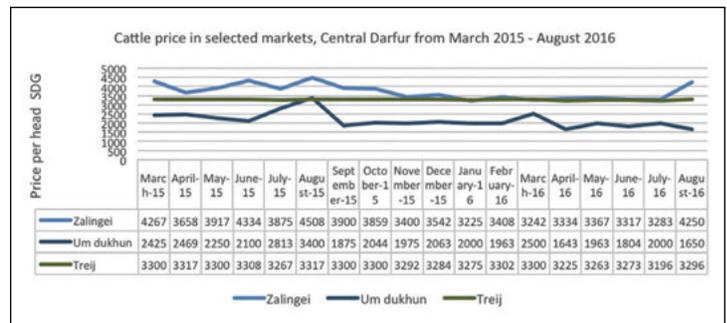


Figure 4 Cattle price in selected markets, Central Darfur from March 2015 – August 2016

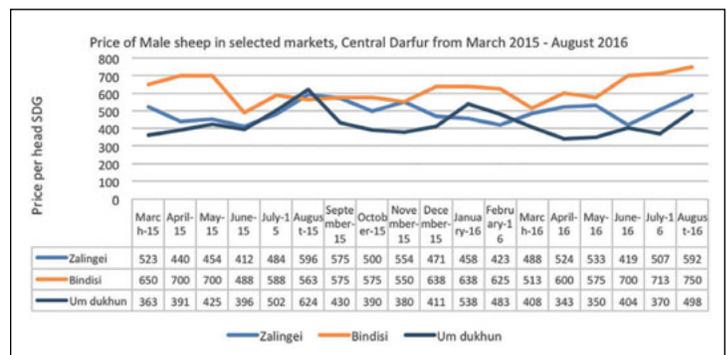


Figure 5 Price of Male sheep in selected markets, Central Darfur from March 2015 – August 2016

showed an upwards trend from May/June 2016 during the month of Ramadan and for Eid. See Figure 5. A new phenomenon in 2016 is the return of livestock traders working as agents for large scale-traders in Omdurman, to the most secure markets in Central Darfur such as Zalingei, Garsilla and Um Dukhun, from March up until Eid Aladha. As livestock are taken to Omdurman, goods and food products are brought back to Central Darfur, thus increasing market activity and the availability of commodities in Central Darfur's markets.

No large numbers of **camels** and **horses** were registered during the six month period in Central Darfur's markets.

Local donkeys were mainly used as a means of transport and for agricultural purposes, especially in rural areas such as Nertiti, Bindisi and Um Shalaya. They tend to be cheaper in large towns such as Zalingei where they are used much less.

Daily Labour

The agricultural sector is one of the most important sources of daily wages and work opportunities during the last 15 months because of high demand for labour, and therefore, higher wage rates compared with other sectors such as brick-making and construction. The type of agricultural work varies over time, and is seasonally dependent. For example, during the rainy season from June to November it begins with the cultivation of cereals such as

dried okra, dried tomatoes and groundnuts, followed by irrigated cultivation of onions, sugar cane, potatoes, okra, garlic and animal fodder when the rainy season has ended. The wage rate per day is between SDG 25 to 30 per person. This rate has remained constant over the six month period, March to August 2015. Most daily labourers are women and children, a common feature of daily labouring in the agriculture sector in Central Darfur.

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Cash Crops

Most dried tomatoes in Central Darfur are produced in the Jebel Marra area, known for its high quality. This is the main source of supply for other parts of Central Darfur such as Um Dukhun and Wadi Salih, as well as other Darfur states including North, West and South Darfur. Due to the conflict in Jebel Marra early this year, this affected the flow of dried tomatoes from the area and therefore the price. Traders have had to bring dried tomatoes from other areas such as West Darfur, pushing the price up. See Figure 6. Dried okra is produced in most parts of Central Darfur particular in the Wadi Salih zone. The prices of both dried tomatoes and dried okra are also influenced by seasonality.

Central Darfur is not a major production area for groundnuts. They are only used for local consumption of groundnut oil, therefore they are only found in big markets like Zalingei and Um Dukhun. While the overall price trend was fairly stable, there were monthly fluctuations, as in Zalingei. This could be due to

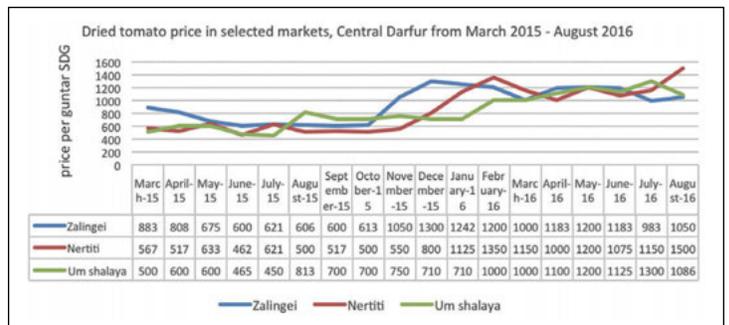


Figure 6 Dried tomato price in selected markets, Central Darfur from March 2015 – August 2016

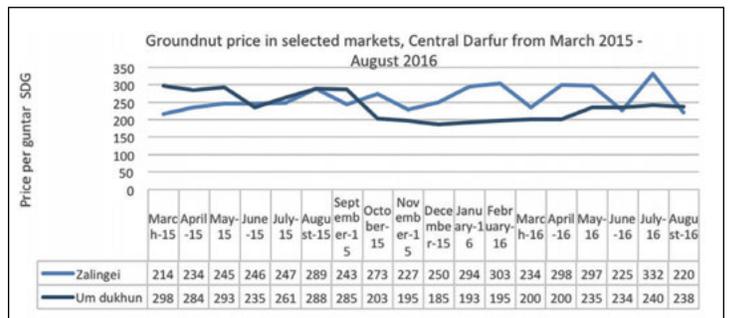


Figure 7 Groundnut price in selected markets, Central Darfur from March 2015 – August 2016

the timing of the arrival of trade convoys, en route from Omdurman to El Geneiena, which bring cheap cooking oil to Zalingei from Omdurman, temporarily pushing prices down. See Figure 7.



Trade routes

During the six month period of March to August 2016 the number of checkpoints along most of Central Darfur's trading routes decreased due to a decision by the President of the Republic to remove those checkpoints. However, this has not resulted in a reduction of prices which are influenced by high transportation costs, in turn due to high fuel costs as well as increased costs during the rainy season when there is an increase in fuel consumption and increased journey times compared with the dry season.

The **Zalingei – Kass - Nyala Road** (the extension of the El Ingaz Road) is the major trade route in Central Darfur linking Western Sudan with the central and eastern parts of the country and passing through Jebel Marra. This is used as the main transportation road for both people and commodities such as building materials and cooking oil, as well as for the export of local production like agricultural commodities and fruit. During the last six months (March to August 2016) there has been a reduction in the number of checkpoints over this road (for the reasons mentioned above). However, transportation costs have not been affected and remain high.

The **Um Dukhun – Garsilla – Zalingei Road** is an important trade route that links the livestock supply area in Um Dukhun/ Central Africa and Chad with other parts of Central Darfur, carrying materials and other commodities to and from Um Dukhun. This has been blocked and reopened several times during this six month period due to flowing Wadis. The distance of the route is about 212km. The main materials coming from Central Africa and Chad along this road were skins and leather from wild animals, elephant ivory, honey, perfume and beauty creams in addition to livestock and bamboo.

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Fruit and vegetables

Central Darfur is the main production area for onions, supplying West Darfur, South Darfur and even Chad. Onions are produced across all of Central Darfur due to the fertility and appropriate land. Most farmers in Central Darfur are dependent on onions for part of their income. Seasonality significantly impacts onion prices. They are cheaper during the harvest season in January up to June, and start to rise during the rainy season (July to December) as it is very difficult to store onions during this time. See Figure 8.

Central Darfur is a very important source of oranges. Despite the conflict, Jebel Marra remains the major production area, producing both high quantities and high quality¹. During these six months (March to August 2016) Jebel Marra continued supplying Omdurman through Nyala and Geneina, and Chad and Central Africa through Um Dukhun, an indication of the improved security situation around the area. Transportation costs

¹ See the cash crop trade study, 'Taking Root', in 2013 for a description of how resilient the orange trade out of Jebel Marra has been <http://fic.tufts.edu/publication-item/taking-root/>

Background and methodology

The goal of this community-based market monitoring initiative is to deepen analysis and understanding of the shifting patterns of trade and markets in Darfur, on an ongoing basis for key agricultural and livestock commodities, to identify how livelihoods and the economy can be supported through trade, and to identify peace-building opportunities through trade. Five CBOs/NGOs plus DDRA are monitoring 10 markets across Central Darfur on a weekly basis. Quantitative data, for example the price of Darfur's main cereals, livestock, cash crops and fruits and vegetables are collected weekly as well as qualitative data, for example on sources of supply. Some data are collected on a monthly basis, for example transport costs, transport routes and the impact of the conflict on flows of commodities. DDRA holds six-monthly analysis workshops with the CBO enumerators.

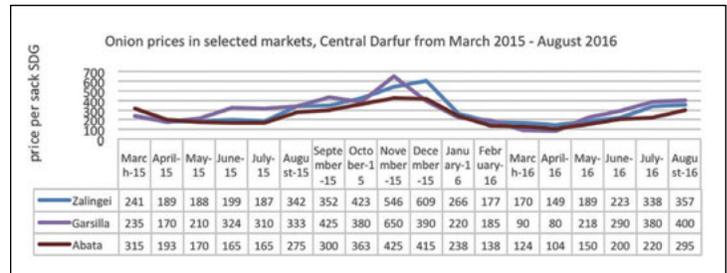


Figure 8 Onion prices in selected markets, Central Darfur, from March 2015 – August 2016

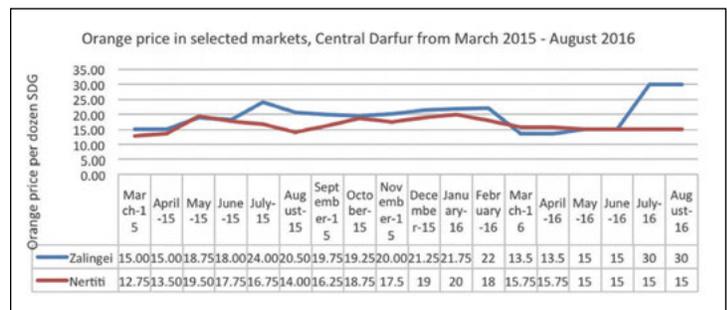


Figure 9 Orange price in selected markets, Central Darfur from March 2015 – August 2016

determine the price of oranges, increasing during the rainy season when the roads may be blocked and there is less security. See Figure 9 which shows a sharp increase in the price of oranges in Zalingei in July and August 2016 as flooding wadis blocked routes out of the Jebel Marra area and lorries stopped moving out of Zalingei.



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