

## Annex 14

# Market surveys

Markets are a very useful source of information regarding the status of the agricultural season but more is required than a simple examination of prices. You need to know who is buying what and why? Who is selling what and why? Who is benefiting and who is losing?

### Key Informants and Information

The obvious key informants are those buying and selling natural-resources-based products.

While spot prices are monitored, data on the following market characteristics should also be collected, including how the situation varies from last year and what would be normal:

- the numbers of people buying or selling,
- the local products they are selling/buying,
- from where they have come,
- to where they are going,
- the means of transport,
- difficulties experienced in movement of goods
- the quantities they are handling,
- the quality of the goods,
- the number of presentations made for the same items before sale,

As popular memories are only as accurate as a trader's acumen and instinct allow, request written records of presentations and actual sales with prices (disaggregated by quality, class and gender for livestock) from the **municipal authorities** for each market visited.

This exercise and all other market related work should be undertaken by a **local CF-SAM team member**, who speaks the language of the area. International team members should remain at a distance as their presence almost invariably has a serious adverse effect on the validity of market data obtained. Vehicles with logos relating to food aid or donor institutions should not be used for this exercise.

Such data, once obtained, should be cross-checked by interviews conducted by the same team members, by themselves, with the cluster of traders present in the market at the time of the visit and reasons for any measurable changes in market conditions and prices discussed.

Predictions as to changes in the condition of the market over the coming few months should also be sought from traders in local commodities and straights who have traded in the locality for several years.

Be aware of the fact that the dealer rings, price setting, and trader monopolies are the norm rather than the exception and are uncontrolled in most CFSAM countries. See also Annexes 17 and 18.