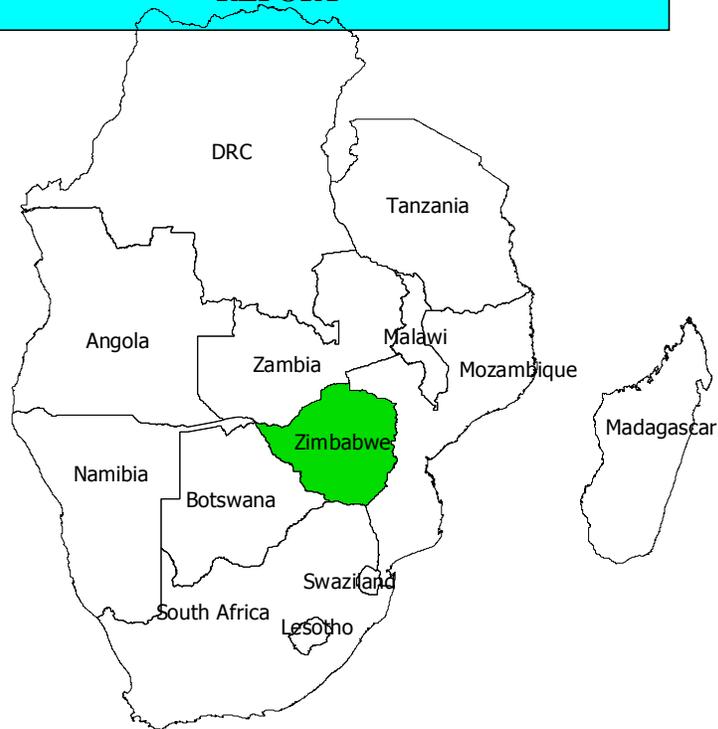


**ZIMBABWE  
FOOD SECURITY AND VULNERABILITY  
ASSESSMENTS – JUNE 2005  
REPORT**



**Report No. 5  
June 2005  
Harare**

Prepared in collaboration with SIRDC – Food and Nutrition Council; Ministry of Agriculture- AREX, Ministry of Water and Development, Ministries of Public Service Labour and Social Welfare, Ministry of Health and Child Welfare, Ministry of Local Government, Public Works and Urban Development, CSO, UNWFP, FAO, FEWSNET, UZ and NGOs

With financial support from Government of Zimbabwe, WFP, FAO, UNDP, UNICEF, WORLD VISION and SADC FANR RVAC

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## **Preface**

The June 2005 Zimbabwe Food Security and Vulnerability Assessment Report presents the detailed results of the fifth rural food security assessment conducted by the Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee (ZimVAC)\*. The assessments started in August 2002 with technical support from the SADC-FANR Regional Vulnerability Assessment Committee (RVAC). Since then, four rural and one urban food security and vulnerability assessments have been carried out in Zimbabwe. The assessments have provided the Government of Zimbabwe and other stakeholders with vital information for policy formulation, planning, decision-making, evaluation and research at both national and sub-national levels.

This report seeks to further guide interventions in areas where issues concerning food availability, access and accessibility, education, household health, water and sanitation have gone below acceptable levels.

The report provides highlights and major findings in line with the specific objectives of the assessments, defines methodology used in both data collection and analysis. It goes on to address sectoral issues like health, education and agriculture and then concludes with recommendations.

## Acknowledgements

These assessments were made possible through the generous financial and in-kind contributions made:

- Government of Zimbabwe
  - Scientific and Industrial Research Development Centre
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  - Ministry of Local Government, Public Works and Urban Development
  - CSO
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- NGOS
  - World Vision
  - CRS
  - COSV
  - SC (UK)
  - Action Aid
  - FEWSNET
- Others
  - UZ
  - SADC RVAC

Field researchers were drawn from Government, NGOs and UN Agencies.

ZimVAC acknowledges this invaluable support from these organizations

## Acronyms

AREX	Agricultural, Research, and Extension Service
BEAM	Basic Education Assistance Module
CSO	Central Statistical Office
EA	Enumeration Area
EHHs	Elderly Headed Household
FANR	Food , Agriculture and Natural Resources
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization
FEWSNET	Famine Early Warning System Network
FEZ	Food Economy Zone
FHHs	Female Headed Household
FNC	Food and Nutrition Council
GMB	Grain Marketing Board
GoZ	Government of Zimbabwe
HBC	Home Based Care
HHs	Households
LBVA	Livelihoods Based Vulnerability Analysis
MHHs	Male Headed Households
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
RVAC	Regional Vulnerability and Assessment Committee
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SC (UK)	Save the Children United Kingdom
SIRDC	Scientific and Industrial Research and Development Centre
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Education Fund
UNWFP	United Nations World Food Programme
VAC	Vulnerability Assessment Committee
VCT	Voluntary Counseling and Testing
ZDHS	Zimbabwe Demographic Health Survey
ZimVAC	Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee

## **Glossary of terms**

Child	A person aged between 0-17 yrs
Chronically ILL	A person who has been ill to the extent of being unable to do normal activities around the house for at least 3 months of the past 12 months
Coping Strategy	Coping strategies refer to the specific efforts that people employ to reduce or minimize stressful situations.
Dependency Ratio	A measure of the portion of a population which is composed of dependents (people who are too young (0-17) or too old (60+), chronically ill (18-59). The dependency ratio was calculated by dividing sum of the number inactive (0-17, 60+, chronically ill 18-59) by number of active (18-59) people.
Dietary Diversity	Is the number of different foods consumed over a given period of time.
Food Consumption Index (FCI)	A measure of dietary diversity of the household.
Food Economy Zone	A geographical area in which people obtain food in more or less the same ways.
Food Insecure Households	Households that will not be able to meet their daily minimum energy requirements of 2100 Kcals per person (of which at least 70 percent will be from cereals), at all times during the April 2005 to March 2006 period.
Food Secure Households	Households that will be able to meet their daily minimum energy requirements of 2100 Kcals per person (of which at least 70 percent will be from cereals), at all times during the April 2005 to March 2006 period.
Food Security	Access to adequate food through own production, purchases and direct sources for productive and healthy living at all times.
Head of Household	The key decision maker in the household as perceived by the respondent.
Household	People living and eating together

LBVA	It acknowledges that access to food is not exclusively related to food production or availability, but also the ability of people to purchase and use other food entitlements at their disposal
Livelihoods:	All the activities that the households engage in to earn a living.
Village	An administrative unit headed by head of village.
Vulnerability	The level of exposure of a household or community to particular shock (external vulnerability) and their capacity to cope with that shock (internal vulnerability)

## Highlights of the Report

### Food Security

- A total population of 2.9 million people, which constitutes 36% of the rural population, will not be able to meet their household food requirements during the 2005/06 marketing year.
- A total of 225,455 Mt of maize will be required to meet house hold deficit for this population.
- The greatest number of people predicted to be food insecure will be in Masvingo (549 877) and Manicaland (529 983) provinces.
- Thirty five percent of the households had a low FCI, 27 percent had a medium FCI and 38 had a high FCI.
- Food insecure households were found already engaging in negative coping mechanisms. Reduction of number of meals per day (62%) was the most common followed by reduction of expenditure on education (41%), health expenditure (36%) and on agricultural inputs (35%). The least mentioned strategy (3%) was consumption of cereal seeds

### Education, Health and Child Welfare

- Of all those children not in school, 29 percent were aged 6-12 years, 71 percent were aged 13-17 years. The highest number of those not in school are orphans.
- A quarter of the children aged 0-17 years were orphans. Of these, 14 percent were paternal orphans, 4 percent maternal and 7 percent had lost both parents
- The proportion of communities reporting availability of voluntary counseling and testing facilities increased from 25 percent in 2004 (ZimVAC April 2004) to 36 percent in 2005 (ZimVAC June 2005).
- Sixty two percent of deaths occurred in the 18-59 years age group, followed by children under five (18%), the elderly (15%) and 5-17yrs (5%).
- Fifty one percent of the chronically ill people are in the economically active age group (18-59) years.
- A total of 95% of the surveyed households are using iodized salt.
- Dietary

### **Agriculture**

- The proportion of households which received seed from the Government increased from 14% (ZimVAC April 2004) for the 2003/04 cropping season to 42% (ZimVAC June 2005) for the 2004/05 agricultural season.
- Thirty six percent of the households are expecting to get seed from the Government, 26% are expecting to purchase and 15 % do not know where they will get seed from for the 2005/06 cropping season.

### **Community challenges and Priorities**

- The major challenges identified by communities in order of severity were: drought, price increases, shortage of draught power, sanitation , lack of safe water and livestock diseases
- To address the identified challenges the community proposed the following in order of priority: borehole rehabilitation and drilling, irrigation development and rehabilitation, credit plans and agricultural inputs

## **1.0 Executive Summary**

### **1.1 Purpose of Assessment**

The 2004/05 cropping season was characterized by prolonged dry spells occurring during important crop growing periods. Dry spells were experienced in October to November 2005, January to February 2005 and in March 2005. As a result the crop production was below normal. The situation is being further aggravated by the general socio-economic challenges that the country is going through which are: three consecutive years of low harvests at household level, high HIV and AIDS prevalence rate, periodic shortages of some basic commodities and diminishing purchasing power of the Zimbabwe dollar.

The assessment is meant to provide Government and relevant stakeholders at various levels with information for planning and decision-making. The broad objectives of the assessment were, to appraise the rural food security situation throughout the country, identify areas and populations likely to be food insecure in the 2005/2006 marketing year. Secondly, explore rural livelihoods in order to determine short and medium term needs and opportunities for sustainable interventions.

The specific objectives were:

- To predict the extent and intensity of rural food insecurity at household level throughout the 2005/06 marketing year, quantifying the food gap and its geographic distribution.
- To explore rural livelihoods in particular, household demographics, including gender dimension, asset ownership, education, child protection, health and HIV & Aids
- To establish changes in rural livelihoods and coping strategies
- To identify community challenges and opportunities for sustainable rural livelihoods
- To recommend short and medium term activities for sustainable livelihood based interventions.

### **1.2 Methodology**

The survey sampled a total of 100 sites representing all of the 23 Food Economy Zones (FEZ - geographical area in which people obtain food in more or less the same ways) across all the eight provinces and farming sectors. The sample was then stratified proportionally as follows: communal areas (70% of sample), Old resettlement areas and small scale farms (7%), newly resettled A1 areas (14%) and newly resettled A2 areas and large scale commercial farms (9%). For the purpose of the survey large scale commercial farms were considered to be commercial farms whose size is greater than A2 newly resettled areas. At each selected site, one village was randomly selected and a total of 31 households were then systematically selected for the household interviews. A total of 3,100 households and 100 key informants' interviews were conducted.

The data was then analyzed within the Livelihood Based Vulnerability Analysis (LBVA) framework. The framework acknowledges that access to food is not exclusively related to food production or availability, but also the ability of people to purchase and use other food entitlements at their disposal. The data collected was then triangulated with other secondary information. The main findings of which are summarized below.

## 2.0 Findings

### 2.1 Livelihoods

Households were relying on more than one household activity (livelihood). The analysis revealed that 81% of the households' main livelihood activity was farming, followed by market gardening (21%) which was also agricultural, informal employment (14%) and formal employment (12%).

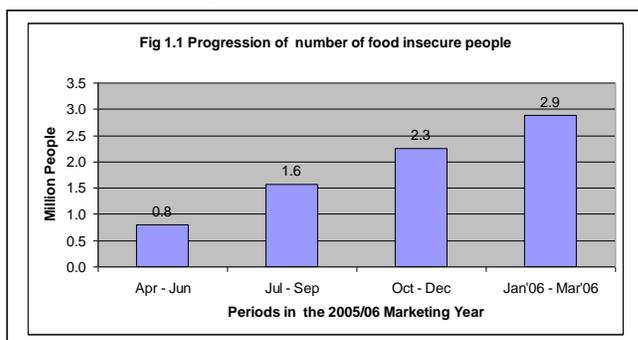
The main source of income for households was farming (41%), vegetable vending and market gardening (13%), formal wages (13%) and agricultural casual labour (11%). About 27% of households reported that they have other children who do not stay at the household but assisted from time to time through remittances.

### 2.2 Food Insecure Rural Population (2005/06 marketing year)

The following food security projection will hold if the current access conditions in terms of grain availability, prices and rural purchasing power prevail.

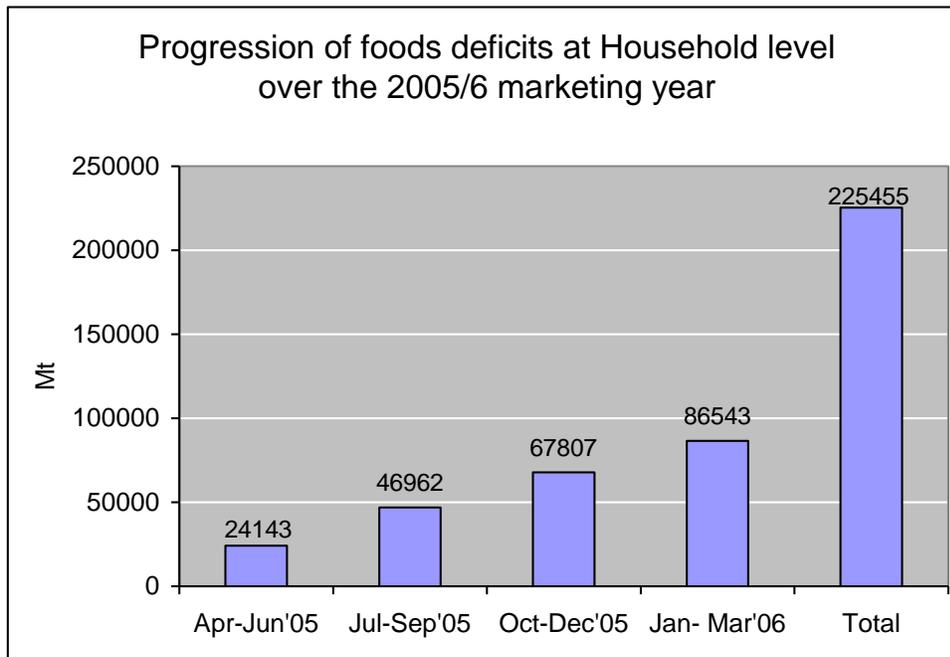
A total population of 2.9 million people, which is 36 % of the rural population, will not be able to meet their food requirements during the 2005/06 marketing year. The population breakdown for the different time periods is as follows:

- 800 000 for the period April to June 2005,
- 1.6 million during July to September 2005
- 2.3 million during October to December 2005
- 2.9 million during the period January to March 2006 (see fig 1.1).



The food insecure population was understood to be people who will not be able to meet their daily minimum energy requirements 2100 Kcals (of which at least 70 percent should be from cereals), at all times during the April 2005 to March 2006 period.

The total amount of maize required to meet the deficit of the Food Insecure households is 225,455 Mt (see fig 1.2).



Overall majority of the food insecure people were in Masvingo and Manicaland provinces (see table below). However distribution of food insecure people at district level at the peak of hunger period (January 2006-March 2006) showed that the top most affected people are in Kariba, Rushinga, Mudzi, Gokwe and Binga districts (see annexe for complete list of prevalence of food insecurity at district level)

## Food Insecure Population By Province-2005-06

PROVINCE	AUGUST 2005 RURAL POP	Apr - Jun	Jul – Sep	Oct - Nov	Jan - Mar
Manicaland	1,342,821	137,276	262,556	367,523	471,354
Mash Central	991,538	118,955	212,420	286,443	350,539
Mash East	1,039,557	107,079	196,147	296,937	368,439
Mash West	947,803	57,656	126,764	200,420	258,840
Masvingo	1,257,270	153,817	291,253	400,833	504,428
Mat North	643,927	57,486	117,882	165,927	213,511
Mat South	635,258	18,030	84,364	140,011	203,428
Midlands	1,172,917	122,697	250,158	380,316	488,713
Grand Rural Total	8,031,091	772,996	1,541,545	2,238,411	2,859,253

Source : ZimVAC June 2005

### 2.2.1 Characteristics of food insecure households

Households, which were classified as food insecure can be identified by the following characteristics:

- Households with orphans
- Female-headed households
- Households with the chronically ill head
- Household head with low education level
- Widow-headed households
- Elderly-headed households
- Households that had a recent death of one of their members were found to be due to incurring funeral expense

### 2.2.2 Coping Strategies of the Food Insecure

Food insecure households were found already engaging in negative coping mechanisms. Reduction of number of meals per day (62%) was the most common followed by reduction of expenditure on education (41%), health expenditure (36%) and on agricultural inputs (35%). The least mentioned strategy (3%) was consumption of treated seeds.

### **2.3 Health**

The majority (60%) of the communities reported having access to general health facilities, a decrease from 75 percent who had reported to have access to general health facilities in 2004 (ZimVAC April 2004). Access to Home Based Care programmes decreased from 66 percent in 2004 (ZimVAC April 2004) to 62 percent in 2005 (ZimVAC June 2005). Availability of voluntary counseling and testing facilities has increased from 25 percent in 2004 (ZimVAC April 2004) to 36 percent in 2005 (ZimVAC June 2005).

Households reported that 36 percent of deaths occurred in the 30-49 years age group, followed by children under 5 years (18%), then the age group 18-29 years (16%) and the elderly group (15%). It is important to note that 62 percent of the deaths occurred in the productive age group (18 – 59yrs), and in addition 51 percent of the chronically ill people are in this age group. This is likely to have a negative impact on the livelihoods of the affected households as well as on the nation.

Although 95% of households were using iodized salt, there is evidence of suboptimal iodine levels in the salt according to data available on monitoring activities done in 2005 by Ministry of Health.

### **2.4 Nutrition**

Cereals (33%) and vegetables (24%) were the most frequently consumed foods by the majority of the households during the 3 days prior to the survey. Sugar and/or sugar products and cooking oil make up 14 percent and 13 percent, respectively. Meanwhile animal protein comprising mainly meat and fish (3%) was among the least consumed foods. A Food Consumption Index (FCI) was computed (FCI measures dietary diversity of the household). The FCI classification used is as follows:

- low (less than 14)
- medium (14-22)
- high (greater than 22)

Thirty five percent of the households had a low FCI, 27 percent had a medium FCI and 38 percent had a high FCI and there is a strong positive correlation between FCI and food security. Households that consume a less diversified diet are more likely to be food insecure.

### **2.5 Education**

The proportion of school going children aged (6-17yrs) children not in school decreased from 25 percent in 2004 (ZimVAC April 2004) to 18 percent in 2005 (ZimVAC June 2005). Of all those children not in school, 29 percent were aged 6-12 years and 71 percent were aged 13-17 years. This result shows that after primary education some children are not proceeding to secondary school level.

Among the dropouts, the major reason (60%) that was cited for being out of school was lack of school fees.

## **2.6 Access to water**

About 48 percent of the communities interviewed had no access to safe water; the main sources of water for these communities were shallow and deep open wells, rivers, streams and dams. One of the main priority areas cited by the communities for intervention was borehole drilling and rehabilitation. This is to address the problems the communities are having in accessing water. Less than half of the communities surveyed confirmed that they had access to safe water mainly from boreholes.

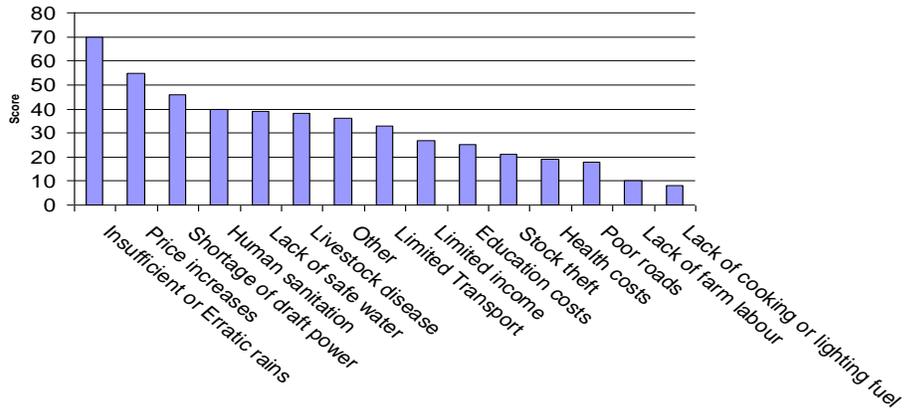
## **2.7 Agriculture**

About 58 percent of households had sufficient seed for the 2004/05 agricultural season compared to 25 percent during the 2003/04 agricultural season. This was mainly due to the Government input programme for the 2004/05; the survey showed that 42 percent of the farmers received inputs from the Grain Marketing Board. As a result of this support during the previous cropping season, about 36 percent of the households interviewed are expecting to get seed from the Government for the 2005/06 cropping season. However 26 percent of the households are expecting to purchase inputs from the market. Cattle ownership decreased from 49% in the last agricultural marketing year (2004/2005) to 42% in this current marketing year (2005/2006).

## **2.8 Community Challenges**

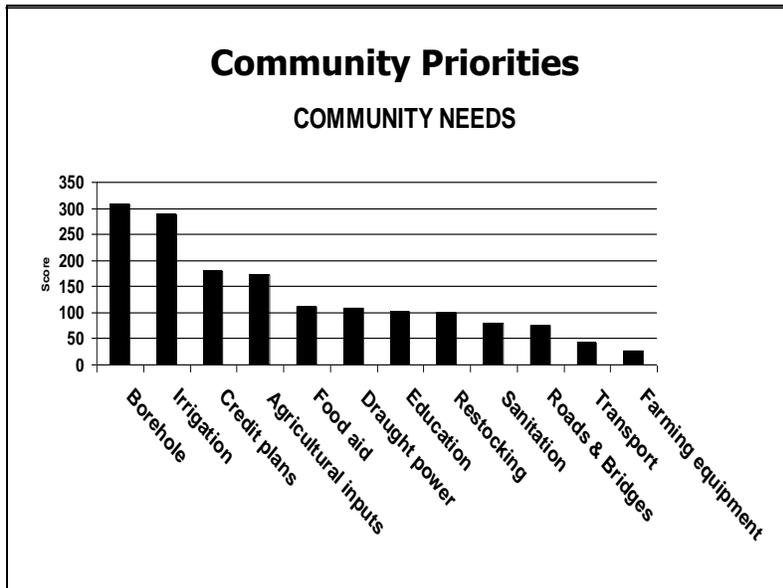
The major challenges identified by communities in order of severity are indicated in the graph below:

### Community Challenges (2004/05)



### 2.9 Community Priorities

The main needs in order of priority identified by communities are indicated in the graph below:



### 3.0 Recommendations

In order to address the immediate needs of the food insecure people, it is recommended that:

#### 3.1 Food Security

- As a result of the low harvest from the 2004/05 cropping season, households will depend on purchases to meet their food requirements. Grain should therefore be made available on the market for households to purchase. The plans to import 1.2 million MT of maize announced by the Government must be implemented.
- Grain should be made available on the market for households to purchase. Government should maintain the price of maize at current levels of ZW\$36 000 per 50 kg bag (720/kg) and ensure efficient distribution so that the number of food insecure people will not increase from the current projected 2.9 million people.
- Special Intervention programmes such as Public Works Programme (PWP), Targeted Cash Transfers, Child Supplementary Feeding and School Feeding programmes need to be continued and expanded to cover the needs of the vulnerable.
- Food assistance targeted at the elderly, chronically ill as well as Home Based Care programmes should also be continued.
- Special Intervention programmes such as Public Works Programme (PWP), Targeted Cash Transfers, Child Supplementary Feeding and School Feeding programmes need to be continued and expanded to cover the needs of the vulnerable.
- **Community participation:** A total of 36% of the rural population was vulnerable to food insecurity. Community initiatives to deal with vulnerability should be encouraged, such Zunde ra Mambo, community seed multiplication schemes, social safety nets (extended family support) mechanisms to identify vulnerable people.
- Technology to ensure that households with reduced labour due to illness, old age etc, can still be productive.

#### 3.2 Education

- Majority of children dropping out of school cited lack of school fees as the major reason and also the bulk of these children were orphans. Ministry of Education should ensure that the BEAM programme be continued and expanded. There is also need for disbursements of school fees under the BEAM programme to be done at the beginning of each term rather than once at the beginning of the year to ensure that children who fall in difficult circumstances during the course of the year are catered for.

### 3.3 Agriculture

- Given that the communities attributed their poor harvest to lack of draught power, unavailability and late distribution of agricultural inputs, and erratic rains. There is therefore need for:
  - Government to announce the agricultural input plans for each cropping season by July of every year to enable farmers to make appropriate decisions.
  - Government and other relevant stakeholders in the private sectors to have distribution systems that are efficient to enable farmers to access seed in time. The efficiency includes sequencing of inputs, i.e. financing, tillage, basal fertilizers, seeds, etc. The inputs should be suitable for the ecological zones.
- **Irrigation:** Insufficient and erratic rains were cited as a major problem by the communities during the 2004/05 cropping season. Communities also cited irrigation and boreholes as their major priorities; therefore it is important for government and relevant stakeholders at all levels to expand irrigation programmes and also the drilling and rehabilitation of boreholes in the rural areas.
- **Conservation Farming:** Given that lack of draught power was attributed to poor harvests, there is need for Ministry of Agriculture to vigorously promote conservation farming practices such as minimum / zero tillage and autumn ploughing
- **Cattle Ownership:** Cattle ownership decreased from 49% in the last agricultural marketing year to 42% in this current marketing year. There is need to continuously monitor and improve the livestock restocking programmes.

### 3.4 Health and Other Issues

- Strengthen monitoring of salt iodization programme. Development of Information, Education and Communication materials targeting informal traders is crucial.
- **Home based care programmes:** Given that almost 40% of the communities are not accessing home based care programmes and given the context of HIV pandemic, there is need for NAC and its partners to increase coverage of home based programmes.
- 
- **OVCs:** Orphaned children had high school drop out rates. There is need to strengthen OVC programmes to address the needs of this growing number of OVCs

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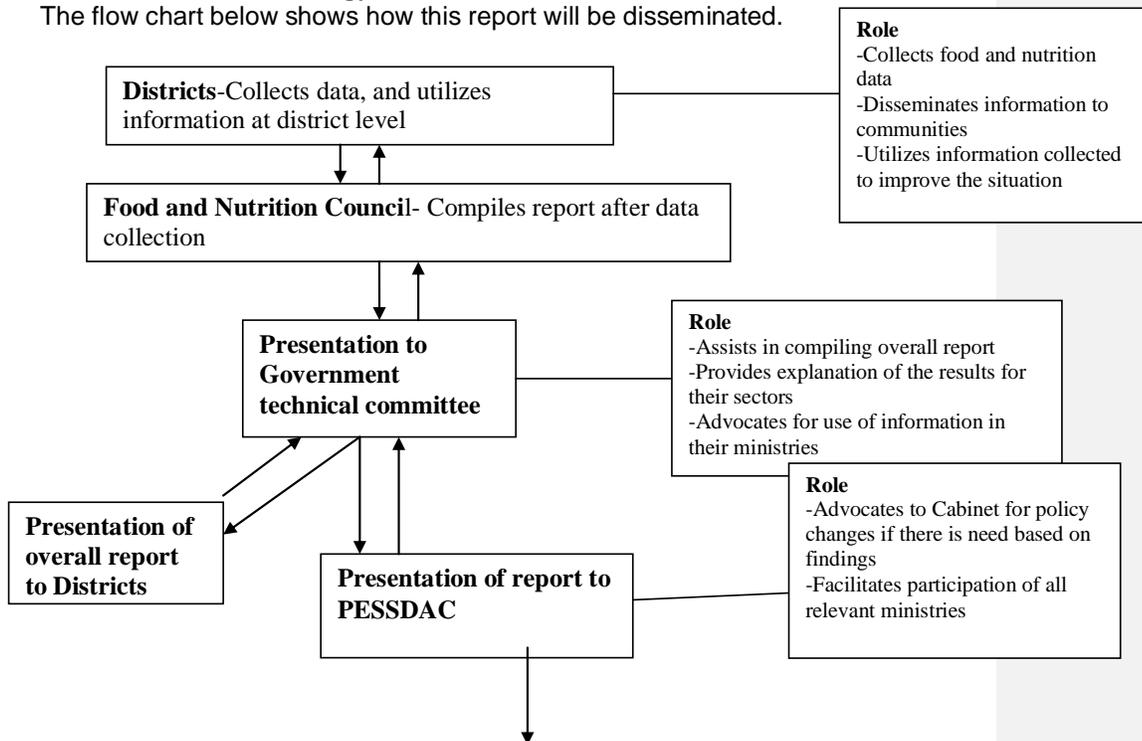
### 3.5 Monitoring

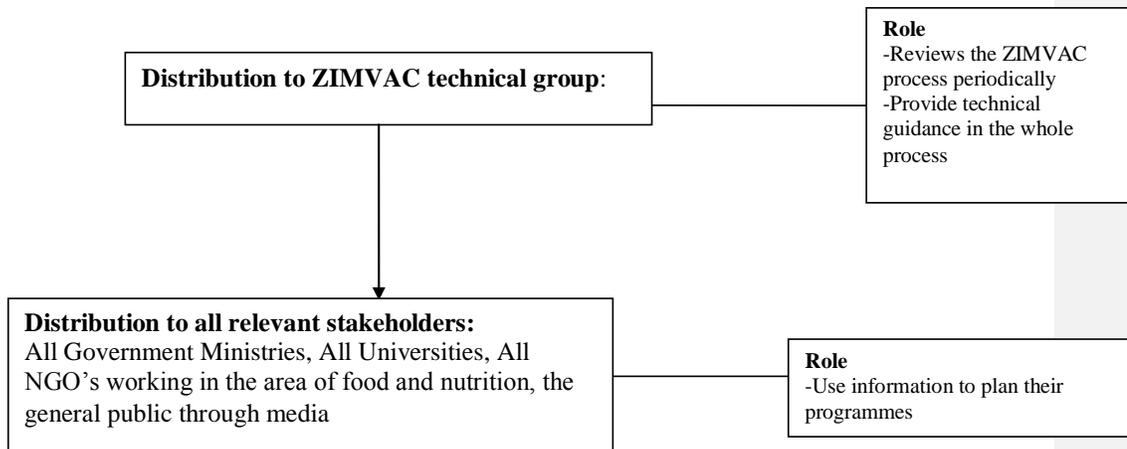
- The number of the food insecure is dependent on availability and price of maize on the market. There is therefore need for close monitoring the price of maize in order to inform the Government on food security situation.
- PESSDDAC is requested to encourage relevant technical departments to participate in food security and vulnerability monitoring and also to address issues in their sectors that may impact on food security status of the population.

### 3.6 Financing Vulnerability Assessments

### 3.7 Dissemination Strategy for the results

The flow chart below shows how this report will be disseminated.





#### 4.0 Conclusion

Food insecurity situation in Zimbabwe is largely a result of limited capacity of households to cope in the event of a shock like drought, death and disease. It was observed that households that relied only on agriculture as their livelihood activity, households that had experienced a death or presence of orphans and households that had a chronically ill household member were likely to be food insecure. It is therefore important that communities start to develop coping mechanisms in the event of the emergence of a shock like drought, death or chronic illness.