



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

Zimbabwe

DIEM – Data in Emergencies Monitoring brief, round 9

Results and recommendations
February 2024

Key highlights

- > The survey was conducted during the main crop planting season which is also the beginning of the rainy season.
- > At least 57 percent of respondent households reported a decrease in main income.
- > Among the shocks experienced, heat or drought stress was one of the most frequently reported challenges reflecting the delayed onset of the rainy season and the expected impact of El Niño.
- > About half of the respondent crop producers planted less area than a typical year.
- > In Zaka district, an illustrative El Niño-prone district, about 44 percent planted less area and an additional 13 percent planted the same as a typical year.
- > Access to fertilizer, machinery, tools or animals for ploughing, and quality seeds have improved compared to last season.
- > About 72 percent of livestock producers reported a decrease in the number of livestock compared to the same period last year.
- > The food security situation was slightly better than the previous round with more people faring better according to the household hunger scale (HHS) and household dietary diversity score (HDDS).
- > About 96.6 percent of respondent households (up from 96.2 percent last round) reported a need for assistance in the coming 3–6 months.

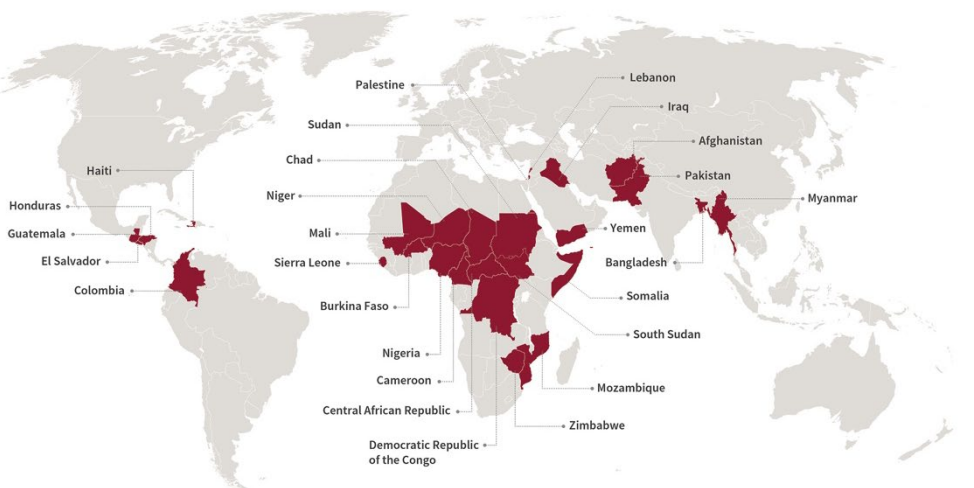
Methodology

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) conducted a household survey in Zimbabwe through the Data in Emergencies Monitoring (DIEM-Monitoring) System to monitor agricultural livelihoods and food security. This ninth-round survey was conducted via computer-assisted telephone interviews from 23 November to 22 December 2023, reaching 2 832 households. The survey is representative at administrative level 1 in 8 out of the country's 10 provinces, excluding Harare and Bulawayo metropolitan provinces. The survey is also representative at administrative level 2 in six drought-prone districts: Buhera, Chimanimani, Chiredzi, Chivi, Gwanda and Zaka. These districts were sampled because they are at a high risk of facing El Niño driven drought during the 2023/24 agricultural season.

The survey used a one-stage sample design and drew a simple random sample stratified by administrative level 1 resulting in a target of 2 889 households. In the end, a total of 2 832 households were reached. A minimum quota was set for agricultural households to ensure findings were representative at administrative level 1 and administrative level 2 in the six selected districts. Variable targets for agricultural and non-agricultural households were set following the proportion observed in the population, which resulted in 2 531 surveyed agricultural households and 301 surveyed non-agricultural households.

This ninth-round survey followed the eighth-round survey conducted from 12 to 30 July 2023. The eighth round and the sixth round – conducted from 28 November to 31 December 2022 – have been drawn from to make comparisons throughout this brief.

Figure 1. Countries with an established DIEM-Monitoring System



Source of data: FAO. 2023. DIEM-Monitoring. In: *FAO Data in Emergencies Hub*. Rome. [Cited 1 July 2023]. <https://data-in-emergencies.fao.org>

Source of map: United Nations Geospatial. 2023. Map of the World. In: *United Nations*. [Cited 12 January 2023]. <https://www.un.org/geospatial/content/map-world-1>

The final boundary between the Sudan and South Sudan has not yet been determined. Final status of the Abyei area is not yet determined. The dotted line represents, approximately, the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties.

About DIEM-Monitoring

FAO established the DIEM-Monitoring System to collect, analyse and disseminate data on shocks and livelihoods in countries prone to multiple shocks. DIEM-Monitoring aims to inform decision making by providing regularly updated information on how different shocks are affecting the livelihoods and food security of agricultural populations.

At the core of the DIEM-Monitoring System are country-level dashboards. Readers are encouraged to explore these dashboards to gain more insight into the context of Zimbabwe and other countries.

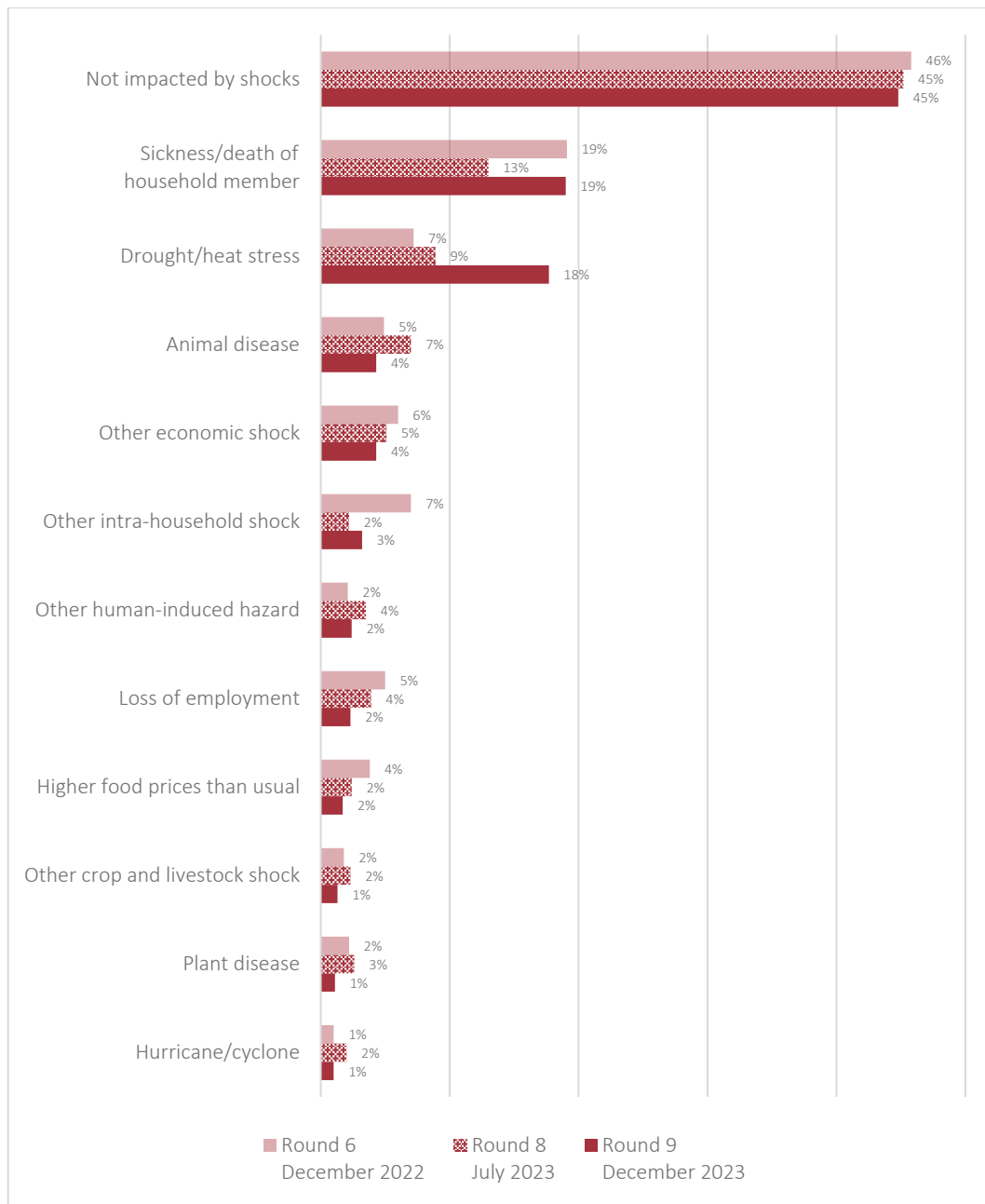
Learn more at <https://data-in-emergencies.fao.org/pages/monitoring>

Income and shocks

Five percent of households reported that they had no main income source and were forced to use savings or accrue debts. As a comparison, in the eighth round, all respondent households reported a main income source. Stable employment in the non-agriculture sector was the most frequently reported source of main income (19 percent). About 68 percent – up from 57 percent in the last round – reported no second income source, and 88 percent – up from 68 percent – reported no third income source. About 57 percent – down from 58 percent – reported a main income decrease, while 53 percent – up from 48 percent – reported a second income decrease, and 57 percent – up from 36 percent – reported a third income decrease.

A substantial percentage of households reported experiencing no shock in the three months preceding the survey (45 percent – down from 46 percent in the sixth round conducted at the same time last year) (Figure 2). The major shocks reported were sickness, accident or death of a household member (19 percent – down from 19.1 percent) and heat or drought stress (18 percent – up from 7 percent).

Figure 2. Main shocks reported (percentage of households)

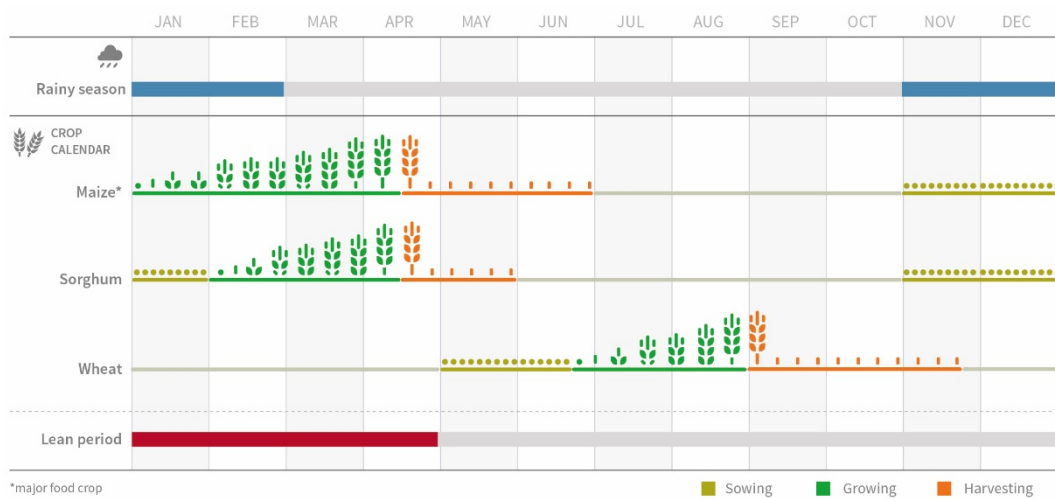


Source: FAO. 2023. Zimbabwe: DIEM-Monitoring assessments results (December 2022, July and December 2023). In: *FAO Data in Emergencies Hub*. Rome. [Cited 24 January 2024]. <https://data-in-emergencies.fao.org>

The increase in the number of households experiencing heat stress was evident in the sampled administrative level 2 El Niño-prone districts. Buhera and Chivi districts stood out because at least 20 percent of the respondent households in these districts experienced heat or drought stress. This is typical for the season as the overall temperatures in these districts are usually high. However, the households reported this as a stress making it likely that the levels were beyond what is normal.

Crops

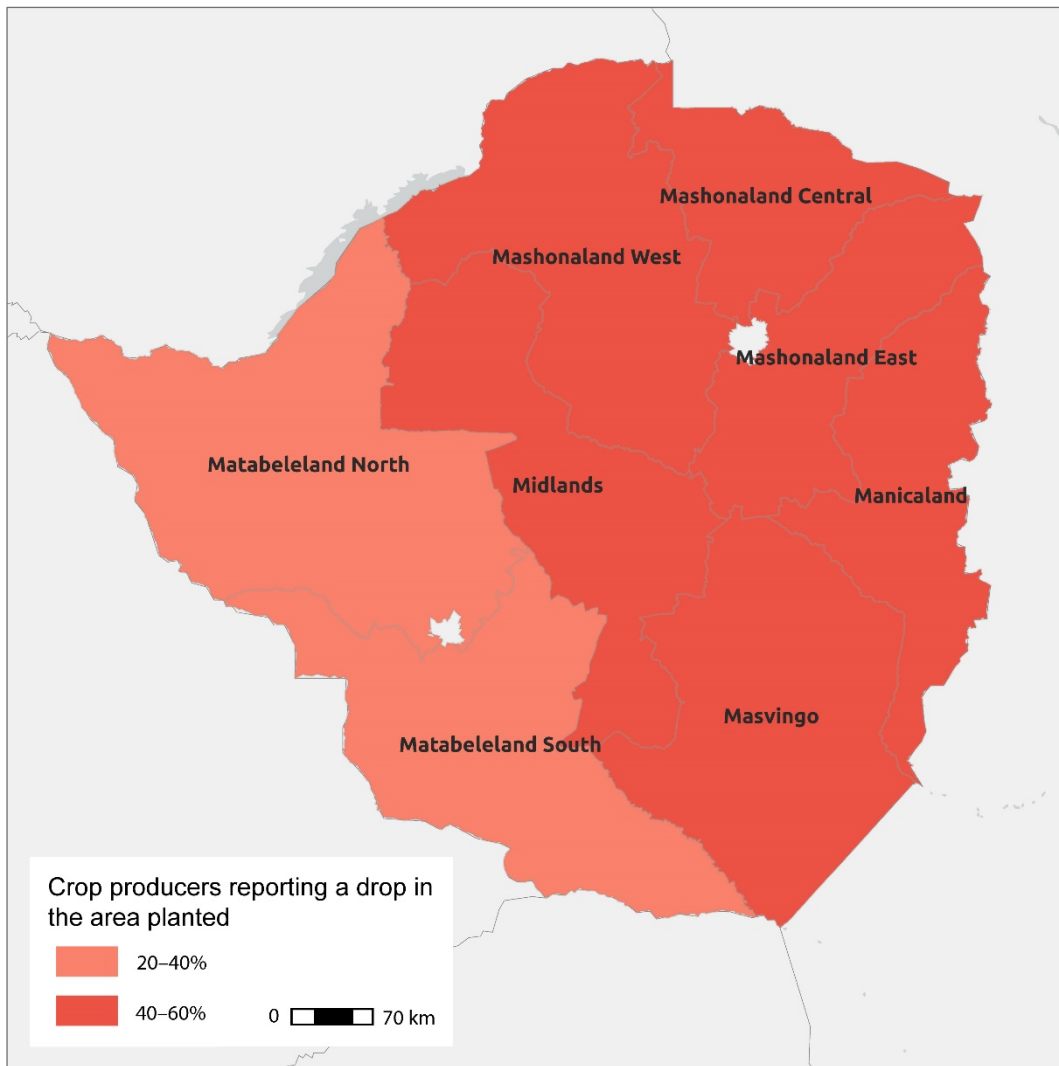
Figure 3. Zimbabwe agricultural calendar



Source: FAO. 2023. GIEWS Country Briefs: Zimbabwe. In: FAO, 18 October 2023. Rome. [Cited 24 January 2024]. <https://www.fao.org/giews/countrybrief/country.jsp?code=ZWE>

The survey was conducted during the main crop planting season. Maize was the main crop and was planted by 62 percent of households, followed by sorghum (8 percent). These proportions and crops are typical for Zimbabwe as these are the staple cereals. About 78 percent of respondent households reported that they rely on rainfed agriculture. Most farmers (48 percent) planted less area than a typical year – up from 38 percent in the eighth round – while 14 percent said they planted more – down from 24 percent – and 38 percent planted the same area as a typical year. Mashonaland and Midlands provinces had more farmers reporting a drop in area planted while Matabeleland North had the least. The El Niño-prone Zaka district (44 percent) followed by Chivi district (37 percent) reported planting less with about 20 percent indicating that they planted a lot less (half as much) compared to a normal year (Figure 4). This is likely to have an impact on production levels.

Figure 4. Crop producers reporting a drop in the area planted (by province)



Source: FAO. 2023. Zimbabwe: DIEM-Monitoring assessment results (December 2023). In: *FAO Data in Emergencies Hub*. Rome. [Cited 24 January 2024]. <https://data-in-emergencies.fao.org>

A correlation was found between the households that faced a heat or drought shock and crop area changes, especially in Zaka and Chivi districts (Figure 5). While the reasons for crop area changes may be numerous – difficulty accessing inputs, for example – the main reported reason was the lack of adequate rainfall to begin planting.

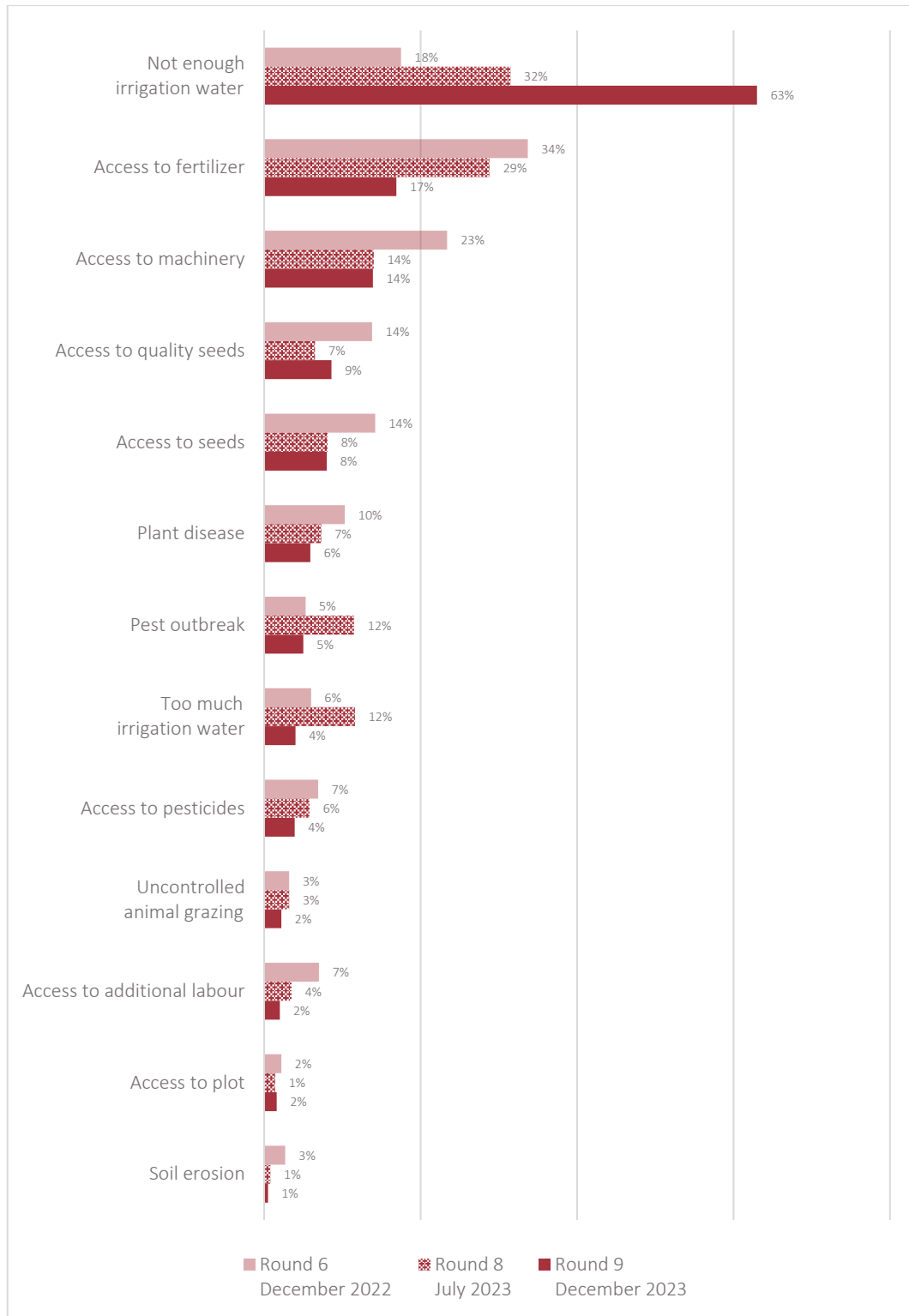
Figure 5. Crop area changes for households facing a heat or drought shock (for the six illustrative El Niño-prone districts)



Source: FAO. 2023. Zimbabwe: DIEM-Monitoring assessment results (December 2023). In: *FAO Data in Emergencies Hub*. Rome. [Cited 24 January 2024]. <https://data-in-emergencies.fao.org>

About 63 percent of crop producers reported facing crop production difficulties. Access to fertilizer, access to machinery, tools or animals for ploughing, and access to quality seeds seem to have improved in the ninth round compared to the eighth round (17 percent, 14 percent and 9 percent respectively). The most frequently reported difficulty was not enough rainfall or irrigation water (63 percent) (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Crop production difficulties (percentage of crop producers)

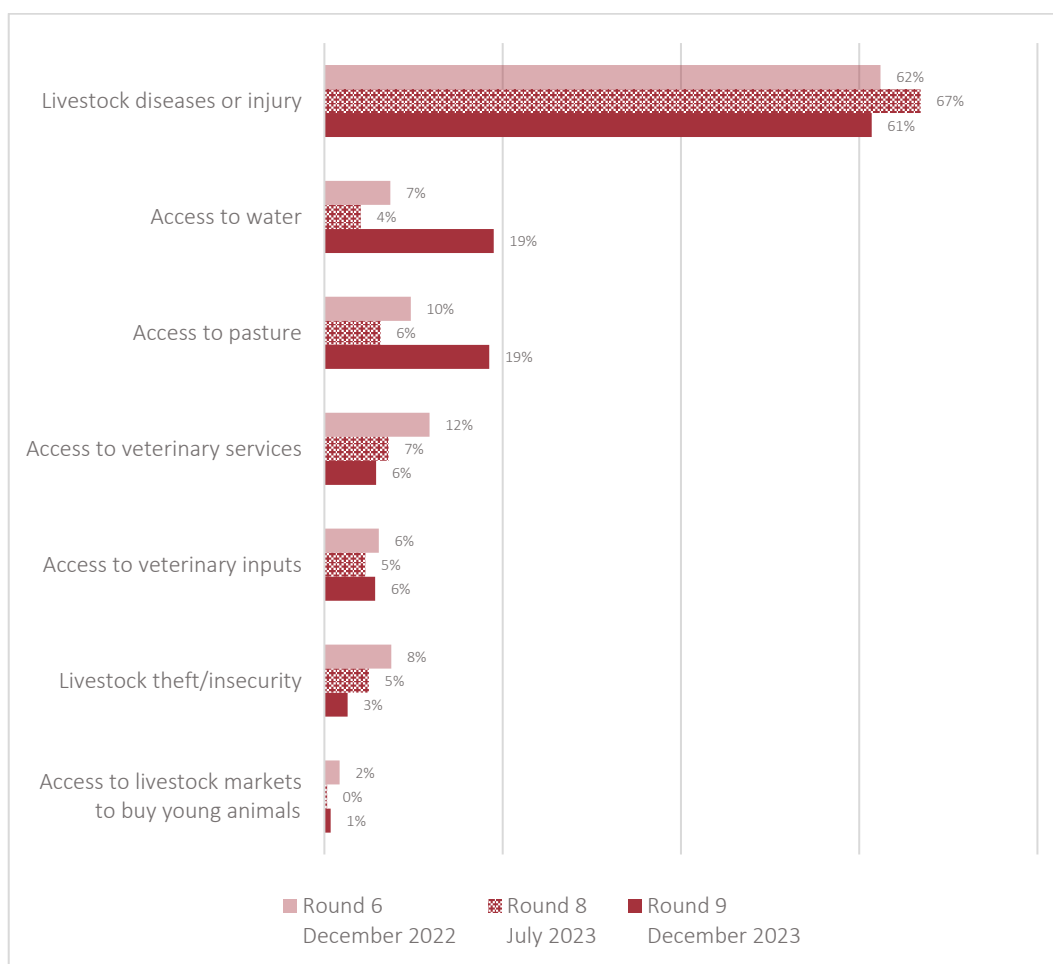


Source: FAO. 2023. Zimbabwe: DIEM-Monitoring assessments results (December 2022, July and December 2023). In: *FAO Data in Emergencies Hub*. Rome. [Cited 24 January 2024]. <https://data-in-emergencies.fao.org>

Livestock

About 72 percent of livestock producers reported a decrease in the number of livestock compared to last year, while 21 percent reported an increase. The reasons for the decrease were mainly animal deaths due to diseases, parasites or injuries (33 percent) – tick borne diseases increase during the rainy season – sales (19 percent), and animal deaths from malnutrition, drought or lack of feed (17 percent). Sixty-one percent of respondent households reported livestock diseases as their main production difficulty (Figure 7). This trend was also prevalent in the sixth and eighth rounds. Lack of access to water significantly increased from about 4 percent of respondent households in the eighth round and 7 percent in the sixth round, to 19 percent this round – further evidence of the dry conditions.

Figure 7. Livestock production difficulties (percentage of livestock producers)



Source: FAO. 2023. Zimbabwe: DIEM-Monitoring assessments results (December 2022, July and December 2023). In: *FAO Data in Emergencies Hub*. Rome. [Cited 24 January 2024]. <https://data-in-emergencies.fao.org>

Poultry was the main livestock reported as being sold by livestock producers (70 percent) followed by goats (17 percent) and cattle (7 percent). About 52 percent – up from 51 percent in the eighth round – of livestock producers faced difficulties selling their livestock and livestock products. The main sales difficulties encountered by producers were low selling prices (10 percent – up from 37 percent), lack of demand from usual buyers (26.6 percent – down from 27.4 percent) and payment delays (25 percent – up from 20 percent).

Food security

As measured with the Food Insecurity Experience Scale,¹ the prevalence of moderate to severe food insecurity was about 48 percent, with 3 percent facing severe food insecurity. About 28 percent (down from 29 percent in the eighth round) of households ran out of food during the 30 days preceding the survey while 22 percent (up from 21 percent) reported being hungry and unable to eat, and 10 percent reported not being able to eat for a whole day (down from 15 percent).

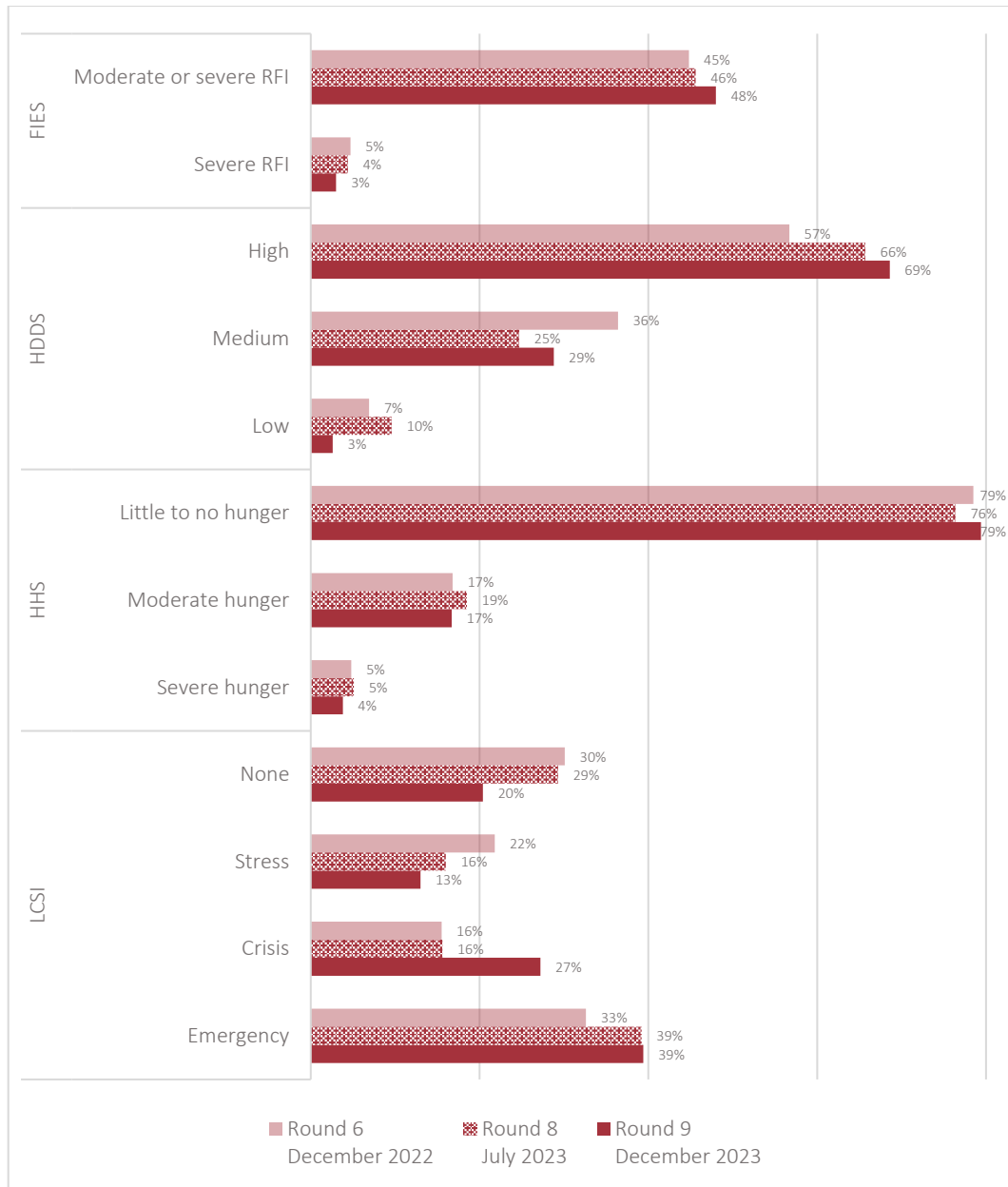
HHS is a household food deprivation scale based on the idea that the experience of household food deprivation causes predictable reactions that can be summarized in a scale. According to the HHS, the majority (66 percent, up from 64 percent in the eighth round) had a score of 0 meaning they faced little to no hunger; 14 percent – up from 12 percent – had a score of 1 meaning they faced slight hunger; 17 percent – up from 11 percent – had a score of 2 meaning they faced moderate hunger; and 3 percent faced severe hunger with combined scores of 4, 5 and 6 (Figure 9).

The majority (69 percent, up from 66 percent in the eighth round) had high dietary diversity – as measured with HDDS – while 29 percent (up from 25 percent) had medium dietary diversity and 3 percent (down from 10 percent) had low dietary diversity (Figure 8).

The majority of households (39 percent – up from 39 percent in the eighth round) were using emergency household livelihood coping strategies – as measured with the livelihood coping strategies index (LCSI) – followed by crisis (27 percent – up from 16 percent) and stress (13 percent – down from 16 percent). Twenty percent – down from 29 percent – reported that they did not have to employ coping strategies (Figure 8).

¹ FIES results are subject to change until the country scale is established for more consistent comparability across rounds.

Figure 8. Food insecurity measures over time – FIES, HDDS, HHS and LCSi



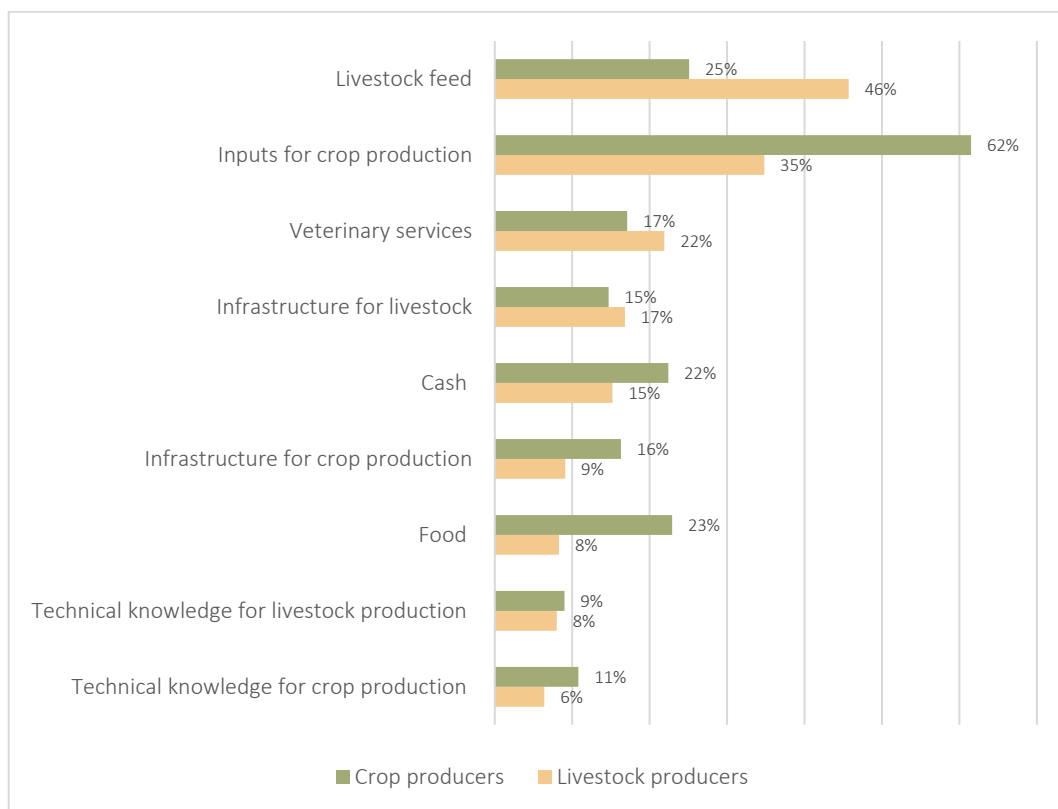
Source: FAO, 2023. Zimbabwe: DIEM-Monitoring assessments results (December 2022, July and December 2023). In: *FAO Data in Emergencies Hub*. Rome. [Cited 24 January 2024]. <https://data-in-emergencies.fao.org>

Needs

About 97 percent of respondent households (up from 96 percent in the eighth round) reported the need for assistance in the coming 3–6 months. The main needs reported were inputs for crop and vegetable production (56 percent), livestock feed (32 percent) and veterinary services (22 percent) (Figure 9).

In the three months preceding the survey, only 14 percent had received assistance. The Government provided assistance to most of the households (75 percent) followed by non-governmental organizations (18 percent), other United Nations agencies (6 percent) and the World Food Programme (2 percent). Of those who received some assistance, the majority (60 percent) were satisfied.

Figure 9. Needs reported by crop and livestock producers (percentage of households)



Source: FAO. 2023. Zimbabwe: DIEM-Monitoring assessment results (December 2023). In: *FAO Data in Emergencies Hub*. Rome. [Cited 24 January 2024]. <https://data-in-emergencies.fao.org>

Recommendations

Short-term recommendations (1–6 months)

- > In light of late planting due to the late onset of the rainy season, farmers should be encouraged to use short season varieties to make up for lost time, and plant crops suitable for the period (i.e. sunflower and sugar bean).
- > Enhance pest and disease surveillance to limit production losses and ensure optimal harvest.
- > Encourage farmers to use the land not yet sown and the remaining time in the cropping season for legume production for both fodder and human consumption.

Medium- to long-term recommendations (6 months and beyond)

- > Prepare for humanitarian support during the lean season in the identified drought-prone districts.
- > Increase food access by supporting food availability and affordability through targeted distributions and import liberalization.
- > Create small scale crop irrigation programmes to enable farmers to cope with lower-than-average rainfall seasons with drip irrigation and water harvesting projects.
- > Include livestock restocking programmes for resilience building to cater to the decrease in livestock due to distress sales and death.
- > Increase livestock dipping programmes during the rainy season and increase livestock vaccinations to avoid diseases.
- > Continue with surveillance and monitoring of livestock conditions during the winter, rainy season and peak lean season periods.
- > Strengthen early warning systems including the revival of the National Early Warning Unit within the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water, Climate and Rural Development.



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