

# Zimbabwe short-changing its small-scale farmers

HARARE: A Zimbabwe state mechanism designed to promote food security is being blamed for exacerbating the country's chronic food shortages.



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The failure by the 83-year-old state-run Grain Marketing Board (GMB) to pay producers for their grain in recent years has short-circuited the ability of small-scale farmers to generate cash flow to fund agricultural inputs for the following season - a problem recognised by President Robert Mugabe's ruling ZANU-PF party.

The Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee, with a membership drawn from the government, the UN World Food Programme and other partners, estimates that 2.2 million people, or a quarter of the rural population, require food assistance during the 2014 "lean season" - the few months before the harvest in March.

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