

DROUGHT MONTHLY BULLETIN, AUGUST 2008

West Pokot District

Warning Stages

SEASONAL CALENDAR

SR
 Land Preparation
 Harvesting Planting
 planting Harvesting

SR LR
 Harvesting

Livelihood Zone	Warning stage	Trend
Agro pastoral	Normal	Worsening
Mixed farming	Normal	Stable
Pastoralist	Normal	Stable

Situation overview

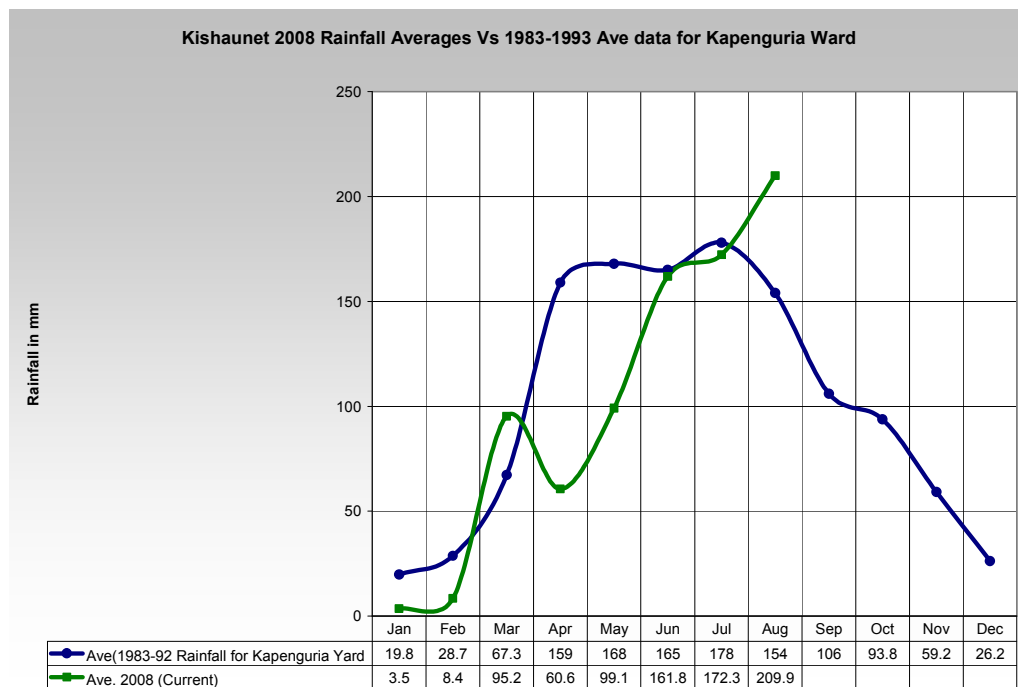
- 209.9mm of rainfall was recorded (KVDA Kapenguria Station) during the month under review compared to 172.3 mm in July. The rains were fairly distributed across the livelihood zones in the district.
- While the agro-pastoral livelihood zone received below normal rainfall, the rains in the mixed-farming and pastoral zones were normal.
- Temporal distribution was for an average of 10 days. This was normal for the area in view of the long term average of 154 for the same month.
- Pasture quality and quantity remained good in the pastoral areas and this could last another three months. However, pasture in the agro-pastoral livelihoods could last a shorter period since rains there were slightly below normal.
- Milk production improved in the mixed-farming areas but remained stable in the agro-pastoral and pastoral livelihood zones.
- Crop production was good in the mixed-farming livelihood zone including Lelan, Tabach and Kapenguria and farmers were preparing to harvest. The zone received normal rainfall, therefore normal harvests were expected.
- Natural rivers remained the main sources of water, while boreholes and shallow wells were alternative sources.
- Cases of Pestes Petis Ruminants (PPR) were reported across the pastoral and agro-pastoral areas. However, mortality rates were lower in areas where vaccination had been carried out.
- A disease affecting camels was reported in the district.
- Prices of goats rose from Ksh 862 in July to Ksh 1,021 due to increased demand.
- Cattle prices dropped from Ksh 7,424 to Ksh 6,255, as pastoralists disposed of more livestock to meet other food needs.
- Prices of cereal and legumes remained high with maize prices rising from Ksh 27 per kg in July to Ksh 30. Most of the cereals and legumes were imported from the neighboring districts.
- Food stocks at the household level were very low, thus reported sales were negligible.
- The nutritional status of children below five years declined, with those rated as being at the risk of malnutrition rising to 8 per cent from 4.8 in July.
- The food security situation in the mixed-farming livelihood zone was normal but likely to worsen in other zones.

1. Environmental indicators (Stability)

1.1 Rainfall

- Fairly distributed rainfall was received in most parts of the district.
- However, the amount was slightly below normal, especially in the agro-pastoral livelihoods. The mixed-farming and pastoral livelihoods received normal rainfall.
- Though the rainfall was erratic, especially at the beginning of the season, it benefited livestock more than crops.

- Crops planted late in the agro-pastoral livelihood zone did well, while those planted earlier wilted due to late rains. Condition of livestock and milk production in the areas also improved.
- The rainfall received in the upper catchment areas resulted in increased water volume in rivers.
- 209.9mm of rainfall was recorded at Kishaunet (18 days) during the month of compared to 172.3mm recorded in July (16 days).
- The improved amount of rainfall impacted positively on livestock but crops had already wilted.
- The rainfall average was normal at the time of the year.
- The highest recorded reading was 50mm, while the lowest was 0.8mm compared to 30mm and 0.6mm in July.



Source: Kerio Valley Development Authority (KVDA), Water Resources Management Authority (WARMA), Ministry of Agriculture (MOA)

1.2 Condition of natural vegetation and pasture

1.2.1 Quality and quantity

- Pasture quality and quantity did not change significantly compared to the previous month.
- The situation remained fairly good since the rains received across the district sustained pasture quality. Browse was available in the pastoral livelihood zone but poor in some areas including Kangoletiang and Kongelai.
- Most animals that had moved to the dry season grazing areas returned. However, animals were concentrated around households and not in the dry season grazing areas.

- This situation was normal at the time of the year.

1.2.2 Distance to grazing areas

- The average distances to grazing areas increased slightly to 4.4km compared to 4.1 km in July.
- Distances of 7km were recorded in Konyao while Sasak sentinel site recorded 7.3km.
- The differences were attributed to the uneven rainfall distribution.
- The situation was normal in most of the areas where distribution was good.

1.3 Water sources and availability

1.3.1 Water sources

- Natural rivers remained the main water sources across all livelihoods.
- This was a result of the rains received, especially in the catchment areas.
- Boreholes and shallow wells were also alternative water sources.
- The situation was normal at the time of the year.

1.3.2 Household access to water

- The average distance to water sources for households improved from 2.7 km in July to 2.0km.
- This was attributed to the rains received across the areas.
- The distances had increased to 3.6km before the start of the rains.
- The longest distance of 4km was recorded in Nyangaita.
- The situation was normal at the time of the year.

1.4 Insecurity/conflict

- The security situation in the district was calm.
- The situation, which had been worsened by movement of livestock to the dry season grazing areas (which are conflict prone), normalised after the animals returned.
- Cases of human/wildlife conflict were reported in most parts of the pastoral livelihoods.

1.4.1 Migration

- No cases of animal migration were reported.
- The situation was normal at the time of the year.

1.5 Implications on food security

- Food security in the district was bad, especially in the agro-pastoral livelihood areas.
- Though rains were received, they were not timely, especially for crops. The rains were late, resulting in withering of most of the crops.
- The rains, however, had a positive effect on livestock with increased pasture quality and quantity.
- The food security situation was better in the mixed-farming areas, where farmers were about to start harvesting.

2.0 Food availability

2.1 Livestock production

2.1.1 Livestock body condition

- The livestock body condition was good in all livelihood zones due to the rainfall received across the livelihood zones.
- The condition of cattle, which had been most affected, improved, leading to better prices.
- The situation was normal at the time of the year.

2.1.2 Livestock diseases

- Cases of PPR (Pestes Petis Ruminants), mainly in goats and sheep, were reported across the district.
- Vaccination was carried out in some areas, which have already registered reduced mortality rates.
- A disease affecting camels was reported in Pokot North, especially in Kangoletiang, Konyao and Alale where 10 camels were said to have died.
- The situation is normal for camels.

2.2 Crop production

2.2.1 Timeliness and condition of various crop production activities

- Crops in the mixed-farming livelihoods were in good condition and almost ready for harvesting. The situation in the area was attributed to consistent and timely rains.
- The rains were late in the pastoral livelihoods, and only crops that were planted late survived. Crop failure was expected in the area.
- The situation in the mixed-farming livelihood zone was normal at the time of the year, but below normal in the agro-pastoral livelihoods.

2.2.2 Pests and diseases

- There were no outstanding cases of crop pests reported during the month.
- This was a normal situation at the time of the year.

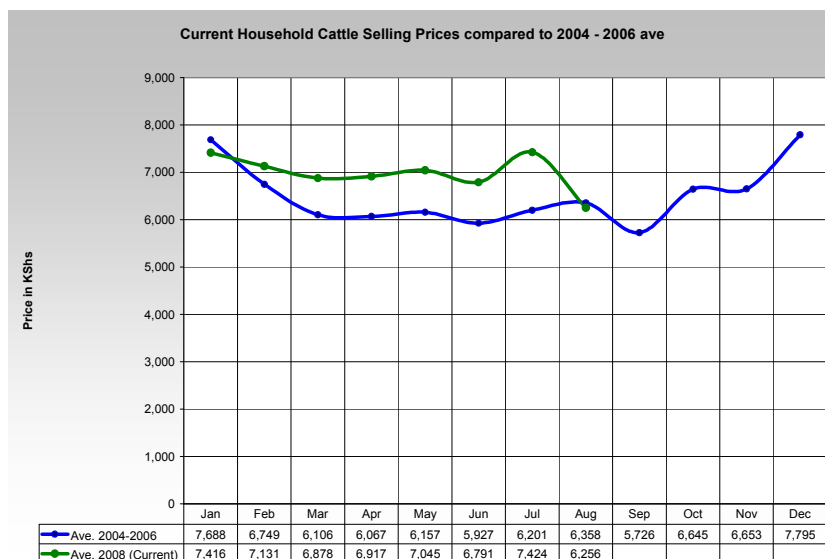
2.3 Implications on food security

- Food security varied across different livelihood zones.
- The situation was normal in the mixed-farming livelihoods and farmers were preparing to harvest.
- However, the situation was below normal in the agro-pastoral livelihood zone. This was because rains were late and farmers also planted late. Rains were erratic and there are fears of crop failure in the zone.
- The food security situation was fair in the pastoral livelihoods due to availability of pasture following rains.
- Milk production increased and availability of green vegetables improved.
- Commodity prices, especially cereals and legumes, remained high.

3.0 Access to food

3.1 Livestock marketing

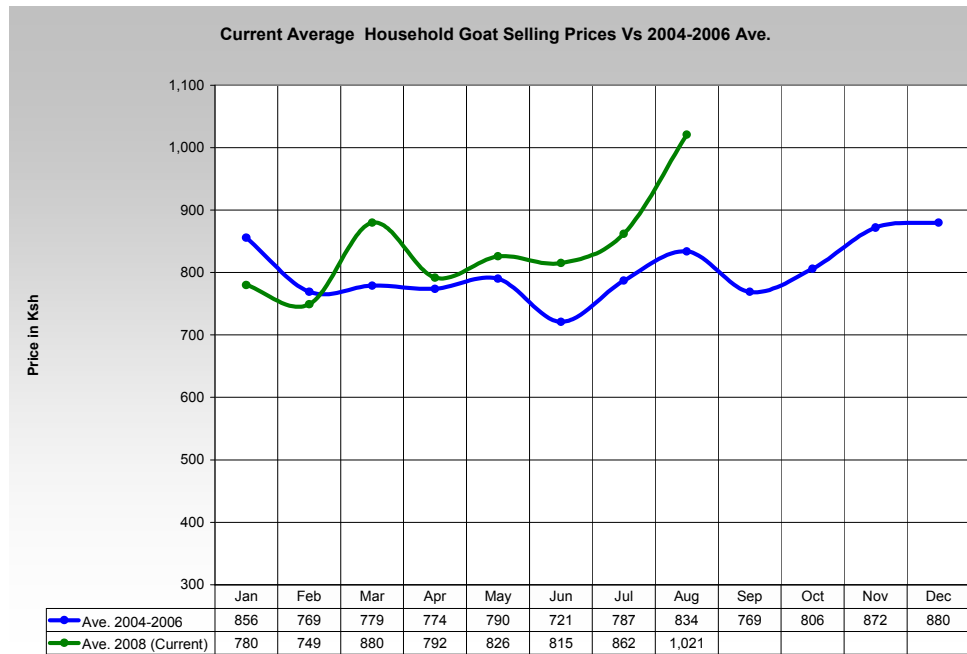
3.1.1 Cattle prices



- Cattle prices dropped to Ksh 6,255 from Ksh 7,424 in July.
- More pastoralists sold stock in order to buy food as prices soared.
- The terms of trade for pastoralists were not favourable since livestock prices dropped, while cereal and legume prices rose.
- The lowest price was recorded at Ptokou at Ksh 5,333 compared to Ksh 6,000 recorded in Orwa last month.
- The highest price recorded was Ksh 7,250 in Kangoletiang compared to Ksh 10,000 recorded in Kangoletiang last month.
- The cattle prices were within the normal range at the time of the year.

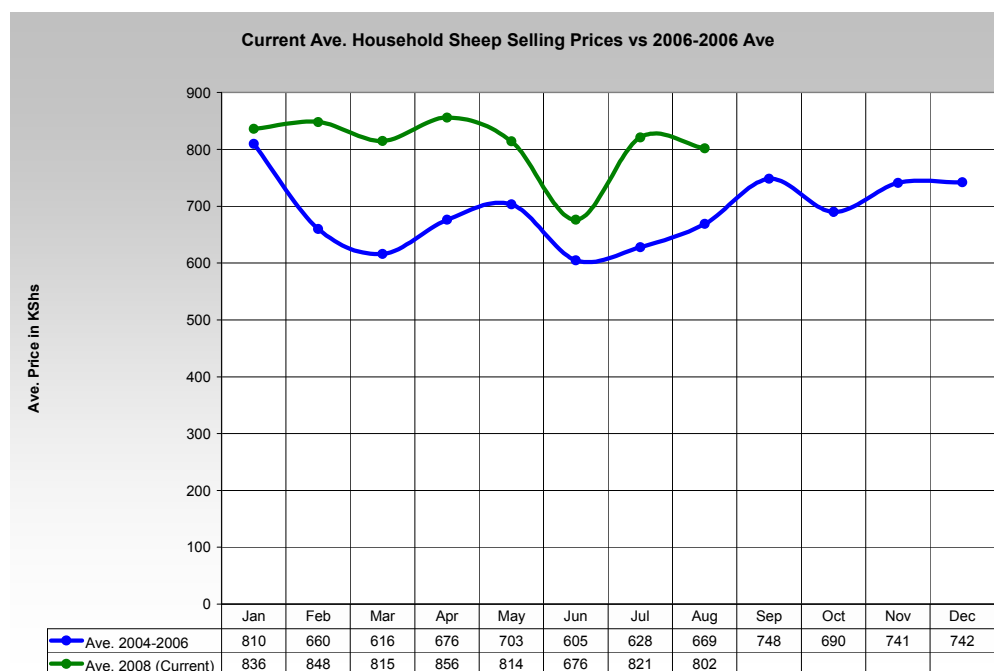
3.1.2 Goat prices

- Goat prices rose Ksh 1,021 compared to Ksh 862 in July.
- The lowest price of Ksh 807 was recorded at Kongelai compared to Ksh 716 recorded in Kangoletiang last month.
- The highest price was recorded in Orwa at Ksh 1,200, which was higher than Ksh 1,000 recorded in Kapsait last month.
- The price increase was attributed to the increased demand.
- Price increases are expected between August and December, but the demand seemed to be higher during the month under review. The situation was, therefore, normal at the time of the year.



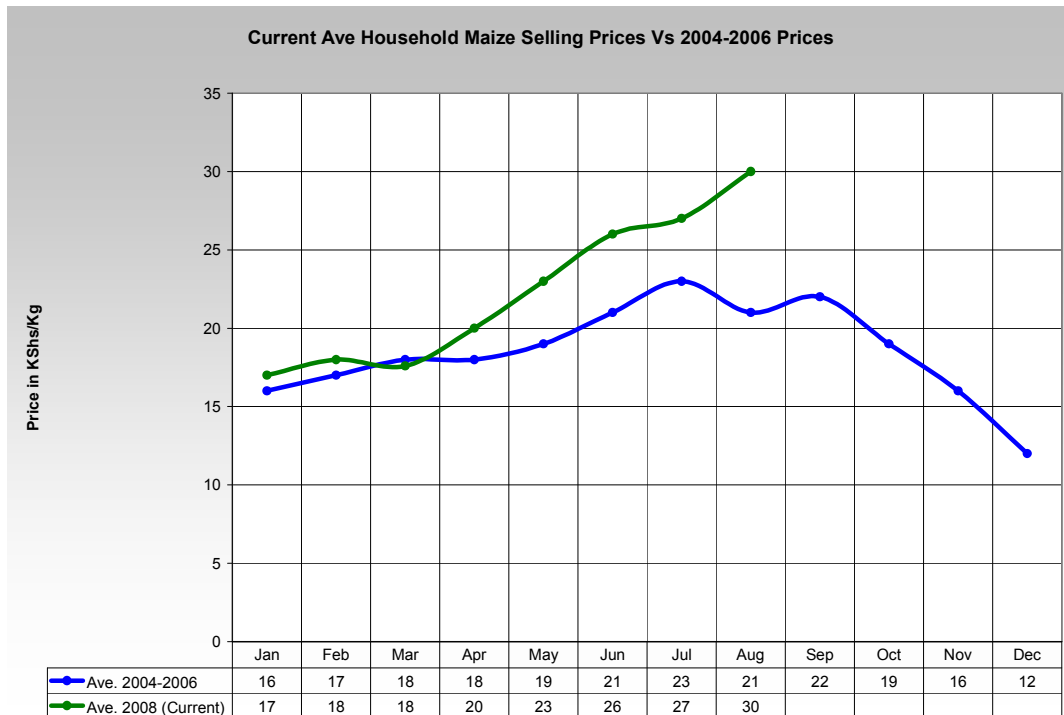
3.1.3 Sheep prices

- Prices of sheep dropped to Ksh 802 from Ksh 821 in July.
- Body condition remained good due to availability of pasture.
- The lowest recorded price was Ksh700 in Kongelai compared to Ksh 560 in Konyao last month.
- The highest recorded price was Ksh 1,000 in Kapsait compared to Ksh 1,500 recorded in the same area last month.
- The situation was normal at the time of the year.



3.2 Crop prices

3.2.1 Maize prices

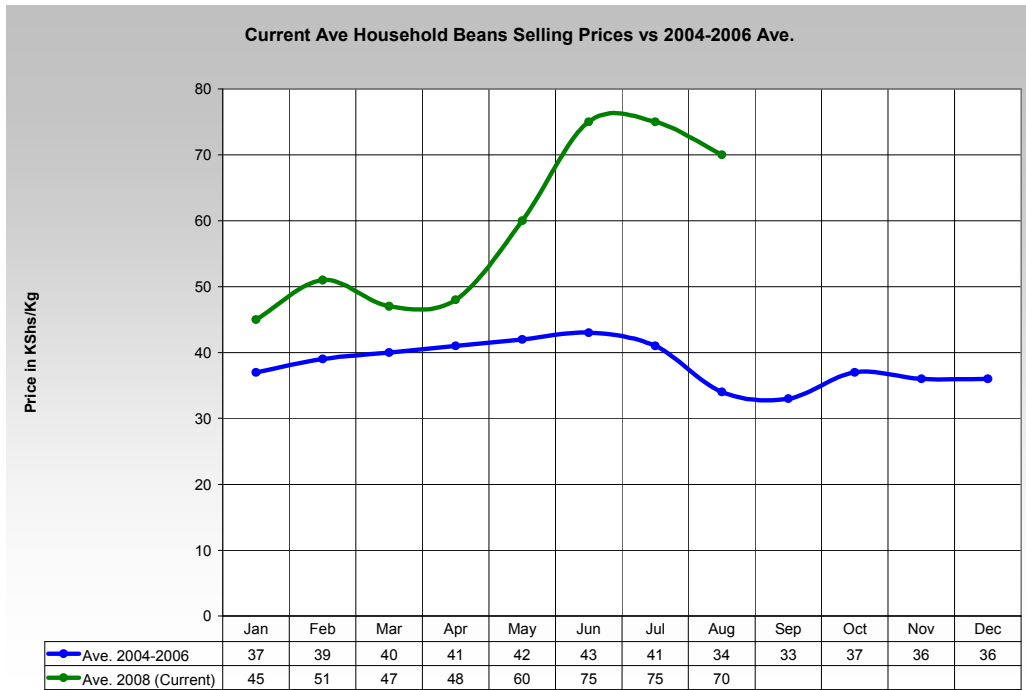


- Maize prices remained high in all livelihood zones. The price rose to Ksh 30 per kilo from Ksh 27 in July.
-
- However, the situation was expected to improve in the mixed-farming zones owing to expected harvests.
- Supply in the market continued to decline and very few households were reported to be selling maize.
- Sales were recorded only at Chepnyal, Kapsait and Pserum at Ksh 25, Ksh 33, and Ksh 32 respectively.
- The highest price recorded was Ksh 33 in Kapsait compared to the highest price of Ksh 29 recorded in Pserum last month.
- The situation was not normal situation at the time of the year.

3.2.2 Beans prices

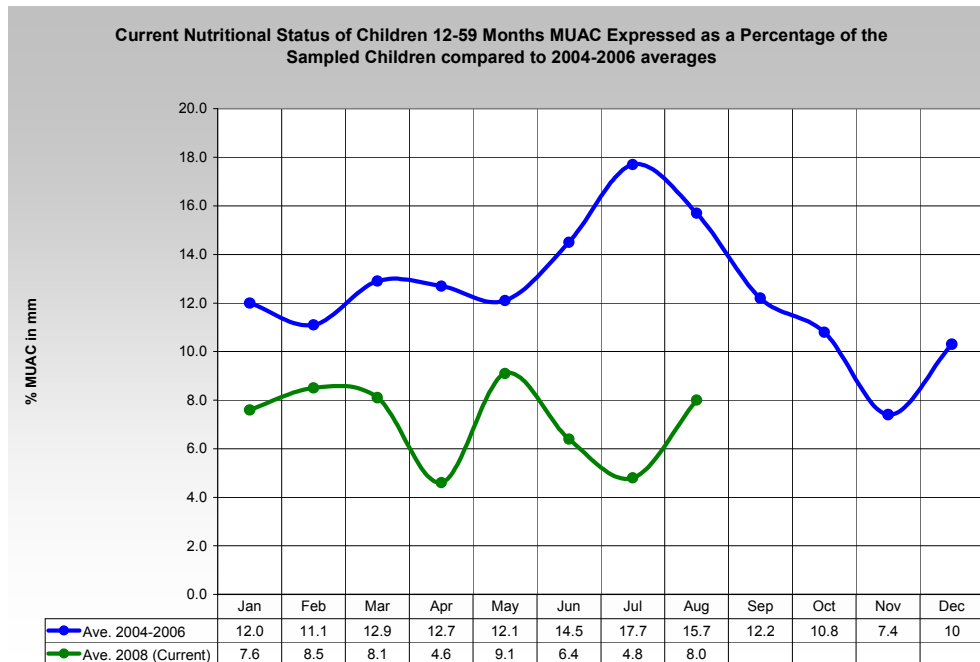
- Beans prices dropped to Ksh 70 from Ksh 75 in July.
- However, the prices were higher than the long term average.

- Only a few households in Chepnyal recorded beans sales and this was not representative for the district. The rest of the data was drawn from inferences from interviews with the communities.
- This was an indication that households had exhausted stocks. The situation was not a normal the time of the year.



4. Utilization of food

4.1 Nutrition status



- The nutrition status of children below five years declined, with the percentage of those rated as being at the risk of malnutrition rising to 8 per cent from 4.8 in July.
- The situation was attributed partly to high food prices, which strained the household economy.
- Erratic rainfall limited availability of vegetables, impacting negatively on availability of nutritious food in households.
- However, a worse situation was prevented by availability of milk in the households.
- The nutrition status was within the normal range and expected to improve after crop harvests.