



**OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER
MINISTRY OF STATE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF NORTHERN KENYA AND OTHER ARID LANDS
ARID LANDS RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROJECT II**

DROUGHT MONTHLY BULLETIN, DECEMBER 2008

Marsabit, Laisamis and Chalbi Districts

Warning Stages



Livelihood zone	Warning Stage	Trend
Agro-Pastoralist	Alert	Improving
Pastoral-All species	Alert/Alarm	worsening
Fishermen/Pastoralist	Alarm	Worsening

TIMELINE ACTIVITIES

Short Dry Spell	Long Rains	Long Dry Period	Short Rains
<i>Jan Feb Mar</i>	<i>Apr May Jun</i>	<i>Jul Aug Sep Oct</i>	<i>Nov Dec</i>

Situation Overview

- The districts recorded insignificant amounts of rainfall during the month under review. Windy, dusty, sunny and misty conditions prevailed in most areas. Mt. Marsabit and Mt. Kulal recorded 6.4mm of rainfall for 2 days.
- Forage dried in most parts of the larger Marsabit district, apart from the hilly parts where it was withering. However, the forage was expected to last for the next two months.
- The water available in the three districts was expected to sustain both households and livestock until mid February 2009. However, water shortage is expected in Maikona, Central and Gadhamoji divisions.
- Livestock body condition improved due to forage availability and minimal disease incidences.
- *Peste des petits ruminants* (PPR) was reported in Laisamis division, while anthrax was reported in Balesa sample area of Chalbi district. However, the Veterinary department intervened in the particular areas. The PPR vaccination campaign conducted in October 2008 only covered 30 to 35 per cent of livestock population in larger Marsabit district.
- 16 per cent of the sampled 390 households reported milk availability. The low milk availability was as a result of few births among all livestock species and livestock movement from wet to dry season grazing areas. 14.6 per cent of households that reported milk availability were pastoralists at an average of 1.2ml per household per day.
- Malaria, respiratory tract infections (RTIs) and diarrhoea were the most common diseases among children and other vulnerable groups, though within manageable levels.
- All water sources were sufficiently utilised during the month, apart from Dukana sample area, where all shallow wells were silted following heavy downpour (300mm) in November. The water sources were expected to sustain both domestic and livestock use until March.
- The nutrition status of children below five years improved slightly during the month under review. Out of 1,259 children sampled, 265 had MUAC<135mm, representing 22.4 per cent of those rated as being at the risk of malnutrition. The improvement was attributed to minimal disease incidences and continued therapeutic relief foods from UNICEF/ EMOP.
- The food security situation was at alarm stage in the three main livelihoods. Increasing food prices impacted negatively on the purchasing power of the Pastoralist, Fisher folk and Agro/pastoralist livelihoods in the larger Marsabit district, resulting in alarming food security situation at household level.
- The security situation improved in most parts of Marsabit, Laisamis and Chalbi districts. However, tension and raids were reported in Loiyangalani location of Laisamis district and Gas and North Horr locations of Chalbi district. In Loiyangalani location thousands of shoats, hundreds of donkeys and cattle were raided by raiders in Moite sub-location and Komote of EIMolo Bay sub-location. Several bandits were killed and others injured.

On-going interventions

- EMOP food distribution in larger Marsabit district.
- Construction of Lekuchula dam in Namarei sub-location Ngurunit location of Laisamis district.

Recommendations to KFSSG, DSG and DA's

- Urgent PPR vaccination campaign to over sixty percent of covered areas of Laisamis, Marsabit and Chalbi districts.
- Decentralisation of resources should be emphasized at all developmental levels based on the split larger Marsabit district.
- Improve environmental awareness and equal strategic inputs to link NRM activities.
- Urgent rehabilitation (de-silting) of Bakuli water source to curb the chronic water shortage in Mt. Marsabit.
- Encourage community participation in projects for their sustainability, basic understanding and awareness. (Refer the drilled El Molo water project).
- EMOP relief should be continued due to food insecurity at household level and high food commodity prices.
- Organise Peace meetings, especially among the warring communities around Loiyangalani, North Horr, Laisamis, Central and Gadhamoji divisions.
- Need for short rains assessment to pave way for GoK, community, NGO's and DA's activities.
- Need for local NGO focused on improving nutritional status to be based in Loiyangalani location to intervene in the consistent emergency malnutrition levels.

1.0 Environmental indicators (Stability)

1.1 Rainfall

- No notable rains were reported in most parts of the three districts apart from Mt. Marsabit and Mt. Kulal, which received 2 days of showers averaging 6.4mm.
- As a result, windy/dusty, sunny and regulated misty conditions prevailed on hilly parts.

1.2 Condition of natural vegetation and pasture

- Forage was dry in most parts of the larger Marsabit district apart from highland areas.
- Forage quantities were sufficient to sustain livestock for the next 60 to 75 days.

1.3 Water sources and availability

- Most water sources were sufficiently utilized in all parts of the three districts.
- Average distance to water sources for domestic use remained minimal for most at an average of 2 to 3kms and livestock use improved to mere 6 to 10kms.
- Distances between grazing and water sources were expected to be minimal for the coming month.
- Water shortage was expected to rise in Hurri hills and its surroundings and Mt. Marsabit in the coming month.

1.4 Emerging issues

1.4.1 Insecurity/ Conflict

- Security situation improved as few raids or deaths were reported due to conflicts.
- Consistent raids were reported in Loiyangalani, Gus and North Horr locations.

1.4.2 Migration

1.4.2.1 Livestock migration

- Livestock out migration increased from wet to dry season grazing areas in all the three districts.
- Livestock movement from homesteads resulted in decreasing milk availability in most pastoralist households.

1.4.2.2 Human migration/ displacement

- Household and individual displacement remained minimal.
- Some migrations were observed around Loiyangalani, North Horr, Gus and other insecurity prone areas in greater Marsabit district.

1.5 Implications on food security

- Increasing food commodity prices aggravated the food security situation across the district.
- Increasing poverty level as result of consistent raids and persistent droughts impacted negatively on food security in most parts of Marsabit district and was aggravated by high food commodity prices.

2.0 Rural economy indicators (Food availability)

2.1 Livestock production

2.1.1 Livestock body condition

- Body conditions of all livestock species was fair and improving, with improved forage condition and availability.

2.1.2 Livestock diseases

- CCPP remained the most common disease.
- The previous quarantine of *Peste des petits ruminants* (PPR) in Laisamis division was still in force although the disease was under control due to the intervention by Veterinary Department.
- However, the disease still persisted in other parts of Laisamis district among shoa species.
- Anthrax in cattle was reported in North Horr division of Chalbi Marsabit.

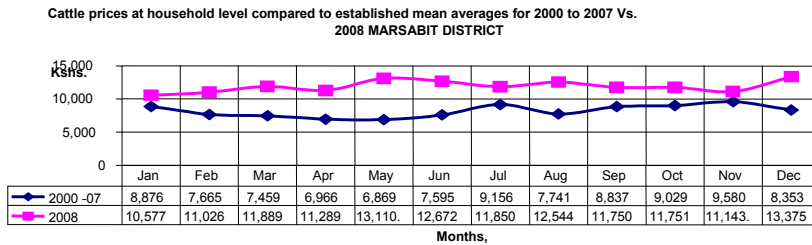
2.2 Implications on food security

- Food security situation is expected to worsen following reduced livestock production.
- High food commodity prices increased by 38 per cent in most pastoral livelihoods, almost 30 per cent in Agro/Pastoral livelihood, and 40 per cent for Fishermen livelihood. This compounded food shortages in all three livelihoods of the greater Marsabit district.

3.0 Access to food

3.1 Livestock marketing

3.1.1 Cattle prices

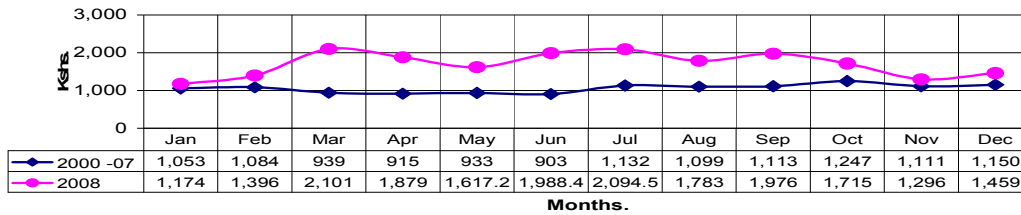


No of Households interviewed 390

- Average cattle prices increased from Ksh11,143 in November to Ksh 13,375.
- The prices were also much higher than the long term mean of Ksh 8,353.
- The price increase was attributed to increasing demand compared to previous years and healthy body condition.
- The prices are expected to increase further next month.
- Higher prices were recorded in Laisamis division at ksh15,000, followed by Maikona division at ksh11,750, while other divisions sold none.
- Cattle sales dropped significantly from 7 the previous month to 6 following the low and unstable demand.

3.1.2 Goats prices

Goats prices at household level compared to established mean averages for 2000 to 2007 Vs. 2008 MRASABIT DISTRICT

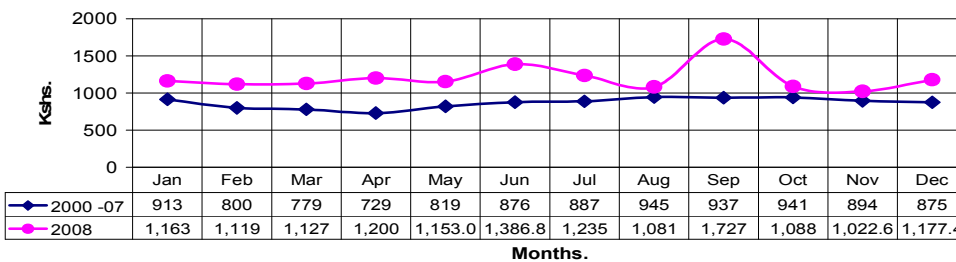


No of households interviewed 390

- Average prices of goats increased slightly from Ksh1,296 the previous month to Ksh1,459. The increase was as a result of improved body condition.
- The prices were much lower than the better part of the year but higher than the long term mean of Ksh 1,150.
- Higher goats prices were recorded in Maikona division in Chalbi district (Pastoralist livelihood) at Ksh2,032.30, followed by Laisamis division of pastoral livelihood in Laisamis district at Ksh1,616.70.

3.1.3 Sheep prices

Sheep prices at household level compared to established mean averages 2000 to 2007 Vs. 2008 MARSABIT DISTRICT



No of households interviewed 390

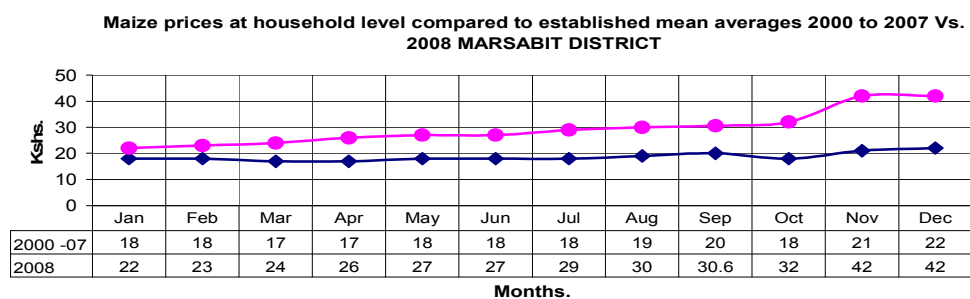
- Sheep prices at household level remained stable between Ksh1,022.60 the previous month to Ksh 1,177.40.
- However, sheep prices were higher than the long term mean of Ksh875.
- Higher sheep prices were recorded in Laisamis division at Ksh1,362.80 followed by Central division at Ksh1,265 and Loiyangalani of Pastoralist/ fishermen livelihoods registered the least at Ksh900.

3.2 Milk consumption

- Milk availability remained minimal in most sedentary households as a result of minimal livestock newborns among all livestock species.
- However, Karare, Kalacha, North Horr and a few households in Ngurunit sample areas (camel keepers) reported a maximum of two litres.
- Generally, declining milk availability was an indication that nutrition status of children and other community vulnerable groups was on alarming trend, especially with the onset of dry season.

3.3 Crop prices

3.3.1 Maize prices



N =332 Households.

- Maize prices remained stable at Ksh42 as in the previous month.
- The prices were however higher than the long term mean by 92.4 per cent. This reflects the deteriorating cereal:meat ratio, hence a threat to the purchasing power of most of the population in both Laisamis and Chalbi districts, which are mainly pastoralist and fishermen.
- However, maize prices are expected to remain high as result of the poor short rains harvest, where less than 34 per cent of the expected maize was harvested.

- Indeed, higher maize prices were recorded in Loiyangalani, Laisamis and North Horr divisions (pastoral/ Fishermen livelihood) at an average of Ksh 44.70 per kg.
- And Agro/pastoral livelihood community on Mt. Marsabit in Central division of Marsabit district reported fair to least prices at Ksh37.20.

3.4 Income

3.4.1 Livestock income

- Sale of livestock remained the leading source of income as was reported by 134 out of the 390 sampled households, especially among pastoralist households.
- Livestock sales rose compared to the previous month as a result of improved livestock body condition.
- Other livestock income included sale of milk, which also reduced compared to previous month, at Ksh 42 as in the previous month.
- However, livestock sales decreased by 13 per cent compared to the long term mean.

3.4.2 Other income

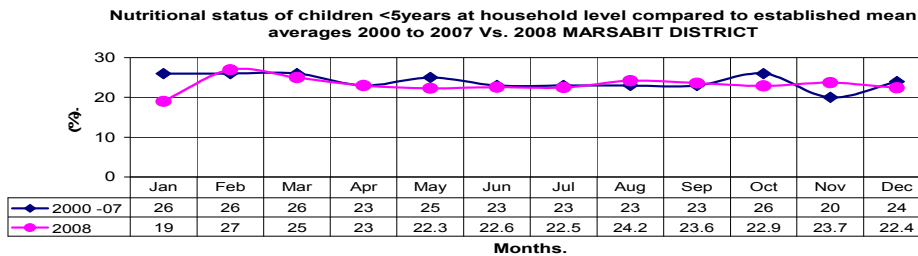
- Other income sources included casual labour, with 144 out of 2,157 sampled persons from 390 households stating so. A few others reported sale of charcoal, petty trade, formal employment and engaging in other minor jobs.
- Average daily wage for casual labour stood at an average of Ksh234 per person.

3.6 Implication on food security

- Consistently increasing food prices impacted negatively on the pastoralists' and fishermen terms of trade, thus causing constant alarming food shortages at district level.
- Lower rates of employment among the pastoralist community implicated negatively on food security situation in the greater Marsabit district.
- Increasing livestock movement from wet (homesteads and its surrounding) to dry season grazing areas also affected the food security situation, especially among pastoralist community.

4.0 Welfare indicators (Utilisation of food)

4.1 Nutrition status



N=1259.

- The nutrition status of children below five years improved slightly during the month under review.
- Out of 1,259 children sampled, 265 had MUAC<135mm, representing 22.4 per cent of those rated as being at the risk of malnutrition.
- The rate was lower than the 23.7 per cent recorded in November and the 24 per cent long term mean.
- Higher rates were recorded in Loiyangalani division of fishermen/pastoral livelihoods at 47.3 per cent, followed by Garqarsa in Gadhamoji division of Agro/pastoralist livelihood at 17.9 per cent.
- Maikona division recorded the lowest rate at 9.7per cent.
- The consistently reported emergency levels of malnutrition in Loiyangalani division calls for urgent intervention.

4.2 Human Health

- Malaria and respiratory tract infections (RTIs) were the common ailments during the month, slightly increasing among children between the ages of 2-10years and adults. This is normal during the wet season.
- During the month under review, the most consumed diet (cereal commodity) among pastoralist, Agro pastoralist and fishermen livelihoods was maize and its locally grinded (Posho) flour. However, increasing prices reduced the purchasing power of households, resulting in under utilisation of food. As a result, a person died of starvation in Afhare sub-location of Ngurunit location in Laisamis district.

5.0 Current interventions

5.1 Non food interventions

- Construction of community water sources in Hurri hills, Naripi, Kurkum, Parkishon, Olturot and Maikona – Christian Community Services (CCS).
- De-silting of Bakuli water source and water porting system was undertaken on Mt. Marsabit to avert the chronic water stress – MOW/Mid roc construction Ltd.

5.2 Food aid

- EMOP relief food was distributed to some distribution centres, while few areas including Kalacha and Ngurunit reported none.
- Supplementary feeding program (SFP) in 17 health centres in all six divisions targeting 2,300 direct beneficiaries among severely malnourished children was undertaken.

5.3 Other coping strategies

The most commonly applied coping strategies include;

- Purchasing food on credit.
- Borrowing food from relatives and friends.
- Reducing numbers of meals per day.
- Reducing sizes of meals.
- Switching to cheaper or less preferred foods.

These coping strategies were severely experienced, which was not normal for the time of the year.

6.0 Recommendations

Food situation

- Supplementary and therapeutic relief assistance should be encouraged to most affected areas like Loiyangalani division to curb the existing malnutrition and food shortages.
- Continue with EMOP, UNICEF relief food to mitigate the alarming food situation among 60 per cent of the neediest population in larger Marsabit district.
- Recommend restocking program as reconstruction measure and strategic food source, especially to pastoral livelihoods in Marsabit district.
- Small-scale business grants should be encouraged to improve the dwindling resources in terms of empowerment in larger Marsabit district.
- Encourage reconstruction of rock catchments instead of water trucking.
- Creation of seasonal grazing areas should be emphasised in all development actors through Environmental Management Committees (EMC's) at location level.

Action- WFP, KFSSG, ALRMPII and other DAs.

Livestock diseases

- Continuous disease surveillance should be emphasized to contain disease outbreaks, especially PPR and Anthrax incidences to areas where livestock is affected or concentrated.
- There is need to cover the areas which were not covered during the PPR vaccination, such as Loiyangalani division.

Human health

- Malaria, diarrhea and respiratory tract infections (RTI) increased in most parts of the district though on manageable scale. The MOH should continue to stock all the rural health facilities with adequate drugs to improve access to basic health services for pastoralists.

Security

- Peace committees constituting at least 25 per cent youth representation should be emphasised to forge way forward for the traditional peace initiative in September 2009.