



**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**

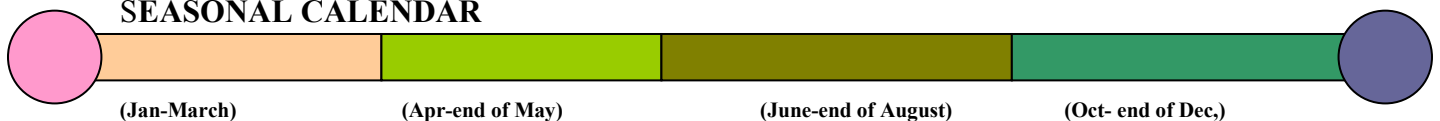
**Samburu District**

**Warning Stages**



Livelihood Zone	Warning stage	Trend
Pastoral-all species	Alert	Worsening
	Alert	No change
Agro pastoral	Alert	Stable
	Alert	Stable
Formal Employment/ Casual labour/ Business	Alert	Stable
	Alert	Stable

**SEASONAL CALENDAR**



## **Situation Overview**

- The district received 7.51 mm of rainfall on average compared to 124 mm received in November. The amount was 85 per cent below the long-term mean average. Dry and hot weather prevailed across the district during the month under review.
- Existing water sources, particularly wet season water points, experienced yield decline across the district due to enhanced rates of evaporation, leading to increased distances to water points for households and livestock.
- Livestock body conditions improved in all species and shoats' prices slightly improved compared to November.
- Cases of the deadly *pestes des petits ruminants* (PPR) were still reported, particularly in areas where shoats contracted the virus before vaccination and in areas where vaccination never took place.
- Milk availability declined slightly at the household level across the district.
- Malaria and upper respiratory tract infections continued to dominate the district human disease profile, but within manageable levels.
- Higher than normal shoats' prices were countered by high prices of essential commodities, impacting insignificantly on the pastoralists' economy and food security.
- Insecurity continued to destabilise the western and eastern borders of the district, constraining access to forage resources and human settlement in the areas.
- The nutrition status of children below five years worsened slightly, with the percentage of those considered at risk of malnutrition (based on MUAC<135mm measurement) rising to 20.3 from 19.6 in November.

## **Ongoing interventions**

- Supplementary feeding programme at 9 health facilities in all divisions targeting approximately 1,400 beneficiaries.
- District-wide general relief food distribution targeting approximately 40 per cent of the population in the lowlands and 20 per cent in the plateau.
- Continuous combined police patrols in the western parts of the plateau.

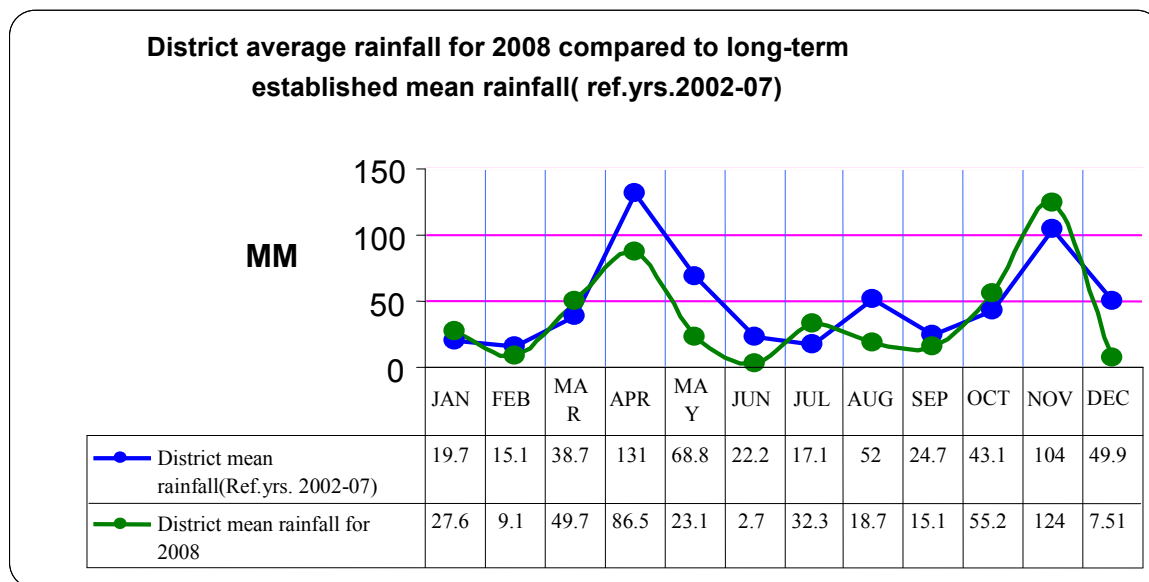
## **Recommendations to KFSSG and DSG**

- Food for assets programme to target more households in the lowlands left out of EMOP brackets to accelerate recovery from the impacts of the previous drought and cushion them from the impacts of the forthcoming one.
- KFSSG and other stakeholders to play a lead role in promoting conflict resolution initiatives among warring communities through facilitation of district peace committees.
- Malaria and URTIs incidences continue to be reported across the district. MOH to staff and stock all the rural health facilities with adequate drugs to improve access to basic health services by pastoralists.
- Insecurity in the western and eastern borders of the district remained a major challenge and requires immediate attention by all stakeholders, particularly GOK, to bring an end to the menace.

- Water trucking will be inevitable as we approach the driest months of the year, hence repair of the water bowser is a crucial drought preparedness measure that needs to be undertaken immediately.

## 1. 0 Environmental indicators

### 1.1 Rainfall



*Source: District Agriculture field weather stations*

- Dry and hot weather conditions prevailed across the district throughout the month under review.
- Light erratic showers were received along the stretch of Baragoi seasonal stream from the foot of Ndoto hills to Baragoi town.
- On average, the rainfall amount received was 7.51 mm compared to last month's 124 mm. The amount was below normal by 85 per cent.
- The long term established threshold normally received during this period of the year is 49.9mm.

### 1.2 Conditions of natural vegetation and pasture

- Quality and quantity of natural vegetation depreciated across the district, especially in wet season grazing zones.
- The impact of livestock concentration, coupled with the dry weather conditions which persisted throughout the reporting month, were the factors behind the above trend.
- Quality and quantity of natural vegetation was still intact in areas where insecurity constrained access to forage resources.
- Apart from conflict-prone areas, forage situation across the other parts of the district were slightly below normal.
- The failure of the last phase of the short rains reversed the recovery trend of natural vegetation in most areas.

### **1.3 Water sources**

#### **1.3.1 Use of water sources**

- The main sources of water for livestock and household during the month remained the same as last month and included natural rivers, traditional river wells, pans and dams, shallow wells and springs.
- Existing water sources across the district registered yield decline, particularly in springs, natural ponds, boreholes and seasonal streams.
- The above was attributed to enhanced rates of evaporation.

#### **1.3.2 Average distance (Kms) to water sources**

- Average distance to nearby water sources for households rose to 4.4kms from last month's 2.2kms.
- The change implied the drying of wet season water points, translating into more time spent in search of water by household members, particularly women and children.
- Average grazing distance to main sources of water also increased to 7.7Kms from last month's 4.1Kms.
- Increased grazing distance was an indication of drying up of wet season water points, impacting adversely on livestock production, particularly milk.

### **1.4. Emerging issues**

#### **1.4.1 Insecurity/ conflict**

- Insecurity intensified in Baragoi-Nyiro divisions.
- Cattle rustling incident was reported in Kawop area of Nyiro division towards the end of the reporting month, where two herders lost their lives and approximately 200 heads of cattle stolen.

#### **1.4.2 Migration**

##### **1.4.2.1 Livestock migration**

- Mass livestock migration was reported towards Kawop from Nachola and Marti areas of Baragoi division.
- The above migration was induced by the precarious security situation experienced in Samburu North district.

##### **1.4.2.2 Human migration/displacement**

- Families remained displaced in parts of Baragoi and Nyiro as tribal skirmishes intensified between warring communities.
- Households in the western parts of the Agro-pastoral livelihood zone too remained displaced and concentrations are still mainly in the lower parts of the plateau and cluster villages in Lolmolog sub-location.

### **1.5 Implications on food security**

- The failure of the last phase of the short rains may impact adversely on livelihood recovery in the lowlands.
- This is expected to impact negatively on household food security.

- Insecurity continued to frustrate efforts to attain a food secure society in the affected areas within the district.

## 2.0. Rural economy indicators

### 2.1 Livestock production

#### 2.1.1 Livestock body conditions

- Livestock body conditions improved of all species across the district despite depreciated quality and quantity of forage and increased trekking distances to water points.
- Birth rates in cattle rose to 9.6 per cent from last month's 6.2 per cent.
- Compared to a normal year, livestock body conditions were slightly below normal across the district.

#### 2.1.2 Livestock diseases

- Cases of the deadly *pestes des petits ruminants* were still reported, particularly in areas where shoats contracted the virus before vaccination and in areas where vaccination never took place.
- Other major livestock diseases reported were ECF in cattle, diarrhoea, enterotoxaemia and worm infestation in sheep, diarrhoea, PPR and CCPP in goats.

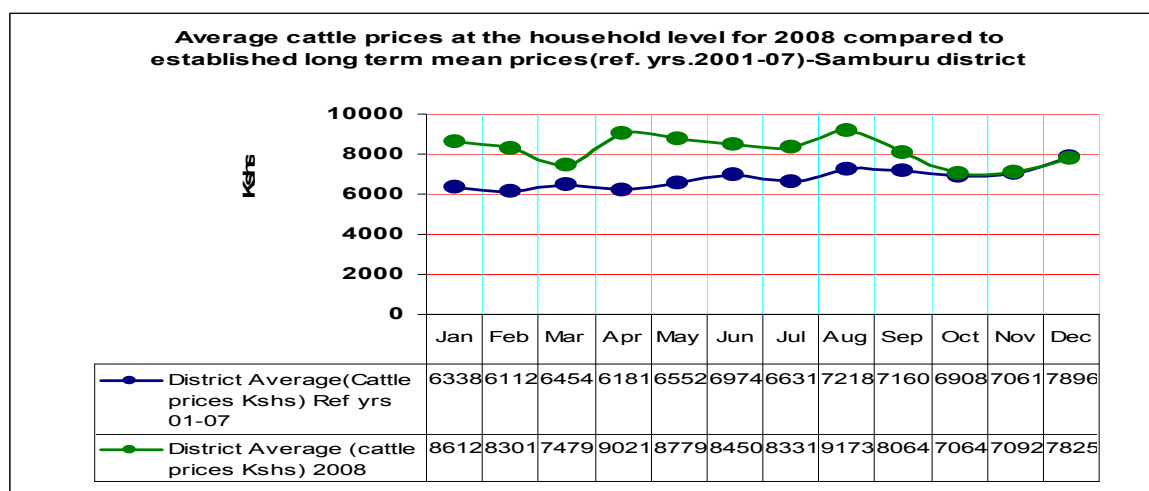
### 2.2 Implications on food security

- Improved livestock body conditions impacted positively on pastoralists' returns and economy.

## 3.0 Access to food

### 3.1 Livestock marketing

#### 3.1.1 Cattle prices

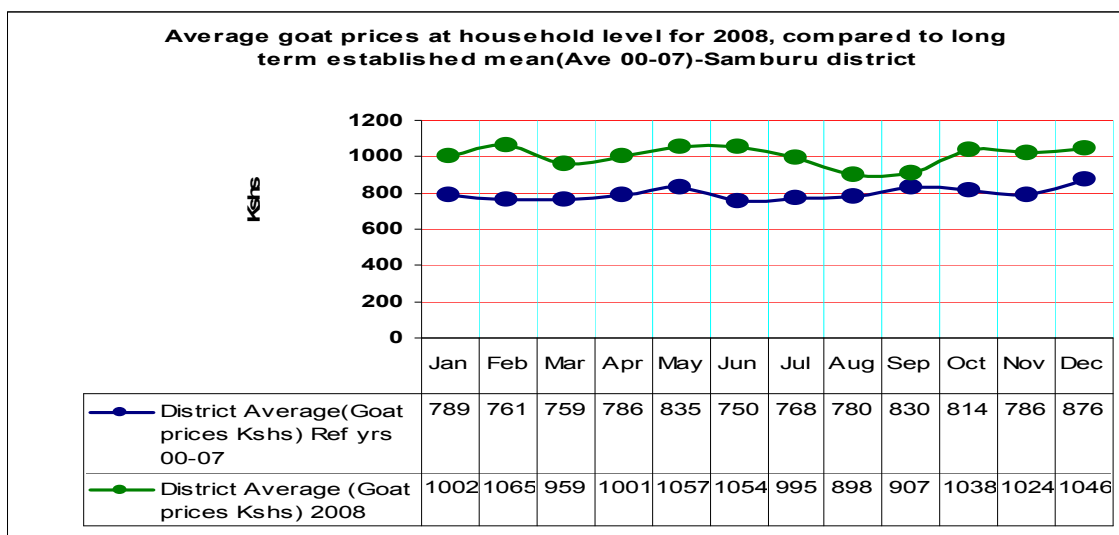


Number of households (N) =390

- The average cattle price rose to Ksh7,825 from last month's Ksh7092.
- The price deviation by 0.8 per cent depicts close to normal range as compared to long term mean prices.

- The rise was attributed to improved cattle body conditions across the district.

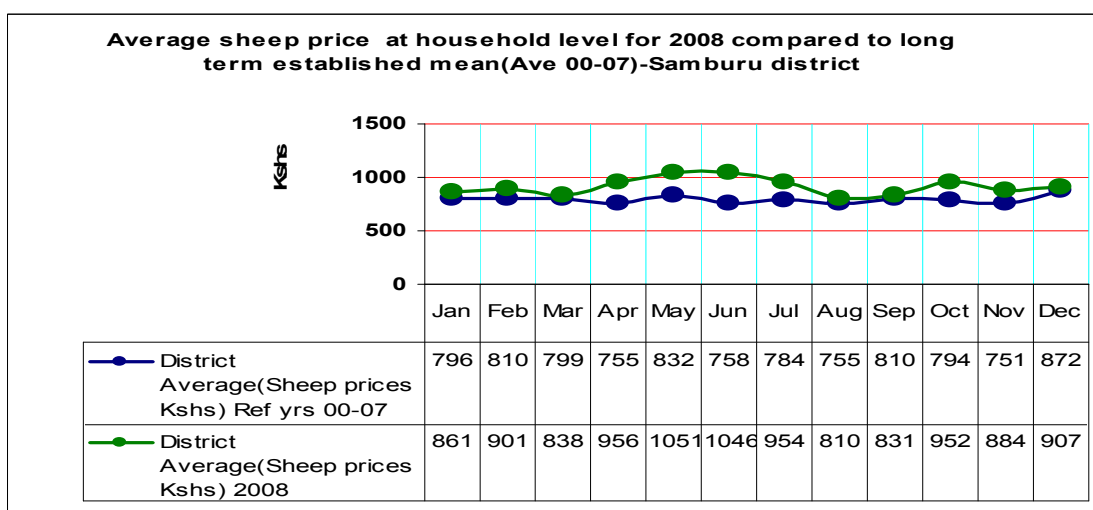
### 3.1.2 Goats prices



Number of households (N) =390

- The average goat price appreciated to Ksh1,046 from last month's Ksh1,024.
- However, the price was above normal by 19.4 per cent.
- Good goat body conditions combined with high demand for goat meat during the festive season led to high prices.

### 3.1.3 Sheep prices



Number of households (N) =390

- Average sheep prices rose to Ksh907 from Ksh884 in October.
- However, the price was higher than the long term average by 4 per cent.

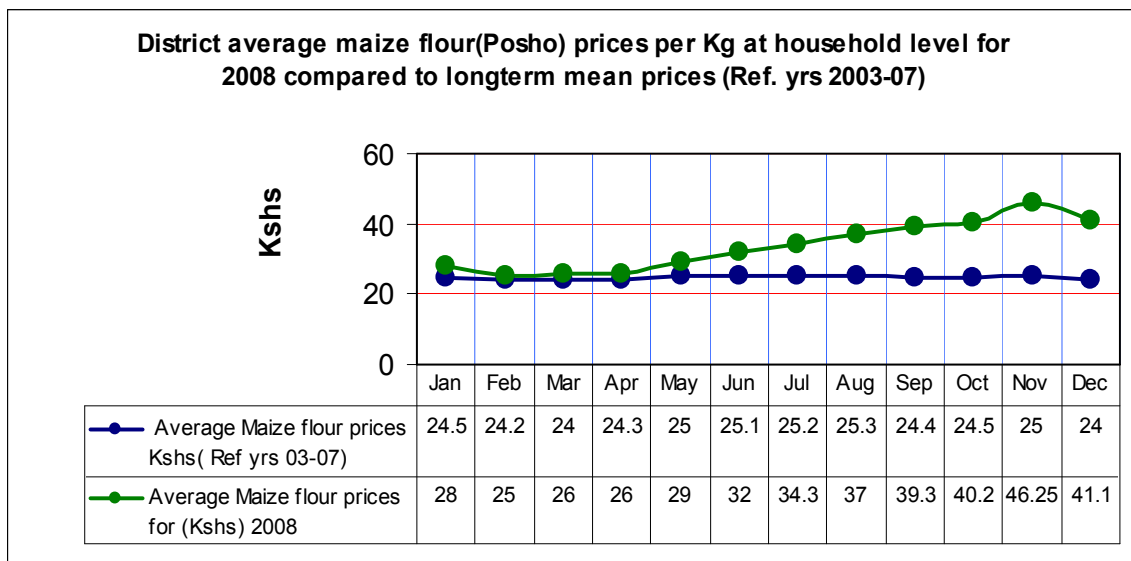
- Improved access to common livestock markets, coupled with good body conditions, were among the factors affecting sheep prices positively.

### 3.2 Milk consumption

- Milk availability at the household level declined slightly across the district.
- This was attributed to depreciated forage resources and increased trekking distances to water points.

### 3.3 Crop prices

#### 3.3.1 Posho (locally milled maize flour) prices



Number of communities (N) =35

- Posho prices fell to Ksh41.10 per kilo from Ksh46.25 in November.
- Compared to the long term mean, the price was below normal by 64.4 per cent.
- The district remained an importer of maize and improved supply led to a slight drop in prices.
- Added transport costs also contributed to hiked cereal prices in many lowland areas compared to the plateau.

### 3.4 Income

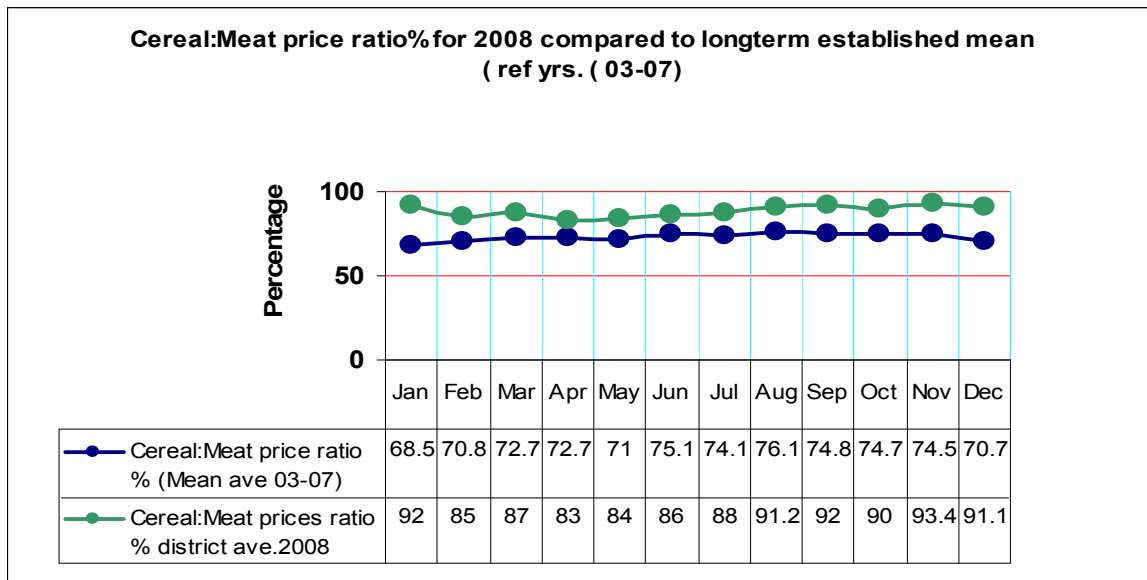
#### 3.4.1 Livestock income

- Sale of livestock remained the major source of income for many households across all the livelihood zones.
- Other livestock income was generated through the sale of livestock products e.g. milk.

#### 3.4.2 Other income

- Casual labour, petty trade, sale of charcoal, sale of wood products, remittances and formal employment were the other income sources for many households within the district.

### 3.5 Cereal/ meat price ratio (%)



**Number of households (N) = 390**

- Pastoralists' households required 0.91 kilo of meat in exchange for a kilo of cereals.
- The exchange rate remained exorbitant as the established long-term mean average was 0.71kg of meat against a kilo of cereals.
- Pastoralists' purchasing power improved to 91.1 per cent from 93.4 per cent in November and was below the long-term mean by 29 per cent.
- This was linked to improved shoats prices and the down trend of cereals prices, particularly maize.

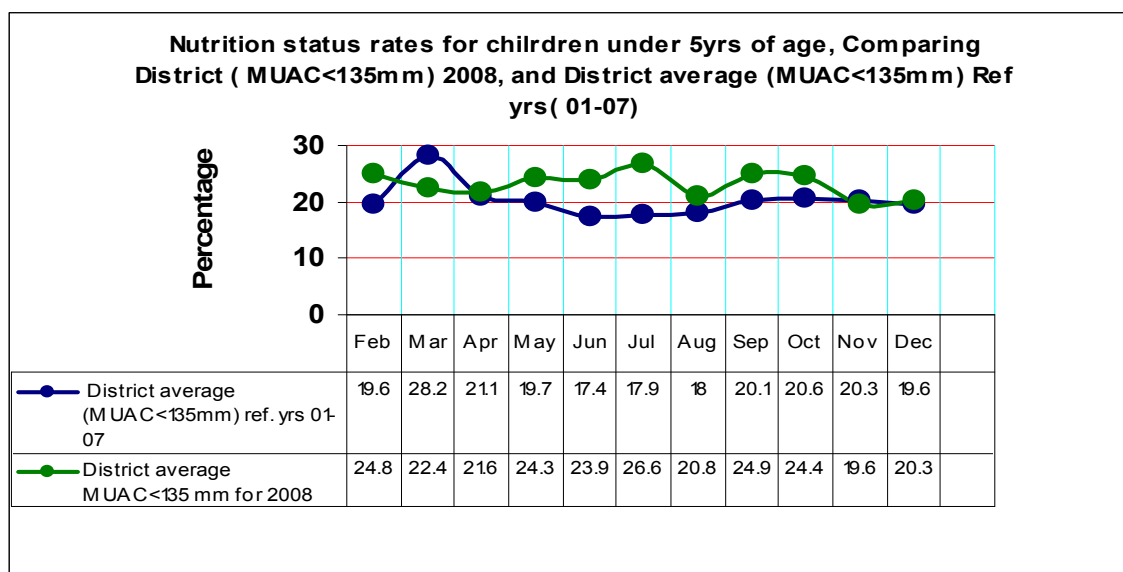
### 3.6 Implications on food security

- Above long term mean livestock prices were countered by highly priced cereals and other food and non-food commodities.
- This impacted insignificantly on the pastoralists' economy and food security.

## 4.0 Welfare indicators (utilisation of food)

### 4.1 Nutrition status

- The nutrition status of children below five years worsened slightly during the month under review, with the percentage of those considered at risk of malnutrition (based on MUAC<135mm measurement) rising to 20.3 from 19.6 last month.
- The decrease was attributed to dwindling milk availability, which is a major component of pastoralists' diet, at household level.



**Number of children (N) =1547 from 390 households**

## 4.2 Human Health

- Malaria and upper respiratory tract infections (URTIs) were the major human ailments reported in various parts of the district but within manageable levels.
- The ailments were countered at the household level through medical assistance sought from public health centres/ dispensaries, private clinics and use of local herbs/ concoctions.

## 5.0 Current interventions

### 5.1 Non-food interventions

- Enhanced patrols comprising KPR, and ASTU in the Western parts of the Plateau.

### 5.2 Food-aid

- Supplementary Feeding Programme (SFP) in 9 health facilities in all divisions targeting approximately 1,400 beneficiaries.
- District-wide general relief food distribution targeting 20 per cent of the population in the plateau and 40 per cent of the population in the lowlands.

### 5.3 Other coping strategies

- The household coping mechanisms were generally normal, ranging from 0 to 4 in all sentinel sites, against a coping strategies index (0 to 10).

## 6.0 Recommendations

- Food for assets programme to target more households in the lowlands left out of EMOP brackets to accelerate recovery from the impacts of the previous drought and cushion them from the impacts of the forthcoming one. (Action: WFP, KFSSG, ALRMP II, UNICEF and other donors).

- KFSSG and other stakeholders to play a lead role in promoting conflict resolution initiatives among warring communities through facilitation of district peace committees. (Action: DSC, District Peace committees, Pastoral associations, KFSSG and Communities).
- Malaria and URTIs incidences continue to be reported across the district. MOH to staff and stock all the rural health facilities with adequate drugs to improve access to basic health services by pastoralists. (Action: MoH, SAIDIA, Catholic Mission, ALRMP, and other donors).
- Insecurity in the western and eastern borders of the district remained a major challenge and requires immediate attention by all stakeholders, particularly GOK, to bring an end to the menace.
- Water trucking will be inevitable as we approach the driest months of the year, hence repair of the water bowser is a crucial drought preparedness measure that needs to be undertaken immediately. (Action:ALRMP)