

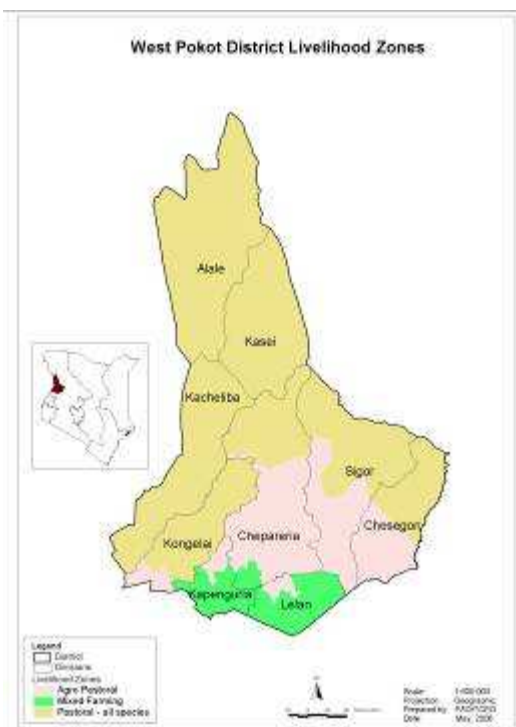


OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER
MINISTRY OF STATE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF NORTHERN KENYA AND OTHER ARID LANDS
ARID LANDS RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROJECT II

DROUGHT MONTHLY BULLETIN, DECEMBER 2008

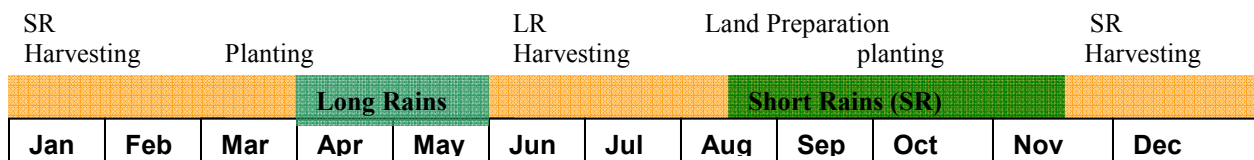
West Pokot District

Warning Stages



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

SEASONAL CALENDAR



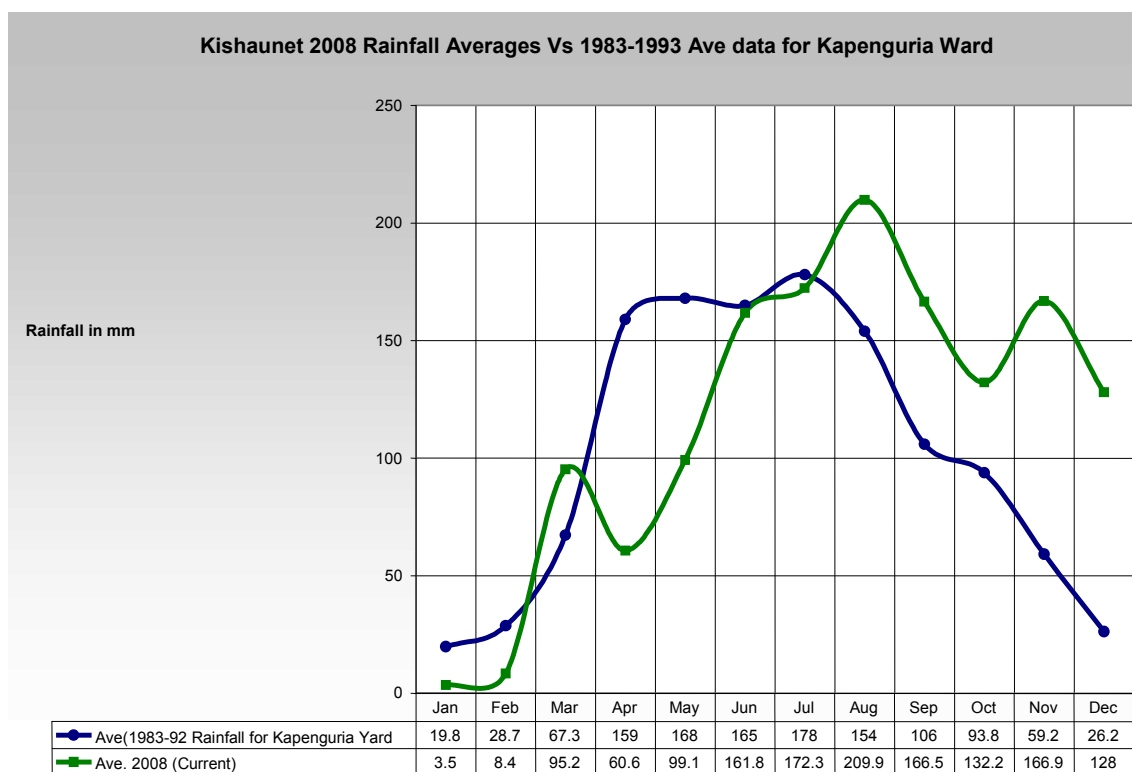
Situation Overview

- Most parts of the districts remained dry during the month under review. The Kishaunet station recorded 128mm compared to 166.9mm recorded in November.
- Traditional river wells were the main water sources, while rivers were the second most common water source.
- Flow of water in the rivers was good but the amount reduced compared to last month.
- The condition of pasture worsened, with quality and quantity dropping as the rains receded.
- There was a significant increase in distance from the households to the grazing areas from 3.6 km to 4.5 km. The distances traveled by households in search of water increased from 2.3km to 2.7 km.
- Cattle prices fell from Ksh 10,613 in November to KSh 9,384 on average, while goat prices reduced from Ksh 1,223 to Ksh 1,189. The price reduction was attributed to worsening indicators.
- Maize prices at household level remained stable at Ksh 21 per kilo. However, the number of households selling maize reduced. However, market prices increased from Ksh 24 last month to Ksh 28.
- The price of beans at household level was Ksh 50, while the average price in markets was Ksh 70. Very few households reported sale of beans, an indication that there were low food stocks.
- The nutrition status of children below 5 years (based on Mid Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) <135mm) dropped slightly during the month under review. The number of children rated as being at the risk of malnutrition increased from 7.3 per cent, from 6 in November. The increase was attributed to the increase in food prices and reduction in milk production.
- The situation in the districts was Normal and on a Worsening trend.

1.0 Environmental indicators (Stability)

1.1 Rainfall

- Most parts of the district remained dry despite the heavy downpour recorded in November.
- The shorts rains were poor, having started late and progressed poorly.
- The Kishaunet station recorded 128mm compared to 166.9mm recorded in November.
- The low lying areas where scarce rainfall was received there were indicators of a worsening trend
- The flow in the rivers was good but the amount of water reduced with the reduced precipitation in the catchment areas.



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

- The quantity of pasture worsened compared to last month.
- This was as a result of the dry season that set in, especially in the low lying areas that never received normal rains.
- The pasture and fodder in the mixed farming livelihood zones was normal at the time of the year.
- In the pastoral livelihood zone, animals were expected to start moving to the dry season grazing areas soon.
- The flagged areas remained lower parts of Chesegon, Orwa and some parts of Kongelai.
- The situation was normal at the time of the year, except for most of low lying areas.

1.2.2 Distance to grazing areas

- The average distance to grazing areas increased compared to last month.
- The distance was 4.5km compared to 3.6km recorded last month.
- The longest distance was recorded in Konyao at 8.8 km compared to 7.5km recorded in Nyangaita last month.
- The distance was normal at the time of the year but expected to worsen.

1.3 Water sources and availability

1.3.1 Water sources

- Traditional river wells remained the main water sources, followed by rivers and boreholes.
- The situation was not likely to change much until the next rain season expected in March.
- This was a normal situation but on a worsening trend in the district.

1.3.2 Household access to water

- The distances traveled by households in search of water increased, indicating stress within the households.
- The average distance was 2.7km compared to 2.3km recorded last month.
- The longest recorded distance remained Orwa at 5km.
- The situation was on a worsening trend, but normal for the time of the year.

1.4 Migration

- Migration of animals to the dry season grazing areas began, especially in the pastoral livelihoods.
- Other animals were moved to neighbouring Uganda.
- The migration was normal at the time of the year.

1.5 Implications on food security

- The food security situation did not improve compared to last month since there were no harvests.
- Food stocks at the household level continued to get depleted.
- Milk production also dropped with the reducing pasture and fodder.

2.0 Rural economy indicators (Food availability)

2.1 Livestock production

2.1.1 Livestock body condition

- Livestock body condition was varied in the different livelihood zones.
- In the mixed-farming zone, the body condition was good and stable.
- These areas received rainfall that sustained pasture, hence the body condition and milk production remaining good.
- The body condition of livestock in the pastoral and the agro-pastoral livelihoods was varied.
- Most animals in the low lying areas where no rain was received migrated and for the body condition of the few remaining ones was poor.
- In the rest of the livelihood the body condition was good but likely to worsen.

2.1.2 Livestock diseases

- No new livestock disease outbreaks were reported in the district.
- Vaccination against *Peste des petits ruminants* (PPR) was completed. However, some areas were not covered due to poor infrastructure, low awareness or lack of interest by farmers.

- The vaccination reduced livestock deaths.

2.2 Crop production

2.2.1 Timeliness and condition of various crop production activities

- Harvesting of cereals and legumes ended in all the areas.
- Crop failure was recorded in most areas and the most affected crops were beans and maize.
- The situation led to an increase in commodity prices at the household level, worsening the already poor condition of escalating prices in the markets.
- The situation in most of the pastoral livelihoods was normal but worsening, except for some low lying areas which didn't receive enough rains in the season.

2.2.2 Pest and diseases

- There were no abnormal cases of crop pests reported.
- Post harvest pests are likely to affect some of the harvested crop since some farmers are not willing to sell their produce as they wait for prices to rise further.
- This was a normal situation at the time of the year.

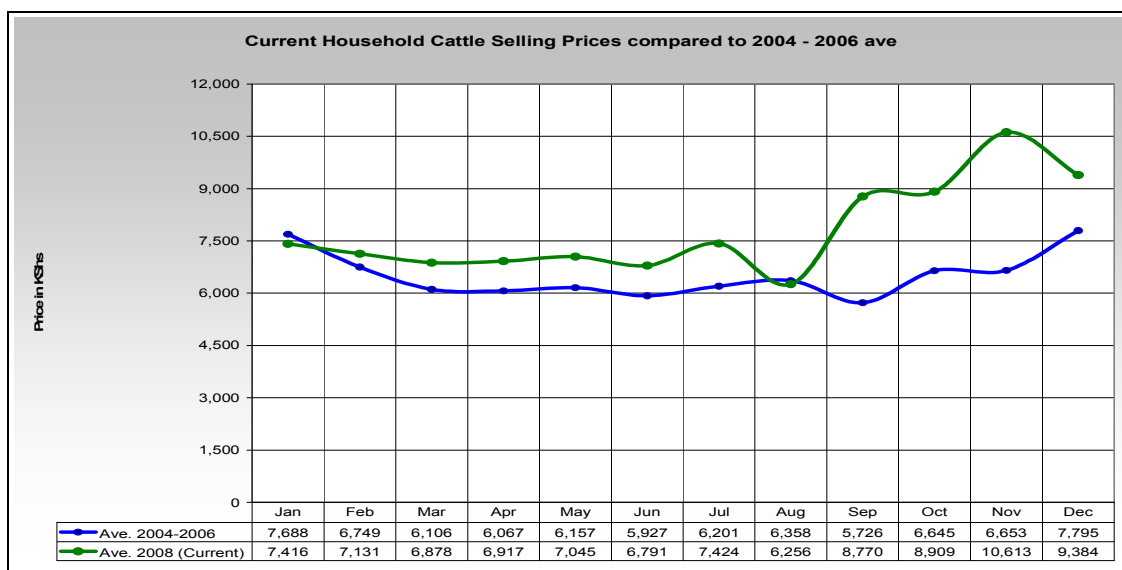
2.2.3 Implications on food security

- Market food prices remained high as household stocks continued to get depleted.
- Milk production was also likely to reduce as animals migrated in search of pasture.
- The major constraint in all the livelihoods was the high price of cereals in the markets.

3.0 Access to food

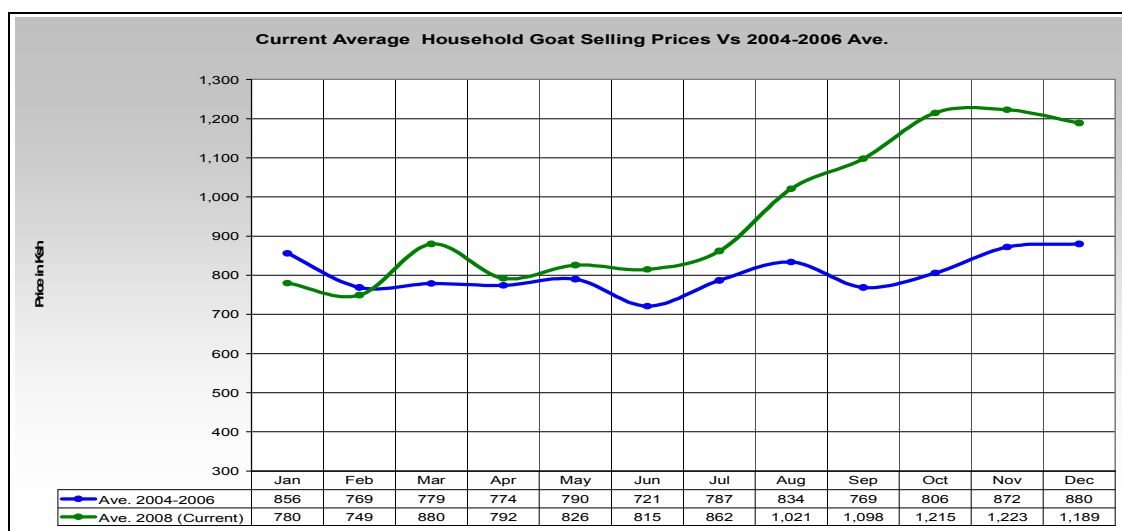
3.1 Livestock marketing

3.1.1 Cattle prices



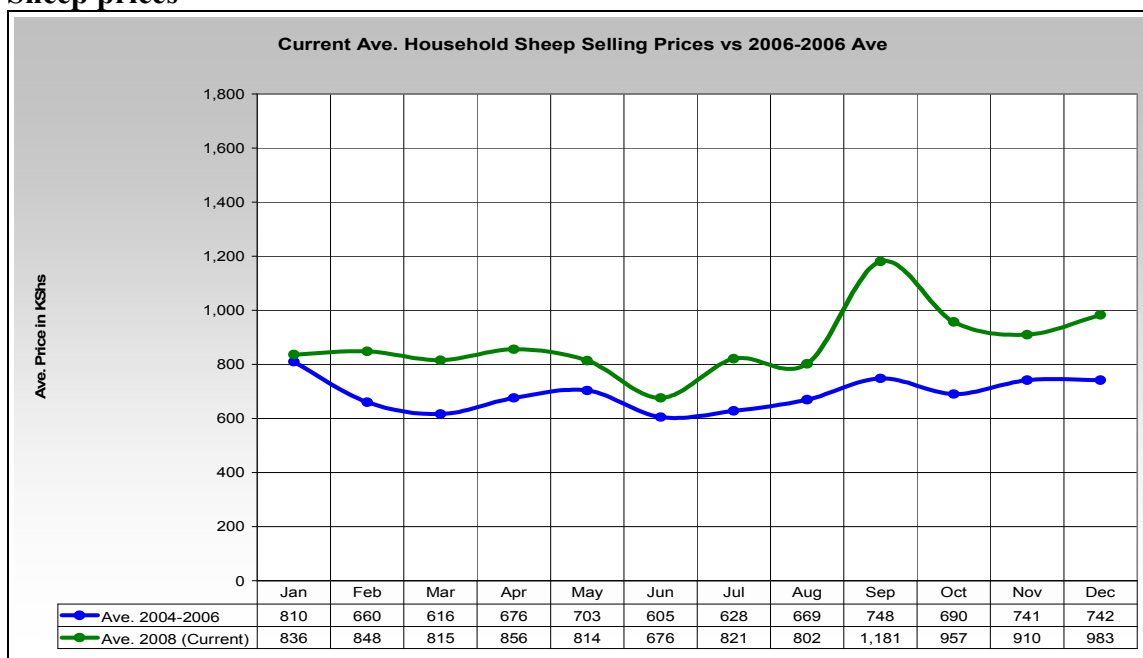
- Cattle prices dropped compared to last month.
- The average price was at an average of Ksh 9,384, down from Ksh 10,613 in November.
- The price was, however, higher than the long term mean of Ksh 7,795.
- The price drop was as a result of the reducing quantity of pasture and fodder due to the reduction in rains, especially in the pastoral livelihoods.
- Prices are likely to fall further if the situation does not change.
- The lowest price was recorded in Konyao at Ksh 7,300, while the highest was Ksh 16,000 in Kaiboss.
- The prices were within the normal range but are likely to worsen.

3.1.2 Goat prices



- Goat prices remained high, but like cattle, the prices reduced compared to last month.
- The average price was Ksh 1,189 compared to Ksh 1,223 recorded last month.
- The reduction was attributed to the reduced body condition, especially in the pastoral livelihood zone.
- The lowest price was recorded at Ksh 894 in Kongelai, while the highest was Ksh 2,035 in Ptokou.
- The situation could worsen if browse and fodder continues to reduce.
- It is also not normal for the price of goats to fall, especially during the December festivities.

3.1.3 Sheep prices

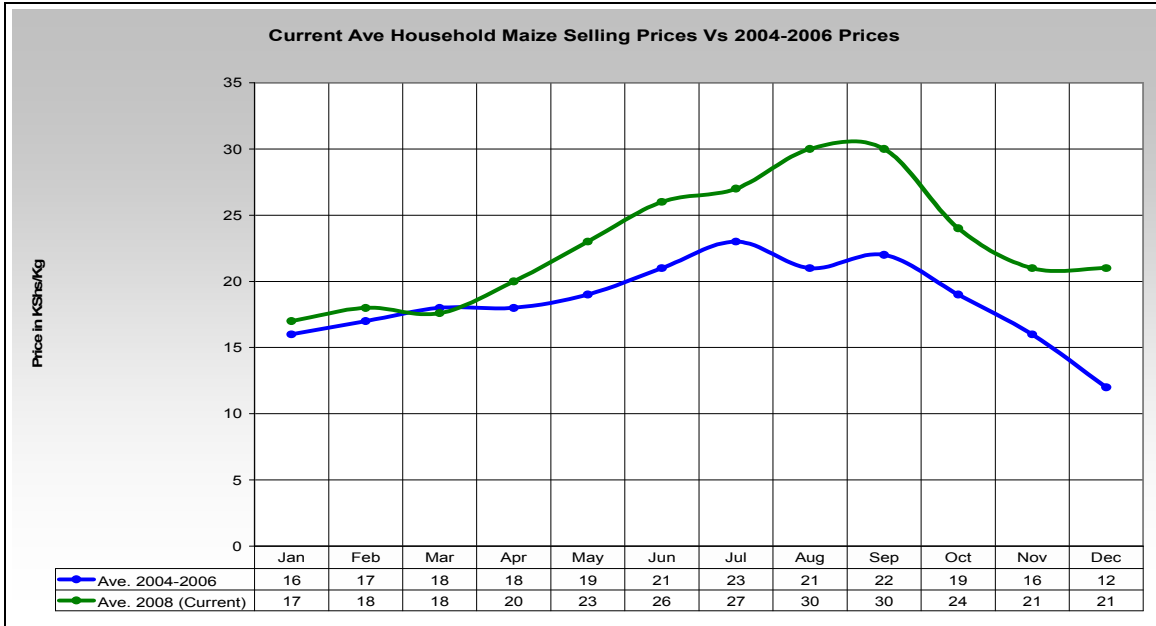


- Sheep prices increased slightly compared to last month.
- The average price was Ksh 983 compared to Ksh 910 recorded last year.
- The increase in price of sheep was because sheep, unlike goats and cattle, are late to be affected by dry spell.
- The situation was normal at the time of the year.

3.2 Crop prices

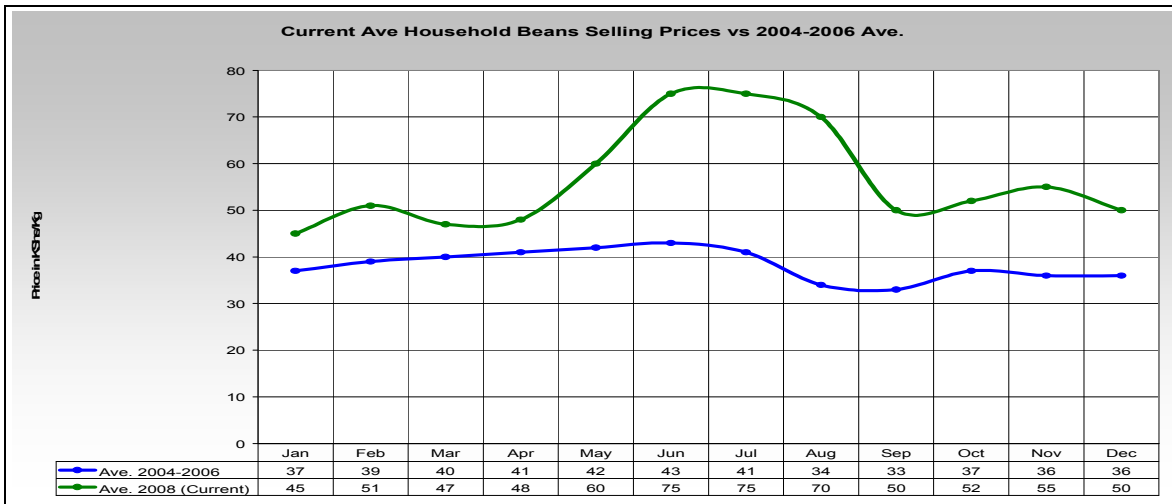
3.2.1 Maize prices

- Maize prices stabilised compared to the previous trend but the average price was still above normal.
- The highest prices recorded remained Ksh 25 per kilo, while the lowest price recorded was Ksh 20 in Ptokou, Chepnyal and Kaiboss.



- The average price in the market, however, increased from Ksh 24 to Ksh 28 per kilo.
- The increase, especially in the markets, was expected to worsen as the previous harvest was not good.
- Most farmers were also not willing to sell their produce, hence the supply in the markets was low, thereby worsening the situation.
- Unlike last month, six sample areas recorded sale of maize, an increase from four.
- The situation was not normal at the time of the year and was expected to worsen.

3.2.2 Beans prices

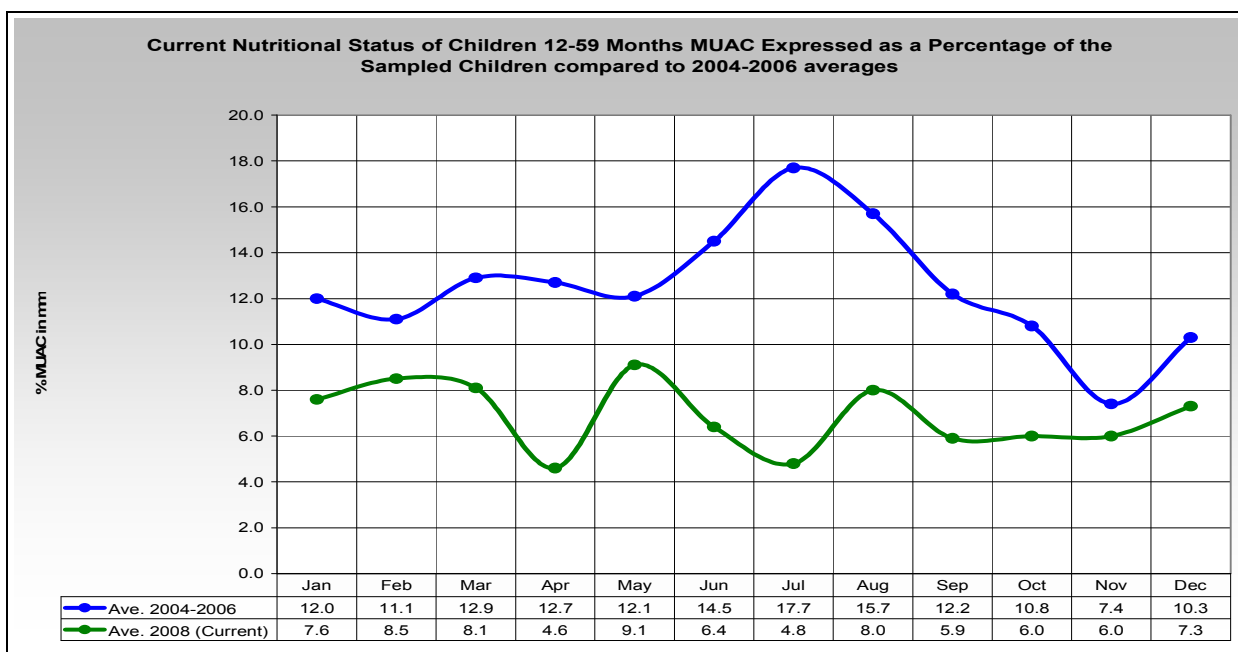


- Beans prices reduced slightly on average but remained high compared to last month.
- The average price was Ksh 50 per kilo compared to Ksh 55 recorded last month.

- However, only two sample areas recorded sale of beans at the household level, an indication that stocks at the household level continued to reduce.
- The average price in the market, however, was at the high of Ksh 70 per kilo.
- This was not a normal situation at the time of the year and the situation is expected to worsen.

4. Welfare indicators (Utilisation of food)

4.1 Nutrition status



- The nutrition status of children below 5 years (based on Mid Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC)<135mm) dropped slightly during the month under review.
- The number of children rated as being at the risk of malnutrition increased from 7.3 per cent, from 6 in November.
- The increase was attributed to the increase in food prices and reduction in milk production.
- The rate was, however, normal but could worsen as most of the indicators show a worsening trend.
- The rate was lower than the long term mean of 10.3 per cent.